

The Fireside.

MISS MARTIN'S LEGACY.

Miss Anna Martin had lived all her life in the small village of Camden. She owned a two-roomed cottage and had an income which sufficed for her simple wants. When she was fifty, a distant relative died and left her a thousand dollars; and on this bright afternoon she was trying to decide what to do with the money.

"I don't think I need to keep it," she said to herself. "It doesn't cost me much to live, and I have more than enough for my needs, and shall have something for sickness or old age. No, I'll use that thousand dollars. I'll have a parlor; it won't cost much to have one built on, about fourteen feet square. I'll have Brussels carpet on the floor, and nice furniture and two large oil paintings. Then I'll have a silk dress—yes, two of them, a black and a brown—and a new bonnet.

"And I'll give fifty dollars to the church," she added by way of afterthought.

But why was it just then she thought of the Dilling children—three in number—who on the morrow would be "bound out" to live with any person who might be willing to take the responsibility of caring for them?

About two years before Charles Dilling had met with an accident which confined him to the house for months, and finally took him away forever. When Mrs. Dilling had time to look about her after this blow, things were very discouraging indeed, and a hard struggle followed. The rent was very much in arrears; the doctor presented a bill which fairly took her breath away, and there were numerous other accounts which must be paid. She sold part of her furniture, and then worked early and late, but in a few months her health failed, and she soon followed her husband.

Then, of course, something had to be done with the little ones. Mrs. Dilling had often been urged, after the death of her husband, to let the children be separated, but her only answer had been: "As long as I can work they shall be kept together."

This answer was sufficient for all who knew Mrs. Dilling. But now she was gone, something must be done. There was no relative to care for the children, and at last it was decided that they should be "bound out."

This meant separation, and it was an appalling thought to the children who were knit together by the ties of more than ordinary strength. No other course presented itself, however, and as Mr. Randall, the overseer of the poor, said, "They must be provided with food and shelter some way, and if they could earn their keep, they must do it."

The next morning Miss Martin ate but little breakfast.

It seems so bad for the children to be separated," she mused, as she looked out at the Dilling house. "I hope they'll be where they can see each other sometimes. They are good children—been well brought up."

Miss Martin's work moved slowly that morning. She spent much time looking over at the Dilling house. She saw Mr. Randall when he came to take charge of the few articles of furniture that were left, and attend to the "binding out" of the children. The neighbors dropped in one by one, and at

length a farmer who wanted a bound boy, arrived. He had tried two already. One had run away after a few months, and the authorities had taken the other from him on account of cruel treatment.

Miss Martin shut her lips tightly together when she saw this man. Probably he would want Fred, who was eleven years old. It would be a shame to see so good a boy go to such a place.

She threw a shawl over her head and stepped to the door. Then she went back and sat down by the window.

"I could have a bed for him upstairs," she thought. "And he could split wood and bring water for me. I believe I'll go over anyway."

Farmer Burman was talking very loudly to Fred when she went into the dark, gloomy kitchen. The boy's face was white, and his eyes filled with tears as he looked at Bessie, his sister.

"You can't have him," said the little girl, choking back her sobs. "He's all we've got left, and we're going to keep him!"

"Ho, ho!" laughed Mr. Burman, "we'll see about that! The sooner we have the papers made out the better, I reckon." And he made his way toward Mr. Randall.

"Fred, would you rather come with me?"

It was Miss Martin's voice, and Fred grasped her hand eagerly, while his sister cried: "Oh, do go with her, Fred."

"I'd rather do it, Miss Martin, if you could get along with me," said the boy earnestly. "I'd try hard to help what I could."

Miss Martin's face lighted up as she listened. This was a new experience to her. Her life had been wholly centred upon her own interests. She could not help thinking of it even in the midst of this excitement. A new feeling swept over her. How selfish she had been! Would God forgive her?

While these thoughts were passing through her mind, she was making her way toward Mr. Randall. Would she be too late? No; Mr. Burnham had been called in another direction. She pulled the poor-master's sleeve and whispered hurriedly:

"I'll take Fred."

"All right," he replied and the deed was done.

The proprietor of the village hotel was talking to Bessie.

"Don't you want to go and live with me at the hotel?"

"No, I don't. I want my own home, and that is all."

"But, child, you can't stay here; the house is all empty, and you've got to go."

Miss Martin's eyes flashed. The idea of that sweet girl going to such a place, never!

"I'll take Bessie, too," she said, and Mr. Randall gladly agreed.

"I can have a bedroom and a tiny kitchen added to my house instead of a parlor," thought Miss Martin, "and can take the old kitchen for a living-room. I don't really need a parlor anyway."

And now, what about little Ray? There he sat, seemingly unconscious of all that was going on around him, printing some words on a piece of cardboard. Ray was only seven years old. He would need care for a long time, perhaps all his life, for he was not strong in body. He was fond of books and flow-

ers and shy and reticent. He held up the cardboard at length and looked at the words he had printed. They were: "Trust in the Lord."

Nobody wanted Ray. He could not be of much use anywhere, and it was decided that he must go to the country farm.

"I'll take him home with me to-night," said Mr. Randall, "and send him away to-morrow morning."

Sitting around Miss Martin's table at supper that night very little was said. Fred had filled the wood-box, brought water, and made himself useful in various ways; but now he was thinking of his little brother. Bessie could hardly keep back the tears.

Miss Martin could not help noticing the children's faces, and altogether it was not cheerful company.

As they arose from the table, there was a knock at the door, and Miss Martin opened it to confront Mr. Randall.

"Is Ray here?" he asked.

"Why, no."

"Well, he's a queer boy; I don't know where he is, and now I can't find him."

"Is the Dilling house locked?"

"No, there is no use locking it; it's empty."

"You stay here, children," said Miss Martin, kindly; "I'll be back in a few moments."

They slipped over to the little old house, and as quietly as she could, peered into every room. There, in the half twilight, she found Ray at last, half lying, half kneeling, on the bare floor in the little room where he used to sleep. In his arms was the cardboard on which he had printed, "Trust in the Lord."

The boy was talking, and she listened.

"It don't seem like home. Bless dear Miss Martin. She's good."

Miss Martin could hear no more. "I can never dress in silk and know that this poor boy is away from his brother and sister," she thought. "O Lord, forgive me for thinking so much of my own desires! I'll try to use my legacy in a way that will be pleasing to Thee!"

Then she stepped forward and touched the boy gently on the shoulder. He started nervously, but when he saw who it was, smiled through his tears.

"Come home with me, Ray," she said tenderly, "and the Lord will care for you and for all of us."—*The Herald.*

ONE STANDARD FOR BOTH SEXES.

Josiah Allen's children have been brought up to think that sin of any kind is just as bad in a man as in a woman; and any place of amusement that is bad for a woman to go to was as bad for a man.

Now, when Tom Jefferson was a little fellow, he was bewitched to go to circuses, and Josiah said:

"Better let him go, Samantha; it hain't no place for wimmen or girls, but it won't hurt a boy."

Says I: "Josiah Allen, the Lord made Thomas Jefferson with just as pure a heart as Tirzah Ann, and no bigger eyes and ears, and if Thomas J. goes to that circus, Tirzah Ann goes, too."

That stopped that. And then he was bewitched to get with other boys that smoked and chewed tobacco, and Josiah was just of that easy turn, and would have let him go with 'em. But says I: "Josiah Allen, if Thomas Jefferson goes with them boys and gets to chewin' and smokin' tobacco, I shall buy Tirzah Ann a pipe."

And that stopped that.

"And about drinkin'," said I: Thomas

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Jefferson, if it should be the will of Providence to change you to a wild bear, I will chain you up and do the best I can for you. But if you ever do it yourself, turn yourself into a wild beast by drinkin', I will run away; for I never could stand it, never! And," I continued, "if I ever see you hangin' round bar-rooms and taverns, Tirzah Ann shall hang, too."

Josiah argued with me. Says he: "It doesn't look so bad for a boy as it does for a girl."

Says I: "Custom makes the difference; and we are more used to seeing men. But," says I, "when liquor goes to work to make a fool and brute of anybody, it don't stop to ask about sex; it makes a wild beast and idiot of a man or a woman, and to look down from heaven, I guess a man looks as bad layin' dead drunk as a woman does."

Says I, "Things looks differently from up there than they do to us—it is a more sightly place. And you talk about looks, Josiah Allen; I don't go on clear looks,

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