

WHAT CAN SHE DO?

By E. F. Roe.

(Continued.)

"And I can't get any work," said Edith despondingly. "People have got to know how to do things before anybody wants them, and we haven't time to learn."

"Ten dollars won't last long," said Zell recklessly. "I will go down to the village and make further inquiries to-morrow." Edith continued in a weary tone. "It seems strange how people stand aloof from us. No one calls and everybody wants what we owe them right away. Are there not any good kind people in Pushton? I wish we had not offended the Lacey. They might have advised and helped us, but nothing would tempt me to go to them after treating them as we did."

The next day Edith started on another unsuccessful expedition to the village, and while she was gone, Zell went to the post office to which she had told Van Dam to direct his reply. She found the plausible lie we have already placed before the reader.

At first she experienced a sensation of anger that he had not complied with her wish. It was a new experience to have gentlemen, especially Van Dam, so long her obsequious slave, think of anything contrary to her wishes. She also feared that Edith might be right, and that Van Dam designed evil against her. She would not openly admit, even to herself, that this was her purpose, and yet Edith's words had been so clear and strong, and Van Dam's conditions placed her so entirely at his mercy, that she shrank from him and was fascinated at the same time.

But instead of indignantly casting the letter from her, she read it again and again. Her foolish heart pleaded for him.

"He couldn't be so false to me, so false to his written word," she said, and the letter was hidden away, and she passed into the dangerous stage of irresolution, where temptation is secretly dwelt upon. She hesitated and according to the proverb, the woman who does this is lost. Instead of indignantly casting temptation from her, she left her course open, to be decided somewhat by circumstances. She willfully shut her eyes to the danger, and tried to believe, and did almost believe that her lover meant honestly by her.

And so the days passed, Edith vainly trying to find something to do, and working hard in her garden, which at present brought no return. She was often very irritable and despondent and again very irritable. Laura's apathy only deepened, and she seemed like one not yet awakened from a dream of the past. Zell made some show of work, but after all left most everything for Hannibal as before, and when Edith sharply chided her she laughed recklessly and said,—"What's the use? If we are going to starve we might as well do so at once and its over with."

"I won't starve," said Edith, almost fiercely. "There must be honest work somewhere in the world for one willing to do it, and I'm going to find it. At any rate, I can raise food in my garden before long."

"I'm afraid we'll starve before your cabbages and carrots come to maturity, and we might as well as try and live on such garbage. Supplies are running low, and as you say, the money is nearly gone."

"Yes, and people won't trust us any more. Two or three declined to in the village to-day, and I feel too discouraged and ashamed to ask any further. For some people seem afraid of us. I see persons turn and look after me, and yet they avoid me. Two or three impudent clerks tried to make my acquaintance, but I snubbed them in such a way that they will let me alone hereafter. I wonder if any stories could have got around about us? Country towns are such places for gossip."

"Have you heard of any scholars?" said Laura languidly. "No, not one," was Edith's despondent answer. "If nothing turns up before I'll go to New York next Monday and sell some more things, and I'll go where I'm known this time."

Nothing turned up, and by Sunday they had nothing in the house save a little dry bread, which they ate moistened with wine and water. Mrs. Allen sighed and cried all day. Laura had the strange manner of one waking up to something unrealized before. Restlessness began to take the place of apathy, and her eyes often sought the face of Edith in a questioning manner. Finding her alone in the garden, she said,—"Why, Edith, I'm hungry. I never remember being hungry before. Is it possible we have come to this?"

Edith burst into tears, and said brokenly,—"Come with me to the arbor."

"I'm sure I'm willing to do anything," said Laura pitiously, "but I never realized we would come to this."

"Oh, how can the birds sing?" said Edith bitterly. "This beautiful spring weather, with its promise and hopefulness, seems a mockery. The sun is shining brightly, flowers are budding and blooming, and all the world seems so happy, but my heart aches as if it would burst. I'm hungry, too, and I know poor old Hannibal is faint, though he tries to keep up whenever I am around."

"But Edith, if people knew how we are situated they would not let us want. Our old acquaintances in New York, or our relations even, though not very friendly, would surely keep us."

"Oh, yes, I suppose so for a little while, but I can't bring myself to ask for charity, and no one would undertake to support us. What discourages me most is that I can't get work that will bring in

money. Between people wishing to have nothing to do with us, on one hand, and my ignorance on the other, there seems no resource. Some of those whom we owe seem inclined to press us. I'm so afraid of losing this place and being out on the street. If I could only get a chance somewhere, or get time to learn to do something well!"

Then after a moment she asked suddenly, "Where's Zell?"

"In her room, I think."

"I don't like Zell's manner," said Edith, after a brief, painful reverie. "It's so hard and reckless. Something about her mind. She has long fits of abstraction as if she was thinking of something, or weighing some plan. Could she have had any communication with that villain, Van Dam? Oh, that would be the bitterest drop of all in our cup of sorrow. I would rather see her dead than that."

"Oh dear," said Laura, "it seems as if I had been in a trance and had just awakened. Why Edith, I must do something. It is not right to let you bear all these things alone. But don't trouble about Zell, not one of George Allen's daughters will sink to that."

CHAPTER XIX.
A FALLING STAR.

Zell slept most of the day. She had reached that point where she did not want to think. On hearing Edith say that she would go to New York on Monday, a sudden and strong temptation assailed her. Impulsive, but not courageous, abounding in energy, but having little fortitude, she found the conditions of her country life growing unbearable. Van Dam seemed her only refuge, her only means of escape. She soon felt all hope of their sustaining themselves by work in Pushton. Her uncured nature could wait patiently for nothing, and as the long, idle days passed, she doubted, and then despaired, on any success from Edith's plans. She harbored Van Dam's temptation, and the consciousness of doing this hurt her womanly nature, and her hard, reckless tone and manner was the natural consequence. Though she said to herself, and tried to believe,

"He will marry me—he has promised again and again."

But to satisfy her conscience, which she could not still, and to provide some excuse for her action, and still more, to brace the hope she tried to cherish that he really meant truly by her, she wrote, "If I will meet you at the boat Monday evening, will you surely marry me? Promise me on your sacred honor."

Van Dam muttered, with a low laugh, as he read the note, "That's a rich joke, for her to accept such a proposition as mine, especially after all that has happened, and still prate of 'sacred honor.'"

But he unhesitatingly, promptly, and with many protestations, assured her that he would, and at once prepared to carry out his part of the promise.

"What's the use of half-way lies?" he said, carelessly. On Monday Edith again took the early train with the valuable she designed disposing of. Zell had said indifferently, "You may take anything I have left except my watch and chain."

But Laura had insisted on sending her watch, saying, "I really wish to do something, Edith. I've left all the burden on you too long."

Mrs. Allen sighed, and said, "Take anything you please." So Edith carried away with her the means of fighting the wolf, hunger, from their doors a little longer. But if she had known that a more cruel enemy would despoil her home in her absence, she would have rather starved than gone.

Laura was reading to her mother when Zell put her head in at the door, saying, "I am going for a short walk, and will be back soon."

She hastened to the office at which she told Van Dam to address her, and found his reply. With feverish cheeks, and eyes in which glowed excitement rather than happiness, she read it as soon as alone on the road, and returned as quickly as possible. Her mind was in a mild tumult, but she would not allow herself one connected thought. She spent most of the day in her room preparing for her flight. But when she came down to see Hannibal about their meagre lunch, he said in some surprise and alarm,

"Oh, Miss Zell, how burnin' red your cheeks be! You've got a ragin' fever, sure 'nuff. Go and lie right straight down, and I see to every ting. I've been to de village and got some tea. A man gave it to me as a sample, and I telled him we're like our tea mighty strong, so you've all hab a cup of tea to-day, and to-night Miss Edie'll come back with a heap of money."

"Poor old Hannibal," said Zell, with a sudden rush of tenderness. "I wish I were as good as you are."

"For bless you, Miss Zell, I isn't good. I've kind of a heathen. But somehow I feels dat the Lord will bless me when I steals for you all."

"Oh, Hannibal, I wish I was dead and out of the way! Then there would be one less to provide for."

"Dead and out of de way!" said Hannibal, half indignantly, "dat's jest how to get into de way. I'd be afear'd of seein your spook whenever I was alone. I had no comfort in New York arter Massa Allen died, and was mighty glad to get away even to Pushton. And den Miss Edie and all would cry dar eyes out, and couldn't do nothin'. Folks is often more in de way arter dey's dead and gone 'an when libin. Seen your sweet face around every day, honey, is a great help to de Hannibal. It seems only yesterday it was a little baby face, and we was all pretty nigh crazy over you."

"I wish I had died then!" said Zell, passionately, and hurrying away.

"Poor child, poor child! she takes it mighty hard," said innocent Hannibal. (To be Continued.)

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48 BUNDLES SHAPES: Bundles of Ribbon, Bundles of Hose, Bundles of Scarfs, Bundles of Laces, Bundles of Fringes, Bundles of Crimps, Bundles of Frillings.

Just received and for sale at lowest prices.

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All orders carefully attended to. Extra furnished if required.

Fare, round trip, - 25 cents.

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July 25, 1884.

THE NEW BOOK STORE.

The Finest Line of Books & Stationery

To be had in the City and at lower Prices than Ever.

Also: Room Paper & Paper Blinds.

ALL NEW PATTERNS.

ORGANS OR SALE AT THE VERY LOWEST CASH PRICES.

W. T. H. FENETY.

Orders for Job Printing of All Kinds will Receive Prompt Attention

May 6th, 1884.

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GENTLEMEN:

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W. E. SEERY'S. For nice Stylish Suits

he cannot be surpassed in the city.

Prompt attention to cutting.

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1884.

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Received this Day:

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600 Bundles Plating and Hoops, various sizes and gauges.

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I. & F. BURPEE & Co.

30 Boiler Plates, Best B. B. and R. B. B. and Lowmoor.

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47 Bells Type Cast Iron, 150 Steel, 150 Sheet Iron.

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Gents' Spring and Summer Suitings, &c. &c.

AT THE ESTABLISHMENT OF

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N. B.—First-Class Cutter; First-Class Work; Lowest "Hand-Pan" Prices. T. G. O'Connor.

April 12.

New Brunswick Railway.

Operating 443 Miles.

WINTER TIME TABLE.

All Trains are run by Eastern Standard Time, which makes 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. John, St. Andrews, Houlton, Woodstock, all points North and South.

9 30 P. M.—From Water Street, St. John—Express for Fredericton.