

## THREE COLLECTORS.

"I really think we have reason to congratulate ourselves," said the Secretary of the Plainville Woman's Mission Circle to the President, as they walked home from the meeting, "on having at last secured new collectors."

"Yes, indeed," was the reply. "I've puzzled my brains not a little over it, and I am truly thankful those two young ladies were willing to accept the office. And did you notice, Mrs. Foster seemed really glad to be appointed? Strange we hadn't thought of her before. With such collectors as Mrs. Foster and Miss Burns something will be done. I presume Alice Bennett will do the best she can too. As you say, we have reason to congratulate ourselves."

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"I might as well begin to-day, I suppose," said Miss Laura Burns, to herself, a few weeks after the meeting. It's a lovely day, just right for my new fall suit," and she closed her book with a regretful sigh and a glance toward the window, through which the October sunshine streamed.

"Besides, it will soon be time to begin Christmas presents, and I must get this out of the way first—I do dislike having a disagreeable thing about, waiting to be done—I can never take a bit of comfort till it is off my mind."

"I almost wish," leaning back in her comfortable rocker, "that I had declined to serve as collector, but they were all so anxious, and spoke so appreciatively of my influence and ability that I thought I wouldn't—especially as I saw Alice Bennett had no notion of declining. If such a shrinking timid girl, with as little force of character as she has, can be collector, I guess I can," and Miss Burns smiled complacently.

"Tis true I haven't seen much of her this last year, but she doesn't look as if she had changed much; such girls rarely do. I must say, Mrs. Wade can't be very discerning, if she is our pastor's wife, or she wouldn't have proposed her for a collector. As for Mrs. Foster I don't know her personally. She looks bright and intelligent enough, but she seems so nervous and hurried all the time. I don't much wonder, for someone said she had done her own work ever since she was married, and her sewing, too.

"Poor woman! How does she think she's going to find time for anything more? Well, I shall have to do all the more if they don't get much, and it's quite evident they won't.

"Where is that list of names they gave me? I wonder if I know them all! Ah, here it is! Let me see, thirty-two names—thirty-two dollars—I may as well say thirty-five, it sounds better, and I can get the other three dollars easily enough. If those other two collectors were only a— a little different, somehow, we

might do something. Three times thirty-five—why, over a hundred dollars! Dear me! they only raised last year fifteen dollars in all!

"What could have been the reason? I wonder who they had for collectors. Someone said they'd moved away, married, died, or something, I don't remember which, and it's a good thing they did, for they couldn't have amounted to much."

"Fifteen dollars" she repeated a little later as she adjusted her bonnet before the mirror, "just think of it! I don't wonder that the President felt that something must be done. I'm sure I hope, with her, that the three new collectors will bring life and vigor and money to the society, but I doubt it somewhat in Alice Bennett's case. I shall do all in my power, however."

"It is pleasant to work when one's efforts are appreciated. Undoubtedly I shall collect much more than a third of the whole, whatever that may be, for I certainly believe, with Mrs. Wade, that a great deal depends upon the collector."

So with an air of assurance, Miss Laura Burns drew on the gloves that so exactly matched the stylish costume, and passed out of the house to begin to walk the rugged way of the collector.

At nightfall she returned in a most unenviable state of mind. With flashing eyes and burning cheeks she walked straight to her room; shut with a decided bang the door behind her; threw into an ignominious heap the bonnet and wraps which were usually removed with care; flung into the waste basket the crumpled list of names and wrathfully exclaimed, "I don't thank the minister's wife, or the President either, for getting me into such an abominable affair! I was never so treated in my life! If I had dreamed that collecting was anything like this, I wouldn't have attempted it. Why they actually treated me—some of them—as if I were a beggar. Well, that ends it. I shan't try it again. I've too much respect for myself. I'll send this wretched two dollars and a half to the Treasurer, and then I shall give myself no further concern. They can get another collector, or they can go without; but there'll be no more collecting done by me, ever;" and up to the present time, Mrs. Laura Burns has rigidly kept her word.

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"Ah, well, I'm in for it now," thought young Mrs. Foster, as she hurried home from that missionary meeting.

"It means work, of course, but I don't mind that; I'm glad to do it, for I do like to see things moving, not standing still. We certainly did need new collectors. I don't mean to be uncharitable, but there's no reason in the world why our contributions should be so small. Our President seems in earnest and we have interesting meetings, and I'm sure Mrs. Wade does all any pastor's wife can, with four children and so many other things to attend to. I'm inclined to