

WHAT CAN SHE DO?

By E. P. Roe.

(Continued.)
Such a woman readily surmised the nature of Edith's trouble, and knew well how deeply the shadow of Zell's disgrace would fall on the family. Edith's desperate effort to save her sister, her bitter humiliation and shrinking shame in view of the flight, all proved her to be worthy of respect and confidence herself. When Mrs. Groody said that Edith lived in a little house, and was probably not in so high a social position as to resent her patronage, her big heart yearned in double sympathy over the poor girl, and she determined to help her in the struggle she knew to be before her; so she said, kindly,
"Now ain't there somethin' I can do for you?"

The driver stood with his lantern near the door, and its rays fell on Edith's pale face and large, tearful eyes, and she turned, and for the first time tried to see who this kind woman was, that seemed to feel for her. Taking Mrs. Groody's hands, she said, in a voice of tremulous pathos,
"God bless you for speaking to me at all. I didn't think anyone would again, who knew. You ask if you can do anything for me. If you'll only get me work, I'll bless you every day of my life. No one in earth or in heaven can help me, unless I get work. I'm almost desperate for it, and I can't seem to find any that will bring us bread, but I'll do any honest work, no matter what, and I'll take whatever people are willing to give for it, till I can do better." Edith spoke in a rapid manner, but in a tone that went straight to the heart.

"Why, my poor child," said Mrs. Groody, wiping her eyes, "You can't do work. You are pale as a ghost, and you look like a delicate lady."

"What is there in this world for a delicate lady who has no money, but honest work?" asked Edith, in a tone that was almost stern.

"I see that you are such a lady, and it seems that you ought to find some lady-like work, if you must do it," said Mrs. Groody, hesitatingly.

"We have tried to get employment—alms—any kind. I can't think my sister would have taken her desperate course if we could have obtained something to do. I know she ought to have starved first. But we were not brought up to work, and we can't do anything well enough to satisfy people, and we haven't time to learn. Besides, before this happened, for some reason people stood aloof from us, and now it will be far worse. Oh, what shall we do? What shall we do?" cried Edith, despairingly, and in her trouble she seemed to turn her eyes away from Mrs. Groody, with wild questioning of the future.

Her new acquaintance was smiling and blowing her nose in a manner that betokened serious internal commotion. The driver, who would have hustled any ordinary passenger out quickly enough, waited Mrs. Groody's leisure at a respectable distance. He knew her potential influence at the hotel. At last the good woman found her voice, though it seemed a little husky:

"For bless you, child, I ain't got a mill-stun for a heart, and if I had, you'd turn it into wax. If work's all you want, you shall have it. I'm housekeeper at the hotel. You come to me as soon as you are able, and we'll find something."

"Oh, thank you, thank you!" said Edith fervently.

"Is dat you, Miss Edith?" called Hannibal's anxious voice.

"Good night, my dear," said Mrs. Groody, hastily. "Don't lose courage. I ain't on as good terms with the Lord as I ought to be. I seem too worried and busy to 'tend to religion; but I know enough about him to be sure that He will take care of a poor child that wants to do right."

"I don't understand how God lets happen all that's happened to-day. The best I can believe is, that we are dealt with in a case, and the poor human atoms are sent right off. But I am indeed grateful for your kindness, and will come to-morrow and do anything I can. Good-bye."

And the hack rumbled away, leaving her in the darkness, with Hannibal at the gate.

"Oh, Hannibal, Hannibal," was all that Edith could say.

"Is she done gone clean away?" asked Hannibal, in an awed whisper.

"Would to heaven she had never been born," said Edith bitterly. "Help me into the house, for I feel as if I would die."

Hannibal, trembling with fear himself, supported poor, exhausted Edith to a sofa, and then disappeared in the kitchen.

Mrs. Allen and Laura came and stood with white faces by Edith's languid, un-nerved form.

There was no need of asking questions. She had returned alone, with her fresh young face looking old and drawn in its grief.

At last Mrs. Allen said, with bitter emphasis:
"She is no child of mine from this day forth."

Then followed such a dreary silence that it might seem that Zell had died and was no more.

At last Hannibal bustled in, making a most desperate effort to keep up a poor show of courage and hope. He placed on a little table before Edith a steaming hot cup of tea, some toast, some wine, but the food was motionless away.

"It would choke me," said Edith.

Hannibal stood before her a moment, his quaint old visage working under the influence of emotion, almost beyond control. At last he managed to say:

"Miss Edie, we've all a leanin' on you

We've nothin but vines a-climbin up de orange bush. If you goes down, we all does. And now, Miss Edie, I'd swallow poison for you, won't you take a cup o' tea for de sake of ole Hannibal? Cause your sweet face looks so pinched, honey, dat I feels dat my ole black heart's ready to bust; and Hannibal, feeling that the limit of his restraint was reached, retreated precipitately to the kitchen.

The appeal, with its element of deep affection, was more needed by Edith in her half paralyzed state than even the material refreshment. She sat up instantly, and drank the tea and wine, and ate a little of the toast. Then taking the cup and glass into the kitchen,

"There," she said, "see, I've drunk every drop. So don't worry about me any more, my poor ole Hannibal, but go to bed, after your hard day's work."

But Hannibal would not venture out of his dark corner, but muttered, brokenly,
"Lor—bress—you—Miss Edie—you're angel—see be better soon—see got de hump."

Edith thought it kindness to leave the old man to recover his self-control in his own time and way, so she said,
"Good-night, my faithful old friend. You're worth your weight in gold."

CHAPTER XXI.

The next morning Edith was too ill to rise. She had become chilled after her extraordinary exertion of the previous evening, and a severe cold was the consequence; and this, with the nervous prostration of an overtaxed system, made her appear more seriously indisposed than she really was. For the sake of her mother and Laura, she wished to be present at the meagre little breakfast which her economy now permitted, but found it impossible; and later in the day, her mind seemed disposed to wander.

Mrs. Allen and Laura were terror-stricken at this new trouble. Hannibal said they were all leaning on Edith. They had lost confidence in themselves, and now from the outside world.

Poor old Hannibal had no fear for himself. His devotion to Edith reminded him of a faithful dog; it was so strong, instinctive, unreasoning.

"We must have a physician immediately," said Laura, with white lips.

"Oh, no," murmured Edith; "we can't afford it."

"We must," said Laura, with a sudden rush of tears. "Everything depends on you."

Hannibal, who heard this brief dialogue, went silently down stairs, and at once started in quest of Arden Lacey.

"If he is quar, he seemed kind of human; and I believe he'll help us now."

Arden was on his way to the barn, having just finished a farmer's twelve o'clock dinner, when Hannibal entered the yard. An angel of light could not have been more welcome than this dusky messenger, for he came from the centre of all light and hope now to poor Arden. Then a feeling of alarm took possession of him. Had anything happened to Edith? He had seen her shrinking shame. Had it led her to—and he shuddered at the thought his wild imagination suggested. It was almost a relief when Hannibal said,

"Oh, Mr. Lacey, I'm sure from de way you acted when you first come, dat you can feel for people in trouble. Miss Edie's berry sick, and I don't know what to go for a doctor, and she won't have any; but she must, and right away. Den again, I oughter not to leave, for dey's all nearly dead wid trouble and cryin'."

"You are a good, faithful fellow, said Arden, heartily, go back and do all you can for Miss Edith, and I'll bring a doctor myself, and much quicker too than you could."

Before Hannibal reached home, Arden galloped past him, and the old man chuckled.

"De drunken Lacey's mighty good neighbors when dey's sober."

Dr. Neely, a new-comer who was gaining some little name for skill and success, and was making the most of it, was at home; but on Arden's hurried application, he hesitated, colored a little, and at last said—

"Look here, Mr.—(I beg your pardon, I've not the pleasure of knowing your name.) I'm a comparative stranger in Pushton, and am just gaining some little reputation among the better classes. I would rather not compromise myself by attendance upon that family. If you can't get anyone else, and the girl is suffering, of course I'll try and go, but—"

"Enough," interrupted Arden, starting up blushing with wrath. "You should spell your name with an S, I want a man as well as a physician, and, with a look of utter contempt, he hastened away, leaving the medical man somewhat anxious, not about Edith, but whether he had taken the best course in view of his growing reputation.

Arden next traced out Dr. Blunt, who readily promised to come. He attended all alike, and charged roundly also.

"Business is business," was his motto. "People whom we employ we must expect to pay. After all I'm the cheapest man in the place, for I tell my patients the truth, and cure them as quickly as possible."

Arden's urgency soon brought him to Edith's side, and his practised eye saw no serious cause for alarm, and having heard more fully the circumstances, said, "She will be well in a few days if she is kept quiet, and nothing new sets in. Of course she will be sick after last night. One might as well put his hand in the fire and not expect to burn him, as to get very warm and then cool off suddenly without being ill. Her pulse indicates general depression of her system, and need of rest. That's all."

(To be Continued)

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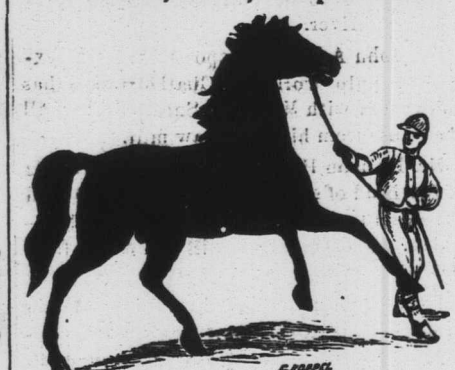
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1884.

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New Brunswick Railway.

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WINTER TIME TABLE.

All trains are run by Eastern Standard Time, which minutes slower than St. John actual time.

COMMENCING OCTOBER, 19th, 1884. Trains will run as follows:

St. John Division.

DEPARTURES.

8 10 A. M.—From Water Street, St. John—Express for points West and for Fredericton, St. Stephen, St. Andrews, Houlton, Woodstock, and all points North and South.

3 30 P. M.—From Water Street, St. John—Express for Fredericton.

8 30 P. M.—From Water Street, St. John—Night Express for points West, and for St. Stephen, Woodstock, Houlton, and all points North.

2 00 P. M.—From Fredericton—Accommodation for St. John.

6 25 A. M.—From Fredericton—Passenger and Mail for St. John.

9 10 A. M.—From Frederic