

"There you are transgressing again," said the minister. "I begin to fear that there are small hopes of your conversion. Yet I could wish that you were as good as you are fair. Dismiss all bigotry and prejudice from your mind, and lend an attentive ear to the truths you are privileged to hear tonight."

"I will," said Mildred, gravely.

"May God grant you the hearing ear and the believing heart," returned Mr. Strong, solemnly; "of ourselves we can do nothing."

The tea equipage having been removed, Mrs. Stainer produced some beautiful painted chimney ornaments, which she and Miss Stainer had been preparing for a Bazaar, the proceeds of which were to further the education of native children in the East Indies.

"Have you any trifles of this kind, Miss Rosier, to contribute? The smallest donations will be acceptable," said Mrs. Stainer.

"I am sorry that I cannot draw," returned Mildred. "I should have felt much pleasure in lending my aid in such a noble cause."

"A few shillings would not impoverish you greatly," said the elder lady.

"I have left my purse at home," said Mildred, much embarrassed, for indeed she had little to give.

"That's unfortunate. But if you cannot afford money, have you not some little useless ornament you could bestow, to further this great end?"

"The maiden would look much better," said the colonel, speaking for the first time, "without that useless piece of vanity about her neck. Modesty, accompanied by a meek spirit, is the best ornament for a Christian woman."

"I am of our opinion, James," said his lady, gently unclasping a small pearl necklace, to which was suspended a locket with hair, from Mildred's neck. "Cannot you give this to aid in the extension of the Saviour's kingdom?"

"Indeed," said Mildred, the tears starting to her eyes, "I cannot give that; it was a present from my dear Aunt Jane, and the locket contains my father's hair. I would not part with it for ten times its weight in gold."

"Beware of covetousness, which is idolatry, young lady," said the minister. "The more value you attach to the toy, the more acceptable will be the sacrifice."

"Take this," said Mildred, drawing a ring from her finger. "It is not the intrinsic value of the necklace which makes me reluctant to part with it; but the value which circumstances have attached to it. God, we are told, loveth a cheerful giver: there is no charity in my gift, for I consider it extorted from me."

"It will not do less good to the poor benighted

heathen, nevertheless," said Mrs. Stainer, slipping the ring into one of the mysterious looking little boxes which graced the mantel-shelf. "It was the spoils of the Egyptians which sent out the empty and hungry children of Israel full."

"I wish my ring was on my finger again," thought Mildred, as she re-clasped the pearl necklace about her snow-white throat. "It, too, was the present of a dear friend."

The tall, serious footman, announced at this moment—"that the Lord's people were assembled in the chapel,"—and a general movement took place. In the next room Mildred found about forty people collected together, the greater part of whom were the colonel's tenants, and the poor cottagers in the neighbourhood.

In spite of herself, Mildred, who was rather inclined to scoff at all that was passing around her, felt a solemn awe creep over her spirit, as a number of simple voices joined in the beautiful hymn—"God moves in a mysterious way." The deep, clear tones of Ebenezer Strong's voice, as he pronounced a plain but eloquent prayer, appropriate to the wants of all present, thrilled to her heart, and actually filled her eyes with tears; she sighed unconsciously, and wished—sincerely wished—that she was good. This unuttered prayer was perhaps the most acceptable service of the evening, to Him who judges not as men judge, but looks upon the heart.

While Mr. Strong was expounding the chapter for the night, Mildred's attention was arrested from the preacher, by the deadly paleness which she observed stealing over the face of Charlotte, and, following the fixed gaze of her eye, she beheld standing behind Colonel Stainer's chair, a young man of noble appearance, whose fine face and gentlemanly bearing proclaimed him a person of superior rank and intelligence to those around him. The next moment Charlotte was fainting in her chair. Mildred rose hastily to support her falling friend. A slight bustle ensued. The application of strong salts restored the wandering senses of the poor girl; and leaning her head upon the bosom of her young friend, she silently wept.

"Are you ill, dear Charlotte?" whispered Mildred.

"Sick—heart-sick."

"What has affected you thus?"

"The sight of him. Good heavens! what brought him here tonight?"

A glance from Mrs. Stainer put a stop to their whispered conversation; and after a long prayer from Jonas Death, followed by another from the serious footman, the colonel concluded the services of the evening with a short exhortation: Mr. Strong pronounced the blessing and the company dispersed. The stranger alone retained his place,