

## WHAT IS A CRANK?

"Why, Harold, my boy, what have you been doing? You look so hot and sweaty, I should think you had been running a race."

"Well, mamma, I have been running. Yes, running to get away from the boys. They are just as hateful as can be; they said you were 'a crank,' and they kept shouting out 'Crank, crank!' as long as they could see me. What is a crank, mamma, and why do they call you a crank? It is just as mean as it can be; and Harold Brown began to cry."

"Come here to me, my boy, and after you have had your face bathed and are a little cooler, inside as well as outside, we will talk about it."

"There, I feel cooler now," said Harold; "so please tell me about the cranks."

"I hope the water made you feel cooler inside, as well as on your face, my boy. Did you ever see a crank, Harold?"

"Why, yes, I have seen cranks; but I don't see what they have to do with you, anyway, or why anybody should call you a crank."

"Tell me," said Mrs. Brown, "about the cranks you have seen."

"Well, I've seen the crank to grandpa's grindstone, and to grandma's coffee-mill, and to Aunt Mary's churn. I can't think of any other just now," said Harold.

"That will do," said his mamma; "but of what use are the cranks?"

"Why, don't you know? The grindstone could not turn, nor the coffee-mill grind coffee, nor the churn make any butter if the cranks didn't make them go," replied the boy.

"Oh, I see!" was the reply; "cranks are to make things go, are they?"

"Of course they are. But, mamma, they called you a temperance crank."

"And, don't you see, my boy, according to your own definition, what would a temperance crank be but something to make temperance go? And that is just what some one meant who used the word in their hearing, and so they used it too. And it is a splendid name to give me, so don't feel bad about it any more. You know that is my work; to make temperance go and drunkenness stop. When anyone gets greatly interested in anything good, and puts a great deal of time and labor in it, people, that is some people, are sure to call him or her a crank, because such people make the thing go."

"Yes, mamma, I'm beginning to see, and I don't feel so bad as I did about it."

"Why, no! I suppose some would have called the apostle Paul a crank, because he was so earnest in trying to be like Jesus, his Master, that he said, 'This one thing I do—I press forward.' But he gained a heavenly crown, because he did press forward. No doubt some would have called Columbus a crank; but he made things go till he discovered a new world. Very likely Neal Dow has been called a crank many a time, but he made Maine a prohibition state. Our dear Saviour set us the example, showing the same spirit, doing the will of his Heavenly Father, though it caused Him to be crucified; He kept right on, and did just what He came into the world for, and to-day He is at the right hand of the throne of God. Why, my boy, all the grand work of the world has been done by so-called cranks, who have turned bad things upside down."

"Well, mamma, I guess the boys didn't know what a nice nickname they were giving you," said Harold.

"I don't count it a nickname," said mamma, "but a title. It is a good title. And I want my boy to remember, that, if he is ever going to do any great good in the world he must be willing to be called 'names.' If he is going to be like Jesus, he must not fear to be called a crank."

"Oh, mamma," said Harold, "do you think Jesus will be willing to let me be one of His cranks, so I can do some good in the world?" The tears were in Harold's eyes now.

"My dear, we will ask Him," said mamma; and, laying her hand on her boy's head, Mrs. Brown asked the Heavenly Father to help him to be good and pure, never afraid to do right; never afraid to be laughed at; never afraid to be called a crank, or a fool, even, for Christ's sake.

And when Harold went out again to his play he went feeling kindly toward his playmates, stronger to do right; stronger to resist wrong, because his mother had so lovingly taken him to help him in the very best way. He is not afraid now of being called a crank.—"Temperance Banner."

## A GENERAL FAVORITE.

"It's mine!"

"It's mine!"

"Tisn't either."

"Tis. Guess you said I could have it."

"I never said such a thing."

"You did."

"I didn't."

"Didn't he say so, Willie?" said one of the flushed combatants to a small companion who was looking on with wide open eyes of interest. They were struggling for the coveted possession of a long tin whistle. All three small boys had evidently been tumbling and rolling in the thick dust of the road. Their dark and freckled faces were streaked with dirt, their uncovered heads with their mass of unkempt hair, their brown legs with their slight coverings of rags made them objects of little interest.

"Yes, he did," nodded the small boy appealed to. "He said you could have it. I heard him."

"I didn't. Never said it," angrily protested little Sammy Scott, kicking out at the offending party, but never loosening for a moment his tight clinch on one end of the long whistle.

Bare legs and brown fists took up the battle in earnest. Willie came to his chum's rescue and together the three rolled and tumbled in the dirt.

"Got it," shouted a boy, perching himself on top of a rickety old fence in order to see the fun better.

"Look at 'em fight!" he shouted.

"Give him another, Sammy. Punch him in the head, Willie," he roared from time to time encouragingly, laughing uproariously as he watched the youngsters have it out.

Suddenly his encouraging remarks ceased. Dick Clark was coming down the road on a run. For reasons best known to himself, he preferred to keep quiet till Dick got past. The dark, swarthy looking boy that appeared on a run looked much like his fellows in appearance, except perhaps that there were fewer degrees of dirt on the patched clothes, and a clearer, brighter expression in the face.

"What's all this row about?" he shouted, bringing himself to an abrupt halt.

"Git up here," he vigorously added, without waiting for a reply, unceremoniously grabbing at the same time one of the urchins from the tangled assortment of legs and arms, and straightening him out upon his feet.

The other two boys quickly scrambled up, looking shame-faced as they saw it was Dick. They liked Dick. He was always good in his rough way to the little fellows.

"What's the row this time?" he asked, straightening up and putting his hands in his pockets, looking down on the guilty three with an air of a small judge.

"Johnny says the whistle is his'n, and Sammy says 'tisn't, it's his'n," said small Willie, coming to the front as being the most disinterested party in the matter, and thus better able to explain.

"What? That thing?" exclaimed Dick, kicking a much flattened piece of tin at his feet.

"Yep," said Willie, speaking up boldly, "that's it. Smashed, ain't it?"

"Looks as if the whistle was all squeezed out of it," said Dick, putting the battered whistle to his mouth.

"Who wants it?" He held it out.

But nobody seemed to care for it now. It wouldn't whistle.

"Tain't no good," said Sammy, eyeing it with a forlorn expression on his face.

"It's flattened all out, and the whistle isn't there," said Johnny.

"And now nobody can get any fun out of it. Haven't I told you bushels of times that fightin' didn't pay?" questioned Dick severely. "Besides it isn't the right thing to do. You were fightin' yesterday. Saw you?"

The boys looked sheepishly at each other at this accusation.

"Johnny wanted my pencil. I found it," volunteered Sammy.

"I saw it first, anyhow," cried Johnny.

"Yes, he did, Dick," chimed in Johnny's staunch defender.

"People that want the whole world is mighty likely not to git anything," said Dick, throwing down the piece of tin and slipping his hands back into their accustomed place. "Teacher told us a story she read about a dog once. He al'ays wanted everything himself. One day he was going across a little bridge carrying a bone in his mouth, and he saw a dog in the water with a bone in his mouth, too. It made him

mad, and he snapped at him, and his own bone fell in the water, and he didn't git nothin' at all."

The three small boys at this point all eyed the flattened whistle and understood.

"Want to see something?" There was a fresh ring in Dick's voice. He was a wise teacher and knew how to change the subject. From one of his pockets Dick drew a half-dozen small cards and laid them out before the admiring eyes of his small friends.

"There is a man in the store uptown that saves them for me," he said. "I did an errand for him one day. He's the nicest man in town."

"That's pretty," said Sammy, touching gently with his dirty forefinger a clean, white card. There was a wistfulness about the boys' look that free-hearted Dick could not resist.

"I'll give you each one," he said generously. "You can pick, only not that one. That's for Liz. She likes the posies. I like 'em, too."

The boys chose their cards, and sat down by the side of the road to admire and compare. They were friends again. Gus, on the fence, looked disgusted.

"Fun's all up," he exclaimed discontentedly. "And all on account of that old Dick. He's always spoiling things. Don't see why everybody likes him so well, giving him cards and things. They never do me."

"Why was it, I wonder? Can any one tell me?"—Florence M. Ekins, in New York "Observer."

## AS A LITTLE CHILD.

Here is an incident which took place during last Christmas between two of our infant-class children:—

Bertha—Chrissy, what should you like to have best this Christmas?

Chrissy—A dolly.

Bertha—So should I. I wonder what we'd better do?

Chrissy—My teacher says we ought to ask Jesus for everything we want.

Bertha—Let's go and ask Him.

Away trotted the little mites upstairs, into their bedroom, and, kneeling down together, asked Jesus to send them a dolly.

On Christmas morning the children came downstairs, full of excitement and wonder; and there, sure enough, lay two dollies. "Oh," said Bertha, "I wonder what we ought to do now?"

Again Chrissy came to the rescue. "Teacher says we ought to thank Jesus when He sends us what we want."

"Come on, then, let's go and thank Him."

And off they ran, with their treasures clasped in their arms; and, kneeling down in the very same place where they had sent up their petition, they thanked Jesus for sending them their dollies.

What a lesson for some of us older children. We may not get 'everything we want,' but like the ten lepers, how few of us 'return' to thank Him for what we do receive.

In our young days almost the first words we were taught to say were 'Thank you,' and how often, in our excitement over the gifts bestowed upon us, we had to have the gentle reminder put to us, 'What do you say for it?' So, too, after the many blessings we receive from our Father, might He not put the same question to us, 'What do you say for it?'

If, instead of always looking at our troubles and thinking of our cares and worries, we were to watch his hand, and trace his goodness in all our lives, our mouths would be filled with praise continually.—N. Bristow in 'The Christian.'

## A SCAR.

"John," said a father to his son, "I wish you would get me the hammer."

"Yes, sir."

"Now a nail and a piece of pine board."

"Here they are, sir."

"Will you drive the nail into the board?"

It was done.

"Please pull it out again."

"That's easy, sir."

"Now, John," and the father's voice dropped to a lower key, "pull out the nail hole."

Every wrong act leaves a scar. Even if the board be a living tree, the scar remains.