



Sandy Brown

LEAVES FROM MY DIARY.

(G. Jameson, in 'Sunday at Home.')

CHAPTER I.

His photo is before me as I write. 'A hardy little fellow'—undoubtedly. Keen, dark eyes, clenched fists, firm mouth: a man with a history.

The broiling June sun, flaming sheer down on slumdom, found me in The Open, a well-known east-end resort, spelling the legend on a crazy sign-board: A. Brown, Smith. From this hung a large key, to advise the ignorant that Sandy, the smith, could do a little to relieve those troubled with stubborn locks.

The workshop below being empty, I mounted the short outside stair where Sandy was presumed to dwell. Save for buzzing flies, all was still. Knocking at a door and waiting a reply, it was opened by a short, ill-clad, somewhat evil-looking man, who replied respectfully, if briefly, to my request for admission. He was too late, however, to shut the door, as my foot was already into the inch or two of space; and he accepted the situation.

'Very kind of you, mister; but the fact is, the wife's out, and the house isn't in very good order, and—'

'That's the very reason you should let me in.'

'Oh, well, if you like'—and my friend with the piercing black eyes made way.

That was a sad sight. Hardly a stick in the house; doubtless, with him of the 'Golden Three,' and the proceeds spent in drink. The man—Sandy Brown—stood trembling by my side, in sore straits through drinking, meditating suicide; four 'childer' huddled and played in a bed absolutely without bed-clothing, the ticking of the old bed literally filthy; opposite this, on the black fire lay, upside down, an old kettle with its 'stroup' or nozzle half broken off.

The children stared at me, then wept clamorously.

'Whisht! will you?' he growled.

Then, to me: 'The fact is, mister, the wife and I are drinking, and the childer are hungry.'

'What do you propose to do?'

'Oh, if I had a shillin' I would soon get food.'

'If I get you food will you stop the drink?'

'I will.'

'Follow me.'

We strode downstairs, he behind me a little—as if to save my reputation. Soon we were in the grocer's, next street.

'Give this man—how much do you need?—tea, sugar, bread, butter, and a bit of that nice boiled ham.'

'Now, look here, my man; get this ready at once, and I'll be down after you.'

He was off, like a shot, revealing to me, by a back view, his utter misery; wife's boots on—and such boots!

Paying the grocer and exchanging small talk took up a brief moment, and I was again in the house—to find my man gone!

Looking round in despair—'oh! this is too bad.'

'Where's your father, children?'

'Oot'—as I knew only too well.

'The fellow's off to drink my groceries'—and, in a trice, I was out of the house. We met in the lobby: 'Ah, where were you?'

'Next door, for spunks,' holding up some matches.

'Well, like a good fellow, hurry up the tea—take a good cup yourself—it will steady you. And give the bairns plenty to eat. I am going up into the garrets,

but will be down in a while. Tidy up things a bit till I return.'

'Thank you, sir. I'll try.'

CHAPTER II.

In two hours I returned. What a change! Floor washed clean, very clean. Bright fire burning, and on the 'hob' the paralytic kettle steaming away merrily in spite of its injured 'stroup.' Sandy himself more collected—trembling off him—though, of course, perplexed; for there, on a stool, sat his wife—evidently under thirty—sodden with drink, and very sullen.

Sandy and I had a long chat—a very serious talk indeed. His Bible knowledge surprised me by its volume and its accuracy. He talked of exegesis, too; and, rightly or wrongly, would have definite answers to puzzling questions. Then we got back finally to the personal matter; did he, or did he not, wish his life and outlook changed? Was he contented with this kind of thing?

Quick as a flash, eyes gleaming fire—'No! mister, I am not; and, with God's help, I'll soon mend it.'

'Stay, now, Sandy. Are you just talking? or, when I come to-morrow may I count on finding you determined to be done with the drink?'

'Well, mister, the fact is—it's easy for you to talk; you know nothing at all about it. It's this way, you see; when I meets my chums they says—"Have a drink, mate"; and the fact is, it's best to be honest—I dare not refuse. You may look—it's the God's truth I'm tellin' you, I daren't! Why, man alive! they would laugh at me, and ask if I was saved. Now, honest, mister, an' I'll leave it with yourself—what would you do in my place? Just think of the fun it would be to Tom and the fellows in The Open to hear that Brown was saved! It's best to be straight, mister—mind you, I don't deny but you're right; only you haven't my life behind you. It won't do.'

'Look here, Sandy! God has given you intelligence. You know how I found you. If you go on now, you sin against light; and, what is more, you are a coward!'

There was an ugly light in his eye, but I went on:

'You are a coward, Sandy. Tell me:—Will all the fellows in The Open save your soul? Are they not helping you to lose your life every day? They, too, are cowards—afraid of you, and you of them—I implore you to cast yourself on God, this very day, in penitence and tears. Play the man! Fear God only, and doing evil. The fellows will tickle you, of course—they'll soon stop that; and, later on, you may help them. And, as for drink, Sandy, you have had your last glass; touch it again you must never—No! Never!'

A long talk ensued, the end being that he promised absolutely to abstain. He has told me since that he was saved from temptation's power—later in that very evening—by the stamp of my foot on the floor, as I said 'No! Never!' He declares it made his flesh creep; though the whole thing is to me an utter blank. I remember nothing about it—but it nerved him.

With Mrs. Brown I talked for a little; and, then, after prayer, left—to call next day.

(To be continued.)

The Pennsylvania Railway company has adopted a rule prohibiting card-playing and liquor-drinking on its trains. A similar rule should be adopted by all railways. There is no excuse for such practices in public places, as they are offensive to the majority of those who patronize railway trains.

Expiring Subscriptions.

Would each subscriber kindly look at the address tag on this paper? If the date thereon is Oct., 1903, it is time that the renewals were sent in so as to avoid losing a single copy. As renewals always date from the expiry of the old subscriptions, subscribers lose nothing by remitting a little in advance.

Correspondence

LETTER TO THE TEXT-HUNTERS.

Dear Tinies,—This week I am going to give you just one text to find. Hunt it up in the book of Daniel: 'The people that do know their God shall be strong and do exploits.' Give the next verse, too.

FOR SCRIPTURE SEARCHERS OVER THIRTEEN YEARS OLD.

There was a man in the Old Testament whose name began with G., but after he had thrown down the altar of an idol he had another name given to him beginning with J. He was chosen by God to deliver his nation from their enemies. After certain signs by which he was assured of his mission, he gathered an army and selected his soldiers by a unique method.

1. Give the two names by which this man was called.
2. What enemies did he lead his army against?
3. What two signs did he ask for?
4. How did he choose his soldiers?
5. Give a summary of the rest of his career.

A BIBLE RIDDLE.

'We left our little ones at home,
And whither went we did not know,
We for the church's sake did roam,
And lost our lives in doing so.
We wandered in a perfect way,
With the wicked in full view,
To men we lived, to God we died,
Yet of religion never knew.'

You will see the solution in the sixth chapter of first Samuel. How many can find it?

Toronto, Ont.

Dear Editor,—I think the 'Northern Messenger' the most interesting paper I have ever read. I like the Correspondence Page best. I wrote you a letter once before, when I was in Vancouver, but I came to Toronto last summer. I go to school here, and I am in the third reader. My teacher is very nice. I like arithmetic, spelling, and writing best. I have one sister and two brothers, but I am the youngest of the family. Is any other little girl's birthday the same as mine, Easter Sunday?

NORA J. (age 9).

Blyth, Ont.

Dear Editor,—I see letters written by children to the 'Messenger,' so I thought I would write one, too. Mamma takes my brother and me to Sunday-school and to church. My teacher gives me the 'Messenger,' which I like to read very much. I am a little boy eight years old last 25th of July, and I am studying in the third book since last March. I also learn geography, Canadian history, grammar, literature and drawing. I went on two excursions this summer, one to the 'Model Farm' at Guelph, and the other to Kincardine, a beautiful town on Lake Huron, and I enjoyed myself very much. The friends that I visited gave me a beautiful cup and saucer with a picture on it, representing the fishing off Kincardine pier. The lake was very rough, and the captain of the ship said that we could not go out on the water. So I gathered pebbles and shells along the beach. I left Kincardine at eight o'clock, after a pleasant visit, and my uncle met me at the depot. I am invited to a harvest home picnic for the boys and girls around here.

WILLIAM J. P. S.

Flesherton.

Dear Editor,—I thought I would write to you, as I have not written to the 'Messenger' before, and I have not seen any letters from here. I am going to school, and am in the fourth book. I like it very much. I study reading, writing, arithmetic, geography and literature. Our teacher's name is Mr. R.; he has been teaching our school for fourteen years. We all like him very much. I have one brother and