

WHY THE MINISTER DID NOT RESIGN.

AN EASTER STORY.

BY ANNIE H. DONNELL.



HE waited until she put the baby down, then he met her in the middle of the sunny room, and said it.

"I shall do it next Sunday, Rebekah."

"Oh, Julius, not next Sunday!" she cried out in dismay. "Why, next Sunday is Easter, Julius!"

Julius Taft's smooth-shaven lips curled into a smile.

"Well, why not, little woman? It would be a new way to celebrate Easter. Everybody likes a 'new way.' The lilies and the carols are so old!"

"Julius!"

"Forgive me, dear; but my heart is bitter. I cannot bear it any longer. I shall do it next Sunday, Rebekah."

"But afterward, Julius!"

The mother's eyes wandered to the row of little chairs against the wall, each with its neatly folded little clothes. There were three little chairs and the baby's crib. Afterward, what about those? They argued mutely against this thing.

"Afterward I'll dig clams for the babies—don't worry, little mother!" he laughed, unsteadily. Then he drew her down with him on the sofa.

"Let's have it out, dear. I've borne it alone as long as I can."

"Alone!" she scolded, softly.

"Julius Taft, you know I've been bearing it with you!"

"I know it, dear; but we've both kept still. Now let's talk it out. It's no use beating about the bush, Rebekah; I've got it to do."

"Oh, Julius, if we could only peace-make!" she wailed.

"But we can't—not even the minister's little peacemaker wife. They won't let us do it—they'd rather wrangle."

She put her hands across his lips to stifle the ugly word; but she knew it applied.

"They don't realize, Julius. If Mrs. Cain and Mrs. Drinkwater would only realize! They influence all the rest. Everybody would make up, if they

would. They're the ones to peace-make, Julius."

"Yes; but Drinkwaters and Cains won't 'peacemake'—you can't make oil and water unite. There was a grudge between them three generations ago, and it's descending. It can't see any way out of it."

"But on Easter Sunday, Julius! 'Peace on earth, good-will to men,' " Rebekah Taft murmured, softly. The minister sighed heavily.

"There isn't any 'peace, good-will' in the Saxon Church, Rebekah. It won't be Easter Sunday here. It will be just like all the other Sundays, only the minister will resign."

"But he will preach an Easter sermon, Julius? Tell me he will!" pleaded the minister's little peacemaker wife.

"Yes, dear, he will preach an Easter sermon to please his little wife."

They sat quite silent awhile. The sleeping babe nestled and threw out a small pink and white hand aimlessly. The clock on the painted mantel said: "Bedtime, bedtime, bedtime!" with monotonous repetition.

They were both very tired, but they still sat side by side on the hard little sofa, thinking the same sorrowful thoughts. It was the wife who broke the silence first.

"Dear, there are so many things to think about," she whispered.

He smiled down at her from his superior height.

"Four things," he counted, on his fingers, "Kathie, Julius Junior, Hop-o'-Thumb, and the baby!"

"Yes, I meant the children. If you could not get another charge, dear, for a good while——"

Julius Taft was big and broad-shouldered. He drew himself up and faced her. His lean, good face was the face of a man who would create the opportunity that he could not find ready to his hand.

"Did the children's mother think all I could do was to preach?" he cried gaily. He could not bear the worry in her face. "She's forgotten I blew the bellows in my father's smithy. I can blow them again, tell her! I can find good, honest work in God's world,"