

### "Inasmuch."

[We take this admirable tale from a tract published by the Woman's Executive Committee of Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church.—ED.]

"Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of these, ye did it not to me."

"If there was one thing Elizabeth Day prided herself upon, it was her thoroughness, that she was not a 'dilettante' in anything; and certainly a girl who read Kant in the original and quoted Dante in the 'soft Tuscan tongue' could not be called superficial.

To-day she had been hard at work since early morning finishing up a water-color sketch. It was coming out beautifully, and she sighed a little impatiently when the maid announced one of her friends. However, she turned the easel to the wall, drew two easy chairs in front of the grate, and welcomed her guest cordially.

"Evidently Kate has something on her mind," she thought, as Miss Forbes seated herself with a preoccupied air and drew a letter from her pocket.

"'Lizabeth," she began abruptly, "do you remember Mary Hadleigh?"

"Remember her? I don't think any of our class will ever forget her, for she took first honors all around and didn't leave a ghost of a chance for the rest of us. Besides," she added, warmly, "she was the sweetest little saint that ever breathed. What about her?"

"Well, listen. You know brother Jack has a sheep ranch out in Colorado, and he's always roaming over those western wilds prospecting for mines and things. He'll date a letter in Idaho, finish it up in Texas, and between times send a telegram from San Francisco or Yankton. To-day this letter came from Choctaw Gulch, if you know where that is."

"I certainly do not. What has it to do with Mary? She is not out there, is she?"

Miss Forbes did not answer at once. She unfolded the letter deliberately; then said with an odd inflection in her voice:

"Before I begin, 'Lizabeth, I wish you would look around this room. Look slowly—take it all in—then I'll read Jack's letter."

It was very queer, so unlike Kate's usual racy nonsense. What did she mean? Elizabeth looked curiously about her room to see if she could find an answer. The afternoon sun shone in through the south windows; its rays were flashed back from the silver fittings of the dressing

table; they lit the face of her favorite Madonna with a new glory and lingered caressingly on the bowl of roses and mignonette whose fragrance filled the air. It was a beautiful room, and expressed well, she often thought complacently, her own personality.

"Well," she said, as she completed the survey, "what next?"

"This is next," said Miss Forbes quietly, and read from her letter:

"I met one of your school friends the other day under rather unusual circumstances. I was riding slowly over a bad bit of prairie, and as I came up alongside a dugout I saw a woman on the lee side with a tub of clothes. It was blowing fifty miles an hour, and she was trying to rig up a clothes line. Just as she got one end tied fast and started for a pole with the other, the norther whiskered round the corner, lifted that tub like a thistle-down, and in two seconds there wasn't a rag in sight. I roared; it was the neatest thing I ever saw. But when the little woman turned round and started back for the house, head down, fighting the wind and fighting the tears back, too, I didn't laugh any more. The next thing I knew Bill and I were loping over the prairie after that washing. We brought back all that were left in the country."

Both girls broke out into an irresistible laugh.

"Just imagine Jack careering over the plains with his arms full of wet linen!" said Kate.

"It must have been more exciting than polo," said Elizabeth, dryly.

Kate read on: "Perhaps you can take in my astonishment when I found my Madonna of the Tub was your friend, Miss Hadleigh (Mrs. Grant). In ten minutes we were chatting away like old cronies, with the small fry hovering around. My arm aches like the toothache, writing, but I'm bound to persevere ('He never wrote such a letter before in his life,' interjected Kate). It's time you kid-gloved saints and sisters in the effete east knew how some of your substitutes live out here. You know what these dugouts are like. I could stand up straight in this one and an inch to spare ('Jack's six feet one.') There was a lean-to cutained off where, I suppose, the dominie and his wife slept. The walls were lined with building paper; the cooking stove was on one side of the room, the table on the other; there were two chairs, the baby's cradle, and a wash-bench. That was all, and about all there was room for. They are living here, two miles from

anything, because since the railroad struck the Gulch nobody but a saloon-keeper can pay the rents.

"Grant came home soon with a couple of bundles, and I heard one youngster sing out, 'Oh, mamma, papa's got some meat!' and the other piped up, 'And ginger snaps!' They were hushed up quickly, but I drew my own inferences. In the course of the evening I found out that their salary was overdue, they were in debt, and Grant had just two dollars and thirteen cents to lay in winter supplies with.

"We men peeled potatoes for supper, and talked political economy and evolution. Grant's a Yale man, same fraternity as I, and as level-headed a fellow as I've met. The menu for supper was bread and potatoes, with fried mush and coffee for dessert. No butter and no milk. They're raising the infant on condensed milk, so the rest of the family can't indulge.

"I was making my adieux about nine o'clock, when some men stopped at the house and wanted to know the way to the Gulch. Grant asked them in and I offered to pilot them, but Grant got in a prayer-meeting first. He did it so easily that we all dropped on it as if we went to them every night in the week (I haven't been in one for ten years). We sang some hymns; Grant read some verses that screwed into a fellow's conscience—and then he prayed. I tell you, Kate, I never meant to be a 'professor'; but if I could get hold of the sort of religion that man has, I'd go for it. He has a grip on the Almighty that means something. I haven't any use for the gilt-edged religion that prays in plush pews and don't pay its missionaries (I don't mean you and mother, Katchen), but to know God—to believe—"

But Kate sprang up with a choking sob. "I can't read any more, 'Lizabeth. To think of Jack, dear, darling Jack, wanting to be a Christian, and mamma and I have been praying for that so long—and the first one to make him think is a home missionary—and in debt—and this suit cost me a hundred dollars for making—"

The tears were coming too fast to be held back, and, more afraid of Elizabeth's cool sarcasm than of anything else in the world, Kate did not try to finish her sentence, but ran down stairs and disappeared as suddenly as she came.

Elizabeth could not go on with her painting that afternoon. The light was still perfect; Kate's call had not been a long one; but after trying a few half-hearted touches, she put her colors away and dressed for a walk. As she passed