

IT IS FINISHED!



In the charming little work, "Our Coffee Room," the gifted authoress says:— I shall not easily forget a visit I paid one day by mistake!—a happy mistake it was. Intending to call at a particular house in a small street, I knocked at the wrong door, and was immediately welcomed in by a kind,

motherly-looking woman, who offered me a seat in her little parlour. So friendly an offer could not be refused, and, for the sake of conversation, I asked her why she had placed in the window some conspicuously large texts, which in passing I had often noticed.

With a very sweet smile, she replied, "Those texts have a history."

Being invited to "tell the history," she gave me the following story thus:—"Fourteen years ago," she said, "my dear husband was a drunkard; he used to drink terribly, and two or three times everything in our house was sold for drink. The first twelve years of our married life were spent in poverty and distress; but through it all I had one comfort, and that was in praying to the Lord for him. Every night, too, for all those years I put a tract on the table before he came in to tea, made the room as comfortable as I could, and had the armchair set for him before the fire. Sometimes he would take up the tract and look at it, then curse and swear; sometimes he would take no notice of it; but still I went on placing it there within his reach every night.

"One evening he came in as usual. I was just setting the kettle on the fire when he took up the tract. This time it happened to be one entitled, 'What has Jesus done by dying?'"* He held it in his hand for a moment, then went upstairs. A long time passed, and he did not come down. At last, fearing something was the matter, I went to the bedroom, knocked at the door, but got no answer. Looking in, I saw him on his knees by the bed."

"Was he praying?" I asked.

"No, miss," she said, "he was praising God! He made me kneel down beside him. When we got up from our knees, he pointed to three words in the middle of the tract in large print, 'It is finished?'"

"Oh! Mary," he said, "why did you never tell me that before? I always thought I must strive, and toil, and labour and pray, if I wanted to reform; but that it was all dreadful uphill work, and that as often as I took a step up I should slip a step down again—so that it was of no use trying; but I see now that Jesus did all the work for me, and said, 'It is finished!' too. All the work is done, and I believe in it all. I wish I had known this before. I wish I had known it."

"After this," continued the wife, "he came down

to his tea, but he took very little, and spoke scarcely a word for two or three days.

"Then came Saturday. In the evening he brought me all his money, and counted it out on the table; but as he finished reckoning it up, he said, 'Mary, I want one shilling for myself.' This might have been for the inevitable half-pint of beer or packet of tobacco, which runs away with so much of the hard-earned silver; but not so to-night."

Continuing her narrative, she said: "He went out, and was gone some little time, while I sat at home praying all the while. At last the door opened, and he came in, carrying a brown paper parcel in his hand. This he unfastened, and showed me six large print texts which he had bought. These he said he wanted to put up outside the house, for 'everybody to see;' so he got a hammer and some nails, and hammered them up outside the wall facing the street.

"However, the rain came, and battered them about, so he took them down next morning, and put them inside the window; and he has kept on putting them there ever since.

"Thank God, he was a changed man from that night. He never touched another drop of drink; but he would often say, 'Oh, Mary, I dread even the smell of it'.

"The first day he came in to dinner—after he had read that tract, and it had changed him so—he caught sight of the jug of beer on the table, for the doctor had ordered beer for me, as I was not very well. But as he saw it, he turned away; so I just said to the little girl, 'Throw away that beer, Emma; we won't have it in the house again'—and none of us have ever touched it since."

Would it not be well if, among the wives and mothers of our land, we could see practised more of this holy self-sacrificing decision, resulting as it ever must in the "hundred-fold more in this present life," as well as in a golden harvest for the ages to come? Prayer and effort thus combined must ever move the giving Hand, for to such paths of obedience as these His promises are bestowed, and on such a life His richest blessings must descend.

"What were the texts he put up that night?" I asked her, in conclusion.

"They were all very simple texts about the ways of salvation," she said, such as these:—

"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved."

"Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out."

"Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

"I am the way, the truth, and the life."

"Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth."

So the poor drunkard had become a "preacher of righteousness," one of the "trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He might be glorified," and all through the simple story of the cross—that one only effectual remedy for the sin-stricken soul; the only fountain of healing provided for those wounded by the deadly bite of the serpent.

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