

LIGHTS AND SHADOWS

A True Narrative of Elizabeth McMan

Blind! blind! blind! Bitter, agonized, awful, the cry arose. It was the cry of the stricken deer on the sea-girdling rock-ledge that sees his last chance of escape from the huntsman, cut off. One heard in it the heart cry of the world's woe. Plenty of light, dear God, with old Sol's splendor enwrapping the world with ten thousand embraces; yet blind! blind! blind!

Who could have thought it? Who could have dreamed it? Roll back the curtain of time that we may have a glance at the past of her, the now blind one, as she stood on that fair July morning just forty-three years ago.

The village bell was merrily ringing. Had we asked Lillian Adams the reason, we might have remained uninformed. It was indeed the great day of her life for she was about to wed the man of her choice, Strong and noble looking he stood, Andrew Eversham. Sweet, buoyant and charming she stood, Lillian Adams. And so the marriage vow was pledged and they were made man and wife.

Out on the thick carpet of the lawn where the bright fingers of the sun crept through the over-arching foliage of the trees and the incensed breath of July fondled the brow, was served the wedding repast. Lights and shadows, picturing human life, were there. Feathered songsters cheered on the banquet with their roundelay. Summer lavishly contributed her wealth. Best wishes for long life and happiness were tendered by the guests. Soon the bride and groom are being driven toward the quay, as the wedding trip is to lead them by both water and land. Now they stand on the steamer's deck. The last whistle blows. Cast off the lines! Farewell! Farewell! One year and something more is gone. It is the early Autumn with unseen hands working magic with the trees. It is a day of lights and shadows, only the Eversham is dying. His splendid frame lies like a battered and helpless stem. His strong right arm that was wont to hurl obstacles from his path shall wield the implement of toil no more till that day when the grave gives up its dead. The sun is setting. A life is going. Softly, softly! He is gone! He is gone!

Aged twenty-two, Mrs. Andrew Eversham stands alone in the world. Her one great treasure, her little girl, was laid to rest beside her husband two years ago. The fell destroyer has taken her parents, her brothers and all her relatives. There is nothing for her but to start to make her own living. This she does right strongly and bravely. In process of time she is managing a small dressmaking establishment with a number of employees engaged and the business shows signs of success.

Time's great clock strikes off seven years. The fierce fight with the opposing forces of life, the mighty struggle for an existence, have proved too much for the young widow and leave her stretched helpless on a bed of suffering. But strong is yet the spirit of her life and finally triumphs. Convalescence is slow but sure. She changes her occupation for the role of pedagogue for a time, but at length resumes her former employ.

CHAPTER II.

It had been snowing all day, but that was the very spice of life to the young, Jacky McMan laughed gleefully at the feathery flakes and bounded over the road toward his home. It was Christmas Eve, Jacky's big brother Jim was getting up a Christmas tree for them. He had also invested in some handsome presents for mother. A new dress was being made at the dressmaker's. Mrs. Eversham faithfully promised it for that evening and the big brother was to go for it.

Yes, tomorrow would be Christmas! Jim McMan had secured a grand tree, which seemed invested with wonderful properties. They would have a cosy, joyous time, the three of them. Ever since the husband and father died the Lord had seemed to exercise a special providence toward them and deep gratitude therefore welled up in the heart of the breadwinner to the Father of all mercies. In this attitude of mind he called for his parcel. Mrs. Eversham herself delivered it to him. She looked very weary, Jim thought. He expressed a hope that she would have a good Christmas. She weakly smiled and reciprocated the expression.

The snow had ceased. The day dawned bright, crisp, cold. Jim McMan had run over with a Christmas present to a poor family and was returning home. How good it was to be alive! Someone was singing in a nearby house. What a sweet voice! Jim drew nearer to catch the words: "Carol, sweetly carol. A Saviour born to-day! Bear the joyful tidings Oh bear them far away. Carol, sweetly carol! Good will and peace and love To God who reigns above."

Thought Jim, "Poor Mrs. Eversham. She seems to have caught the full night of Christmas. Must be lonely for her to-day too. Wonder how 'twould be to get mother to call on her and ask her over to share our tree." The thought proved father to the deed. That night there were four instead of three at the McMan's. What a grand roaring fire they had. What stories were told and what exchanges of confidence took place. That night in the heart of Jim McMan were sown the seeds of love for their guest. There seemed but few shadows on this great Christmas day and these few melted away in the beautiful light of good-will.

It did not take Jim McMan long to make up his mind. A few weeks later he called upon Mrs. Eversham with the great resolve in his head and heart. It was a wild night. The snow swirled and the wind seemed full of knife blades, but in the snug parlor all was serene. They talked town news and then books, and finally the conversation drifted—or was it intentionally steered by the wily Jim onto the subject of home and its comforts.

"Mother can't last long," he said, "and when she's gone, 'twill be a mighty poor home for me."

"Oh," she said, "I don't know."

"Eh," said Jim, "why don't you know? Do you think I'll be happy there alone?"

"Well, there are lots of people in the world—lots of them."

"Do you mean ladies?"

"Yes."

For some seconds there was silence, then he ventured.

"How would you like to be one of them?"

She, slowly, "I don't know."

He, more boldly, "Would it take you ten years to find out?"

"I do not know."

"Would it take you ten weeks to find out?"

"I do not know."

"Would it take you ten minutes to find out?"

"I don't know."

"Well, my love, I know. What you seem not to know is marvellously clear to me. I know you're ready to say yes now and I'm going to stay right here till you say it."

And she said "yes."

CHAPTER III.

The fulfilment of the prophecy of Nahum 2: 3, 4 has a direct bearing on the fortunes of Mrs. Jim McMan. This was due to the following event. In the spring of 1913 Mr. and Mrs. McMan were driving home one evening when a large motor car came up behind them. Instead of passing them the driver kept his rearward position for some time. This uncanny procedure finally alarmed the horse which suddenly sprang around and threw the occupants of the wagon to the ground. It soon became apparent that the wife was terribly injured. A fearful scalp wound extended from the forehead to the crown of the head. Tenderly she was borne home and cared for. The doctor's verdict was that the chief danger lay in possible blindness. The danger grew with the lapse of time. An operation was performed but nothing accomplished. As though this trouble was insufficient, her husband, who during her affliction had become inestimably precious, suddenly took ill one night and was dead before morning. Thus was sorrow heaped on sorrow. Well nigh crushed in spirit, she came to the town of Y. Here another operation was performed. She was not to know the result of this till three months should elapse, at which time the doctor (who was leaving the town), would return.

During the anxious spell of waiting she met Mrs. Canning. The latter, though an utter stranger, took a keen interest in the case. The two went walking and driving together. They talked much about the mysterious workings of Providence and both had faith to believe that all would work out for the best. The doctor returned. Mrs. Canning accompanied her blind friend to the interview and together, in the spirit and sympathy of sisterhood, they heard the dread sentence pronounced—"Hopelessly blind."

The above narrative in its main events, is a true one. For good reason the real names have not been used, but the same are available to anyone interested. Mrs. McMan was a native of Bridgetown. She is a very sweet, refined lady, and is in every way worthy of assistance.

Under the best circumstances blindness is a great affliction, but when one has no money and neither kith nor kin, from a natural view-point, it might be classed as a terrible calamity. Yet such are the facts. Mrs. Canning has done everything possible for the sufferer and provision has been made for the latter for a short time. Then what?

Note.—The writer of this sketch

has given us the name of the lady, at present blind and needy. Anyone who would like to know the maiden name of this Bridgetown lady may enquire at the Office of the Monitor.—Ed. Monitor.

MISS CLARA JEFFERSON OF HAVERHILL, MAKES MANY POOR CHILDREN HAPPY

(Haverhill Gazette, Dec. 17, 1915)

Somewhere within the limits of Haverhill, and in Maine, New Hampshire and as far away as Nova Scotia, 160 tiny girls will be made happier at Christmas time through the generosity, kindness and charity of one Haverhill woman, who feeling the call of the Christmas spirit has given of her time and talents toward extending the good will which is supposed to stalk broadcast at the holiday season.

This woman is Miss Clara Jefferson, who to these small girls is fairy princess and Santa Claus Queen for through her these youngsters who might not know the meaning of Christmas are made happy with the gift of dolls, real china dolls with real hair and clothes fashioned in the latest models and styles which will all come off and which can be put back on again, thus adding to the joy and value of the gift.

Beginning five years ago with her doll gifts, Miss Jefferson dressed two and sent them away. The next year the number increased. Last year she gave away 100 dolls and this year the number is still further enlarged to 160, and of these 140 will go to poor children while the remaining 20 are gifts of Miss Jefferson to some of her younger personal friends.

Miss Jefferson's dolls were placed on exhibition Wednesday afternoon and evening in the reception rooms of the Elk's Home on Summer street, and from 4 to 10 o'clock the rooms were thronged with visitors who called to admire the handiwork of the donor and to revel in the luxuries of doll land and the quaint costumes designed by Miss Jefferson.

Miss Jefferson adopted one of the characters famous in American life and the doll lady as she is known to many hosts of small girls received her guests in a Colonial gown of beauty and with grave curtseys informed her guests of the afternoon that she was for one day, Mistress Dolly Madison. The Colonial idea was carried still further, for her assistants at the doll levee were Miss Claudine Jacobs and Mrs. James D. Webster, and they too were dressed in the beautiful gowns which add so much to the grace and character of the women of an earlier day.

When Miss Jefferson began to give away dolls at Christmas time it was to satisfy her own desire to make some children happy who otherwise might face a dreary Christmas. Then her friends became interested and asked to view the dolls before she gave them away.

This led to an exhibition three years ago, and Miss Jefferson has since made it an annual custom, but that of Wednesday afternoon was far the most elaborate of all. Not only were there dolls in the various groups, but there were also toys, wooly animals for wee boys and fuzzy sheep, chairs and tables and everything dear to childhood's heart.

The costumes of every doll were fashioned by Miss Jefferson and each was equipped against the stress of cold weather by crocheted hood and caps, fastened at the throat with bows of ribbon. Even to the tiniest detail of underwear the dolls were complete and the best of it all was that each garment can be removed, thus giving the owner added pleasure in dressing and undressing their charges.

Dolls in Colonial costumes and hoop skirts were also aided by powdered hair and saucy curls, and the male dolls wore knee breeches, silk stockings and buckled shoes with three cornered hats and ruffled cuffs and silk shirted bosoms.

By far the most ingenious creation was a fig, raisin and candy doll, and as may be imagined, she was the sweetest of all.

Her head was made of a fig, she wore a natty bouffant cap, her features were etched in candy, and her arms, legs, hands and feet were made of raisin, while her dress was plaid silk of ancient lineage, no one knows how old. There were dolls dressed in gingham, silks, satins, crepe de chene, voiles and woolsens. In fact, every possible weave of cloth was represented in the garments of the dolls, the major portion of these being the gifts of friends and acquaintances who have become interested in the work of Miss Jefferson and who send her remnants and pieces left over in dressmaking revels to fashion clothes for her dolls.

There were several groups which were especially interesting. A table set with dainty china was surrounded by a fashionable group of women at tea. There was a Colonial wedding party with a Colonial mansion for a background, broad walks and a shaded lane, and in the wedding party were the bride and bridegroom, the mother and father of each, the negro servants, the domestic animals, the clergyman, the flower girl and every-

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thing in complete and minute detail. Two dolls sat at a manuring table in a manicurist shop but by far one of the most interesting groups was a Kewpie wedding with kewpie dolls for the principals.

The Kewpie bridegroom wore a full dress, his bride was garbed in fashion's latest make, the minister wore a long white cassock, there were kewpie attendants and kewpie cupids with their smiling and saucy little faces. It was a remarkable creation and one which reflected much credit and ingenuity on the part of Miss Jefferson.

Every doll with the exception of Mammy Cloe fig was a china doll, and all are of the finest type of imported Bavarian manufacture. Much difficulty was experienced by Miss Jefferson in securing the dolls because of the great war, but she persevered and triumphed in completing her list.

The exhibition reflected vast hours of patience, time and labor, but Miss Jefferson felt Wednesday it was well worth the trouble and when she begins to receive letters of thanks from the children all of which she carefully preserves, the time and work dwindle to nothing in the light of the Christmas spirit her gifts carry with them.

Children in the City hospital are remembered, friends tell her of others, she investigates many cases herself and frequently receives names of children from overseers of the poor. They are all looked after as far as possible, and Miss Jefferson is the real Dolly Madison and the true exponent of Christmas and its spirit of love and charity.—(Miss Jefferson is a daughter of the late "Barney" Jefferson of Bridgetown.—Ed. Mon.)

A SEASONABLE SUGGESTION

Dominion Department of Agriculture Dairy Division, Ottawa.

Now that the regular factory patron is getting to think more and more about cow testing, preparing in many localities to take weights and samples as soon as the first cow freshens, it would seem opportune for more factory owners to consider this matter seriously. If a larger and better milk and cream supply is wanted, then talk up cow testing, get more patrons interested. If reduced operating expenses are sought, with a larger output of better quality, then recommend cow testing to every dairy farmer in the vicinity. For in the ways above indicated, and in very many others, the factory must benefit.

The assistance from the dairy division of the Department of Agriculture at Ottawa is just as liberal as in former years. Where a cow testing association is organized and a thoroughly competent person will do the testing of milk samples from individual cows once a month, supplies of preservative tablets and sulphuric acid will be sent free of charge together with the necessary blank forms; beyond this, a payment of five cents per sample tested will be made. Factory owners, cheese and butter makers will do well to note these facts and act promptly.

C. F. W.

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