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'For a bit of Sunday reading commend me to the "Northern Messenger."—W. S. Jamieson, Dalton, Ont.

A Bowl of Milk Toast.*

(By Rev. John T. Faris, in the 'Christian Endeavor World'.)

There was a hush in the tenement as it was whispered that Mollie Bendig had had a stroke of paralysis, and was lying helpless in her room—her one room, which had long served her as parlor, bedchamber, and kitchen. Not that it was anything new for Mollie Bendig to be helpless; times without number her neighbors had carried her in from the street in a drunken stupor, from which she had frequently roused long enough to hurl curses at her bearers for their interference.

broken. But he understood the question in their eyes.

'Mrs. Bendig can neither move nor speak, he said. 'It may be she will recover the power of speech in a few days. But she will never walk again. She may live a week, and she may be with you a month or more. There is not much I can do for her. I have told Mrs. Gardner how to look after her. I know you will help.'

Dr. Sandy's confidence was justified. Mrs. Gardner, the visiting nurse, had more proffers of assistance than she could accept. Nearly every one was eager to lend a hand. Mrs. Fogarty, just from the wash-tub, asked to be

Mrs. Fogarty's explanation was accepted, and Mrs. Dolliver received many black looks in consequence.

But it was not the memory of the black eye received a year before that was responsible for Mrs. Dolliver's inactivity in her former enemy's behalf. That enmity had been forgotten when at the church near by she had learned to know God who told her to love her enemies. In love for Mrs. Bendig, who was now in such need of assistance, she one day prepared some savory soup. The five cents which she had first expended for meat was one of the few coins drunken Jake Dolliver had allowed her to retain from her own earnings when that morning he went off to the saloon. At noon, when he stumbled in again, the soup was steaming on the table. He reached for it.

'Don't, Jake!' his wife pleaded. 'That's for poor Mrs. Bendig. I'll have your dinner in a jiffy. You know I didn't expect you this noon, or I would have been ready for you.'

Then the storm broke. 'I'll have that soup,' he shouted. 'Don't you keep me waiting for a hussy who's too drunk to get her own food. And I'll have you know you've got to quit feeding other people at my expense. Mind me now; don't you dare take anything to that woman or to anybody else. I'm not going to support all the loafers in the building. A lazy wife is enough of a drag on a hard-working man.' With that he turned to his food.

Without a word Mrs. Dolliver brought her own dinner to her husband, and sat down in the bedroom. If there was nothing for her to eat, she would at least get a little rest before beginning her afternoon work.

But it was not to be. In a few moments her husband stood in the doorway.

'What are you doing there? Get up, and hustle. Think I can support you in idleness?' As he spoke, he pulled the chair from under her, and jerked her to her feet. 'There's plenty to do, I'll have you to know. If you were the kind of wife you ought to be, you'd get out and carry in that coal they've just thrown in the alley. Now I suppose you'll leave that for your poor, tired husband.'

He was turning away when something occurred to him. With a brutal laugh he spoke again. 'I'm going to be generous with you. You get in that coal, and do it right, and I'll let you take a snack to the Bendig woman. Just for once, mind you! I'm not going to have my victuals walked up-stairs when we need them right here. Get it done before I get back, too. I won't be here for supper.'

With a sigh she went to the window. The teamster was just driving away, and the large load of coal almost blocked the alley. How she had saved to buy all that coal at one time! There were one hundred and fifty bushels in the pile; she had noted the figures as she signed the receipt.

'I wish it was in the cellar,' she thought. 'I always have such a time getting Jake to carry it in.'

Then she thought of her husband's last words. If she would carry in the coal herself, he would let her take something to Mrs. Bendig. How she wished she could do it!



PAINFULLY SHE STAGGERED UNDER HER BURDEN.

Helplessness of that kind was an every-day occurrence, and it occasioned no comment. But there was a difference to-day, the difference which the shadow of death causes, in palace and in hovel alike.

When the child who had been hurriedly sent for aid returned with the doctor and the visiting nurse from the dispensary at the little church around the corner, the hall was crowded with whispering women.

When the physician, his work done, appeared in the doorway, the silence was un-

*Our readers will be interested in knowing that the following story is, in all essentials, true. Its pathetic and beautiful lesson is thus greatly strengthened.—Editor of 'C. E. World.'

allowed to sit up the first half of the night. 'It will rest me,' she insisted, when objection was made. 'I'm that tired of going to bed with the sun! A change will do me good.' Mrs. Graves said she intended to take the rest of the night as her share. 'And I'll smash the head of her as says I sha'n't,' she declared.

But there was one woman who took part in neither nursing nor carrying victuals. Mrs. Dolliver did not even go to the door to make inquiries. When some of her house-mates expressed surprise, Mrs. Fogarty said:

'Don't you mind that fight Mollie Bendig and Mary Dolliver had last winter—the time Mary got a black eye? I guess she hasn't forgot, not if she has got religion since then. Pretty religion that.'