

The Fireside.

SARAH JANE'S STORY.

BY S. V. DUBOIS.

"Home missionary work has become very precious to me, ma'am, for if it hadn't been for a laborer in the home mission field, I might have been no better than a heathen myself, for there was a time when the Bible was a sealed book to me."

"When John and I first married, we were neither of us Christians, and when little Lucy was born it appeared as if nothing more was needed to make life complete. We went to church now and then, when we felt like it, and sometimes the minister called on us, but we never thought of 'getting religion,' we were too well satisfied without it, ma'am."

"But Lucy was never a very healthy child, and the little body wasted away and grew so weak, until one day we laid her to rest in the church graveyard. I thought, ma'am, our hearts would break, for we did not have the blessed consolation of religion to uphold us. John is a strong man, but he wept like a little child before the lifeless form of his precious one. It is a terrible thing to look upon death and feel that you have no part in the religion of Jesus Christ. It was then that we became converted, but the Bible was such a strange new book to us, and there was a great deal in it for us to learn."

"Well, we joined the church, and took a pew, and paid for it, just like the rest of the members. But our minister was always very zealous on the subject of missions, and when the reports would come in how some of our home missionaries worked under disadvantages which seemed to us well-nigh incredible, worshipping in log houses, with rude benches, and dry goods boxes for pulpits, and the people flocking together to hear the gospel and never minding the discomfort at all, then he would preach to us about our duty in giving to the Lord till I could see John's patience was well-nigh gone. 'There's no use talking, Sarah Jane,' said John to me, 'I've worked hard all my life to keep myself, and there is nothing I could give up if I wanted to.' I made no sort of answer, but I felt uncomfortable for all that. The words, 'Deny yourself, take up your cross and follow me,' seemed to dwell continually in my mind."

"It really didn't seem as if I could do anything for the Lord, and the burden rested so heavily on me that I got so I couldn't sleep at nights."

"John," said I, one Sabbath, just after the morning service, "our minister is going to take his vacation."

"Is that so?" said John.

"Yes, he starts to-morrow morning." John had been kept home from church by a felon on his thumb. "Thank the Lord for that," he said; "we'll have a rest now on the subject of missions."

"But, John, he is going to visit some of the western missionary fields." He groaned, and I continued: "Do you know, I don't feel easy in my mind about the way we are living. We act so well satisfied to think we have our names written in the Lamb's Book of Life, that we are ready to slam the door in the face of all mankind outside. It

has never seemed to matter whether others heard the gospel or not so long as we were saved." John looked confounded.

"The fact is, wife," he said, "I'd a little bit of service of my own this morning, with Tabby and Ship for spectators. And my prayer was that God might bless me and Sara hJane, and make us prosperous."

"O, John," I cried, "God cannot bless us unless we are willing to make our lives a blessing to others. This morning as I sat in our comfortable pew and listened to our minister as he told of the destitute field he is about to visit, I had to wriggle, I just felt that uncomfortable."

"I don't see as there is anything we can do, Sarah Jane," he said.

"Well, John, I've been thinking about it, and I've concluded to give up drinking tea." "You can't do without that, wife," he said.

"Oh, yes, I can, and if the Lord sees I can't, he will provide a way."

"And I'll give up my tobacco," said John. "I've got to do without it in heaven, anyway, and I might as well learn how here." That brought the tears to my eyes, it was the only luxury John had ever known.

"He gives twice who gives quickly," said I, "and couldn't we send the price of a box of tea and a pound of tobacco out by our minister?"

"I reckon we could, little woman," John answered, with a smile.

"And so we commenced the work of giving to the Lord, just a little now and then, taking great joy in it, because his name was glorified thereby."

"Sometimes, now, when I read of some great work which is being done, I'll say, 'my tea is at work, there, John,' and he always answers, 'What a world of good my tobacco is doing somebody.'"—*The Intelligencer.*

NO PLACE AT HOME.

I met him on the street corner—a bright, black-eyed lad of perhaps fourteen summers. I had seen him there evening after evening, and wondered whether there was no one who knew the temptation he had encountered.

I made friends with him, and won his confidence. Then I questioned him kindly in regard to his spending so much time upon the street.

"I know," he said, looking up at me in such a frank, winning way that I could not help thinking what a noble man he might make, "the street is no place for a boy, but you see, there's no place for me at home."

I was surprised and pained at the answer.

"How is that?" I asked.

"Well, I have two grown-up sisters, and they entertain company in the parlor every evening. They give me to understand that I am a 'third party,' and not wanted. Then papa is always tired, and he dozes in the sitting-room, and does not like to be disturbed. It's pretty lonesome, you see, so I come down here. It was not always so," he went on. "Before grandma died I always went up to her room, and had a good time. Grandma liked boys."

There was a quiver in the voice now that told of a sorrow that time had not yet healed.

"But your mother?" I suggested.

"Oh, mamma!—she is only a reformer, and has no time to spend with me. She is always visiting prisons and work-houses, trying to reform the men or writing articles on how to save boys."

"And her own in danger?"

"Yes; I am not half as good as I was before grandma died. I am getting rough, I am afraid. There does not seem to be any one to take an interest in me, so it does not matter much."

It was a hard, bitter truth; yet I knew he was not the only boy who needed a wise, gentle hand to lead him through the dangerous period.

O mothers! are you blind that you cannot see the danger of your own, but look for that of others?

Make home the brightest spot on earth for your children.

I think the saddest, most hopeless thing I ever heard from a boy's lips was that sentence: "There is no place for me at home." God forgive that mother, and open her eyes before it is too late, and help others to heed the warning!

How is it, mothers? Are your boys in danger? Think of this, ponder over it, pray over it.

SHE LESSENER HER COAL BILL.

"What—windows open with the thermometer at zero?" exclaimed a friend one cold winter day as she stepped into my sitting-room, through which the air from two windows was freshly blowing. "You must have an exceptionally good furnace," she continued. "We keep ours running at full speed this cold weather, and yet we cannot keep warm. But I never think of opening windows."

Here she gave such a decided shiver that I thought it advisable to close mine before explaining my reason for the cool atmosphere.

"And do you never open your window in winter?" I asked.

"Never, except on sweeping days, and then I caution Kate to close them as soon as possible."

"I don't wonder you cannot keep warm," I said.

"You don't mean to say that you open your windows to heat your house?" she exclaimed.

"That is one of my reasons," I replied, smiling at her astonishment.

Lest she should think I had suddenly taken leave of my senses I hastened to explain.

"Do you not know that it is impossible to heat dead air?" I asked.

"Dead—air?"

Evidently I was not making things any more intelligible. Hygiene had not been introduced into her brain.

"It is impossible in cold weather to properly heat a room in which the same air has been allowed to remain day after day. We are inhaling poison into our lungs whenever we breathe the same air over and over again. Three times a day, in cold weather, the windows all over my house are opened, and a draught of air allowed to circulate freely. The result has been we seldom have colds, the rooms heat quickly, headaches are unknown, and our coal bill, I know for a fact, to be less than that of any of our neighbors. Do you feel cold now?" I questioned.

"No, indeed, I am delightfully warm," was the reply.

"And yet it is scarcely three minutes since I closed the windows; so you see fresh air heats very quickly."

My friend's face was full of interest. When she rose to go she remarked:

"I think I'll go home and change the

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air in my house, and then see if I can heat it."

A few days after I chanced to meet Mrs. Brown on the street, and she said:

"I am so glad I found your windows open when I called on you Friday. I have profited by your example, and expect to save a ton or two of coal. Our furnace heats the house finely now, and all I've done to bring about this state of affairs has been to open windows."—*The Ladies' World.*

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