

A Home Missionary.

According to my usual custom of spending a night once a week with my niece and her husband, I packed my bag one cold morning, and started for the city.

Arriving at the Florence, I ascended the elevator to the fifth floor, with the usual sensation that my inner consciousness was dropping into the cellar, while I rose in space with the celerity of a bomb.

When the elevator box reached the fifth, I stepped out with the feeling of relief that must have made my countenance radiant, if it in any way expressed my feelings. I touched the button of my niece's door, and she usually does the rest in the way of entertaining; but on this visit it was different. But, as the novelists say, I anticipate.

I found Annie in her little rose-bud of a bedroom (a flat bedroom is always a bud of a room). Annie had a sunny window (it was a corner flat), and all was pink and palest green, with rose-buds all over the wall; and she, the queen rose-bud, threw her arms around her old auntie, and held me closely to her warm heart.

I loved Annie as I would have loved my own daughter if I had had one.

"I am so glad to see you, auntie; I am feeling so lonesome."

"Lonesome, my child, in this pretty nest, and the best man in the world coming home to-night."

Her face hardened a little, and she laughed (unnaturally, I think), and began to ply me with questions about every cat, kitten and chicken on the place, as was her wont, and yet she did not seem herself, but had a sad, hard look.

"Something's the matter," I said to myself, "but I won't ask. She'll tell me when her heart flows over."

So I talked on, and we had a merry day, only the difference I spoke of—Annie was not her usual bright self. We drew up to the fire for our five o'clock tea.

It was snowing fast and the wind howled like a demon.

"A bad night for any one you love to be out," I said, drawing the curtains, after a look into the wintry street.

Again that hard look in her face. She had a quarrel with Dudley, I am sure. Dear heart, she things she has had trouble, and she doesn't know its meaning.

When Dudley came home I managed to be behind a portiere in the hall; I wanted to see them meet, but I was disappointed.

Annie sat toasting the point of a dainty shoe by the fire, and Dudley went in and stood with his back to it, man-fashion, and I heard him asking for me.

I came in from my eavesdropping, and was greeted with a hearty kiss and hand-shake.

We sat by the fire talking until late—that is, I talked, and they talked to me, but not a word or look to each other.

"There is serious trouble between these two," I said to myself; "it will out, and I must wait till it comes."

"Just as I was comfortably tucked in bed that night, and in that wonderful borderland where you don't know whether you are dreaming or thinking, I heard some one enter the room and stand by the bed.

"Are you asleep, auntie?"

"No, dear child."

She was in my arms in an instant.

"Dudley won't like you to desert him, dear," I said, patting her.

"He won't care; he doesn't love me any more, nor I him. Our marriage was all a mistake, and we will live apart hereafter."

"What!" I cried, "you are not going to separate?"

"O, no! We will live here for the world's sake. We do not want to make talk, but we have separated in our hearts forever."

"How did this happen?" I asked, holding her close.

"O, I cannot tell you, auntie. A thousand little things have occurred to separate and show us that we are unsuited, unmade, incompatible."

"Stiff and nonsense," I said to myself, but I only petted her as I used to when she was a baby and fretted.

"He will have his way in everything, and I want my way in some things. He goes to the club very often lately, because, he says, I don't love him. He doesn't seem as he used to before we were married. He reads the papers all the evening, and when I tell him he does not love me, he just says he is happy to know I am near him, and he doesn't think it worth while to tell me he loves me all the time; I know it without the telling. Oh he is so indifferent, auntie; I know he is growing indifferent to me, and our happy married life is over."

Here she broke down and cried herself to sleep.

Young people cry their heartaches to sleep. I lay awake and thought; that is elderly fashion. It is the old story, I cooed to myself, the reaction from the honeymoon; poor children, how they do love each other; and how much they do suffer. I

hope Dudley is asleep. I'd like to comfort him, dear boy. I heard a noise in the next room. Dudley was moving about, then I saw the library gas was lit.

He is going to read the night out; he feels it worse than she does, dear, foolish children—then I went to sleep.

The following day the same icy indifference covered aching hearts. Annie told the story over again. I said I was so sorry, so sorry. I could not say more, words were useless, their hearts were steeled against each other. At twilight I opened the piano and began crooning over some old melodies. Annie lay among the cushions on the divan. Presently my fingers strayed into the sweetest and tenderest of all Scotch songs:—

"Douglas, Douglas
Tender and true."

I sang it low but distinctly, and when I came to the words: "And would I could have you back again, Douglas," my old voice quavered, a chord in my heart that had long lain silent, vibrated with the wistful longing of the song. I heard the door shut, and knew, without seeing, that Dudley was by the fire. I rambled in and out of several melodies, not singing, but playing softly. I found my fingers were straying among the Scotch airs again. "Annie Laurie" came out of the throng, and my voice took up the words. When I had reached the second verse, I heard a sound on the divan. Was it a smothered sob and a caress? I hoped so, but I still sang on:—

"For my bonnie Annie Laurie
I would lay me down and dee."

Then my fingers strayed into "Home, Sweet Home," and I stole softly away with a side glance at two figures so close together on the divan, the sight made my heart leap for joy. Later I entered.

"Why, you here, Dudley? When did you come in?"

"O, auntie!" and they both hugged me until my breath gave way.

"You did it, you dear old conspirator, with your blessed songs. We do love each other just as well, no better than ever."

When the elevator dropped me down five storeys the following morning, my inner consciousness, instead of going to the cellar, lifted itself in sheer joy to the very top of the house.—Brooklyn Times.

If the hair has been made to grow a natural color on bald heads in the thousands of cases, by using Hall's Hair Renewer, why will it not in your case.

A Terrible Charge.

"Prisoner at the bar, have you anything to say why sentence of death shall not be passed upon you?"

A solemn hush fell over the crowded court room, and every person waited in almost breathless expectation for an answer to the judge's question.

Will the prisoner answer.

Is there nothing that will make him show some sign of emotion?

Will he maintain the cold indifferent attitude that he has shown through the long trial, even to the place of execution?

Such was the questions that passed through the minds of those who had followed the case from day to day.

The judge still waited in dignified silence.

Not a whisper was heard anywhere, and the situation had become painfully oppressive, when the prisoner was seen to move, his head was raised, his hands were clinched, and the blood had rushed into his pale care-worn face, his teeth were firmly set, and into his haggard eyes came a flash of light.

Suddenly he rose to his feet, and in a low, firm but distinct voice, said:

"I have! Your honor, you have asked me a question, and I now ask as the last favour on earth, that you will not interrupt my answer until I am through."

"I stand here before this bar, convicted of the wilful murder of my wife. Truthful witnesses have testified to the fact that I was a loafer, a drunkard and a wretch; that I returned from one of my long debauches and fired the fatal shot that killed the wife I had sworn to love, cherish and protect. While I have no remembrance of committing the fearful, cowardly and inhuman deed, I have no right to complain or condemn the verdict of the twelve good men who have acted as jurors in this case, for their verdict is in accordance with the evidence."

"But, may it please the court, I wish to show that I am not alone responsible for the murder of my wife."

This startling statement created a tremendous sensation. The judge leaned over the desk, the lawyers wheeled around and faced the prisoner; the jurors looked at each other in amazement, while the spectators could hardly suppress their intense excitement. The prisoner paused a few seconds, and then continued in the same firm, distinct voice:

"I repeat, your honor, that I am not the only one guilty of the murder of my wife. The judge on the bench, the jury in the box, the lawyers within this bar, and most of the witnesses, including the pastor of the old church, are also guilty before Almighty God, and will have to appear with me before His Judgment Throne, where we all shall be righteously judged."

"If twenty men conspire together for the murder of one person, the law power of this land will arrest the twenty, and each will be tried, convicted and executed for a whole murder, and not one-twentieth of the crime."

"I have been made a drunkard by law. If it had not been for the legalized saloons of my town, I never would have been a drunkard; my wife would not have been murdered; I would not be here now, ready to be hurled into eternity. Had it not been for the human traps set out with the consent of the Government, I would have been a sober man, an industrious workman, a tender father and a loving husband. But to-day my home is destroyed, my wife murdered, my little children—God bless and care for them—cast on the mercy of a cold and cruel world, while I am to be murdered by the strong arm of the State."

"God knows I tried to reform, but as long as the open saloon was in my pathway, my weak, diseased will-power was no match against the fearful, consuming, agonizing appetite for liquor. At last, I sought the protection, care and sympathy of the church of Jesus Christ, but at the communion table I received from the hand of the pastor who sits there and who has testified against me in this case, the cup that contained the very same alcoholic serpent that is found in every bar-room in the land. It proved too much for my weak humanity, and out of that holy place I rushed to the last debauch that ended with the murder of my wife."

"For one year our town was without a saloon. For one year I was a sober man. For one year my wife and children were supremely happy, and our little home a perfect paradise."

"I was one of those who signed remonstrance against re-opening the saloons in our town. The names of one-half of this jury can be found to-day on the petition certifying to the good moral character (?) of the rum-sellers, and falsely saying that the sale of liquor was 'necessary' in our town. The prosecuting attorney on this case was the one who so eloquently pleaded with this court for the licenses, and the judge who sits on this bench, and who asked me if I had anything to say before sentence of death was passed on me, granted the license."

The impassioned words of the prisoner fell like coals of fire upon the hearts of those present, and many of the spectators and some of the lawyers were moved to tears. The judge made a motion as if to stop any further speech on the part of the prisoner, when the speaker hastily said:

"Not not your honor, do not close my lips; I am nearly through, and they are the last words I shall ever utter on earth."

"I began my downward career at a saloon bar—legalized and protected by the voters of this Commonwealth, which has received annually a part of the blood-money from the poor deluded victims. After the State had made me a drunkard and a murderer; I am taken before another bar—the bar of justice (?) by the same power of law that legalized the first bar, and now the law power will conduct me to the place of execution and hasten my soul into eternity. I shall appear before another bar—the judgment bar of God, and there you who have legalized the traffic, will have to appear with me. Think you that the Great Judge will hold me—the poor, weak, helpless victim of your traffic—alone responsible for the murder of my wife? Nay, I, in my drunken, frenzied, irresponsible condition, have murdered one, but you have deliberately and willfully murdered your thousands, and the murder-mills are in full operation to-day with your consent."

All of you know in your hearts that these words of mine are not the ravings of an unsound mind, but God Almighty's truth. The liquor traffic of this nation is responsible for nearly all the murders, bloodshed, riots, poverty, misery, wretchedness and woe. It breaks up thousands of happy homes every year; sends the husband and father to prison or to the gallows, and drives countless mothers and little children into the world to suffer and die. It furnishes nearly all the criminal business of this and every other court, and blasts every community it touches."

"You legalized the saloons that made me a drunkard and a murderer, and you are guilty with me before God and man for the murder of my wife."

"Your honor, I am done, I am now ready to receive my sentence and to be led forth to the place of execution, and murdered according to the laws of the State. You will close by asking the Lord to have mercy on my soul. I will close by solemnly asking God to open your blind eyes to the truth, to your individual responsibility, so that you will cease to give your support to this hell-born traffic."—Tallie Morgan in Domestic Journal.

The Spring Medicine.

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Good Friday at Jerusalem.

We were present at the Greek Feast of the Holy Fire on their Good Friday, which comes a week later than ours. For some days bodies of men, mostly young, kept arriving at Jerusalem, singing a strange chant. This ceremony must be seen from a private box in the gallery, if one is fortunate enough to get a place. Some years ago all the different sects participated in this terrible performance, but they dropped off one by one, and now it is only practised by the Greek Church, and the more enlightened of this community do not at all approve of it. In former days it was not unusual for many people to lose their lives, and only a few years ago six people were killed. The whole body of the church was packed with wild-looking men—many stripped to the waist—chanting at short intervals a fierce monotone to this effect, "Death to the Jews! they killed our Lord"—a straining, seething mass of hot humanity, holding bundles of long, thin candles, which with the heat of their hands melted and dripped. The women and children were on platforms, fixed to every accessible spot; for example, there were two or three storeys fitted into the upper part of the arches. A passage round the centre chapel was kept by a line of soldiers with fixed bayonets, the officers having whips with long thick lashes, with which they lashed those who became obstreperous. Men were lifted up to the heads of the crowd, and rolled about unable to get down again. Then the Greek Patriarch entered, and amid great excitement marched three times slowly round at the head of a long procession of richly-clad priests. After this he went into the Holy of Holies—inside of which is the supposed sepulchre, and there was a silence full of awe, which lasted two or three full minutes. He then put a lighted torch through a small hole in the wall of the chapel, supposed and believed by most of those present to have been lighted by fire from Heaven. This was received by a priest who was borne aloft on the shoulders of a body of men, who rushed with him, dispensing fire on the way, to the courtyard to light the candles of hundreds who were unable to get inside, and send a messenger with a flame direct to Bethlehem to light afresh the lamps at the Church of the Nativity. What followed is not in the power of words to describe, the delicious excitement and the mad rush for fire. In a marvelously short time the whole place was in flames and thick with smoke, and men, women, and children were bathing themselves and their clothes in the flames from their bundles of candles.—Ex.

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ETHEL D. HAINES, Lakeview, Ont.

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