

SOURCES OF SUPPLY

"CHARITY"

LEAVING HOME

STATE OF PENNSYLVANIA:

COUNTY OF LANCASTER :

Before me a Notary Public, a Justice of the Peace, in and for the State and County aforesaid, personally appeared PAUL M. KINSIE who, being duly sworn, deposes and says, to wit:-

I am a resident of 340 West 19th Street, New York, N. Y., and am twenty-four years of age.

On November 26, 1943, while in the post office, applying for mail at the General Delivery window, about from 7 to 10 P. M., I met a girl, LOUBELL KERNS. It was most odd, the manner in which we made each others acquaintance. LOUBELL, upon being told that there was no mail for her, turned toward me and expressed herself with an vehement "Oh sha".

I smiled but said nothing. The girl realized her outburst, and said, "I beg your pardon, I know it is not your fault."

I replied, "I'm really very sorry that you are so disappointed. There will be more mails tomorrow."

The girl seemed terribly down cast upon my mentioning "tomorrow", but made no reply. We walked out of the Post Office together and I said, "Why so quiet."

Her retort was, "Oh, nothing, why, who wishes to know."

I replied, "I should like to."

She said, "I've been away from my folks now on seven months, and I never felt like I do to night. Tomorrow is Thanksgiving and when I think of it, my heart is almost torn from me. I suppose my mother will enjoy herself just as much as I. It's going to be a fine thanksgiving, I can see that. They'll all be home, my two brothers, and sister, and I'll be way."

I said, "Do you mean to tell me that a young girl like you is away from home. You're not 19 are you?"

She replied, "No, I'm just past 17 years. Gee, I wish I never left home. Do you know I never realized it until today. When I saw everybody preparing for the big day. All the little kids delivering groceries, and going marketing, I thought I was hard, but believe me, I felt sick at heart."

We walked along Orange Street, the girl took my arm and holding me tightly, and with tears in her eyes, continued in answer to my questions. I pretended not to understand her position, as I wished to have her talk freely. I said, "Why did you run away from home. You're stopping here with some relatives aren't you?"

She said, "I'm all alone. I always wanted to do as I pleased. It's funny, I thought I was having a fine time until to-night. Every girl is going, all dressed up to a dance, with her fellow, and I could be doing the same thing if I was home. Gee, last year all us boys and girls had a great time. You know I only live in a small town, but it isn't half as lonesome as these big cities."

I asked, "What ever possessed a young kid like you to leave

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home?"

She replied, "I wouldn't mind so much being away from home, but my folks never knew what became of me. I just packed up and went. No, I didn't make up my mind all of a sudden. I'll tell you, when I was at school, I used to read about the big cities and I just wanted to travel. I was working and my folks never took any of my money. I saved and saved and then I beat it. I went to Pittsburg, and got a job. I never wrote even a note home. They don't know if I'm dead or alive. I stayed in Pittsburg up until a couple of weeks ago. Then I got to traveling again, so I went to Harrisburg, and now I'm here. I just got here last Thursday. I can't imagine what got into my head. I don't think I thought of the folks at home until to-night."

I said, "How did you manage to exist?"

She replied, "I worked, and I saved my money, but it's all gone now. I know what you're thinking. I'll tell you the truth. Not until last Thursday when I came here, broke, and looked for a job, did I go out, I never was used to anything like that and it didn't just fit. I had to get money to live. The first man I had last Saturday Night, and he knew I was green, because I was so ashamed. I tried to get a job in the factories, but I couldn't. If my mother ever knew what I did, I know she'd rather get work than that I'm dead."

The girl then took a bundle of post cards from her pocket and said, "See, that's where I live."

In looking through the cards, she showed me one dated 1911. She said, "I wish it was then and what I know now."

I asked, "Do you intend to go home when you get enough money?"

She replied, "No, now it's too late. I couldn't be home. My mother never heard where I was. She thinks I'm either dead or walking the streets. They wouldn't believe me, that I worked all the time. Besides, things never would be the same."

The girl's eyes filled up with tears and she displayed a photograph of her mother, upon which is the following, "To my darling Loubelle. Mother."

She kissed the picture and then said, "Here's my two sisters."

Both girls were apparently 12 and 14 years of age. She also showed me a picture of her brother. A flaxin haired youth of apparently 5 years of age, dressed in overalls.

I said, "Would you go home if I bought a ticket for you?"

She replied, "No thanks, you're awful good, but it's too late now. I'll just have to make the best of it, that's all."

I said, "You know a mother will always forgive. You just pack up, and I'll see that you get home."

She said, "No, I couldn't any more now. Thanks awful much, but I couldn't. Just think 7 months I've been away and they didn't even know where I was."

I asked "How long have you been walking the streets?"

She replied, "Since last Thursday and Saturday night was the first time I went with a man. Oh, I used to run around when I was home but I never went with anybody but the boys at home. You know just like some girls do here."

I said, "I think you're kidding me."

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She replied, "Well I'm awful sorry, I aint asking you for anything, am I? You made me feel much lighter. It was on my heart and it had to come off. Maybe you were never away from home and you don't know what it is to be lonesome."

I said, "Then why not accept my proposition and go home."

She replied, "I couldn't do it. If I went home when I was in PITTSBURGH it would be all right but not now."

During the entire evening the girl spoke of nothing but of her home life and her felly in leaving. Before I left her she said, "I guess I'll get over it all right, just as soon as the holidays are over. I'll have to, that's all. Just as soon as I get a start here I'm going to PHILADELPHIA and I know I'll be able to get a job there."

I said, "Why not take my advice and go home. You might get to PHILADELPHIA and suppose you can't get a position, what will you do?"

She said, "I'm sure I'll get a position. I know I will. Can't you see, I'll have to get a position. Nobody wants me." The girl was alluding to an ugly scar that circled her chin, it being caused by a burn.

At 10 o'clock I escorted the girl to her home at 20 E. Walnut Street. In parting, she said, "Can't we meet again, it seems awful good to be able to talk to some one."

I told her I would meet her again.

This girl comes from a good family in MORGANTOWN, W. VA. Her mother, MRS. MARY E. KERNS, knows nothing of LOUBELLE'S whereabouts and, according to the girl, is reconciled to the fact that she is dead. I believe each word which the girl told. Her manner and actions convinced me that her entire story is truthful. It can be readily seen that the girl is not used to the life she has been trying to lead for the past week. Her southern accent and her abstinence from profanity denote that she is from good family. In considering the mentality of the girl, I am forced to believe that her mind wanders. The expression of the eyes and face at times seemed to make me believe that she was in a trance. In the girl's own words, she said she could never realize what she was doing when she left home.

LOUBELLE is admittedly 17 years of age and about 5'4" in height. She wore a white dress and checked blanket coat. She has light, fluffy brown hair which she allows to dangle about her cheeks in order to hide the scar which seems to be more noticeable on the right cheek.

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