

## NOW

Rise! for the day is passing,  
And you lie dreaming on;  
The others have buckled their armor  
And forth to the fight are gone;  
A place in the ranks awaits you,  
Each man has some part to play;  
The past and the future are nothing  
In the face of the stern to-day.

Rise from your decays of the future  
Of gaining some hard-fought field;  
Of storming some walled fortress,  
Of winning some glory yet,  
Your fate has been decided,  
Of honour, God grant it may!  
But your arm will never be stronger  
On the field so great as to-day.

Rise! if the past detains you,  
Her sunshine and -torms forget;  
No chains so unworthy to hold you  
As those of vain regret;  
Sad or bright, she is lifeless forever,  
Cast her phantom arms away,  
Nor look back, save to learn the lesson  
Of a nobler strife to-day.

Rise! for the day is passing,  
The low sound that you scarcely hear  
Is the enemy marching to battle—  
Arise! for the foe is here!  
Stay not to sharpen your weapons  
Or the hour will strike at last,  
When from dreams of a coming battle  
You may wake to find it past.

— Adelaide Ann Proctor.

## Our Story.

## AN OFFSCOURING.

"Well, yes, ma'am, I have stole?"  
"Why John?"  
"You asked me, didn't you?"  
"Yes, I asked you!" the mission teacher replied, a sad, almost disgusted expression on her sweet, young face.  
"What did you ask me for, if you didn't want me to tell you? I could 'a lied!" the boy went on in a stolid sort of a way, and yet with a ring of feeling in his voice.

"No, you couldn't, Johnny," the teacher answered with a smile, "because you promised, you remember, that you would always tell the truth to me."

"Well, I didn't go back on it, did I?"  
"No, Johnny. Have you any objection to telling me how often you have taken things that didn't belong to you?"

"Mebbe I couldn't remember them all," the boy replied, "but I never lifted anything very partikeler. Once when the old woman where I hang out got sick, and cried a blue streak for oranges, and nobody had any money to get 'em, I asked the old cove that kept the grocery to trust me for a couple till the next day. He wouldn't do it, and that night I stole six from him."

"Why, Johnny!"  
"Why didn't he let me have 'em, then?" the boy went on doggedly, "I'd 'a paid him, 'cause I said I would. Anyhow the old woman got well, off them oranges."

"Then you are not sorry you took them?" the teacher inquired.

"Well, the old woman had to have them oranges, and somebody had to get 'em for her."

The teacher's face was very grave, and as her companion looked up he saw the fire in her eyes, a sight which had a serious effect upon him.

"Don't make me tell you any more, please ma'am," he said, dropping his eyes, while his face flushed scarlet. "I ain't nothing but a 'offscouring' anyhow, and I ain't no good to fret about what I do. I was kinder dragged into this place, else I'd never 'a bothered you."

"What name did you call yourself?" the teacher inquired. "I didn't understand you."

"Granny Leeds always said I was a 'offscouring,' and so I am."

"What is an 'offscouring,' John?"

"Oh! the leavin's of something that ain't no good."

"Granny Leeds, as you call her, was very much mistaken, and you are very much mistaken about yourself, Johnny," the teacher replied. "You are not an 'offscouring' but God's own child, and He is giving you a chance to make something of yourself. How much do you think the things are worth that you have taken, in all, Johnny?"

"Them oranges was worth four cents apiece when I took 'em, that's twenty-four, and then two loaves of bread I lifted for two fellows that froze their feet last winter, and a mackerel to make the bread go down. It's awful tough to eat bread without nothing with it, and then a base ball that was worth fifty cents, and all them things would make neat hand to a dollar. I don't remember anything else now."

"Well, John, I shall give you a dollar, and I want you to go to these places and pay for all those things."

"Then I'll have to own up," the boy interrupted, in his bewilderment relapsing at once into slang.

"Wouldn't you feel better to confess, Johnny?" the young lady inquired, not a little troubled at the effect of her words. For a moment the boy seemed lost in thought, and then lifting a frank face to his companion, said, "I ain't never felt partikeler bad about any of them things 'cept the base-ball, and that I could 'a done without, but if you say so, Miss Lee, I'll give the whole thing away, only as I ain't lifted anything lately and don't mean to again, they would always suspicion me, and make me out a thief when I ain't no such thing. Don't you think 'twould do, ma'am, if I dropped the money in them places so they'd be sure to find it?" If you don't think so I'll blow the whole thing if it takes me to the Island."

"What will you do, Johnny, if somebody needs bread and oranges, and you haven't any money to buy them with?"

"That's a sticker, ma'am. I dunno."  
"And it wouldn't be strange if something of that kind were to happen any-day."

"No, ma'am. There's something putty gen'rally to pay with the folks I know."

"Well, Johnny, I will tell you what to do," the teacher replied. "Here is my card, and when any of your acquaintances are in trouble I wish you would come directly to me; and if anything is amiss with you be sure and send a messenger. You had better come up to-morrow, anyway, Johnny, for I want to give you some warm clothes and then it will be easy for you to find the place next time."

Johnny hung his head. This kindness overpowered him, and not a word could he speak.

"I didn't mean to hurt you, Johnny," the tender-hearted teacher hurried to say. "You are willing I should help you, are you not?"

"I guess you had better let me git now, Miss Lee," the boy replied huskily. "You could knock me down with an eye-winker. You needn't worry about my remembering all you've said, but just now I'm all broke up."

"And I can trust you, Johnny?" the lady inquired.

"It's a go, ma'am," the boy answered, simply.

Miss Lee tucked a dollar bill in his hand, and Johnny hurried out of the building.

It took considerable tact and skill, as well as time, for the boy to satisfactorily manage the business which his teacher had provided the money for. For instance, the grocer from whom he had "lifted" the oranges, had sold out to another man, and Johnny was obliged to hunt him up. He was found at last, poor and ill, and the boy, without a moment's hesitation, confessed the theft and produced the money. "I guess I can make it thirty cents," he said, "and that'll be a little interest. If I wouldn't like to give

you five dollars then you may shoot me for a crow."

The ex-grocer was so surprised at Johnny's confession and subsequent generosity that he shook the boy's hand heartily and invited him to step in again soon, which the lad promised as heartily to do.

By nightfall these "back debts," as Johnny naively called them, were all settled, and then, after a scanty meal, the boy started out with his evening papers. About a quarter to eight he had sold out, and then, as fast as his fleet feet would carry him, he hurried to the neighbourhood of the Academy of Music to watch the people go into the building. It was opera night, and this was one of Johnny's greatest pleasures, and so, with his back to a lamp post, he gave himself up to the delight of watching the gay throng. Johnny wondered what it would be like to drive round in luxurious carriages and have plenty of money to spend on fine clothes. He thought of the bread and herring he had eaten for his supper, and tried to imagine what it would be like to have turkey and cranberry sauce every day. Every Christmas Johnny had turkey and cranberry sauce for dinner, and he knew from experience how nice they were. He had once ridden in an ambulance with a friend of his—a newsboy—who had been run over by an express waggon, and this was the nearest approach to a carriage ride Johnny had ever enjoyed. He wondered, as he watched these happy, gaily dressed people, why it was that some people had all they wanted while others were cold and hungry, and sometimes starved to death. This was not the first time Johnny had been perplexed with such thoughts, but they had never made him feel quite so uncomfortable as on this occasion. He called to mind the warm underclothing and fidy jacket and pants which Miss Lee had given him that day, and tried to comfort himself with the thought that there was one person, in the world, who cared for him.

There had been a heavy fall of snow that day, and as Johnny, still absorbed with his thoughts, started to cross the street, he saw something sparkle in the snow at the side of the crossing. There had been a rush of carriages, and a few had not been able to pull up at the curb. As he picked it up he saw that it was an ornament in the shape of a cross studded with diamonds.

Johnny knew they were "shiners," as he called them, as soon as he looked at them, so with his heart in his throat he tucked the precious jewel in his pocket, still holding it firmly in his hand. Johnny's ambition had been to start a coffee and cake establishment where newsboys could be entertained at low rates. For more than a year he had nursed this project and here was a chance to carry it into execution. There were nine stones in the cross. Disposing of one at a time to avoid suspicion, there was money enough to last him, "for years and years" he told himself. It puzzled him to know where he could keep the shiners, for there wasn't a soul among his acquaintances whom he dare trust with the secret. Not until he had crept into his poverty-stricken bed, with his treasure carefully hidden among the straw, did the thought occur that he ought to try and find an owner for it. Then followed a hard battle between the natural honesty of the lad and his very natural desire for creature comforts. The person who could wear a gold thing like that "chock-full of shiners," he said to himself, "must have money enough to buy more shiners." Here he was, cold and hungry half the time, with no prospect before him but to be always hungry, if not always cold; and here were these "shiners" which would set him up in business and give him a chance to help the boys. Johnny honestly wanted to help the boys. Why should he find the owner of this cross when he had nothing, and the owner had everything? This fight continued until it was time for the

lad to start out for his morning papers. All through the business part of the forenoon the battle still raged, and the newsboy's thoughts were so occupied with his new found riches that he almost forgot to attend to his customers. About half-past ten, as he crossed City Hall Park, he noticed a gentleman in earnest conversation with another gentleman, as he passed he heard the words "diamond cross," spoken Johnny slackened his pace and listened.

"The diamonds were all of the first water," the gentleman said. "It was a present to my wife from her father, and she is terribly cut up at the loss. I don't suppose we shall ever find it."

"You will advertise it, won't you?" his companion inquired.

"Oh, of course," the gentleman replied, "but more than likely it has fallen into dishonest hands, and unless the reward is made equal to the value of the diamonds we shall probably never see them."

When the gentlemen separated the one who was interested in the diamonds entered the City Hall, and after a little inquiry Johnny discovered that this gentleman held a very honorable office in the city department. After finding this out the lad took a turn round the Park to think it over again.

"Granny Leeds said I was a 'offscouring,' and Miss Lee says I ain't," he argued to himself. "If I keep these shiners Granny 'll be right and Miss Lee 'll be wrong. She said the Lord was giving me a chance to make something of myself. Well, now, the question is, am I or am I not an 'offscouring?' If I keep these shiners, I am, and if I give them up I ain't. Well, I ain't!" and with these words on his lips Johnny started for the gentleman's office. Nothing daunted, he entered, and presented himself at the desk.

"Some of your folks have lost something, ain't they?" he asked.

"They have," said the gentleman.

"Will yer honour tell me what it is like?"

"It is a gold cross set with diamonds," and the gentleman described the relative position of the stones. "It was lost either in the Academy of Music last night or on the way to and from that place."

Johnny's coat was off in a twinkling, and with a rip at the stitches which confined his treasure he took it out and put on his coat again. "I s'pose this is it," handing it to the gentleman. "I wanted to keep them shiners awfully bad," he continued. "They'd 'a set me up in business, them shiners would, but you see I couldn't get to be such a offscouring as that, though I have been trying to be a thief all night long. If I was your folks," he went on, "I'd get a stronger string to hold them shiners, for fear they'd be gone for good and all next time."

"What is your name?" the gentleman inquired, as the lad, with his cap in his hand, stood modestly before him.

"John Resney," the boy replied.

"Have you father and mother?" was the next question.

"Nobody, yer honour, but myself."

"Which would you prefer to do, Johnny," the gentleman next inquired; "go into business or go to school?"

"Why, I would rather go to school, ten to one," said Johnny, "but there ain't no show for that."

"We will see," said the gentleman. "Will you come into my office, Johnny, until I see what is best to be done?"

"Yes, sir," Johnny replied, the tears starting to his eyes.

"I shall want you to go home with me in an hour or two, and give my wife her diamonds, and see what she thinks of you."

"All right," said Johnny, brushing away the tears. "Anything to do now, yer honour?"

The following Sunday Johnny went to the Mission School for the last time, and