

JACK BRANDON'S CERTIFICATE OF CHARACTER.

"We must hurry, or we won't get a chance at the nuts. The Ninth Grade boys are going over to the grove in a body, and if they get there first we might as well stay away." This from George Brandon who was getting over the ground as fast as his short legs would carry him, while his cousin kept pace with him without any effort.

As they swung along the street in the outskirts of the village, talking of the day's promise of a good time, and wondering if the Ninth Grade boys had started yet, they came to a sudden halt. They were opposite a queer little house, old and weather-beaten; windows placed irregularly for convenience rather than outside appearance; wooden eavestrough; a lean-to and a scraggy grape vine climbing up towards the roof; a tangled mass of weeds and flowers that had escaped the early frost grew along the fence.

As the boys came opposite, a window was hastily thrown up, a man's head and shoulders were pushed out, and a voice called out: "Hallo! Say, you young fellows, are you going to the village?"

"No!" replied George, moving forward. But Jack said:

"Hold on; let's see what's wanted."

"We haven't time!" persisted George.

"We'll take time!" Turning to the man, he said: "Can we do anything for you, sir?"

"Well, I'm that stiff with rheumatism that I couldn't hobble to the village and back in half a day. Miss Green wants her shoes for Sunday, and I've run out o' thread and can't finish them no how; tho't I get some. I thought maybe you'd just as soon get me some; boys like to run about. My! I wish I was a boy!"

George demurred, and explained that they were in haste, and were not going to the business street of the town, and, anyway, did not expect to return before two o'clock. "We could bring the thread then, if that would do," he said.

The old man shook his head. "There wouldn't be time to finish the work after that, and Miss Green, she don't like to be kept waiting. Besides, I promised her, and I never broke a promise yet," and the old voice faltered as the head drew back. He was about to shut the window, when Jack spoke up:

"I'll do the errand, sir, if you'll tell me just what you want and where to get it."

The old face brightened. "Bless you. You'll save the old man's reputation for keeping his word, and Miss Green won't be kept from church to-morrow."

In spite of his cousin's protest, Jack waited for his orders, and cheerfully undertook one or two additional commissions. It is true that he was late at the grove and the Ninth Grade had been before him, so that the nuts were scarce, and George, with his own bag full, said, tauntingly:

"If you hadn't been such a greeny as to turn an errand-boy for old Snitz you might have had as many. You got nothing for it, and lost your chance here."

"You are mistaken; I did get something."

"You did. What?"

"Thanks, and a promise to do me a good turn," returned Jack, quietly.

"That was good pay! Likely you'll get into the President's Cabinet on the strength of his influence," exclaimed George, ironically.

* * * * *

"Well, Snitzer, at it yet?"

"Yes, Judge; I'm allers at it!"

"Can you sew up a rip in my boot just now while I wait?"

"Reckon I can, sir, I ain't so very busy. The truth is, I kinder kalkerated to lay off this afternoon. I had other business on hand."

"Ah! how so?" asked the Judge, with a show of interest.

"Well, I have been writing out a certificate of character for a boy. You know about John Brandon's boy. He lives up to his Uncle Fred Brandon's now, but he wants to get a chance to make something out of himself, and I jast writ out a paper for him; maybe you'd like to look it over while I take the boot in hand?"

This is what Judge Cary read, written in a cramped hand, with some misspelled words:

"This certifies that Jack Brandon, son of the late John Brandon, is a polite, kind young fellow. He is kind to animals, helpful to the poor and helpless, honest, can reckon money correct, and has good temperance principles. He can stand ridicule, and can sacrifice his own interests without wanting to be known as a martyr. Anybody that wants this sort of a boy had better get hold of Jack Brandon."

"(Signed) Karl Snitzer."

"How do you know all this?" asked the Judge, when he had spelled out the scrawl.

"How do I know? Well, I'll tell you, Jedge." While the rip in the boot was rapidly closing, the old man told of his interview with the two Brandon boys. "Now, that Jack took off his hat while he talked with me, so I know he is a polite boy. He stopped to pat the cat when she rubbed up against him, so I know he is kind to animals. He gave up his nutting party to do me a kindness, and didn't seem to think it was any great thing to do. He did my errands all square, and brought back the change, more than I expected, because some of the things were cheaper than I thought. So you see, I know."

"But what about the temperance principles? How do you know that?"

The old man hesitated, then answered, slowly: "Well, Jedge, I suppose I'll have to tell you. Being you are so stiff yourself on the question, I hated to own up. You see, I asked the boy to bring me a bottle of liquor, and he just stood up and said: 'Sir, I can't do that. Anything else you want I'll do, but I neither taste nor handle.' My! I am ashamed. Well, he got all I sent for. Wouldn't take pay, either. I tell you Jedge, if you want a boy he's the one for you."

A few days ago Jack Brandon was admitted to the bar, taken in to partnership with Judge Cary. Looking over some old papers, in view of the new arrangement, the Judge came across one over which he smiled, then handed it over to his partner, saying:

"I think I never showed you this. Perhaps it may interest you."

Jack read it with a puzzled expression, then, as light broke, he said, with feeling:

"He did serve me a good turn."

It was Jack's "Certificate of Character."—Temperance Banner.

THE SACRED HEART AND A MILLIONAIRE.

A little trait in the character of an American millionaire, who recently visited England, came within our notice, says the London Tablet; and seems to be worth a record. From an inner coat-pocket this gentleman brought forth some precious documents for reference, when in the midst of them was seen a little picture of the Sacred Heart. It was a cheap little oleograph which nestled in a bank that could buy up an English county; and perhaps a look of surprise on the look of a spectator, who happened to be a Catholic, drew from the man of affairs a sentence in explanation. "You may," he said, "be surprised to find a Protestant like myself bearing about with me a Catholic emblem. It happens that among the thousands of people in my employ, one—a young Catholic girl in a very humble position—came to me some years ago, told me she was praying for my conversion, and asked me to carry this holy picture about me. My dear, until I die, I promised her. So it has been here ever since, and I would rather lose most of the contents of my pockets than lose that now ragged memento of a simple girl's disinterested piety in my regard."—Michigan Catholic, Detroit.

THE "MONEY-GRABBING" PRIEST.

From the Ave Maria. The "money-grabbing" priest, of whom we read and hear sometimes has at last been discovered in Mississippi. A clergyman writing from that State says:

"Father Bernard O'Reilly, my neighbor, is obliged to teach school for a living. Several of our priests are not able, financially, to attend

our annual retreats unless the bishop pays their travelling expenses. Most of us never see more than two or three hundred dollars per annum. Some of our priests never see the place they call home more than once a fortnight."

The somnolent, ease-loving priest, growing bulky with luxuriant dinners, has also been discovered—this time in North Carolina. Father Price, of Nazareth, gives this account of the daily life of himself and his fellow-missionaries:

"We rose at about 5 o'clock and devoted the early part of the day to ourselves—meditation, Mass and breakfast. This latter was furnished by a neighboring family for a few cents, and consisted of coffee, sour bread and a little fat meat. About 10 o'clock we were ready for work, which consisted in the first place of arranging the chapel for service, sweeping it out and making it look tidy. If any persons came to see us or passed us, we talked to them about religion, etc."

The account then tells of visiting the sick of all denominations, of praying, singing, preaching, catechising and conversing with individuals. It continues:

"These conversations kept us busy till supper and the night service. At this service we always had the question box, with singing and praying as before, and a lecture, with after conversations to all who remained. It was always 10 o'clock when we were able to retire. We slept—some of us in a neighboring house, and several of us in the shack (the little wooden chapel) on the benches, using a cassock, coat or mission case for a pillow."

But this riotous living was not to be endured in that community; a virtuous person, a match and an oil can, a burning shack and the mission ended. But it will be resumed, and the honest bigot who set fire to the little chapel will one day be a pewholder in it. Which is an Hibernicism as well as a prophecy.

ASKING FOR CHARITY.

"Ask the Z's," said one of a committee of young women, who were organizing a little entertainment for charity. "They are so religious and so rich, they will be sure to help."

"Not at all," interrupted another member of the party. They are the sort of good people who always disapprove of everything, and are on the defensive the moment you ask a favor of them."

There is an immense difference in people in this respect. Some meet a request for aid so kindly that even if for some good reason they cannot consent, their refusal gives no discomfort; while others, whether they help or not, make the applicant feel for the moment as if she had committed a crime to ask them.

"No one realizes," said a charitable woman, to whose zealous work many a splendid charity owes its existence, "how hard it is to ask people for help, and how your courage fails when you see the cold look of distrust that suddenly clouds over a conventionally pleasant countenance when you state the object of your visit. It is not the refusal that wounds—it is the manner. Sometimes it is the very people who make your task so hard that are the most generous patrons of the charity in the end, and you realize this, and for the sake of the object to be attained try to overcome the sense of personal humiliation. You cannot help feeling this, although you know you are asking for others, and giving the rich an opportunity to help the poor in the right direction. Nevertheless, the sense of being a mendicant on such occasions is strong, and you therefore feel a deep sense of gratitude to those who appreciate your situation and act nicely toward you."—Catholic Columbian.

HOME.

"Home," says Robertson, in his sermons, "is the one place in all this world where hearts are sure of each other. It is the place of confidence. It is the place where we tear off that mask of guarded and suspicious coldness which the world forces us to wear in self-defense, where we pour out the unreserved communication of full and confiding

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