



'JUST OUT.'

YOUR OWN OPINION.

BY ELEANOR A. HUNTER.

The subject of this talk was suggested by a little chat which Jack had with his mother the other day. He had been telling her of something which had occurred during the mid-winter examinations which were just past. Jack had given his next neighbor three dates for his History paper.

'But, Jack,' said his mother, 'was that honorable?'

'Why, mother,' answered Jack, 'all the fellows do it.'

'That's not the point,' she said gently, 'do you think it was right?'

'Harry would have thought I was awfully mean if I hadn't.'

'Would you have accepted such help?'

Jack wiggled a little. 'Well,' he admitted, 'Harry did give me one little hint in my Algebra. Turn about is fair play.'

'Of course,' said his mother, 'Professor Simpson knew all about it.'

'Of course, he didn't,' returned Jack a little impatiently. 'Mother, you don't understand. All's fair in love and war, and this is war. The professors are on one side, and we are on the other. They know how it is. If they catch us, all right; but if we can beat them, why we come out ahead.'

'And do all the boys in your class act on that principle?'

'Yes,' answered Jack, 'I guess they do, at least I don't know any one who does not.'

'Now, Jack,' said his mother looking at him seriously, 'I want you to forget about the other boys, and their ideas, and I don't want you to think whether you like or dislike your masters: but judging by the standard which the bible gives, I want you to tell me whether you think you have acted honestly.'

Jack was silent for a minute, and then he said slowly.

'Well, no.'

Some time since I was talking with a young man who was in business in New York, and he told me this story. He was in the wholesale nail trade, and the price of nails was so low that the nail dealers were losing largely; and it was decided that something must be done, so all the merchants agreed not to sell nails below a certain reasonable price, and they were free to get as much more than that as they could. The head of the firm with which my young friend was connected entered into the combination, but gave private in-

structions to his clerks to sell all the nails they could at a trifle less than the price agreed upon. The consequence was that while the other firms held to the agreement faithfully, this man for some weeks sold more nails than any other dealer in New York, and he made a good deal of money.

'But,' said I to the young man who told me this narrative, and who laughed at the sharp practice, 'do you think that was right?'

'Well,' he answered uneasily, 'of course it was not right in the abstract, but Mr. B— made a lot of money, and one expects double dealing in business, it is an understood thing. A man can't make money without it.'

'Do you know what you are saying?' said I. 'You are saying that there is no firm in New York which is prospering that is making money honestly.'

'Oh, I don't mean that,' said he, roused at last, 'but it is a fact that there is lots of deceit practised in business.'

'And you,' said I, 'were beginning to think that perhaps it does not matter so much after all.'

I once spent about two years in a town where nearly all the young men were in the habit of playing games of chance for money. I was talking to one of them about it.

'Oh,' said he lightly, 'all the fellows do it. I would look queer if I didn't.'

'But do you think it is right?'

'It is my own money that I lose.'

'Whose is it that you win? You get something for nothing, then, don't you? Is that honest? You know that some of the young men in this town have been ruined by betting and gambling; perhaps you have helped to do it by playing with them; at any rate you have had the experience of playing games for money. You know the intense excitement of it and the temptation of it. Now honestly, looking at it from all sides, do you think it is right?'

He was an honest boy at heart; he flushed, but he looked me in the eyes.

'No,' said he, 'I don't.'

It is much the easier way for a boy to think as the other boys think, to accept their standard of morals, and to do as they do, but a boy will surely come to grief if he allows himself to drift like that.

The only way in which you can become a strong and noble man is for you to think over every question of morals for yourself, being quite uninfluenced by popular ideas, and then when you have formed your own opinion abide by it, careless of what any

one may say. Take the bible for your standard, be governed by your conscience, and you will never go far wrong, though you may sometimes find yourself standing quite alone; but never mind that. Better stand for the right with Christ by your side than to be wrong with the whole world for company.—*Christian at Work.*

HER TWENTY-DOLLAR GOLD-PIECE.

Thirty years ago the pastor of a young Brooklyn church made an earnest appeal to his people for subscriptions to build a new house of worship. The enterprise, for some time in full movement, had stopped soon after the breaking out of the Civil War.

One of the hearers of that appeal was a gentleman from New York, who spoke of it that Sunday evening at his boarding-house table.

Among the boarders was a young lady who had once known the Brooklyn pastor, and had once received from him some slight service.

She was a school teacher, who had her

living to earn, and had then no special interest in religious work; but her mind and imagination dwelt on the story of the church effort across the river with unusual emphasis. Gratitude, novelty, and something of a feeling perhaps more sacred than either decided her to make a donation.

She went to Brooklyn and gave the pastor a twenty-dollar gold-piece. At first he refused to keep it, because he knew the amount was more than she could well afford to give; but she insisted, and told him it was the first time she had ever given anything to a religious object. It was a new experience to her, and she felt her reward for the act in the happiness of doing it.

The piece of money was kept, and its story told—and so well told that the discouraged congregation took heart from it, renewed their efforts, and soon raised funds enough to complete the building.

To the young lady that contribution was the beginning of a moral earnestness that changed and ennobled her own life, and helped and blessed many other lives.

She became a regular attendant at the church she had assisted, and there commenced her Christian childhood. To-day the two sons of herself and her Christian husband are Christian young men soon to graduate, it is expected, with high college honors, and both active members of a western city church.

The poor school teacher's twenty-dollar gold-piece has lived its usefulness over and over again in the eloquent words of the man who received it, and its story has imparted new enthusiasm and faith to many struggling congregations. Doubtless it will go on doing good for many a year to come.—*Youth's Companion.*

A REMARKABLE COLLECTOR.

A boy in Portland, Me., many years ago, was deeply interested in collections, and after taking up several things, minerals, stamps, and the like, he settled down to make a collection of shells.

At seventeen he had developed such keenness of observation as to discover a new species of shell, and presented a paper before the Boston Society of Natural History on his discovery. In a few months he again discovered a new species that had been classified as the young of a known species. A great English naturalist visiting this country, was taken to visit this boy and see his collection of shells. He was so interested that on his return to Boston, he spoke of the collection to Professor Agassiz, who invited the collector to Harvard as a special student.

That boy is known to the world as Professor Morse. He went to Japan as Professor of Zoology in the University of Tokio, and while in Japan began studying the beautiful pottery of that artistic nation, until he had become an authority, and was made Judge at the Chicago Exposition. Professor Morse attributes his knowledge of Japanese pottery to the habits of close inspection acquired in his boyhood when making his collection of shells.—*Outlook.*



'A SCRATCH PACK.'

From the Painting by C. Larton Barber.