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The Story of a Sin.

(‘Friendly Greetings.’)

‘There, that’s right!’ said the cashier to his assistant as they were closing their quarter’s account, ‘I am glad the balance has come so readily.’

But the account was not right. The keen eye of the young assistant had detected an error of ten pounds, but this, if pointed out, might entail on them some hours’ work, for they must get the balance before they went

He had entered it in the regular way as being received, so that if he kept the money it could never be brought home to him.

His face flushed as he thought of it. He needed the money badly enough just then, and it would be mortifying to have to confess his careless forgetfulness. So he pushed the money into the corner of his desk and covered it with some papers. And there it lay for a week—for a fortnight. Then that account was gone into and balanced, and seemed right. It was just as if the money

cursed the accident that had put the money in his possession. He prayed also that God would help him. He even began to save up a little money towards paying it back, though it was hard work on a small salary.

But week after week went by, and still nothing came out. He began to feel more easy. It would not be found out this time. Conscience was not so pressing, and he would pay it back somehow, at some future time, and thus escape from the inner shame of being a thief. And as months passed it became clear at last it would not be discovered. The evidence of his guilt was buried in his own breast. It was one of the undiscovered crimes. He almost forgot it himself at last. But he never stole again.

Some years passed away. He became the cashier. Though young, he was looked upon as competent and trustworthy, and filled his position with credit. But one day he had to return home ill, seriously ill. And the question came to him, Was he about to die? And then there rose up steadily before his memory this one act of transgression—a theft, unconfessed, unatoned, going before him to judgment. Till now he had forgotten it. But it rose steadily before his conscience, it was an agony to bear worse than the pain of body. How could he face God with this sin? It marred his life.

He recovered, but he still carried about an uneasy memory. A dozen times a day, at home and at work, his conscience reminded him of his sin. He was assured the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin. He prayed, but conscience stood unappeased.

‘He that confesseth and forsaketh his sins shall find mercy.’ Did that mean he must go to his employers and slur his own name by a confession? No, surely! It was confession to God that was meant. He would not keep the money. He would send it back with interest and compound interest, anonymously.

But the compromise did not answer. It did not bring peace to his heart. Conscience was not satisfied.

At last he yielded. He stood in his employer’s office, and confessed the sin to which he had yielded years before, told him the circumstance, and how he was trying now to find God’s pardon, and this unconfessed sin stood in his way. He asked forgiveness of the old wrong.

His employer listened, took his hand, and said kindly, ‘Say no more about it, Mr. Phillips; I understand it all. It need never be mentioned between us again.’

And now he could look up to God, he had done all he could to set the wrong right. He had surrendered his pride, he had confessed the wrong in true penitence of heart, and the Spirit of God now sealed on his soul the living pardon of our Father.

‘He that confesseth and forsaketh his sins shall find mercy.’—J. Scott James.

A Grumbling Child.

One mother asks:—‘If one has a persistently grumbling child, never satisfied, grumbles at getting up, at going to bed, at breakfast, at everything all through the day and night, what can a mother do? I have tried to show her how displeasing this is to



A DOZEN TIMES A DAY HIS CONSCIENCE REMINDED HIM OF HIS SIN.

home that night, and he was anxious to get away.

So he did not point it out. Still, after he was gone, he became concerned about it, for it might lead to serious complications, and he determined carefully to go into the matter at the first opportunity. The next morning the cashier was not well, and this gave him the chance he wanted. He had not far to look. The error was all in one account, and, curiously enough, there lay ten sovereigns in his desk from that very account, which he had accidentally forgotten to pay in. It was a careless blunder, which he should be ashamed to confess, but which exactly balanced the mistake on the other side.

was intended for him—and he needed it so much. At last he put it into his pocket, and after awhile paid it away.

He paid his debts; they were not very much, but he had the uncomfortable feeling of a wrong-doer—a thief. He flushed crimson at times as he thought of it. Never again would he go beyond his salary. Supposing it possible that it should be discovered—and his memory told him of instances in which accident had brought such things to light—what would be the result?

He thought of the policeman and the dock, and the shame of being marched out of the office where he had held his head so high—a thief. He cursed himself for a fool. He