

formed as to make the cards which bore the texts most attractive. Besides the texts which she first selected, she had printed some like the one seen at Nettie's, and a fourth one bore these words: 'Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord.'

Within a week she received orders for more texts, and the demand proved to be steady, thus increasing the scope of her work as well as her earnings.

She was looking at the text in Aunt Jennie's room, one day, as she sat chatting with her. 'Do you know,' she said, 'that I enjoy painting my texts better than any other part of my work. I try to do it all heartily, as to the Lord,' but this part of my brush work seems to be real work for Christ.'

A Pop-Corn Ministry.

(Rev. W. A. Bartlett, in Boston 'Congregationalist'.)

My friend, the philosopher, claims to understand human nature, and the other day, as we took our seats in the train, he remarked that the great majority of the race have no ambition.

'For instance,' he said, unfolding his paper, 'look at that pop corn man; you can tell from his cheerful tone of voice that he is satisfied, and that his highest ideal in life is attained when he has sold out.'

I made some feeble rejoinder to the effect that there were worse occupations than selling pop corn.

'Very true,' replied the philosopher, who dabbles in business and shines in society, 'but what an awfully narrow and unproductive existence!'

The philosopher then took an expensive cigar from his case and said that if I would excuse him he would go into the smoker.

After my friend had gone, a man in front of me turned around and said, 'I couldn't help overhearing your conversation, and if you will permit me I should like to tell you something about that pop corn man.'

'By all means,' I replied, not particularly relishing the prospect, as I wanted to read an editorial on the Philippines.

'I consider that man who peddles pop corn one of the best and greatest men in our city,' continued the stranger, emphatically.

'Indeed,' I replied, feeling sure now that I was to be bored by a 'crank' of the first order. Of all bores the train bore, who keeps you from reading or thinking, is the greatest.

'I will not encroach more than a moment on your time,' said the man, noticing, perhaps, a look of strained politeness on my face.

'That pop corn man comes from a good family line,' he continued. 'His grandfather was governor of —, but from my point of view the governor has as much reason to be proud of being the ancestor of my friend as he has in having this official progenitor.'

'This man's father was a minister, and served a little country church for thirty years. His mother was the salt of the earth, and when this boy was born she said he was a child of promise—God had made her sure of it. From the first the child was "set apart" for the ministry, and his disposition and character seemed to point that way.'

'When the boy was fifteen years old his father died and it was necessary for him to leave school to help provide for his mother and two other children. His father's salary had been somewhere between three and four hundred dollars, and the family expenses had been helped out by working a small farm.'

'Then the mother died, and without a word of complaint the boy assumed the add-

ed burden—and it was a tremendous struggle to take care of those children.

'The people of the place were poor, and while they were kind they had no opportunity to help much, except to give him odd jobs, chores and such like, with what pay either in money or stuff they could.'

'One winter before the mother died they had a hard time to get along, and while no one outside suspected it, there were days when there was nothing in the house to eat.'

'James, this boy, began to sell pop corn—he went from house to house, you know, and many bought it at first as a matter of benevolence, but the corn was so good that James created quite a demand. People said his was always just so, and somehow he could make it better than any one else.'

'Well, sir, it was wonderful what that fellow had to go through with. Sickness and all kinds of things took every cent he had and more. But he never seemed to lose his courage.'

'He gave his brother and sister a little start in life, and they are well to do. But there was no more show of his becoming a minister than the man in the moon.'

'By-and-by, when he had the younger ones started, he wakened up to the fact that he had been working too steadily in taking care of them to learn any trade or profession. He told me it was the darkest hour of his life when he was told that he was too old to begin a business. Nobody wanted him for a boy's place, and he was not competent to fill a man's. He says that the Lord showed him, after a night of praying, that if the corn business was good enough for one time it was for another. He says he hasn't had a doubt since.'

'One day I got him to tell me what he has told to few. He said that when he made up his mind to pop corn for a living he asked the Lord to ordain him for it—funny, wasn't it?'

'He made up his mind to preach the gospel by peddling pop corn. He determined to buy consecrated corn, the best grade. He would use only good butter, even if the profits were a little smaller. He would pop the corn as a religious work, and not a stale bag would he sell for fresh. Only a pop corn man knows how much that means.'

'Then he promised the Lord that he would call his corn in a cheerful voice—first, because he wanted people to know that he regarded his work to be as honorable as any other; and, second, to "hearten people up." He claimed that a cheerful tone not only helped business, but gave people courage. If it was to be the Lord's work, he said, it must do good.'

The stranger paused, and after a short silence reached for his paper, as if to read. But somehow I felt that the Philippines could wait. 'And then?' I asked.

'Does it interest you?' he questioned. 'To tell you the truth,' he said, 'my friend's history is in a way sacred to me, and I do not want to tell it to any one not in sympathy.'

'I should not feel satisfied unless I heard more,' I replied.

'He had some difficulty in getting permission of the company to sell on their trains. He called that his examination. But when word came to go ahead, he said he felt as a young minister might when passed by a council. He entered that first train as if he were going up the pulpit stairs, and he said to himself, "My mother's prayers are answered, the promise is fulfilled."'

'That first day two small boys were making a disturbance in a car. The passengers were disgusted at the screaming and fighting, and their mother was entirely discouraged. When James came through, saying, "Pop corn, pop corn, fresh buttered pop

corn," the boys made a dive for him, yelling like Indians, "Ma, get us some." James said he prayed that it might quiet them down and give their mother a rest.'

'Did it?'

'Yes, and when the two bags were empty—it was but a matter of a few moments—an old gentleman near by bought more in self-defence.'

'James always has a pleasant word when he thinks it will do good. Once a young woman got on the train, and there was a long box in the baggage car with her husband or some dear one in it. She sat with her handkerchief to her eyes, weeping. James took in the situation, and when he came into her car he said, "Pop corn," in a kind of sympathetic way, and after a while the girl got to looking for him to come through.'

'Once he rested his basket on the arm of her seat and said, in a low voice, "Cast thy burden on the Lord, and he shall sustain thee," and went on. It came to me in a roundabout way from some of her friends that it was the first real comfort she had received.'

Another time the train was late, and a lecturer, some great preacher, found he would not have time to get a lunch, so he bought pop corn from James. "I wish I could speak up as bright as you, my man," said this minister, who looked worried and tired. "We both have the same Lord, sir," said James.

'The next morning James read of the eloquent and "impassioned" speech made before a crowded house the night before by this same man. "He gave them some of the gospel of pop corn," said James, and when the preacher saw him on the return trip he kept shaking his hand and said: "If it hadn't been for your words and your good corn, my Christian friend, I should have been flat last night; God bless you."'

'But James doesn't calculate to do much talking or preaching. He says there is a great gospel of cheerful doing needed, followed by prayer, and the Lord will take care of the words.'

'The train waits at our station about four minutes, and James gets on at the front end of it. Very often he gives a bag to the train hands and conductor, who take it home, or munch it in the baggage car, and by the time he gets through the smoker, where the sales are light, the people are out and new passengers have taken their seats. One day a man who had stayed to talk came rushing through the car just as James was entering the door. He tried to get his basket out of the man's way, but the fellow ran into it and then turned fiercely on him and said: "Confound you and your confounded basket; why can't you get out of the way?'

"It was too bad," said James, kindly, "take a bag of pop corn to the children and call it square."

'The man was by that time nearly down the steps, but he hesitated and went back, put out his hand to shake and said: "It was my fault, and you're a gentleman." Then he took a bag of corn and threw a dollar in the basket and disappeared.'

'That's a gospel bag," said James, looking wistfully after the man. "Every kernel of it will do him good, and I shall have a thank offering."'

'But how do you come to be so interested in this man?' I inquired.

'Well,' said the stranger, slowly, 'I happen to be pretty intimate with the man who ran into James that day, and by the time I—I mean he—had eaten the last of the corn, and thought about the man who made it, he had come to the conclusion that there was a