

Yes, of course it was dreadfully rash
But I just thought I'd show Mr. Thomas
How to play, if the game was for cash.

"Would I walk on the breezy veranda?"
"O, thank you"—now, Nell, you can guess
How it all came around, and imagine
That moment of choking distress
When I said, seeing Tom through the window,
"Indeed, sir, you—that is—why—yes."

So it's all coming off in October;
I am having my trossieu from Worth.
He is nice, Nell, and perfectly solid,
And a man of respectable birth;
But, somehow—that is—well I don't know—
I'm the wretchedest girl upon earth.

—Scribner's Monthly.

"CHARGE IT."

"I wish I had some money," said Harry Morrel, in a wistful way.

"What could you do with it?"

"Oh, spend it. I'd buy taffy, or something else may be. Why can't I have some pennies every week? Don't you know Charles Durkee does? Couldn't I have two?"

"That doesn't seem unreasonable for a beginning," said Mrs. Morrel. "Will you be contented with two, though?"

"Yes indeed," Harry answered, beginning to jump up and down. "Because often I go a week and don't have one. Unless you meant to give me more," he added, hastily; "I'd like to have three."

"Very well, you shall have three. You love to share everything too well to run any risk of making yourself sick with what is left. I'll give them to you now, only remember that it is only three a week, and that you must plan how to do the most with them."

"Oh, you loveliest mamma!" Harry said, with a choking hug, and then ran down to tell grandfather of his good fortune.

The next morning Harry called at Bob Field's little store near the school house, and, after a great deal of thinking, decided upon the purchase of a stick of wintergreen candy. The stick seemed so small that he hesitated, and Bob said:

"Well? You want something else?"

"I'll take half a cent's worth of peanuts and half a cent's worth of raisins," Harry said, putting the other penny at the very bottom of his pocket. It never would do to spend all three the first day.

"That ain't no way to trade," said Bob; "I don't do business that way."

"Then I'll have all peanuts," Harry said, so cheerfully that Bob changed his mind, and counted out thirteen peanuts and four raisins.

"Just for once," he growled; "and don't you let on."

Like other people before and since, as time went on, Harry found it difficult to live within his income. "Treating" was so pleasant, and three cents did so little toward it. Harry longed for more, but a way came out one day to him as he went with grandfather into the grocery.

"Charge it on my bill," said Mr. Burton, as he went out.

"Charge it," repeated Harry, climbing into the buggy. "You always say that, grandfather."

"Not always," said Mr. Burton; "for I pay the bill once a month. Charging means that he writes in his books what I owe him until I am ready to pay. It is more convenient, because sometimes I have not the money with me; but it is generally best to pay as you go."

Harry sat quite still. Why should he not have a bill and let Bob "charge it"? Grandfather often gave him pennies, and he could save them and pay all at once. He would tell mamma the moment he got home. No, he wouldn't either. He'd try it first and see how it seemed, and then tell her.

Harry might have known there was something not quite right when he was not quite willing to go at once to her, but kept still, thinking he would call it a secret and enjoy telling it after a while. So next morning he went into Bob's and looked about. Fresh dates, altogether too good to do without in the window, and he said at once:

"Five cents' worth o' dates, Bob," adding as he took the sticky little bundle, "you may charge 'em, Bob. I have 'nt any pennies this morning."

Bob looked doubtful a moment. Then, sure that Mr. Burton would pay said, "All right," and Harry ran off.

That very evening Uncle John drove over from Cornish and gave Harry a five-cent piece, and the small debtor, who had been a great deal worried through the day over his morning's work, went to bed happy. Bob was paid next day and more dates bought, and then, seeing some fresh lemon drops, one cent over was charged on Bob's slate.

So it went on. The bill grew slowly but surely. Harry sometimes catching up, but oftener not, and hardly realizing how surely, until one morning Bob, with a very sober face, handed over a dirty slip of paper.

"I can't read writing," said Harry, uneasily. "What is it?"

"It's your bill, boy. High time you paid up!"

"How much is it?" asked Harry, faintly.

"Twenty-eight cents, and you'd better pay to-day, because I want all the money I can get in."

"Well I'll pay you pretty soon," Harry said slowly, but his heart sank within him as he turned away and walked down the road.

"He's a plucky one," said old Bob to himself. "He hasn't got a cent, but he wouldn't let on if he was flogged to make him. I wonder what he'll do about it."

Harry walked on until he came to the wood-path, into which he turned, and went on till he came to an old log near a spring, over which grew a clump of alders. He sat down here and began to think. Twenty-eight cents! What would his mother say, and grandfather, too? How long would it take to pay at three cents a week? Harry thought it out slowly. Nine weeks and a little bit of another! Would old Bob wait? The school bell was ringing, but he could not go there. How was he to learn a spelling lesson or a table when over and over in his head, seeming to say itself, he heard: "Twenty-eight cents! Twenty-eight cents!"

"I hate an allowance! I hate it!" Harry said passionately, throwing himself on the ground and beginning to cry. "I wish I hadn't ever had one! What shall I do? O dear, what shall I do?"

Down the wood path came a tall figure, with hands clasped behind and bent head. It was Mr. Osgood, the village minister, who very often walked here, and who stopped now in surprise as the sound of sobs fell on his ear. He looked for a moment, then went on softly, sat down on the log, and said: "Harry!"

Harry sprang up with a cry. Then seeing who it was, ran right into the kind arms he had known ever since his babyhood, and sobbed as if his heart would break. Mr. Osgood waited until he was quieter, then said gently:

"Now, Harry, boy, what is it all about?"

"I hate my allowance! I don't want to have an income!" began Harry, incoherently. "I'm in debt awfully. I never can pay it, not until nine weeks and a day, and Bob'll put me in prison, may be. What shall I do?"

Little by little the privately much astonished Mr. Osgood heard the whole story, and smiling in spite of himself, as Harry looked up pitifully, said:

"There are two things to be done; it seems. First to tell mamma; then to think of some way of earning money to pay the debt."

"Then you don't believe Bob will want to put me in prison?" Harry said.

"Not at all. But you must pay him just as soon as possible, and I think I know a way. We will go and see what mamma thinks of it. On the whole, Harry, I'm rather glad you had this trouble."

"Glad?" repeated Harry. "How could you be?"

"Because I think you will hardly want to run in debt to anybody again. To do it when you don't know any way of paying is almost as bad as stealing, though I know very few people who think so."

Half an hour later, Mrs. Morrell looked up in surprise as she saw Mr. Osgood and Harry coming up the steps. Harry told his story in a very low voice and with a very red face, while Mr. Osgood walked around the garden with grandfather, coming back when the confession was ended.

"I am very glad it is no worse," mamma said. "Earning the money to pay your debt will be the only punishment you