

THE MISSION OF DOROTHY

By EMILY S. WINDSOR

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Cyril Moore, lawyer, was not noted for the suavity of his manner nor the mildness of his glance. Both were unusually severe this morning, and he was not inclined to deal gently with his disturber. He had been interrupted in the consideration of an important matter, but Dorothy Dale's brown eyes never flinched before his deep set gray ones.

"Please, may I talk to you a few minutes?" she asked in her soft little voice.

"I am very busy," he returned, "and gave orders that I was not to be disturbed."

"The elevator boy showed me your office, and there was no one in the other room, and so I came in," said Dorothy.

The lawyer made an impatient movement, mentally resolving upon the censure which Wilson should receive for leaving the entrance to the office unguarded.

Two little red spots had crept into Dorothy's face, but she went on bravely:

"You see," she began, "I—"

The lawyer again moved impatiently and frowned, but his small visitor persisted.

"It is so important, you see." There was a keen note of anxiety in her voice, but the brown eyes never wavered. And what was there in their depths which brought to the lawyer's mind a vague memory and made him look at his visitor with a stirring of interest, then hesitate and finally push aside the papers over which he had been absorbed and say shortly:

"What is it? I can give you a few minutes."

"Oh, thank you," said Dorothy politely. "It is about that position in the Milton school."

Cyril stared in surprise. What could this little, old fashioned girl have to say about that? It would be interesting to know. He pushed his papers farther away and leaned back in his seat.

"Sit down," he said, pointing to a chair. Dorothy obeyed with a grave "Thank you," settling herself comfortably in the chair which was so high that her feet were quite a distance from the ground. Her blue felt sailor hat was pushed back on her head, and several soft brown rings of her hair had found their way to her forehead. She lifted her clear eyes to the lawyer, and again their depths vaguely stirred his heart.

"You see, auntie lost all her money in Boston, and so we had to come here to live. Auntie owns a little house here, and she says that is better than nothing. And yesterday Mrs. Pruden told her they wanted a teacher in that school and that auntie must try to get it right away."

"Oh, indeed," ejaculated Cyril. "You see," she went on in a confidential tone, "auntie knows a lot of things. She belonged to ever so many clubs in Boston. Every one says that she is so clever."

Dorothy paused to see if the lawyer was properly impressed with the importance of her aunt's acquirements.

"Yes," said Cyril politely.

"Mrs. Pruden told auntie that you could let her teach that school, but last evening a letter came from Mr. White in Boston to say auntie must come to see him right off. You see, he attends to all of her business. So she had to go on the early train this morning." Here Dorothy stopped, out of breath.

Cyril uttered an interrogative "Yes." Dorothy smiled up at him. "And I was afraid she might be too late when she came back, and then it will be such a nice surprise for her when she does come back for me to tell her I came to see you about it."

"Then she doesn't know what you are doing?" queried Cyril.

"Oh, no. I waited till she was gone."

"Where do you live?" questioned Cyril.

"Over on Rose Crescent."

The lawyer did not recognize the locality, but there had been many changes in the old town during those years in which he had been absent from it.

"Auntie will be a splendid teacher. You see, she's so sweet. Won't you please try her?"

In her eagerness Dorothy arose and stood beside Cyril, placing her hand in its woolen mitten on his arm.

The little action thrilled him. A sudden realization of the loneliness of his life smote him, and again the child's brown eyes awoke that memory.

"Please, won't you?" urged Dorothy, with an unconscious pressure of his arm.

Cyril looked down into the eager face with an expression in his own that few had seen there during later years.

"I'll see what I can do. I must know more of her qualifications. I mean," he explained kindly, "if she knows all the things that the person who teaches in that school must know I'll do my best."

"Oh, thank you, I'll go now," Dorothy

slipped off the mitten and gravely tendered her hand to the lawyer. He rose and bowed over it with more ceremony than he had for many years shown any other member of her sex.

Dorothy flashed a confident smile at him and tripped jauntily away through the outer office, much to the surprise of Wilson, who was now at his post.

Wilson was still more surprised that afternoon when on going into the lawyer's private room he found him putting his desk in order and was waved

away with: "Don't bother me with that now. It's such a fine afternoon I think I'll take a walk and look at that Dorren property."

Wilson went back to his desk. He furtively watched the lawyer as the latter put on overcoat, hat and gloves. It was the first time within his knowledge that Cyril had set aside an important matter. What had happened?

The lawyer walked on with rapid stride. There was in the air a suggestion of the spring which was not yet near.

On the corner an organ grinder was playing popular airs. A little farther on a flower vender was offering bouquets of violets for sale. The scent of the flowers floated up to him, and the memories awakened earlier in the day by a pair of childish eyes were again stirred. Cyril bought one of the fragrant purple clusters, fastening it in the lapel of his coat with a smile. When had he done such a thing?

As he walked along his glance fell upon a lamppost bearing the name "Rose Crescent."

A sudden remembrance came to him of his little visitor of the morning. That was where she had said she lived. He recalled his promise to do what he could for her aunt. Why not call upon her and find out her fitness for the position? He paused to glance up and down the street.

But the child had not told him her aunt's name or their number. Then it was useless to consider it further. Still he would like to please that child.

He was walking on when he heard a flying of small feet behind him and his name called. He turned around to see his little visitor of the morning.

"Oh," she exclaimed, "I was at the window and saw you passing. I thought perhaps you were coming to see us."

"Well," said Cyril, smiling, "you did not tell me your number."

"I forgot," she laughed. "It's in here." They had been walking back, and now she stopped in front of a modest house standing back from the street.

"Come in," she said. "Auntie's just got home. I didn't tell her about it yet."

Cyril followed her up the garden path and into the house. She led him into a room opening off a small hall. A lady seated before an open fire rose at his entrance. She was not very young, and she was very sweet looking, with great brown eyes.

"Madam," began Cyril, "I—"

He broke off abruptly, looked bewildered, then ejaculated, "Rebecca Powers—"

"Cyril! Why?"

"You see, auntie, I went to see Mr. Moore about that school. I was afraid you'd be too late, and"—began Dorothy.

But neither her aunt nor the lawyer seemed to hear her. The latter was saying, "She has eyes like yours."

"You see, auntie," began Dorothy once more, but stopped as Cyril spoke again. "To find you here!" His face was flushed, and his eyes were shining. There was a bright color in the cheeks of Dorothy's aunt too. Dorothy was looking at her in surprise. Why, she knew Mr. Moore. Then she would surely get that school.

"Are you still Rebecca Powers? When I saw you last, I thought that you were going to marry!"

Miss Powers interrupted him quietly. "You were mistaken, but I remember you had a bad habit in those days of jumping at conclusions."

"That one has cost me dear—all these lonely years," he said.

He took the bunch of violets from his coat. "I remember you were always fond of violets, Rebecca. Are you still?" He held the fragrant blossoms toward her, and Miss Powers, after a glance into his face, took them from his hand. She held them to her lips a moment, then fastened them carefully in her bosom.

Dorothy was becoming impatient, but to her great amazement just then Cyril stooped down and kissed her aunt.

Then he turned to Dorothy. "I am going to ask your aunt to take charge of one pupil," he said—"one who needs her very much."

"One pupil!" exclaimed Dorothy.

"Why, I—"

But again neither her aunt nor the lawyer seemed to hear her.

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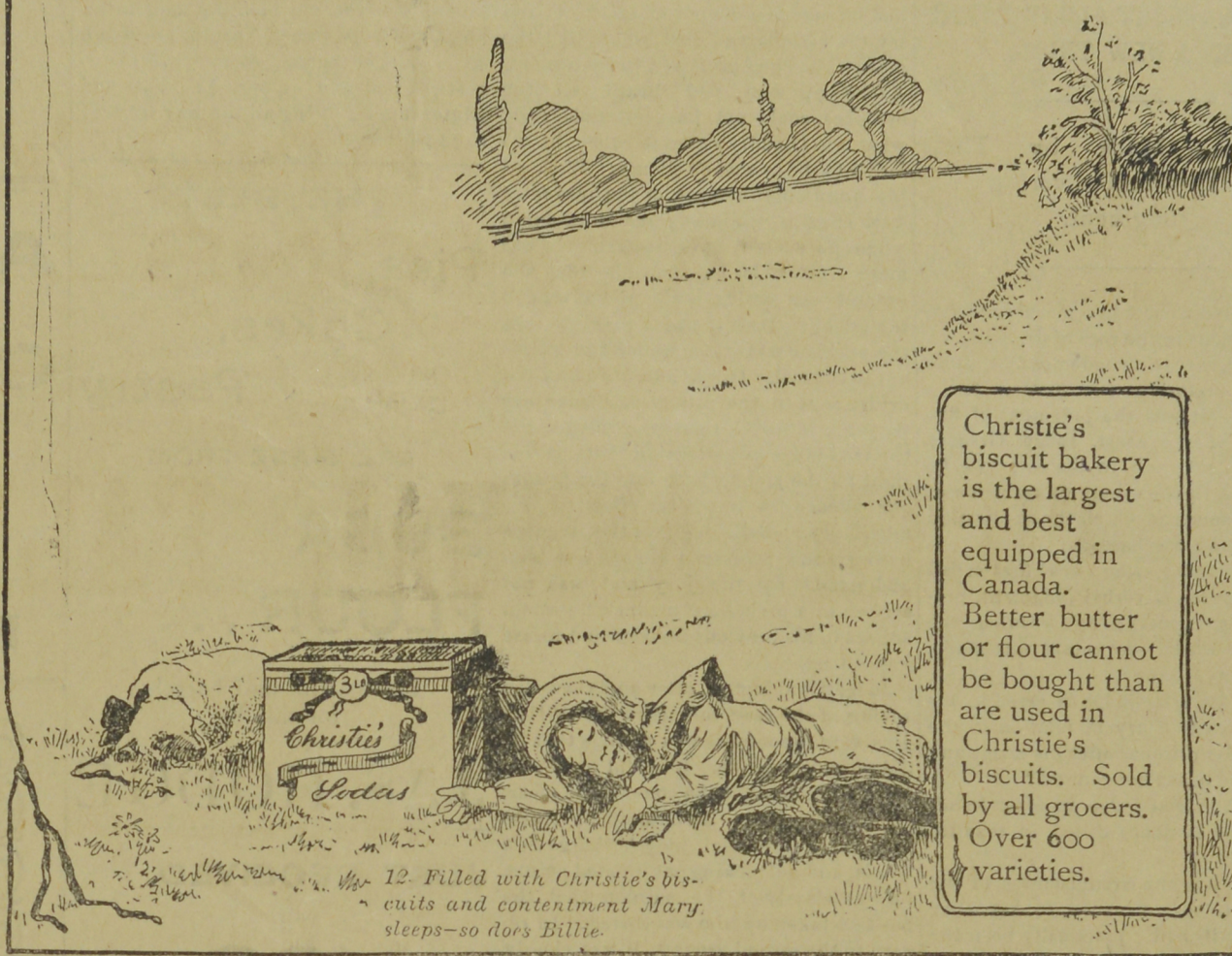
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C. H. LABILLOIS, Chief Commissioner. Department Public Works, Fredericton, Oct. 22nd, 1902. Oct. 22nd—d&wt

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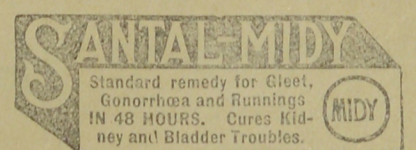
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No. 10 Express for Halifax and Sydney..... 23.25

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No. 9 Express from Halifax and Sydney 6.20
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All trains are run by Atlantic Standard Time. Twenty-four o'clock is midnight.
Moncton, Oct. 10, 1902.

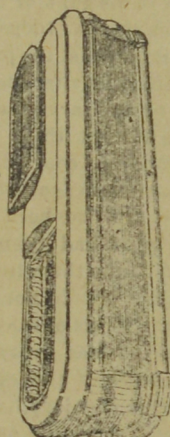
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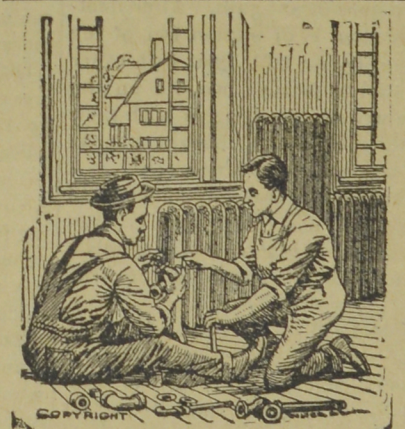
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