

'Do what, boysie?' What am I to promise?

'Why, promise to do what I've thought of.' His sister smiled. 'What have you thought of, dear? Do you want me to make ice-cream, or to tell the boys not to come, or to write your paper? What is it?'

'Yes, that's it. You write—at least, you give us an address on some subject—and we'll call the meeting an 'Open Parliament,' because we don't generally allow ladies to speak.'

The last sentence was delivered with a very important air and a wave of the hand which Cyril called 'The S'ciety manners.'

Miss Haldane went on with her crocheting and laughingly asked what subject he had assigned to her.

'Ah, now, Sis,' coaxed Cyril, 'don't dash a fellow's hopes to the ground in that fashion. Say you will—you can talk on any subject you like. You will, won't you? That's a dear. Only—don't make us sing hymns or anything, you know.'

The teabell rang and Cyril, considering the bargain concluded, ran off to wash his hands before joining his father and sister at tea.

That evening seven boys assembled in the cheery sitting room of Cyril Haldane's home. First came the two brothers, Herbert and Phil Nichols, boys with whom Cyril had studied, skated and run races 'for years and years,' as they would have agreed. Herbert had finished the High School last year and was now assistant book-keeper in a large wholesale store. He was slightly older than the other boys, but he was Cyril's 'particular chum,' and president of the S'ciety besides.

They had scarcely taken off their coats and been shown into the sitting-room when the bell rang again and Harry Hilton and Jim Walters entered. Harry was the youngest member of the Society, and Jim the treasurer. Jim was proud of his position though it was rather a sinecure, as the moment any dues were paid in they were promptly voted away by the society.

These sat down and chatted for some minutes, about the skating, about the snow, about the last Henty Book which the S'ciety had bought and had just finished reading.

Herbert Nichols cast an anxious glance toward the door. 'We cannot begin the meeting without our scribe,' he said. Allan Ireland, the secretary of the society, was always late and Arthur Paterson who always called for and went with Allan, was naturally late, too. They now appeared and sat down in bashful silence, as Herbert remarked sternly—'Late, as usual, Mr. Secretary.' Then, rapping on the table with a long pencil—'The S'ciety will please come to order.' The members of the S'ciety sat up straight and stiff and answered solemnly to their names as the roll was called.

The president consulted a small memorandum book, and at the end of the roll-call announced: 'The "S'ciety Weekly," will now be read.'

The 'S'ciety Weekly' was a type-written sheet to which each of the members of the S'ciety contributed an opinion each week. The seven opinions were of different lengths. Phil Nichols claimed 'six lines at the least,' Harry Hilton generally gave a very short opinion as he wished it all to be alliterative. Cyril gave jocular opinions and generally had to add several lines to 'explain the point.' Allan Ireland said that he had 'thinking enough to do, what with getting out a report of every meeting,' so he sent in a quotation from one of his favorite authors. Herbert, whose forte was brevity, never took more than half a line, while Jimmie Walters with his 'financial state-

ments,' contrived to fill in what lines were left.

When the 'Weekly' had been read, Herbert again consulted his memorandum. 'We are to hear this evening from our famous member, Mr. Haldane, a paper of "Good Citizenship."'

Cyril blushed furiously. 'I don't know, Mr. President, whether you will call me famous or not when you hear that I totally forgot all-about writing that paper, until near six o'clock this evening—'

The president frowned, the members groaned.

Cyril went on—'You see, the fact is, I have a pleasant surprise for you, in fact—my sister has promised to give us an address this evening, which I am sure will more than make up for my deficiency.'

The president's brow cleared, the whole society clapped, and clapped louder still as Cyril went out to bring in his sister.

Miss Haldane bowed her acknowledgment. She was pretty well acquainted with the boys as individuals but she had never before spoken to them as a society.

'Mr. President, gentlemen of the Society,' she began, 'It is a great pleasure to me and I feel it a great privilege to address you this evening. I feel that the subject to which I am about to call your attention is one of the most important which could be brought before you as a Society or as individuals. Though you may not hitherto have felt any great interest in this subject, and may not at present feel any obligations, still, feeling as I do that it is one of the most important themes of the age, I think it wise to bring before you some thought of one of the greatest needs of the age—I speak of the need of Foreign Missions.'

Miss Haldane paused a moment, she had kept her hearers on the qui vive up to the present moment, she had heard a short sigh when she mentioned the word 'missions,' but the boys kept their eyes fastened on her, and with a swift prayer for utterance she went on with her remarks:

'You have all read "The Lady of the Lake," and probably remember as I do with vividness the legend of the Fairy Cross. I wonder if it would seem irreverent to say that God has sent forth the Fiery Cross. When our Lord ascended He left the message of the Cross with His disciples, but not till they had received the baptism of fire were they to go forth to proclaim His message to the uttermost ends of the earth. They obeyed Him, they carried the message to Judea and Samaria. As the years went on those to whom they had given the message took up the cross and went on to tell others. They carried the message to Rome, to Athens, to Spain. At least some one came over and told the glad message of the Cross to our forefathers in Britain. Before that time our forefathers were heathen, worshipping the sun and offering human sacrifices in the most cruel and revolting manner.

'They sent the message of the Cross all over Europe and wherever the people accepted it there came to pass the most remarkable transformations—transformations of lives, transformations of character, transformations of government and general estate. But people seem not to have grasped the whole of the message, for they settled down to enjoy the comforts and joys which the new way of Life brought to them, without a thought of their duties to the regions beyond where the heathen still practise the most barbarous cruelties in their religious rites. Our forefathers were heathen, but some one brought to them the message of the Cross, and we now have happy Christian homes while the people to whose forefathers we should have sent the Gospel are still in the darkness of paganism!

'The Fiery Cross has been laid down in our land, who, then, is willing to take it up and speed over mountain and moor and fen with the message? For this Cross is not a "cross of strife," but a message of peace and love from the Almighty Father to the least and remotest of the children of men.

'Doubtless you have all heard something of the cruelties to women and children in heathen lands, but it all seems so far away to you that you cannot really imagine what it would be like to be there. You cannot put yourself in the place of the little Hindu boy brought up to despise his own mother. You cannot imagine such a horrible thing as that your little sister should be taken from home before she is ten to be a little drudge and slave in the house of her mother-in-law. You would boil with rage and horror to think of any one putting your little baby sister out in the cold, some place where the wild beasts could get her, or where she would be drowned. Yet the Chinese mother herself casts away her little baby girl because she knows not the love of Jesus, and knows not the worth and preciousness of one human soul in His sight.

'You cannot put yourself in the place of an African lad, just reaching the promise of manhood, with all the prospects of life before you, suddenly accused of witchcraft and compelled to drink the bowl of poison which ends surely in death.'

The speaker paused, her eyes were bright with unshed tears. The ardent faces of the lads showed that if they had never considered these facts much before, they now began to see in them a reality. The earnest tones of the speaker had brought an answering thrill of earnestness to these young hearts, the heroic element which lies dormant in many hearts till roused by such burning words was awakening now within these lads.

Miss Haldane knew not how to stop—yet how proceed?—

'Can you even imagine yourself in the position of an Armenian lad? Brought up somewhat as you have been in the Christian homes of Canada, can you imagine what it would mean to you if to-morrow the edict should go forth—"Every Christian in Montreal to be instantly slain." If there were provided some way of escaping this massacre by permanently giving up all hope of Christ, or even by appearing to accept some horrible travesty of religion—what would it mean to you? Would you hold to the Cross of Christ though it meant not only your own death but the death or torture of your dearest ones? Would we be as true to Christ as the poor tortured Armenians have been. If the message of the Cross had been carried to all the world, would these things be?'

Miss Haldane's voice choked slightly and she abruptly left the room. Utter silence reigned for some moments. The S'ciety had received some new thoughts. When little Walter said, 'Let's sing "From Greenland's icy mountains,"' and Herbert responded with a deep-voiced 'Amen,' even Cyril sang the dear old words with a hearty good will. And when Miss Haldane came in half an hour later with a tray of steaming coffee cups she found the S'ciety discussing ways and means of helping to send on the message of the cross, and making plans for obtaining more information concerning those who had already gone forth into the dark places of the earth.

'I suppose there must be some books that we ought to read about missions, but they are all so dull,' sighed Phil.

Miss Haldane left the room and returned in a moment with a book and a cake basket. 'I will take great pleasure in presenting