

a moral certainty, there is a power in it somewhere, and—

"Yes," broke in Harry, "there's power in it to change Fred Johnson from a jolly, merry, sociable chum into a miserable, long-faced, moping parson. Why, it's a misery to be where he is now. A feller can't use a word his mother smacked him for without getting a black look or a lecture. And then, when he might take a spell, he goes working on like a nigger. Bah! He ought to be shot!"

"But," laughed Adams, "you can't blame a man for going into anything with all his might, instead of half-doing it, can you?"

"No, but that's just what I think is the case with him. He's half doing it, and, between you and me and the post, I believe he's been crawling round Weatherby somehow."

"Then he ought to be black-balled," said Harry savagely.

"And I should be one of the first to black-ball him," said Will, a dangerous light in his eyes, "if that proves to be the case. Anyhow, time will show what he is. But I'm off"—looking at the clock and going to the door. "Coming?"

"Half-a-minute," replied Houghton, who, as Adams, always punctual as the clock itself, disappeared, called for two more halves of bitter beer. After this he and Harry left the tavern, to arrive at the office ten minutes late, as usual.

When the members of a party, as, for instance, in politics, meet together and exchange ideas, they invariably part in a much hotter frame of mind than ever. So it was with these. All bore Johnson a grudge for robbing them of his, at one time, agreeable society; for becoming religious; and for having crept up above them into the position of second clerk. But especially was this the case with Houghton. He was of a vindictive spirit naturally, and when, added to this, we take into consideration the fact that some weeks previously—before his conversion—Johnson had given Houghton a sound thrashing, the quarrel having sprung from a drunken brawl, it must not awaken surprise if the feelings with which the latter regarded the other were venomous. And these feelings were none the less deadly because he concealed them from all others—almost himself as well. Nor was he sufficiently manly to crush them, instead of allowing them to grow day by day.

This being so with Johnson's fellow-clerks, that young man had a very miserable afternoon on this particular day. Houghton led off with the first shot of chaff, and this example was quickly followed by the others, until Fred's excitable nature could no longer endure it without retorting. This, of course, made matters worse. Still by a great effort, Fred kept his temper down, and this, strange to say, caused that of his assailant to rise. It pleased him to see his cutting jibes enrage his victim, but when the latter assumed a quiet, confident tone, he became savage.

"I suppose," he said, at last, at a loss for something that would go home, "you couldn't do anything wrong now—oh no! of course not, and, consequently, if you were to see others doing wrong you couldn't bear it—you'd have 'em punished, wouldn't you?"

"Suppose, now," pursued Houghton, encouraged by the half-smile on Will's face, "I were to appropriate something of the governor's; wouldn't you feel it your duty, as a good young man, to tell him of so naughty a thing? Come—wouldn't you?"

"Decidedly—it would only be right," answered Fred, thoughtlessly and hotly, little guessing that the other was laying, with consummate cunning, a trap for him, and less, that he had so easily fallen into one.

At this answer Houghton turned with something like triumph to the others. "You hear what he says? He'll round on us if we are not careful."

Before any more could be said, Mr. Watson, the chief clerk and manager, entered—a fact which meant that work was henceforth to be the first object in the office, at least during his presence.

That evening Fred hurried over to Brixton, where dwelt a tender heart that beat fast at the thought of his coming. As these two strolled through one of the by lanes in that sweet suburb, Fred told Minnie of his good fortune, and at once began, after the manner of hopeful youth, building castles in the air.

"And it's through you, dearest, that I have obtained this splendid chance," he said,

exultingly. "If God had never brought you to me I should never have been a Christian, and so, certainly, should never have been advanced. Now I can feel at peace and go to work like a man. I felt before as if tied down—nothing seemed certain. I might have got discharged at a moment's notice, seeing what sort of master I have—though, happily, he hasn't, of late, shown such tantrums as I can remember. Still, he might have broken out at any moment—and then, farewell to that bright dream which now, thank God, bids fairest to be realized. Yes, dearest, that best of days shall not now be long in coming—that day when you and I shall be one."

"But, dear," returned Minnie, looking up into his face with loving reproof, "you must not make too sure. God may have some heavy trial in store for you yet, bright as things seem now."

"Then he will give me strength to bear it." Though Fred spoke thus wisely he did not fully realize what he said. Perhaps this was because he believed that no trial was in store for him. Hope was too strong in his heart to allow any uncomfortable misgivings there. Nevertheless, there was a trial before him—one that would test his Christianity to the utmost. He little thought, as he strolled along, full of brilliant schemings for the days to come, that at that very moment the storm was gathering.

A close observer might the next morning have seen a peculiar smile on Houghton's features when he entered the office. During the forenoon, too, it might have been noted that he gave utterance to several peculiar phrases about "being once more free," "getting rid of the incubus," and such like. At the time Fred took no notice of these things, but afterward they came before his mind with all their abominable meaning.

At eleven o'clock to the minute Mr. Watson took his place. As he did he said, gazing hard at Fred, "Mr. Johnson, Mr. Weatherby desires your presence in his office."

"Very good, sir," and Fred rose to go. As he passed Houghton's stool, that worthy whispered, "Don't round on us yet, Johnson. We hav'n't had the luck to find any bank-notes."

For a minute Fred stared at his tormentor like a statue. The words, strengthened as they were by the speaker's evil smile, struck on his ear with the force of a death-knell. Then he was gone.

It took but two minutes to get from one office to the other. But those who have experienced some sharp, sudden shock—some sudden revelation, meaning for them something as dreaded as death itself, can guess how much fearful agony can be compressed into that infinitesimal space of time. Such alone can imagine what crowds of thoughts will throng through the brain in that interval, and they only can guess the feelings of Fred Johnson as he went to what seemed his doom. Those few words recalled, in a flash, a day, not long ago, when he was still one with those who now hated him, when, seeing Mr. Weatherby's pocket book on the floor of the office, he had picked it up and, being driven to extremities by betting and drinking and other excesses, had extracted therefrom some bank-notes to the value of twenty pounds. No one knew of this—not even Mr. Weatherby himself, for he had not missed the money, as the pocket-book had been left where it lay. But also in that flash of thought came to Fred the memory of his having, in a moment when drink made him reckless, made a confidant of Houghton in the matter. Till now he had forgotten this, though he would never have believed anyone so utterly cowardly as to inform against him. In that flash, too, came the many promptings he had felt, since being a Christian, to go like a man to Mr. Weatherby, confess what he had done, and undertake, if allowed, to pay back the money. And at the heels of these recalled promptings came, like jeering spectres, his irresolution and fear and procrastination. It was a moment of agony.

What should he do?

The question burned itself into his throbbing brain. There was no reply to it. All he could understand in that horrible moment was that his bright, sweet dream, so lately built up, was to be dashed ruthlessly to the ground. Minnie! How that name cut his heart! Could he take her—could he allow her to take him, with that fearful brand upon his forehead, "thief?" Never! Would he go insane? Would this be too much for him?

But at that instant came a beam of hope. "Where was the proof of his having done this thing? Who could accuse him and bear out the charge with evidence. None. There was no evidence. He had only to deny it, and all was well. Yes! This once—one sin, to save him—could make no difference!"

He did not stop to think further, but opened the door and stood before Mr. Weatherby.

If he had had any doubt about the object of his being sent for, it would have been instantly dispelled by a glance at the merchant's face, which was black as a thunder-cloud.

"Read that, Johnson, and tell me if it is true."

Fred read the short note handed to him. It was addressed to Mr. Weatherby in confidence, and had no signature. The contents did not surprise him at all, as they did but disclose the incident of the pocket-book.

When he had done, the man looked up, tried to gaze into the keen, determined grey eyes of his master with a glance which should be as much like innocent wonder as possible. The denial was formed in his brain. But there the devil's power stopped—his tongue refused to act.

Like a glimpse of a glorious world all but forfeited, came before Fred's mind's eye a vision of the pure and sinless world in which he had elected to live, and he said, with a deep grief, "Lord Jesus, forgive me—help me!"

And there and then he was helped. Like the face of a conqueror new from the victory seemed the face of Fred as he mastered his temptations, and it was with fixed resolve to face everything that he answered, "To my shame, sir, I confess it is too true. I came here with the wish to deny it, but, thank God, he has helped me to be true to him. I became a Christian since I did that, and have often half-resolved to tell you all, but I had made myself poor by excesses, and knew not how to repay the money, which I intended to do. I have suffered more than I can tell, but, if, sir"—he went on, seeing that the other quietly waited for him to finish—"you will forgive me and grant me time I will repay all, and you shall have no cause to regret your mercy."

Mr. Weatherby was a man of few words. When Fred had done speaking he said, the frown on his brow a shade less black, "Go back to your desk, Johnson, and come here to me at this time to-morrow."

If he tried to describe the young man's feelings as he obeyed he should fail. All sense of fear had vanished from his breast, and he instinctively felt that all would be well. He trembled to think of the terrible gulf on the brink of which he had so lately stood; but his heart rose rejoicing at the help that had been given him in his moment of danger, and with this rejoicing came the sweet exultation that follows the Christian's victory in a battle for God and truth.

That day was one of strange looks and whispers on Houghton and Harry's part. Adams seemed to know nothing. But it was a day of comparative peace for Fred; though, like a wounded snake, it dragged its slow length along. But it passed at length; and the next came, bringing Houghton, as well as Fred, before Mr. Weatherby.

"I accept your offer, Johnson," was all he said to that individual. Then, turning to the other, he continued, "You will find another situation, Houghton, in a week. When next you write anonymous letters disguise your hand-writing more effectually. You are both at liberty."

Fred Johnson afterward had the extra delight of knowing that Mr. Weatherby and Will Adams had both been studying him, and, through finding him to be true grit—a genuine epistle of Christ—had learned to read the truth in him, and, what was better, to love it.—E. J. Axton, in the *General Baptist Magazine*.

"I SEE IT!"

In a certain city, a laboring man leaving a saloon saw a costly carriage and pair standing in front, occupied by two ladies elegantly attired, conversing with the proprietor. As it rolled away he said to the dealer: "Whose establishment is that?" "It is mine," replied the dealer, complacently. "It cost \$5,000; my wife and daughter cannot do without it." The mechanic bowed his head a moment in deep thought, and looked sad; with the energy of a man suddenly aroused by some startling flash, he said:

"I see it! I see it!"

"See what?" queried the dealer.

"See where for years my wages have gone. I helped pay for that carriage, for those horses and gold mounted harness, for the silks and laces and jewellery for your family. The money I earned, that should have given my wife and children a home of our own, and good clothing, I have spent at your bar. My wages and those of others like me have supported you and your family in luxury. Hereafter my wife and children shall have the benefit of my wages, and by the help of God I will never spend another dime for drink. I see the mistake and cure for it."

Who else will "see it" and work for themselves and their loved ones, instead of toiling to buy silks for rumsellers' wives and carriages for rumsellers' families?—*Selected*.

SALOON BOYS.

BY MRS. M. A. HOLT.

"There goes a saloon boy—just look at him!" a friend said to me while we were walking along the streets of a village in which I was spending a few days.

"Yes, I should have known that he was a saloon boy if you had not told me," I answered, glancing at the boy in question.

He was evidently not more than fourteen years of age, and yet he was smoking a cigar, and appeared more like a rough bar-room man than a boy. His bold, reckless manner at once revealed the fact that he had been a "saloon boy" for some time, for these signs of vice can not all be gained in a day.

"Too bad! He might be a fine boy," my friend observed.

"Saloon influences will ruin any boy," I answered.

Saloon boys will always grow up into saloon men, and these are never honored, respected members of society. Our criminals and drunkards come out of this class. Boys, beware of saloons!

DRINK IN CORK.—A large placard was lately posted in Cork, by friends of temperance there, saying to Irishmen: "While the dark cloud of poverty hangs over many a home in our land, and the pangs of hunger are so keenly felt by the families of those who have no employment, it is well to investigate the cause of this want, and apply a remedy which may be lasting and tend to elevate the people from this unhappy state." This placard reminds the men and women of Ireland that "five thousand pounds (\$25,000) every week is spent in Cork alone on drink," and it adds: "Many of you are robbing your pockets, keeping your homes miserable and unhappy, depriving your children of proper clothing, destroying your reputation as citizens, by the habit which has stolen on you of drinking whiskey, porter, and other intoxicating beverages." Of course such a warning cannot ameliorate the pangs of present hunger, but its lesson for the future ought not to be lost.—*National Temperance Advocate*.

THE ROSY CHEEKS and swollen frame of the wine-bibber or the beer-drinker is no evidence of health. A slight abrasure of the skin has in some cases proved fatal to them, thereby proving that they have poisoned their blood and hastened their own decease. "After having treated more than three thousand cases in the fever hospital of Liverpool, Dr. Macrorie gives it as his opinion that the constant moderate use of stimulating drinks is more injurious than the now and then excessive indulgence in them." "Water," says Dr. Johnson, "is the only fluid which does not possess irritating, or at least stimulating qualities; and in proportion as we rise on the scale of potation, from table-beer to ardent spirits, in the same ratio we educate the stomach and bowels for the state of morbid sensibility, which, in civilized life, will sooner or later supervene."—*League Journal*.

APPLES, GRAPES, AND GRAIN.

Eat them and you'll find them good,
Nothing better for your food;
Drink them and you'll poison find
For the body and the mind.

Eat them, you'll be well and strong,
Happy as the day is long;
Drink them, soon with footsteps slow
Staggering on your way you'll go.

Come then, friends, come one, come all,
Listen to our temperance call,
Pure cold water ever'll be
The best drink for you and me.