

an office ink-bottle; but this spring no melody, no light or perfume, had penetrated her despair.

Yes, it was April by the almanac—and it was Good Friday!

Barbara was not a churchwoman, but a thrill of awe, of fear, went through her with a startling realization of her late moral stupor. Truly death was associated with Good Friday, but whose death? The Saviour of the whole world! Her Saviour, if so he had any right belief in him. Weakening until her knees failed under her, Barbara sank to the floor, her thoughts turning from herself to that Holy One whose wondrous story seemed, of a sudden, to fill all her memory, the Christ who was a "Man of sorrows, acquainted with grief." The house was as silent as the grave, but borne in to her, as by an audible voice, were the heart-melting words, "Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows. . . . He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray."

"Yes! Yes, Lord Jesus! That is what I have done," wailed Barbara. "I have gone all astray, off into the darkness and almost into the pit. Come after me, O thou Crucified One! Come after my poor lost soul!"

If Barbara had been a Romanist or a mystic, she would later have made much of her own spiritual experiences that day in which she prayed long under the yellow almanac; but all she ever told was, "I got such a blessing that Good Friday never can mean a dark day to me. I presume the sun had been shining those spring days previous, but when I first threw open my doors and windows it did seem as if the world were just made and flooded with a new glory of light. When I was a little used to such a change what do you think I did? I took that Bible, lying open at the 'Death Record,' and I wrote down, 'While we were yet sinners Christ died for us,' and then on the other page, where granny wrote my name forty years before, I wrote 'Born again April 2, 18—.'"

That night Barbara slept like a little child, and on the morrow "began to live" in a sweet, simple fashion, pathetic too, had any known or cared. She studied how to make a "home" without money, how to touch other lives for good, and resolved after Sunday to go out in quest of work. All day her heart sang for joy to remember the coming Easter. She presumed that no one had missed her from church, but the Lord must see her there once more with praises on her lips. It was with a queer worshipful thought that she discarded the old woollen garb that had clad her in those days of despair and adapted from her wardrobe relics a quaintly neat costume.

Next morning she was a little fearful that she was "too fine" when she saw the effect of soft lace about her neck, a fresh ribbon on her bonnet, and a bunch of blue violets in her bosom. To tone down so much splendor she put on her grandmother's quaker-colored shawl, which only brought out a delicate pink in her cheeks. But no vanity found place in Barbara's soul that day, for it was too full of Easter joy, too conscious that

"The heart that trusts for ever sings
And feels as light as it had wings,
A well of peace within it springs,
Come good or ill,
What ill to-day, to-morrow, brings,
It is His will."

That was a rare walk to church, the air full of spring odors, little brown streamlets trickling through the new grass, bluebirds, robins, and budding foliage in the lane. At the door the sexton greeted her, and it was good to be again in her old place. Did the other hearers discover most uncommon beauty in the Scriptures read and unearthly sweetness in the hymns sung? Did they know that the minister had never before talked so lovingly of a risen Saviour? If not, all that was Barbara's great gain.

In the pew just in front of her was a small girl, hunchbacked, with wistful blue eyes continually turning towards the violets in Barbara's dress. When the people stood up to sing the doxology the woman timidly slid them over the crooked shoulders into the child's hand and was thanked with a glance which made her too ready tears start. On her way home she asked herself how ever she had wanted to go out of a world

where there were spring flowers, grateful little children, and Easter hymns.

In the week that followed Barbara mortgaged her house to Mr. Hewitt, who offered to lend her a much larger sum than she needed on the easiest terms. She supplied herself with some new comforts and decided to go to raising fruit and vegetables for market. This had been her grandparent's occupation; she understood the business and had ground enough behind her little house.

Seven days passed and Sunday came again. This time the sexton, attracted by something friendly in Barbara's face, said good morning. Just inside the porch was the little girl, who smiled brightly, and with her a thin, middle-aged man.

"That's Lawyer Randall's heir, I suppose you know," whispered the sexton. "He says he taught school here years ago—his name's Marvin."

Barbara hurried into her pew, and out of it later, without seeing anything but the new-comer's coat-collar—rather rusty it was—and his thin, gray-streaked hair. She was not actually excited. Why should she be after twenty years, and the mother of the poor little hunchback somewhere, no doubt? Two days later John Marvin came to see her, and he seemed altogether too old to be the young school teacher, but presently he fused the old John and the young John into a person not unfamiliar. When he had made subsequent calls Barbara was glad that he had numerous gray hairs, considering the years that she herself had spent in the office with the dust-box. This was after he had told her about his early struggles with poverty, and of his wife (now dead), and Barbara herself had yielded up the facts in regard to those mislaid letters.

The spring came in jubilantly. Barbara planned her garden, sowed her seed, and blushed to reflect that John Marvin could not possibly need half the useless information about his departed uncle that he pretended to require. Soon he begged her to take in his little Katie to board, and when she told him that she lived too simply, he replied that Katie had been used to simplicity and he himself was not rich now. That not being exactly to the point, he grew even more explicit in regard to his desires. In May there was a full moon of course, and naturally the lane was just as fragrant and pretty as it had been twenty years before. So, in spite of Barbara's convictions that they were "too old for such doings," John would entice her out there to walk and to talk. Of course a lawyer was too plausible not to gain all he wanted in a case like this, and Barbara finally promised to take in Katie and Katie's father—though not as boarders.

That summer the prim old house blossomed out into a piazza and two bow-windows, beside a mansard roof. Barbara never raised any vegetables for market, but the little hunchback revelled in flowers, and every Easter Barbara filled her hands with violets—only she called them "Heartsease."

WORK FOR LITTLE WORKERS.

A HINT FOR MISSION BANDS.

We are glad to publish this letter, partly because Mr. Ritchie asks us, and partly because it will help answer questions we are constantly receiving as to what children who form the Mission Bands throughout the country can do in the way of practical mission work. Let the letter first speak for itself.

MONTREAL SAILORS' INSTITUTE.

Montreal, 1st Feb., 1888.

EDITOR NORTHERN MESSENGER.—I received the letter of which the following is a copy on the 21st Nov. last and also six bags containing the articles mentioned, which will be much prized by our sailors. Will you please let this appear in your good and useful Messenger that as Miss Anning suggests, others may get an incentive to do likewise. We can make good use of a great number. Such bags can be made of any strong material, such as cretonne, linen, &c., and let the articles be of the best quality, as a man at sea cannot go next door to buy a needle if one breaks. For further information apply to

JOHN RITCHIE, Manager,
Sailors' Institute,
Montreal, Que.

(Papers favorable please copy).

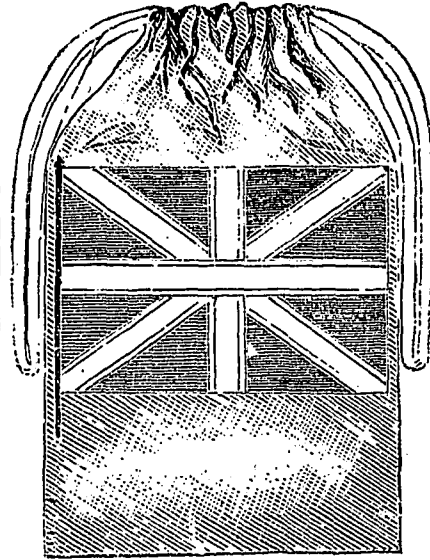
Pictou, Ontario, Nov. 19th, 1887.

MR. RITCHIE, Dear Sir,—Some time ago I saw an account in the Montreal Messenger of two little girls in New York who each year made bags, each containing sundry articles, as thread, thim-

ble, needle book, needles, wax, buttons and a Testament with a letter from themselves. These bags were sent to the Seaman's Home and disposed of at the discretion of the missionary in charge. I wished to take some plan to awaken a deeper interest in others among the little girls of my Sunday school class. This then seemed the most feasible, or at least a feasible way of doing so, and as they readily agreed to it, you have the result before you in the shape of the bags. We designed them more particularly for ocean sailors and would like them so used if possible. The children were interested in the work and I feel sure part of the reward came in the doing. If you would kindly acknowledge the receipt of the bags and also let me know if you think the idea a good one, as we might do the same at another time, you would confer a favor upon, yours sincerely,

EDITH ANNING.

As we thought it more than likely that comparatively few of our readers had seen bags such as these, we borrowed one from Mr. Ritchie and got one of our artists to make a rough sketch of it. The one here represented came from England. It is made of strong, brown linen and has a double drawing string of scarlet braid. The Union



Jack is very neatly made with a ground of navy blue cotton and the crosses of scarlet braid edged with narrow pieces of white cotton and the whole stitched with the machine. But this ornament, though making the bag more attractive, is by no means essential. Another bag we examined was made of dark cretonne lined with blue silk and contained a needle book filled with needles large and small, strong white and black thread, balls of darning yarn, a little bag of buttons, a ball of bees-wax, a lead pencil, large thimble, a dainty little gilt edged Testament with a number of marked passages, and a short note from the little girl who made it wishing the sailor into whose hands it should fall a Merry Merry Christmas, expressing the hope that her Saviour was his Saviour too, and giving her address, asking that whosoever should get it if they felt inclined would write to her that she might have some idea into whose hands her work had fallen and so know that it had been useful to some one.

Mr. Ritchie has ample use for hundreds of these bags and if we know anything of young Missionary Workers many hundreds throughout the country will be glad to know of some one thing which will keep willing young fingers busy and afterwards be of practical use to others.

ED. NORTHERN MESSENGER.

For "Prize Bible Questions" see second page

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