

Sunday Reading.

A LAD OF METTLE.

It was a wet, stormy afternoon in January when Johnny first appeared upon the scene. Mr. Coleman, the senior partner, was leaving the office early, and before facing the wind and rain he stood for a few minutes in the hall, buttoning up his mackintosh. The commissionaire was off duty for some reason or other, and as Mr. Coleman pulled open the swinging door and prepared to go out, a dripping little fellow in a coarse, threadbare, tweed suit, and with a telegraph badge on his arm, darted in.

'Take care, you young rascal,' cried the senior partner, letting the door swing to as he stood aside to avoid a collision.

'Don't charge into an office as though you were on the football field and were kicking the ball between the goal-posts. Ah! let me see these wires,' he went on, stretching out his hand for the thin brown envelopes.

'Can't,' said the youngster, concisely, making for the door of the manager's office.

'Stop!' cried Mr. Coleman, laying a detaining hand upon the boy's shoulder. 'Why can't you?'

'Cause it's not allowed.'

'Not allowed! What do you mean, my lad?'

'I'm not allowed to give telegrams to strangers.'

'Strangers! Of course not; but I'm master here. I'm Mr. Coleman.'

'Perhaps; but I don't know you; never saw you before. Sha'n't give 'em to you.'

The situation was amusing; Mr. Coleman smiled. At that moment a pretty fair haired girl, one of the firm's typists, came out of the manager's room. The boy called to her:

'Say, miss, who is this man here? He wants to take my telegrams.'

The girl blushed.

'It is Mr. Coleman,' she said.

'There now,' said the senior partner. 'You hear what the lady says. You can safely hand them over to me.'

'Are you quite sure it's O. K., miss? Is he the right man?'

'Oh, yes; I'm quite sure; it's all right,' she reassured him.

'Very well, there you are,' said the boy, handing the telegrams over. 'But I'll just go in and tell Mr. Bunting I've given them to you. And he flashed into the manager's room.'

Mr. Coleman went back to his own room leisurely, opening and reading the telegrams as he went.

Next morning, when going through the letters, he said to Bunting:

'I suppose you heard about the boy refusing to give me the wires, yesterday?'

'Yes, sir, I did,' replied the manager.

'I like that boy,' said Mr. Coleman. 'See if you can engage him for the office.'

'Very well, sir; I'll see to it.'

Johnny Burke was not easily persuaded to transfer his valuable services from her Majesty Queen Victoria to Messrs. Coleman & Parker, commoners and manufacturers of linen goods. However, the offer of an extra three shillings weekly convinced him that the change was worth making, and in due course he entered the employment of the firm. He began at the lowest rung of the ladder, and for some months was employed in running errands, copying letters, and making himself generally useful.

The position was a trying and difficult one to fit, since he was at the beck and call of every member of the large office staff, from the manager down to the youngest typist; but Johnny was equal to it.

He was a very glutton for work; he positively revelled in it, and Mr. Bunting very soon found that if he wanted a message taken to any of the staff, whether in the office or in the works, Johnny's nimble brain could take it in and his ready tongue repeat it with the clearness and accuracy of a phonograph.

On the Christmas Eve following Johnny's appointment, Mr. Bunting sent for him. The boy entered the manager's room, quaking inwardly, and wondering if he had at last unwittingly done something for which he was to be reprimanded.

'I have been speaking to Mr. Coleman about you, Burke,' said the manager, 'and have reported to him the progress you have made since you entered the employment of the firm. Although you may have been unaware of it, Mr. Coleman has had his eye upon you.' (Johnny, remembering sundry mental notes he had made during the past few months, smiled internally, though to the manager's eye he was a Sphinx in miniature—and I may say we

are both well satisfied with the way you have done your work. From January 1st your salary will be raised five shillings a week, and you will be placed in charge of the stamps and petty cash.'

Johnny was speechless, but his heart leaped to his throat, and in his mind's eye he saw the dear, careworn face of his widowed mother lighting up with joy as he told her this wonderful piece of news.

'We have every confidence,' continued Mr. Bunting, 'that you will fully justify the trust we intend to place in you; and now I have only to give you this Christmas-box with the compliments of the season.'

He handed Johnny a sealed envelope, laid a kindly hand on his shoulder, and pushed him gently out of the room.

It was characteristic of the boy that he took the envelope home and handed it to his mother unopened. Between them, with eager fingers, they tore the flap and found inside two beautiful crisp new bank of Scotland pound notes.

There was not a family in all the great city of Glasgow that had a happier Christmas than Johnny Burke and his widowed mother in their little room and kitchen house in Charlotte street, Calton.

Coleman & Parker's factory was situated in what is called the Port Dundas district of Glasgow. Between the works and the counting house lay the Forth and Clyde Canal. The general officer ran the whole length of the counting house building on the ground floor, and its fourteen windows all looked out on the works across the canal. A couple of high bridges spanning the water were the means of communication between works and office.

Johnny Burke was an important man when, on Dec. Mr. Bunting handed him the key of the drawer of the safe in which were kept stamps and petty cash.

When business was resumed after the New Year holidays, Nellie Stewart, the pretty typist who had certified to Mr. Coleman's identity nearly a year ago, made a discovery, which she lost no time in imparting to the rest of the staff. It was this: Johnny was wearing cuffs! It is true they were of celluloid; but after wearing them a week, Johnny used to make them as good as new with soap and water and the brush he used for his hands every morning after he had put on the fire and swept up the kitchen for his mother, so that she might have nothing to do but rise and take her breakfast in comfort.

When he had gone out into the dark streets to trudge manfully the three miles from Charlotte street to Port Dundas, she would pause in her work of 'redding up' to lift the little brush, and with shining eyes press her lips to its hard bristles for the sake of the brave boy who was at once husband and child to her widowed heart.

This was something that neither Nellie nor any of the other clerks ever discovered.

Johnny was keenly conscious of his responsibility, but it by no means overpowered him. His cuffs were the visible expression of his attitude of mind. He was now a full fledged clerk, doing a man's work, and filling an important position.

One Monday night in February he was busy squaring up his stamps and petty cash account before going home. It was about a quarter to eight o'clock, the commissionaire had just left for the general postoffice with the last bagful of letters, and Johnny was alone in the office.

'That's O. K.,' he soliloquized, shutting up his books. 'Balance in stamps £35 4s. 6d. and cash £5 3s. 7d. Now to lock up the safe and cut off home to supper. What'll mother have tonight, I wonder, to restore the energies of the tired man of business? A finnan haddie, maybe; that would just be about my form.'

He rose, carried his stamps and cash to the safe, put them in the drawer, and locked it.

'Heigho I'm tired,' he said, yawning and stretching his arms above his head.

Next moment the key of the drawer was snatched from his grasp, and he wheeled round in amazement to confront three men with black crape masks over their eyes.

'So kind of you, Mr. Burke,' said one of them, jeeringly, 'to hand over your key in that gentlemanly way. We were just thinking we would have to take the to go through your pockets.'

Johnny answered never a word, but his active brain began to work as it had never worked before.

'We were thinking,' the man went on 'that we might have to use a little gentle persuasion to make you hand it over, but fortunately you have saved us the trouble. Very considerate, wasn't it, mates? That's the silver key to unlock the golden lock,' he added, holding up the shining key and stepping towards the safe.

Like a flash came the idea. Johnny had been searching for he darted forward snatched the key from the man's hand, and sent it crashing through the window into the canal.

With a savage oath the man struck the lad full on the temple telling him to the

floor. When Johnny regained consciousness a few minutes later, one of the three men was working busily at the safe drawer with burglars' tools, and his companions were sitting on stools smoking in silence. They had dragged Johnny along the floor out of their way, and he lay within a few feet of the open office door. His head throbbed painfully, and he felt sick and sore; but his brain began to work again. Could he outwit the scoundrels yet?

Suddenly his glance fell on the clock, high up on the wall and his pulses leaped as he saw the minute hand pointing to four minutes to eight o'clock. If he could only get out of the room unobserved all might yet be well, for he remembered that at eight o'clock exactly the fire patrol man was due to enter the office and report himself by telephone to headquarters.

Slowly and noiselessly the boy began to move on his back towards the door, anxiously keeping his gaze on the three figures beside the safe.

The grating noise of the hand drill that the man at the safe was using drowned every sound Johnny made as he slowly worked his way to the door. Three minutes—two minutes—one minute to eight; and with a final silent effort he rolled out of the door, and rising to his feet staggered sick and reeling along the passage leading to one of the bridges spanning the canal.

As he set foot on the bridge, he stumbled into the arms of the fire patrol man on the way to the telephone.

'Quick!' gasped Johnny. 'Burglars—three—drilling the safe drawer now!'

'Eh! what? Three burglars?' echoed the man. 'Never mind, my boy; we'll nab them. Run to the time office and tell the three timekeepers to come quick march. I'll wait at the door and see the bold boys don't clear out.'

Johnny's head was still throbbing painfully, but the fresh air had revived him, and he ran as he never ran before.

When the four men rushed into the office, the lock of the safe drawer had just given way, and as the three burglars turned round in dismay, a more astonished trio would have been hard to find.

Johnny is now 'on the road' for Coleman & Parker, and the firm has no more trusted representative.—The Sunday Magazine.

Fadeth Not Away.

The old professor was listening with a half smile while his class explained certain facts in metaphysics.

The brain, they said, retained longest the first impressions made upon it. Memories of middle life faded out, while those of childhood remained vivid and clear. Dying persons had been known to speak in a language which they had learned in childhood, and forgotten during a long lifetime.

When the class was dismissed, one of the young men, as usual, lingered to walk across the campus with the professor. The class had noticed that the old man was a little more deaf this winter, a little duller of sight, a little more gentle. They contrived that he should not cross the icy spaces without some one to assist him.

'All that is true, Bob,' he said, thinking of the recitation and talking half to himself. 'Quite true, and very strange. You learn in childhood a language, simple enough, having to do with the foundation of things; God and heaven and you, yourself. Then you get out into the world and forget it. You learn difficult languages—philosophy or trade or politics; loud, strident kinds of talk that move the world, and you do your share of talking as loudly as you can.'

'But presently these things begin to fade out of your mind. They seem less weighty; they count for little. The old language that you learned on your mother's knee comes back, and you find yourself speaking it again. The later languages are alien; that is your own tongue.'

'It is strange, sir,' said Bob, with a bewildered face.

He brought the professor to his own door, and bade him good night. The old man lingered, looking with a wistful smile at the great quadrangle with the shadowy buildings in which languages and philosophy and sciences were taught.

'I have indeed gone back to the beginning,' he said. 'These things seem to mean so little, and I think so often of the first line that I ever learned: "Now I lay me down to sleep!"'

A Brutal Schoolmaster.

The cruelty, dignified with the name of punishment, which long prevailed in schools is admirably illustrated by a reminiscence taken from a volume entitled 'Memories,' by C. Kegan Paul, an English publisher.

The mode in which flogging was carried out was an ingenious piece of cruelty. The head-master sat on a dais at one end of the room. The space between the dais and the walls was filled by two closets open

at the top, so that, although gloomy there was light enough to see.

Just within the door was a cupboard containing the canes used for flogging. These were a trifle longer than the cupboard, so that when a little door about four inches square was opened, a cane started out like a jack-in-the-box, ready to the hand. This cupboard was connected with a spring in the master's desk, some six feet distant.

When a boy was to be punished, and there were few days without such an occurrence, Allen used to fling his gown behind him on his chair, and with a lithe bound spring to the cupboard, having first touched the spring on his desk. The ominous click which answered within the cupboard was heard over the hushed and expectant room.

Then driving the miserable child before him, he shut the door, swung the victim across his knee, and then, with the waxed cane flogged till he was tired. After that he locked the boy up for an hour or two, to recover as best he might.

I have felt and seen weals caused by the cane, as thick as a finger, while all between each stripe was livid, broken and bleeding. I have known the black and blue bruises still on the skin for more than a month after the flogging.

Withal, Mr. Allen was a pious person and was said to preach good sermons, and I believe he died regretted by those who did not know him as well as his victims.

PRINCE OF WALES'S DRESS.

Convenience Rather Than Setting the Fashion Is His Chief Thought.

The influence of the Prince of Wales on the dress of New York men who devote especial thought to what they wear is very much less than some persons have supposed. It would come of course through the London tailors who supply clothes to New Yorkers, although even by that means it would be difficult to trace the vogue of any particular fashion to the heir to the English throne. This is caused in a large measure by the different attitude of Englishmen towards the fashions. There the craze for novelty in men's style is not developed to the extent it is here. A new fashion may be worn by well-dressed men in London for several years before it is put within the reach of persons who pay very little for their clothes. The situation is quite different here. A style sent over from London by the best tailors is likely to be put on the market within the next two months at prices which persons of the most moderate means are able to pay.

It is not probable that English tailors would declare a garment the style merely because the Prince of Wales had worn it. His taste is more likely to be regulated by convenience than by any desire to be a pioneer in fashions. What he wears is usually the result of his conclusion that such a garment would be more comfortable for a stout, middle aged man than any other kind. The new single breasted frock coat is said to be the result of his Royal Highness's unwillingness to have any more thickness of cloth than absolutely necessary over his stomach in the warm weather. His disinclination to pose as an extremist in styles was shown by a remark made to a tailor who dresses the Duke of York. This tailor was fitting the Duke one day and the son urged his father to give his tailor a chance. The tailor also murmured his claims obsequiously.

'No, was the answer of the prince. 'You're all right for the young man, but you're too smart for an old man like me.' Some of the peculiarities of the Prince's dressing have been copied, although they were solely the result of his physical proportions. Most striking of these is the fashion of leaving open the last button of the waistcoat. Now most London tailors arrange this button so that it cannot be closed. This came originally from the Prince's difficulty in buttoning a waistcoat over the royal stomach. It has been more generally adopted than any other innovation in dress attributed to this exalted source during recent years. Despite a few valiant pioneers, the fashion of wearing a silk hat with a sack coat could never be made popular here.

Turned up trousers in all weather have been an accepted vagary of fashion for the past three years and the habit is said to have originated in the greater comfort that comes from wearing long trousers turned up, rather than those of the exact length, which would necessarily have to be held tightly by suspenders. The Austrian hats worn in the Tyrol and in all parts of the country by gentlemen there, gained no vogue here because the Prince of Wales, when at Marienbad was photographed wearing one of them and an attempt was made through that fact to boom them here. Men who knew their use recognized their inappropriateness to this country, while others were not attracted by the combination of a green hat and a pheasant's wing. On the other hand, the soft gray hats, described variously as a Hombourg, Fedora or Alpine, owe their continued popularity

here to the fact that the Prince of Wales promptly adopted the new style. That was another case in which his personal comfort was again the motive that led him to take to a new style.

The single-breasted frock coat will in all probability have to be added to the list of those fashions which could not be made popular, even through the Prince's patronage. There may be need of such a garment in London, where the hot weather extends well into the summer months and full dress is required in a temperature that makes the prospect of wearing a frock coat a torture. The additional lightness gained by dispensing with one layer of cloth is not to be despised by a fat man who has to wear a frock coat on a July afternoon. Here the frock coat as a social necessity does not exist after the first of June. Even at weddings, a short coat is permissible after that time. At such places as Bar Harbor and Newport the temperature is usually suited to the garment whenever it is needed, and that is not often.

THE MESSENGER'S DIVERSION.

A Bit of Comedy Between Trains at an Elevated Railroad Station.

A messenger boy, small, trim, reticent and deliberate in his movements, walked up the steps of a Sixth avenue elevated railroad station, went quietly along the passageway between the ticket seller's window and the ticket chopper's box, and there dropped his ticket. The ticket chopper, per being at that moment standing, stretching himself, the messenger kept on around the ticket box and dropped in the ticket chopper's chair without a word or look for anybody.

'I guess you were born tired,' said the ticket chopper. No reply from the messenger.

When the next messenger dropped a ticket in the box the messenger boy reached forward and grasped the handle of the lever and raised it up and let the ticket fall down from the hopper into the box below throwing the lever up through its full sweep slowly, but to the limit with a manner that was at once languid and precise.

'There—that'll do,' said the ticket chopper. 'I'll attend to that part of it.'

Still paying no attention to him, the messenger got up and walked away. He had chopped one ticket that all he wanted to chop; and now he strolled down the platform as calm, as grave-faced, as reticent as ever, as cool, even in this weather, as the proverbial cucumber.

Keeping it Bright.

'It's a good thing to be neat,' said Mr. Willowby to his wife, 'but I believe Sister Jane goes a little too far; I really think she does.' 'What has she done now?' asked Mrs. Willowby.

'Well,' said her husband slowly, 'I went there this morning, and what should I see but a white cloth fluttering from the bell-handle. I thought at first something had happened to one of the children. But when I got close I saw that the bell was covered by the cloth, and there was just a kind of a bow fluttering.'

'When I got inside I asked Jane what under the canopy she'd tied the bell in that kind of a rigging for, and she said:

'Well, Amos Willowby, if you must know, I've got that bell polished up for to-night, when the minister's coming to tea, and if you think I'm going to have it all dulled over before night you're very much mistaken! And I'm making a cover that will just fit on it, and after this I'm going to keep it covered every day till well along in the afternoon, when I'm liable to have callers!'

Land O'Goshen.

Recently little Kitty of Chicago heard, as she often had, her brothers speak of their desire to see the 'Lantic ocean; she was also familiar with her father's favorite ejaculation, 'Land o'Goshen,' and in her mind the two were hopelessly confused. On her first visit to the east she was taken to look at the sea. She mournfully exclaimed, in deepest disappointment, 'Why de lan' o' Goshen 's all full o' water.'

Too Much for Him.

Weary Willie—'Read de remedy fer muskeeter-bites.'

Dusty Dope—'Rub de face an' hands thoroughly wid tar-soap.'

Weary Willie—'Now read de remedy for tar-soap.'

The Advanced Hen.

'Oh, James, here's an account of a hen who laid five eggs in one day.'

'Well, maybe she was getting ahead with her work so she could take a vacation.'

Paradoxical.

Sudds—'Tee circus-poster is a paradoxical work of art.'

Spatts—'Well?'

Sudds—'It is decided in its views, and yet you'll find it on the fence.'