

"A OFFSCOURING."

"Well, yes, ma'am, I have stole!"

"Why, John?"

"You asked me didn't you?"

"Yes, I asked you!" the mission teacher replied; a sad, almost disgusted expression on her sweet young face.

"What did you ask me for, if you didn't want me to tell you. I could 'a' lied!" the boy went on in a stolid sort of a way, and yet with a ring of feeling in his voice.

"No, you couldn't, Johnny," the teacher answered with a smile, "because you promised, you remember, that you would always tell the truth to me."

"Well, I didn't go back on it, did I?"

"No, Johnny. Have you any objections to telling me how often you have taken things that didn't belong to you?"

"Mebee I couldn't remember them all," the boy replied, "but I never lifted anything very partickeler. Once when the old woman where I hang out got sick, and cried a blue streak for oranges, and nobody had the money to buy 'em, I asked the old cove that kept the grocery store to trust me for a couple till the next day. He wouldn't do it, and that night I stole six from him."

"Why, Johnny?"

"Why didn't he let me have 'em, then?" the boy went on doggedly. "I'd 'a' him, 'cause I said I would. Anyhow, the old woman got well off them oranges."

"Then you are not sorry you took them?" the teacher inquired.

"Well, the old woman had to have them oranges, and somebody had to get 'em for her."

The teacher's face was very grave, and as her companion looked up he saw the tears in her eyes, a sight which had a curious effect upon him.

"Don't make me tell you any more, please, ma'am," he said, dropping his eyes, while his face flushed scarlet. "I ain't nothing but a offscouring anyhow, and it ain't no good to fret about what I do. I was kinder dragged into this place, else I'd never a bothered you."

"What name did you call yourself?" the teacher inquired. "I didn't understand you."

"Granny Leeds said I was offscouring, and so I am."

"What is an offscouring, John?"

"Oh! the leavin's of something that ain't no good."

"Granny Leeds, as you call her, was very much mistaken, and you are very much mistaken about yourself, Johnny," the teacher replied. "You are not an offscouring, but God's own child, and He is giving you a chance to make something of yourself. How much do you think the things are worth that you have taken in all, Johnny?"

"Them oranges were worth four cents apiece when I took 'em; that's twenty-four, and them two loaves of bread I lifted for two fellers that froze their feet last winter; and a mackerel to make the bread go down. It's awful to eat bread without nothing with it; and then a base-ball that was worth fifty cents, and all them things would make near hand to a dollar. I don't remember anything else now."

"Well, John, I shall give you a dollar, and I want you to go to those places and pay for all those things."

"Then I'll have to own up," the boy interrupted in his bewilderment, relapsing at once into slang.

"Wouldn't you feel better to confess Johnny?" the young lady inquired, not a little troubled at the effect of her words. For a moment the boy seemed lost in thought, and then, lifting a frank face to his companion, said: "I ain't never felt partickeler bad about any of them things 'cept the base ball, and that I could 'a' done without, but if you say so, Miss Lee, I'll give the whole thing away; only as I ain't lifted anything lately, and don't never mean to again, they would always suspicion me and make me out a thief when I ain't no such thing. Don't you think 'twould do, ma'am, if I dropped the money in them places so they'd be sure to find it? If you don't think so I'll blow the whole thing, if it takes me to the Island."

"What will you do, Johnny, if somebody needs bread and oranges, and you haven't any money to buy them with?"

"That's a sticker, ma'am. I dunno."

"And it wouldn't be strange if something of that kind were to happen any day."

"No, ma'am. That's something putty gen'rally to pay with the folks I know."

"Well, Johnny, I will tell you what to do," the teacher replied. "Here is my card, and when any of your acquaintances are in trouble I wish you would come directly to me, and if anything is amiss with you at any time, be sure and send a messenger. You had better come up to-morrow, anyway, Johnny, for want to give you some warm clothes, and then it will be easy for you to find the place next time."

Johnny hung his head. This kindness had overpowered him, and not a word could he say.

"I didn't mean to hurt you, Johnny," the tender-hearted teacher hurried to say. "You are willing I should help you, are you not?"

"I guess you had better let me git, now, Miss Lee," the boy replied huskily. "You could knock me down with an eye-winker. You needn't worry about my remembering all you've said, but just now I'm all broke up."

"And I can trust you, Johnny?" the lady inquired.

"It's a go, ma'am," the boy answered simply.

Miss Lee tucked a dollar bill in his hand, and Johnny hurried out of the building.

It took considerable tact and skill as well as time, for the boy to satisfactorily

manage the business which his teacher had provided money for. For instance, the grocer from whom he had "lifted" oranges had sold out to another man, and Johnny was obliged to hunt him up. He was at last found, poor and ill, and the boy without a moment's hesitation confessed the theft and produced the money. "I guess I can make it thirty cents," he said, "and that'll be a little interest. If I wouldn't like to give you five dollars, then you may shoot me for a crow."

The ex-grocer was so surprised at Johnny's confession and subsequent generosity that he shook the boy's hand heartily and invited him to stop in again soon, which the lad promised as heartily to do.

By nightfall these "back debts," as Johnny naively called them, were all settled, and then, after a scanty meal, the boy started out with his evening papers. About a quarter to eight he had sold out, and then, as fast as his feet would carry him, he hurried to the neighborhood of the Academy of Music to watch the people go into the building. It was opera night, and this was one of Johnny's greatest pleasures; and so, with his back to a lamp-post, he gave himself up to the delight of watching the gay throng. Johnny wondered what it would be like to drive around in luxurious carriages and have plenty of money to spend on fine clothes. He thought of the bread and herring he had eaten for his supper, and tried to imagine what it would be like to have turkey and cranberry sauce every day. Every Christmas Johnny had turkey and cranberry sauce for his dinner, and he knew from experience how nice they were. He had once ridden in an ambulance with a friend of his—a newsboy—who had been run over by an express wagon, and this was the nearest approach to a carriage ride that Johnny had ever enjoyed. He wondered, as he watched these happy, gaily dressed people, why it was that some people had all they wanted, while others were cold and hungry and sometimes starved to death. This was not the first time that Johnny had been perplexed with such thoughts, but they had never made him feel quite so uncomfortable as on this occasion. He called to mind the warm underclothing and tidy jacket and pants which Miss Lee had given him that day, and tried to comfort himself with the thought that there was one person in the world who cared for him.

There had been a heavy fall of snow that day, and as Johnny, still absorbed with his thoughts, started to cross the street, he saw something sparkle in the snow at the side of the crossing. There had been a rush of carriages, and a few had not been able to pull up to the curb. As he picked it up he saw that it was an ornament in the shape of a cross and studded with diamonds.

Johnny knew they were "shiners," as he called them, as soon as he looked at them, so with his heart in his throat he tucked the precious jewel into his pocket, still holding it firmly in his hand. Johnny's ambition had been to start a coffee and cake establishment where newsboys could be entertained at low rates. For more than a year he had nursed this project, and here was a chance to carry it into execution. There were nine stones in the cross. Disposing of one at a time, so as to avoid suspicion, there was money enough to last him for "years and years," he told himself. It puzzled him to know where he could keep the shiners, for there wasn't a soul among his acquaintances whom he dare trust with the secret. Not until he crept into his poverty-stricken bed, with his treasure carefully hidden among the straw, did the thought occur that he ought to try to find an owner for it. Then followed a hard battle between the natural honesty of the lad and his very natural desire for creature comforts. The person who could wear a gold thing like that, "chook full of shiners," he said to himself, "must have money enough to buy more shiners." Here he was, cold and hungry half the time, with no prospect before him but to be always hungry, if not always cold; and here were these shiners, which would set him up in business and give him a chance to help the boys. Johnny honestly wanted to help the boys. Why should he find the owner of this cross when he had nothing and the owner everything? This thought continued until it was time for the lad to start out for his morning papers. All through the business part of the forenoon the battle still raged, and the newsboy's thoughts were so occupied with his newfound riches that he almost forgot to attend to his customers. At about ten, as he crossed City Hall Park, he noticed a gentleman in earnest conversation with another gentleman, as he passed he heard the words diamond cross spoken. Johnny slackened his pace and listened.

"The diamonds were all of the first water," the gentleman said. "It was a present to my wife from her father, and she is terribly cut up at the loss, I don't suppose we shall ever find it."

"You will advertise it, won't you?" his companion inquired.

"Of course," the gentleman replied, "but more than likely it has fallen into dishonest hands, and unless the reward is made equal to the value of the diamonds we shall probably never see them."

"When the gentlemen separated the one who was interested in the diamonds entered the City Hall and after little inquiry Johnny discovered that this gentleman held a very honorable office in the city department. After finding this out the lad took a turn around the Park to think it over again.

"Granny Leeds said I was a offscouring and Miss Lee said I ain't," he argued to himself. "If I keep these shiners

Granny will be right and Miss Lee'll be wrong. She said the Lord was giving me a chance to make something of myself. Well, now, the question is, am I, or am I not an offscouring. If I keep these shiners I am, if I give them up I ain't. Well, I ain't," and with these words on his lips, Johnny started for the gentleman's office. Nothing daunted, he entered and presented himself at the desk.

"Some of you folks have lost some-things, ain't you?" he asked.

"Will your honor tell me what it is like?"

"It is a gold cross set with diamonds," and the gentleman described the relative position of the stones. "It was lost either in the Academy of Music last night, or on the way to or from that place."

"Johnny's coat was off in a twinkling, and, with a rap at the stitches which confined his treasure, he took it out and put on his coat again. "I s'pose this is it," he said, handing it to the gentleman. "I wanted to keep them shiners awful bad," he continued. "They'd 'a' set me up in business, them shiners would, but you see I couldn't get to be such a offscouring as that, though I have been trying to be a thief all night long. If I was your folks," he went on, "I'd get a stronger string to hold them shiners, for fear they'd be gone for good and all next time."

"What is your name?" the gentleman inquired, as the lad, with his cap in his hand, stood modestly before him.

"John Resney," the boy replied.

"Have you a father and mother?" was the next question.

"Nobody, yer honor, but myself."

"Which would you prefer to do, Johnny," the gentleman next inquired; "go into business or go to school?"

"Why, I should rather go to school, ten to one," said Johnny, "but there ain't no show for that."

"We will see," said the gentleman. "Will you come into my office, Johnny, until I see what is best to be done?"

"Yes, sir," replied Johnny, the tears starting to his eyes.

"I shall want you to go home with me in an hour or two, and give my wife her diamonds, and see what she thinks of you."

"All right," said Johnny, brushing away the tears. "Anything to do now, yer honor?"

The following Sunday Johnny went to the Mission school for the last time, and in such good clothes that Miss Lee hardly knew him. The grateful boy told his teacher what had happened, and concluded as follows:

"I am going away to school to-morrow, and if I've got the learning stuff in me I can go to college; but, Miss Lee, if it hadn't been for you and God I should have been a offscouring all the days of my life."

The King of Burmah

The news that the King of Burmah has made a military demonstration on our frontier with a view to frightening Great Britain into certain acts of reparation seems rather ludicrous. The King's army is said to consist of two bodies, the one 750, the other 300 strong, and the attitude of the troops is represented as arrogant and insolent in the extreme. It is easy, however, to understand that the Burmese may think otherwise. The Government at Mandalay has no practical experience of our prowess and is notoriously ill-informed as to our resources. For a long time past our most important representatives have been the steamers which for purposes of trade have plied the Irrawaddy. On almost the last occasion of the reception of Englishmen by Theebaw he dwelt upon the commercial advantages thus afforded in a manner which showed that he regarded them as our chief titles to his consideration. Then the abortive attempt of Prince Nyoungoke, while it has flattered the vanity of the troops which overthrew him, has correspondingly lowered us in his esteem. For it was generally believed in Burmah, absurd as it may seem, that the Prince escaped from our territory not only with our connivance, but by our assistance; and further, that we look to him to accomplish that conquest of Theebaw, which we dared not attempt. With all these considerations in view it is easy to see that the so-called insolent attitude of the Burmese troops may appear to them quite justified by facts. Whether they will proceed to blows is another matter. The report that when Theebaw has got up his re-enforcements he will send a messenger to demand an indemnity from the British Government is reassuring, for it points to no immediate outbreak of hostilities. Our answer will probably be in the negative, under the circumstances of the threats which accompany the demand, though it is not pleasant to reflect that in several respects Theebaw is in the right and we are in the wrong. We saved Nyoungoke from the exterminating wrath of the King, and then we allowed him to escape from our Territory and raise an insurrection in Burmah. At this moment he is a prisoner in Calcutta, so that we have twice balked Theebaw of his revenge. Had the request for an indemnity been preferred diplomatically it would perhaps have been polite to have acceded to it.—[Pall Mall Gazette.]

HOT BEARINGS.—It has long been known that sulphur cools a hot bearing, but the reason why is doubtful. Von Heeren states that the fine metal dust formed when a journal runs hot, and which acts strongly upon both journal and bearing, forms a sulphide with the sulphur. This compound, which grows soft and greasy, does not cause any appreciable amount of friction. Sulphur and grease, in combination, are in regular use on board the steamers of the North German Lloyd's.

A Memorable Ride.

Twenty-five years ago the favorite social festivity of the autumn months in the Delaware valley was the "apple-cut." The dried apple entered largely into the store of things laid up for winter, and from time out of mind, the custom of inviting a party of young persons to come on a certain evening and aid in preparing the fruit, had prevailed among the farmers of the valley. There was one rule at the apple cuts which met the warm approval of every country beau. The girl who "pared and quartered" the smallest quantity of apples in a given time was bound to give a kiss to every swain present. The "old folks" used to say that the rule was a bad one because every girl seemed to strive to see how little she could do. After the evening task was ended came the feast, and after that the fiddler. Then was merriment till the small hours, to the lively measure of the "Arkansas Traveler," "Money Musk," "Fisher's Hornpipe," "Downfall of Water Street," "McLeef's Reed," and kindred favorites. It was seldom that these rural routs ended before the cocks were crowing in the barn and daylight came admonishingly over the eastern hills. Once, in the rare age referred to, a grand apple-cut was to be given by a rich farmer, who lived eight miles down the valley from Milford. He had several charming daughters, and his house was at all times a center of attraction. Among those invited to the apple-cut were Frank and "Bud" Wells, of Milford. Bob was afterward a prominent member of the Pennsylvania Legislature. Both "laid out" to attend. The day came, and when the boys began to make their preparation to start, they were unable to obtain a horse or wagon in the village. Every horse and wagon was engaged. Frank and Bub were in a dilemma. Eight miles over a hilly road was a long way to walk, and to miss the apple-cut would be something they would never cease to regret. The father of the boys was an undertaker who had a one-horse hearse with a seat in front with just room enough for one, and room inside sufficient to receive a coffin snugly. The horse that the old gentleman drove to this vehicle was out of town.

There was only one horse in the village that was available, and that was a gray mare belonging to a neighbor. This mare was known as "The Tearer." She had the reputation of being the highest and strongest kicker in that region. To harness her it was necessary to get in the haymow above her and drop the harness on her with a pitchfork. The harness once on her, it was comparatively safe for a person to climb over the manger and buckle it. Then the mare would submit to being hitched to the wagon. But there was no telling at what moment she would think it incumbent on her to lift her heels in the air.

"Frank," said Bob, "we've got to hook the Tearer to our hearse, or stay home."

"Tearer and hearse it is, then," said Frank, "for I'm going to that apple-cut!"

By a back door they got into the barn where the Tearer was kept. Before they reached the manger with the harness she had kicked several boards off the side of the barn. After they dropped the harness on her back she cooled down. They led her around to the shed where the hearse was kept and hitched her in safely.

"I'll drive," said Bob.

There was no place left for Frank except inside the hearse. There was room only for him to lie at full length. Away they started for the apple-cut. As they drove out of town people wondered who was dead, that took Bub Wells and the hearse out of town at that time of day. The old mare was a good "goer," and she rattled the hearse along the Dingman road at a lively pace. When they reached the Raymondskill bridge, three miles from Milford, Frank, unable to change his position inside the hearse, called out:

"Bu-u-u-b, ain't you tired o' drivin'?"

"Not a bit," Bub shouted back. "I tell you the Tearer is a ripper. G'lang!"

And away she went, faster than ever. Frank was jolted up and down with every motion of the hearse, until he hardly had breath or strength to make Bub hear him as he called out a mile further on:

"S-a-a-a-y, Bu-u-u-b, ain't you 'traid the mare'll k-i-i-i-ek you? Better let me drive a while, ha-a-a-dn't you?"

"There ain't no danger," replied Bub. "Don't feel anxious about me, for I understand the Tearer. Besides, it's chilly out here, and you'd better stay where you're comfortable. Get out o' this, Tearer!"

And she did. Up hill and down, smooth stretches of highway and rocky places, were all the same to her. By the time they reached the foot of the long hill this side of Dingman's ferry, two miles from their destination, Frank was almost in the last stages of suffocation, and nearly pummeled to a jelly.

"Bu-u-u-b," said he, through the front window of the hearse, "it's—too—cussed—mean—to—let—that—h-o-o-rse—pull—me—up—this—hill. I—want—to—walk. Let—me—o-u-u-u-t."

But the mare went up the hill like a shot. Seeing that Bub didn't intend to stop, Frank began to kick the door of the hearse out, so that he could back himself out and drop to the ground. When Bub heard the work of demolition going on behind, he thought it would be best to stop and give Frank a rest. A half-mile or so this side of Dingman's, where the apple-cut was to be held, the road begins a very decided down grade going toward that village. When Frank began to kick at the hearse door the Tearer was rapidly approaching this hill. Bob began to pull up on her and cry

"Whoa!" Her only response was a savage kick, without lessening her speed a particle.

"Bang!" went Frank's heels against the hearse door.

"Wh-o-a-a, Tearer," said Bub, beseechingly.

"Spat!" came the Tearer's heels against the dashboard of the hearse.

By the time the horse had reached the top of the hill Frank had burst the door open and had got his legs out of the hearse. The mare was going so fast that he was afraid to drop to the ground, and he was unable to draw himself back into the hearse.

"Whoa!" shouted Bub, fiercely, as though to frighten the mare into obedience.

"Whiz! bang!" she replied with her heels, and the dashboard cracked. Bub crept up on the roof of the hearse, and got astride of the narrow vehicle. Half way down the hill the mare gave a kick and put both hind feet through the dashboard of the hearse. But she went right ahead on two feet, and Bub reined her up in that condition before the farmer's door. The girls and boys came running out. The lights from the house were full upon the new comers. Frank dropped from the inside of the hearse and Bub climbed down from the top. The Tearer stood still, with two legs on the ground, and two fastened in the front of the hearse. The boys cut the dashboard away from heels, and led her under the shed. They had a pleasant night, but Frank went home in the stage on the next day. Bub got the hearse home and housed safely before daylight. On the following morning his father said, innocently like:

"I didn't hear any thunder last night, but somehow lightning played hob with that hearse o' mine after I went to bed."

A Man in a Thousand.

A story is told of Hon. Charles B. Farwell, Congressman-elect from the Third district, which goes to prove that there is such a thing as gratitude and that even in politics all is not utter selfishness and lust for power. This will strike the average worldling in the light of a revelation, and doubts may arise as to the accuracy of the statement, which, however, will be removed on learning the fact upon which the extraordinary assertion is made.

Several years ago, when Mr. Farwell was serving a Chicago constituency in Washington, a seedy young man called on him one bitterly cold and windy morning. He was thinly clad, and the pinched expression on his face betokened privation, pain or suffering. The visitor introduced himself as Herman Hansen. He said he was a Swede that he was out of employment, and that unless he could obtain assistance he and his wife must starve. He said they had pawned all their clothing excepting what was on their backs, and had sold all of the household effects upon which money could be raised. Everything was gone and they were entirely destitute. The young man's appeal touched Mr. Farwell's heart and he gave him \$50. Hansen was overwhelmed with gratitude. He had not expected any such amount and was astonished beyond measure. To prove that he was not an impostor he stated the real object of his visit, which was to ask Mr. Farwell to use his influence to get him employment as sail-maker in the navy department. This Mr. F. did, and soon afterward Hansen was transferred to the African squadron or some other far distant post of duty. The circumstance had passed entirely from Mr. Farwell's recollection, but one day, while the campaign was in progress, he received a letter from the person in question, in which the writer, who was then into a theological school a hundred or two miles distant, volunteered to come to Chicago, his home, and work among his Swedish acquaintances for the election of his former benefactor. Mr. Farwell wrote him that his services would not be needed, and thanking him for the interest he was taking in the election, thought no more about it.

Two or three days after the election Mr. Farwell was met at the door of his store by a smiling young man, who extended his hand and shook the proffered congressional digits warmly. "I suppose you do not know me?" said the stranger. "Yes, I do though," replied Charley, after a moment's scrutiny. "Your name is Hansen. I remember you very well."

"I received your letter," continued Hansen, "concluded to come up anyway and work for you among my countrymen. I have been in the city for two or three weeks, and am on the point of returning to my school. I merely called to extend to you my hearty congratulations, thank you again for the great favor you once conferred upon me and mine." With this the warm-hearted Swede again shook Mr. Farwell's hand and bidding good-bye went off. It is difficult to say which was the happiest of the two at that moment, Hansen at the opportunity he had enjoyed of proving his gratitude in a substantial manner, or Mr. Farwell at the unexpected and unusual exhibition of unsolicited friendship on the part of one for whom he had years before done a kindness. Such little episodes do much to light up the pathway of the men of the world.

There was a large boiler of scalding water over a fire in the yard and several black inps playing near it. Suddenly a shrill voice was heard from inside the shanty: "You Gawge Washington keep away from dat ar biler. D'rectly you is gwine ter upset de biler all over yerself, and yez will be fuster one to say, 'Twant me, mammy.'"