

**Offie Downs of Omaha.**

BY MARY BOSWORTH HENDERSON.

Here's a hero, Offie Downs,  
Tell of him in all the towns;  
Wheresoe'er our children gather, in their  
schools or in their play.  
Soldiers, room! a comrade small  
Lists to valour's trumpet call;  
Hears it with a heart uplifted, leaping,  
yearning to obey.

Little lad he is at school,  
Learning well himself to rule.  
There five hundred march together when  
he beats upon the drum.  
Not a child but knows his place,  
Proud that he can keep the pace,  
When child Offie taps his signals, and  
from every room they come.

Months of school have passed away;  
Now has dawned his trial day.  
Fearfully the cry of "Fire!" is ringing  
through the startled place.  
Frightened children clamour loud,  
Struggling, trampling, roughly crowd,  
While each teacher beckons helpless with  
a pale, despairing face.

Dominant o'er all the din,  
Hark! familiar sounds begin,  
Offie beating loud and louder, but with  
rhythm true and strong.  
Children hear and start upright,  
Firmer habit rules their fright,  
Finds their places in the line, and leads  
them orderly along.

Does he not in battle stand,  
Courage making strong his hand?  
Hundreds to that measure moving, all  
are marching safely out.  
Offie breathes with stifled breath,  
Nearer creeps the fiery death;  
On his drum they find him fallen, hear  
him where the people shout.

Oh, they shout and laugh and weep,  
When he wakes from that death sleep;  
Wondering looks upon his master's tears,  
and knows his mother's kiss,  
Then a city's love and pride,  
Compass him on every side,  
And the blessing of his loved ones brims  
his cup of perfect bliss.

Here's a hero, Offie Downs,  
Tell of him in all the towns,  
Wheresoe'er our children gather, let them  
hear the gallant tale.  
Honour has a noble roll,  
Write his name upon her scroll,  
Duty's servants over all the earth bid  
little Offie hail!

**SHOW YOUR COLOURS.**

BY C. H. MEAD.

I was riding on the train through the  
eastern section of North Carolina. No-  
thing can be flatter than that portion of  
the country, unless it be the religious  
experience of some people. The rain was  
pouring down fast, and, for a person so  
inclined, not a better day or place for the  
blues could be found. Looking out of the  
car windows brought nothing more in-  
teresting to view than pine trees, bony  
mules, and razorback hogs. Groups of  
men, white and black, gathered at each  
station to see the train arrive and de-  
part. Each passenger that entered  
brought in more damp, moisture, and  
blues.

Two men at last came in and took a  
seat in front of me. Shortly after, one  
of them took a bottle from his pocket,  
pulled the cork, and handed the bottle to  
his companion. He took a drink, and the  
smell of liquor filled the car. Then the  
first took a drink, and back and forth the  
bottle passed until at last it was empty  
and they were full. Then one of them  
commenced swearing, and such blas-  
phemy I never heard in my life. It  
made the very air blue—women shrank  
back, while the heads of men were up-  
lifted to see where the stream of profanity  
came from. It went on for some time,  
until I began talking to myself. I always  
did like talking to a sensible man.

"Henry, that man belongs to the devil."  
"There is no doubt about that," I re-  
plied.  
"He is not ashamed of it."  
"Not a bit ashamed."  
"Whom do you belong to?"  
"I belong to the Lord Jesus Christ."  
"Are you glad or sorry?"

"I am glad—very glad!"  
"Who in the car knows that man be-  
longs to the devil?"  
"Everybody knows that, for he has  
not kept it a secret."  
"Who in the car knows you belong to  
the Lord Jesus?"  
"Why, no one knows it, for you see I  
am a stranger around here."  
"Are you willing that they should  
know whom you belong to?"  
"Yes, I am willing."  
"Very well; will you let them know  
it?"

I thought a moment and then said:  
"By the help of my Master I will."  
Then straightening up and taking a  
good breath, I began singing in a voice  
that could be heard by all in the car:  
"There is a fountain filled with blood,  
Drawn from Immanuel's veins;  
And sinners plunged beneath that flood  
Lose all their guilty stains."

Before I had finished the verse and  
chorus the passengers had crowded down  
around me, and the blasphemer had  
turned around and looked at me with a  
face resembling a thunder cloud. As I  
finished the chorus, he said:  
"What are you doing?"  
"I am singing," I replied.  
"Well," said he, "any fool can under-  
stand that."

"I am glad you understood it."  
"What are you singing?"  
"I am singing the religion of the Lord  
Jesus."  
"Well, you quit."  
"Quit what?"  
"Quit singing your religion on the  
cars."

"I guess not," I replied. "I don't be-  
long to the Quit family; my name is  
Mead. For the last half-hour you have  
been standing by your master; now, for  
the next half-hour I am going to stand  
up for my Master."

"Who is my master?"  
"The devil is your master—while  
Christ is mine. I am as proud of my  
Master as you are of yours. Now, I am  
going to have my turn, if the passengers  
don't object."

A chorus of voices cried out: "Sing on,  
stranger; we like that."

I sung on, and, as the next verse was  
finished, the blasphemer turned his face  
away, and I saw nothing of him after  
that but the back of his head, and that  
was the handsomest part of him. He  
left the train soon after, and I'm glad to  
say I've never seen him since. Song after  
song followed, and I soon had other  
voices to help me. When the song ser-  
vice ended, an old man came to me, put  
out his hand, and said:

"Sir, I owe you thanks and a con-  
fession."

**"HE CALLED ME MR."**

BY ESTELLE MENDELL.

Bill Johnson was the keeper of one of  
the very lowest rum holes in the city of  
B—. His stand was on the old canal,  
and was a terror to all good citizens.  
The Christian people of the different  
churches had, time and again, tried to  
hold services there on Sabbath after-  
noons—standing on a moored canal-boat  
—but headed by their leader, "Bummy  
Bill," as he was called, the rough crowd  
broke them up, and for some time now  
the work had been abandoned, and Bill  
pronounced hopeless.

One day the young man in charge of  
the mission department of the Church  
walked down old Canal Street and was  
so wrought upon by the terrible things  
he saw and heard, that he resolved, God  
helping him, some thing should be done.

Seeing the crowd about Johnson's, he  
thought he would drop in and talk it  
over with them.

"Good-morning, Mr. Johnson," said the  
young man, with a most cordial hand-  
shake, "I have come to see if you will  
help me to arrange for a meeting here  
Sabbath afternoon? We will have some  
good singing, a short talk, and—"

"Say, that's just what I will, mister,"  
interrupted Bill, with a look of pride, "for  
you're the first man what ever called me  
mister, and I'll lick anyone as dares to  
interfere," and he gesticulated by way of  
emphasis.

The meetings were a success, and  
"Bummy Bill" became not only Mr. John-  
son, but a blessed Christian brother in  
the Church.

Remember that however low your  
brother or sister may sink, the spark of  
divinity is still in the heart somewhere.  
Let the erring one know that you recog-  
nize the divine in them rather than the  
evil. It will awaken their better natures.

**AN ALL-NIGHT SCARE**

Young Englishmen visiting the United  
States have as many absurd and amusing  
experiences as Americans have when in  
foreign countries. The story is told of  
an English traveller who had been  
assured that west of the Missouri River  
the entire country was infested with  
bears, some of which were so bold that  
they came into the towns.

He stopped in a Kansas village, and in  
the evening started out for a walk. The  
stores were closed, but the moon was  
shining brightly. He rambled about the  
place for a couple of hours, and started  
down the business street for the hotel.  
Suddenly he saw before him on the side-  
walk a big bear, sitting on its haunches,  
with open mouth and paws extended,  
awaiting his coming.

In a moment he was on top of a porch  
crying for help, but no one heard him,  
and the bear sat and watched him.

All night long he stayed there, trem-  
bling for fear Bruin would climb the post,  
but comforting himself with the idea that  
it was too small to be used by a bear.

At daybreak some men came along, and  
one of them wheeled the bear back to the  
doorway with the remark: "I wonder  
who put that sign in the middle of the  
walk."

The tourist descended from the porch  
without detection, and had he not subse-  
quently enjoyed the story so much that  
he told it himself it would never have  
been known.—Washington Star.

**ACTION OF THE RAIN.**

The rain falling on the rocks sinks in-  
to every crack and crevice, carrying with  
it into these fissures surface material  
which has been degraded by the weather,  
and thus affording a matrix sufficient to  
start the growth of vegetation, and after-  
ward to maintain the plants. The fibres  
and roots of these plants, bushes, and  
trees thus brought into life, growing and  
expanding, act as wedges to split up the  
surface of the rock, and to commence the  
process of wearing away. From this  
quality of destruction a large class of  
plants derive the name of Saxifrages, or  
rock-breakers, from their roots penetrat-  
ing into the minute fissures in search of  
water, and so assisting in the process of  
disintegration. In winter the water col-  
lected in the hollows and crevices be-  
comes frozen, and expanding as it  
changes into ice, acts like a charge of  
blasting material in breaking up the  
rocks. The pieces thus detached become  
further disintegrated by frost and  
weather, and, being rolled over and over,  
and rubbed against each other as they  
are carried away down the mountain  
currents, are ground gradually smaller  
and smaller, till from fragments of rocks  
they become boulders, then pebbles, and  
finally sand. As the mountain stream  
merges into the river the pebbles and  
coarse sand continue to be rolled along  
the bottom of the channel, while the  
argillaceous particles and salts become  
mingled with the water, and flow on with  
it either in suspension or solution.—  
Longman's Magazine.

**HIS MANNERS.**

He was a pretty little fellow, but it  
was his manners, not his looks, that at-  
tracted everybody—clerks in the stores,  
people in the horse-cars, men, women  
and children. A boy four years old, who,  
if anybody said to him, "How do you  
do?" answered, "I am well, thanks," and  
if he had a request to make, he fit of  
friend or stranger, began it with  
"Please." And the beauty of it was that  
the "Thanks" and "Please" were so  
much a matter of course to the child that  
he never knew he was doing anything at  
all noticeable.

"How cunning it is," said a showy  
woman to his mother, as they sat at  
dinner at the public table of a hotel one  
day, "to hear that child thank the  
waiters, and say 'please' when he wants  
anything. I never saw anything so sweet.  
My children have to be constantly told if

I want them to thank people. How well  
you must have taught him, that he never  
forgets."

"He has always been accustomed to it,"  
said the mother. "We have always said  
'Please' to him when we wished him to  
do anything, and have thanked him. He  
knows no other way."

The showy woman looked as if she did  
not need any further explanation of the  
way in which habits are formed.

Probably you do not.

**The Divine Childhood.**

BY MARGARET J. PRESTON.

Did angels hover o'er his head  
What time, as Holy Scripture saith,  
Subject and dutiful he led  
His boyhood's life at Nazareth?

Was there an aureole round his head,  
A mystic symbol and a sign,  
To prove to every dweller there,  
Who saw him, that he was divine?

Did he in childish joyance sweet,  
Join other children in their play,  
And with soft salutation greet  
All who had passed him in the way?

Did he within the Rabbi's schools  
Say Aleph, Beth, and Gimel 'mid  
The Jewish lads, or use the tools  
At Joseph's bench as Joseph did?

And sometimes would he lay his head,  
When tired, on Mary's tender breast,  
And share the meal her hand had spread  
And in her mother-love find rest?

We marvel—but we only know  
That holy, harmless, undefiled,  
In wisdom, as in stature, so  
He grew as any mortal child.

All power, all glory hid away  
In depths of such humility,  
That thenceforth none might ever say  
They had a lowlier lot than he?

And since the Child of Nazareth  
Set on it thus, his seal and sign,  
Who—till man's sin hath marred it—saith  
That childhood is not still divine?

**KIND-HEARTED HAL.**

Hal is a very unselfish boy. He never  
pouts and frets if he is roused in the  
morning to build the kitchen fire before  
his last nap is finished.

There are boys, you know, who never  
come out of dreamland without grumb-  
ling. Hal is not one of these. He knows  
that it belongs to boys to help their  
mothers.

Hal never runs away to school and  
leaves his sisters to pick their own way  
through the snow. He always tries to  
make a path for them.

Hal carries his unselfishness farther—  
he is just to his dog.

Carlo is a stout little fellow, and can  
easily draw the sled on which Hal likes  
so well to ride.

Hal allows him to do this very often,  
but after he has had his ride, he says:

"Now, Carlo, it is only fair that I  
should take my turn pulling the sled.  
The boy should not have all the fun, and  
the dog all the work. You shall ride  
half the time, and I will draw you."

We are sure we all think this is fair  
play, and we like Hal all the better be-  
cause he looks out for others' happiness  
as well as his own.

A little three-year-old had often  
watched with much interest his grandpa  
stirring his coffee before drinking; and,  
one morning, thinking that grandpa had  
forgotten to do this, he said, "Why don't  
you wind up your coffee, grandpa?"

"I want to ask one more question,"  
said little Frank, as he was being put to  
bed. "Well," acquiesced the tired mam-  
ma. "When holes come in stockings,  
what becomes of the piece of stocking  
that was there before the hole came?"

"Papa," said a little boy to his father,  
"are not sailors very small men?" "No,  
my dear. What gave you such an idea?  
Some sailors are very large, powerful  
men. What makes you think they are  
small?" "Because," said the little fel-  
low, "I read the other day of a sailor  
going to sleep on his watch."