

"Timothy looked up, sort o' wild an' glazed.
"Canvas cots, s'e, 'in the house o' the Lord?"

"Why, Timothy," says his wife, helpless, 'it's all warm there, an' they're there now, an' we don't know what else. We thought we'd carry up their supper to 'em—'

"Supper," says Timothy, 'in the house o' the Lord?"

"Then Mis' Toplay spunks up some. "Why, yes," she says, 'I'm goin' to milk the Jersey an' take up the two pails."

"Timothy waves his barked arm in the air.

"Never!" s'e, 'never. We elders'll never consent to that, not in this world!"

"Well, at that we all stood around sort o' pinned to the air. This hadn't occurred to nobody. But his wife was back at him, real crispy.

"Timothy Toplady," s'she, 'they use churches for hospitals an' refuges,' she says.

"They do," says Timothy, solemn, 'they do, in necessity. An' war. An' siege. But here's the whole o' Friendship Village to take these children in, an' it's sacrilege to use the house o' God for any purpose whatever while it's waitin' its dedication. It's stealin', he says, 'from the Lord Most High."

"I never see anybody more het up. We all tried to tell him. Nobody in Friendship has a warm spare room in winter, without it's the Proudfts, an' they was in Europe an' their house locked. Mebbe ten of us, we counted up afterwards, could 'a' took in one child to 'a' slep' with some member o' the family. But, as Abel said, where was the time to canvass round? An' what would we do with the other ten? But Timothy wouldn't listen to nothin'.

"Amanda," s'e in a married voice, 'I forbid you to carry a drop o' Jersey milk or any other kind o' milk up to that church."

"With that he was out the front door an' liniment forgot.

"Mis' Sykes spat her hands.

"He'll find Silas Sykes an' Eppleby," she says to Mis' Eppleby Holcomb. "Quick! Let's get our hands on my bread an' your cookies. Them poor little things—way past their supper hour."

"An' none of 'em got mothers," says Mis' Sturgis. 'Just left round with lockets on, I s'pose, an' wrecked an' hungry—'

"An' one of 'em lame," Mis' Eppleby Holcomb says, down on her knees tryin' to sort out her overshoes. The Sodality never could tell its own overshoes.

"Well, they scattered so quick it made you think o' mulberry leaves, some years, in the first frost, an' I was left alone with Mis' Toplady.

"Here," she says to me then, all squintin' with firmness, 'you take along all the linen an' comfo'tables you can lug. Timothy didn't mention them. An' leave the rest to me."

"I turned that over in my mind while I stumbled along back to the church, loaded down. But I couldn't make much out of it. I knew Timothy Toplady, that he meant what he said, an' I knew he could run Silas Sykes—the post-master's political strength, as I mentioned, makin' him kind o' wobbled in his own judgment o' other things. I didn't know how Eppleby'd be—it might turn out to be one o' the things he'd up an' question, civilized, but I wa'n't sure. Anyhow, the cream cookies wasn't so vital as them five loaves o' bread.

"When I got back to the church, here it was all lit up. Abel had lit the lamp chandelier on a secular scene. Bless 'em, it surely was as secular as it was sacred. Six or seven of the little things was buildin' a palace out o' the split wood, with the little lame girl for queen. The little blonde one an' the one that was delicate lookin' had gone to sleep by the stove. Mitsy, she run from somewheres an' grabbed my hand. An' Abel had the rest over by the other stove tellin' 'em stories, fairy stories. I heard him say 'dragon' an' 'blue velvet' an' 'golden hair'."

"I hadn't more'n got inside the door before Zittelhof's wagon come with the cots. An' Mis' Zittelhof was with him, her arms full o' bedclothes she'd gathered up around from folks. I never said a word to Abel about the trouble with

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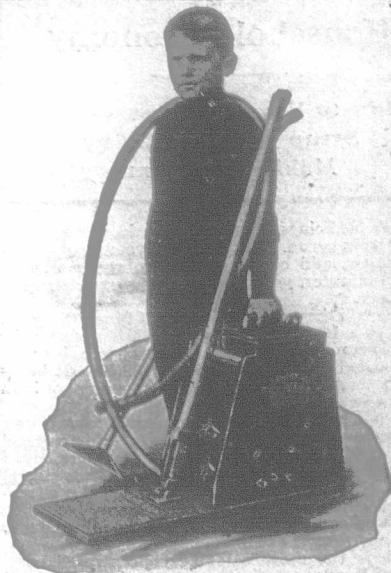
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Timothy. I donno if Abel really heard us come in, he was so excited about his dragon. An' Mis' Zittelhof an' I begun makin' up the cots. On the first one I laid the two babies that was asleep on the floor. They never woke up. Their little cheeks was warm an' pink, an' one of 'em hed some tears on it. When I see that, I clean forgot the church wasn't dedicated, an' I thanked God they was there, safe an' by a good fire, with somebody tendin' to 'em.

"The bed-makin' an' the palace buildin' an' the story-tellin' went on, an' I kep' gettin' exciteder every minute. When the door opened I couldn't tell which was in my mouth, my heart or my tongue. But it was only Libbie Liberty with the big iron kettle o' chicken broth an' a basket o' cups an' spoons. She lifted the kettle up to the stove an' stirred up the fire under it, an' it was no time before the whole church begun to smell savory as a kitchen. An' then in walks Mis' Holcomb with her cream cookies, an' Mis' Holcomb—that-was-Mame Bliss with her brown bread an' more dishes. An' we fair jumped up an' down when Mis' Sykes come breathin' in the door with them five loaves o' wheat bread safe, an' butter to match."

"Still, we was without milk. There wasn't a sign o' Mis' Toplady. An' any minute Timothy might get there with Silas in tow. Mis' Sykes was nervous as a witch over it, an' it was her proposed we set the children up on the cots an' begin feedin' 'em right away. I run

MENTION THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE WHEN WRITING ADVERTISERS.