

Northern Messenger

VOLUME XXXVII. No. 4.

MONTREAL, JANUARY 24, 1902.

30 Cts. Per An. Post-Paid.

A Convert to Missions.

(By Susan Hubbard Martin, in 'The Ram's Horn.')

It was Sunday morning and the bells were ringing. The minister's wife took her summer bonnet from its wrappings with a little sigh. She had worn it for two years and the ribbons were shabby and the roses faded.

'I'm glad I'm to have a new one,' she whispered happily as she settled a crushed bow with a deft touch. 'If it hadn't been for those weddings last week, I couldn't, but now it's really possible. I've had the hardest time trying to get a bonnet,' she went on smilingly, 'seems as if there's always something more needed. Well, well, I'm not going to complain if I do wear a shabby hat. The Lord is good.'

There had been two marriages in Pine Valley in the last few days, and as a consequence, the minister's worn pocket-book held two new crisp five dollar bills.

Weddings were rare occasions in Pine Valley, for it was a small, struggling little place, and there were not a great many young people to be married in it.

The minister had looked at his wife with a tender smile. 'You can have a new bonnet now, my dear,' he had said, 'and some gloves and handkerchiefs, and a new lawn dress, perhaps. Anything you want. I noticed last Sunday, and I don't notice a great many things, dear heart, but even I, noticed that your clothes were growing a little shabby.'

The minister's little wife went up to him and kissed him. 'It doesn't matter, Herbert,' she said gently. 'I want you to know always that I am quite, quite happy.'

'Thank you, my dear,' the minister had answered with a full heart. 'Quite happy.' That was just like her brave, courageous cheerfulness that had never failed him yet. She had always been like that, always, and though the salary now was smaller than it had ever been, and the little parsonage full of shabbiness, still she never murmured. Nobody knew except the minister and his undaunted little helpmate how many contrivances were necessary in that little home to keep things looking even half-way presentable. Carpets would wear out, and furniture would give way, and then there were the children, four of them, always needing things.

There was only one rich man in the church, old Horace Stephens, and he was not inclined to be so very liberal. On one subject he was obdurate. He would never contribute a cent to missions. Whenever a missionary sermon was to be preached, he absented himself with scant apologies.

'Don't believe in 'em,' he would say in explanation of his action in the matter, 'never did. Let people give to their own churches; do the duty nearest 'em, I call it, and let outside matters alone.'

So he paid his portion toward the minister's salary, giving willingly enough to other causes, but missions—he drew the line at them.

It happened, that Sunday morning at the close of the sermon, that the church door opened and a tall, portly man with a benevolent face, walked in. It was the great home mission worker for that part of the

country. There had been an accident on the train, the cars were disabled, and the missionary was forced to wait in Pine Valley until the damage could be righted, and he could go on his way.

The minister saw him first, and his worn face lighted. 'Why, Mr. Jennings,' he cried, 'what good wind has blown you our way this morning? Come up to the pulpit, please, and speak to the congregation, will you, for just a moment? I have finished my sermon, but I am sure my people will listen to you gladly.'

The missionary walked to the platform with

to us every night. In this world there is a great conflict between good and evil, and we, Christians, ought to be the most joyful of all people, because (praise the Lord) we're going to win.

'I witnessed a sunrise on a mountain peak the other morning. It was cloudy, and the sun, with all its power and splendor, struggled to get through in vain. The clouds held for a time, but, by and by, red flecks dotted the gray and angry mass, then came a streak of shining glory, and lo, with a tremendous effort, before our enraptured vision the clouds were burst asunder, and there, ridin'



'CLAXTON,' HE SAID, GRUFFLY, 'I'VE COME HERE THIS MORNING TO TELL YOU YOU'RE A FOOL.'

a firm step, and old Horace Stephens fidgeted in his seat. Here was something he had not reckoned on. However, there was nothing to be done, so he settled himself back in his pew, his face set in stern and rigid lines. 'He won't get anything out of me,' he whispered, 'not a cent.'

The missionary rose and began to speak. He had a deep, musical voice, a rich vocabulary, and from the first, he held the interest of the congregation.

'It strikes me,' he began, 'every time I stand before an audience and look into its faces, that our people are not as happy as they ought to be. We forget the mercies that are new to us every morning and fresh

serene in his heavens, was the victorious King of day.'

He paused a moment, then went on. 'I want to tell you of my work in the destitute districts,' he said. 'Of the saloons that flourish, one for every hundred people, and no churches. I baptized a man sixty years old, out on the plains the other day,' he added, 'and two women over fifty. There wasn't a church of any kind, so we went down to the river, and we—well, I guess we were the happiest people you ever saw.'

'But, my friends, we must plant our banners in this wilderness. I know some of you don't have much sympathy for missions, but that, I firmly believe, is because you haven't