

Isn't that the smallest house you ever saw? And so many men and women and children all about it!

They were walking slowly on, and another step or two showed them the black at the door.

'Somebody is dead,' whispered Antonia. They stopped with a hush upon them.

'They are getting ready for the funeral at the church,' said Lucy, piecing things together after her custom. 'What would life be like lived in this town, in that little house? It must have been a solitary life, and it was not a short one. Was it a lonely man or a lonely woman who lived there?'

'A man,' came the unexpected answer.

Turning with a start, they found a half-grown girl standing beside them. Her eyes were red and her face was swollen with weeping.

'It was an old man,' she went on, speaking hurriedly, with a catch of her breath now and then. 'But he wasn't lonely; everybody was his friend. He was so good, better than anybody in the world, I think. I don't know what we'll do without him. It'll never be the same place again.'

'No, it will not,' chimed in another voice, the voice of a woman who had stopped to join their group. 'Nor it ain't the same place that it was before he came, according to hearsay, and according to what I know of my own knowledge.'

'Did he do so much for the town?' asked Antonia.

'Nobody'll ever know how much, till the Lord himself tells. There's men living here and there's men living otherwhere's that was made men by Paul Holmes, after everybody else had left them for beasts. Do you see our church?' pointing it out. 'That's his work. He saved and begged and planned for it, and, most of all, he lived for it, so that the idea stayed in folks' minds, till at last it was bound to come. I don't know, though, as it's done so much more for the town than his own little place where he worked through the week. One wasn't any more God's house than the other was; only sinners could go to him in one on Sundays, and they could go to him in the other every day. They did go, too; many of them went and found him where Paul Holmes was.'

'Will he be buried this afternoon?' asked Lucy, to fill in the pause which came after the woman's speech.

'Yes. At three o'clock.'

'But there'll not be any music,' put in the girl. 'Oh, dear, I can't get over it; it don't seem right when he was so fond of music. You see, he always played the organ himself, and the rest sang. Nobody feels able to do it, without him; I don't know if they'd have the heart for it, anyway, if they could.' She choked and stopped.

Lucy stole a quick look at Antonia. Would she offer? She was always so 'fussy,' Lucy called it, 'about her instrument and her accompanist and ventilation and a dozen other things.'

To-day, however, Antonia remembered none of them. She spoke out impulsively, without waiting. 'May I sing? I think I could without the organ. Please let me try. I should like to do it very much.'

Lucy was half amused, half provoked, to see both the woman and the girl hesitate. 'They are actually doubtful whether to accept what has to be coaxed and pleaded for by the hour in the big town church!' she thought. 'Is it possible that Antonia's solos are going to be snubbed?'

Indeed, the two loyal friends of Paul Holmes were thinking: 'We'd rather have nothing than to have a boggle made over it. If she did anything out of the way we couldn't stand it, and the neighbors wouldn't ever forgive us.'

Antonia, too, recognized the hesitation, but for some reason it seemed natural to her.

'Do you think you can?' asked the woman, peering anxiously into Antonia's face, with a pucker on her own.

'Yes, I think so. I'll do my best.'

Here Lucy interposed with some reassuring words and the matter was settled. An hour later they were waiting in the little church, watching the people assemble.

'Why, Antonia,' said Lucy, 'it is three-quar-

ters of an hour from the time yet, and the church is almost full. Where do the people come from, and what will they do with them all?'

Every available inch of room was taken, and men were standing thick about the door and windows, when the young preacher rose in his place.

'I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live,' he read. Antonia bowed her head with a sudden rush of tears to her eyes. Never had that Life seemed so real and so triumphant as in the little misshapen church of Coboconk, with its crowd of weather-beaten mourners, who believed with such full assurance that what was loss to them, was gain to Paul Holmes.

After the Scripture reading there was prayer; prayer that faltered more than once and was often interrupted by the sobs of the people; but through it all there ran the same unbroken note of thanksgiving for the light that had shone more and more unto the perfect day.

Then Antonia sang.

The woman and the girl, sitting in a front pew, had cast many troubled glances in her direction, but at the first sound of the exquisite voice falling softly upon the deepening stillness of the church, the trouble passed.

Lucy, too, drew a breath of relief. She had been afraid; Antonia did not always do herself justice; she got nervous, and it told. 'But this afternoon she is singing her best, God bless her! I am so glad! I couldn't bear to have her fail. Surely,' said Lucy, as she still listened, 'I never heard Antonia sing so before.'

It was true. For once, Antonia had forgotten all about her audience, about herself, her success or failure. She was thinking of Paul Holmes: 'He shall see the King in his beauty; and shall behold the country that is very far off.' With the wonder of the thought upon her, she sang as she had never sung before.

Jerusalem the Golden,
With milk and honey blest!
Beneath thy contemplation
Sink heart and voice opprest!
I know not, O I know not,
What joys await us there;
What radiancy of glory,
What bliss beyond compare.'

The two girls were obliged to slip away after the singing in order not to miss their train. They had gone but a few steps when they heard some one hurrying after them. It was the girl from the church.

'Oh, it was so beautiful!' she sobbed, stretching out her hands to Antonia. 'I never heard anything so beautiful! I had to run after you to tell you. I think the angels must sing like you.'

A sudden emotion swept over Antonia. She took the sunburned hands in hers and stopped to kiss the homely, loving face. 'No, no! The angels know how little true that is. But I shall always be glad for to-day, and better for it. It was a great honor to sing. Good-bye, and thank you.'

The long walk to the station was taken almost in silence. Once or twice Lucy wondered whether Antonia was 'waiting for compliments.'

'But I am not going to give her any,' she thought. 'It would be sacrilege, and I will not.'

At last, as they drew near the station, Antonia spoke. 'I was cross about the choir, Lucy,' she said. 'Forgive me. I am beginning to get a glimmering of what you meant. I have been cross very often; there have been so many things that I didn't understand. But I must learn, and teach Professor Oliver,' she added, with a whimsical little laugh.

The months went by. One day a young man said to Lucy, 'There are no more riots in the choir. What does it mean?'

'I think,' answered Lucy, deliberately, 'that it means that they are singing more to the praise of God than they did.'

'Well, do you know,' said he, 'I have wondered myself whether that could be it. Queer, isn't it? One hasn't altogether connected the idea of worship with our choir.'—'Wellspring'

Live Out of Doors.

If living out-of-doors is essential to physical health, it is even more essential to moral health. A vast amount of the moral illness in the world is caused by too much indoor life; by keeping too much within ourselves, walking endlessly around the little circle of our own motives, trying to settle the problems of the universe from our own individual standpoint, and treating our personal conditions as if they were the general conditions under which all men live. These and a thousand other forms the disease of egoism takes on, and disqualifies men and women not only from exercising sound judgment and seeing things as they are, but from winning contentment, happiness, and sanity. The man who is perplexed by questions of his own fitness to discharge a duty or perform a task cannot solve it by thinking about it; let him set his hand to the work, put his strength to it, and he will soon discover whether he has blundered or not. And a multitude of people who are allowing their thoughts to brood continuously over their own misfortunes would find a great lifting of the weight if they would get out of themselves. The quickest and most effective way of helping one's self is to help somebody else. When the invisible house in which every man lives begins to darken, open the windows, set the doors wide, and escape at once into the great world. The remedy of egoism is a greater interest in the affairs, fortunes, and happiness of some one else. The world is full of opportunities for getting out-of-doors and escaping from the prison-house of our own experience; to take the sting out of your personal misfortunes, share the misfortunes of others.—'The Outlook.'

'Lo, It Is Nigh Thee.'

The surprise of life always comes in finding how we have missed the things which have lain nearest us; how we have gone far away to seek that which was close by our side all the time.

Men who live best and longest are apt to come, as the result of all their living, to the conviction that life is not only richer, but simpler, than it seemed to them at first. Men go to vast labor seeking after peace and happiness. It seems to them as though it were far away from them; as though they must go through vast and strange regions to get it. They must pile up wealth, they must see every possible danger of mishap guarded against, before they can have peace.

Upon how many old men has come with a strange surprise that peace could come to rich or poor only with contentment, and that they might as well have been content at the beginning as at the very end of life! They have made a long journey for their treasure, and when at last they stoop to pick it up, lo, it is shining close beside the footprint which they left when they set out to travel in a circle!—Phillips Brooks.

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