

prayer,' said Mrs. Scott. 'Let us pray for this very thing.'

'Why, of course I've no objection, but I haven't the least bit of faith,' said the loquacious little lady. 'I have labored with that woman, off and on, enough to convert a Hottentot, and left her no end of missionary magazines and leaflets, but it all does no sort of good. She said once that some of the reading was "quite interesting" think of that! The matter took no more hold of her than the most commonplace events in the daily papers, nor half so much as the market reports. Nobody is better informed upon the price of farm products than the Widow Brown, but she cares little for any value not estimated by dollars and cents. If she would only antagonize our work, I should have some hope, but her sublime indifference aggravates me.'

That same evening Abner Cole, the Widow Brown's hired man, came into the sitting-room, as his habit was, to talk over matters of mutual interest with his employer.

'Well, Mis' Brown,' said he. 'I've got off the last of them fat sheep to-day, and I'll be bound a likelier lot never was shipped from this station. Yes, I shall miss 'em, but I reckon we sold at the right time; sheep won't be any higher. There! I like to forget the cheque,' and Abner took from his pocket a paper which represented the value of the hundred fat sheep just marketed.

Before going back to his corner by the kitchen stove, the man remarked:

'They say wheat has riz.'

'Yes, so I understand,' said Mrs. Brown. 'Had an offer?'

'Yes.'

'How much?'

She told him.

'Good. Closed the bargain?'

'Not yet. The offer holds until to-morrow. Think I better sell?'

'I reckon you had; it's a big price for wheat this year. Mor'n anybody else got around here.'

The next day the Widow Brown sold her wheat, and wrote to one Banker Brown that she would come to the city the following week, prepared to purchase another \$1,000 bond. Banker Brown was a distant relative and an old friend of her husband. Silas had said to her: 'Always consult with Banker Brown, Bebbey. His advice will be worth more than a lawyer's, and cost less;' and she had done so. She and Abner could carry on the farm, but when it came to investing the proceeds, she trusted no one but Banker Brown.

A week later, as she took the morning train for the city, twenty miles distant, she found half a dozen ladies among her fellow passengers with whom she was acquainted. Among them were Mrs. Scott and Mrs. Edgar, who were going to attend a missionary meeting. They expressed their pleasure at seeing Mrs. Brown, and hoped she was going to the meeting also; but she said hers was a business trip, and she must return by the first train.

'If you have a little time to spare before your train leaves, come in to the meeting, it will be pleasanter than sitting at the station,' said Mrs. Scott, as they separated at the church door.

Mrs. Brown thanked her, and walked on to the bank, which was closed, and a long streamer of crape hung from the door-knob. She was shocked beyond expression. Mr. Brown, the president, had died suddenly that morning of apoplexy. The effect upon her was like that of a severe blow. She leaned against the building a moment for support, then putting out her hand, like one walking in darkness, seemed to grope her way down the steps, and slowly turned back toward the station. She had meant to do a little shopping, but she had no heart for it now.

The day seemed to have grown dark and chill. She shivered as she drew her wrap more closely about her, and quickened her footsteps a trifle, oblivious to everything in the busy streets through which she passed, until she came to the church where the ladies were assembled, and she recalled Mrs. Scott's invitation. Surely her own thoughts would be poor company during the two hours before the train-time, if she went to the station; so she entered the church, and sat down near the door, saying to the young lady usher who asked her to go up

near the front, that she must leave soon, and preferred her present seat.

It was such a meeting as Mrs. Brown had never attended, and it was a revelation to her. She had not supposed that there were any women in the land who could stand up before an audience, even of their own sex, and talk and pray as these women did during the devotional hour at the beginning.

She forgot the train, which had been gone an hour when the morning session closed, and all present were invited to a collation in the church parlors. She would have gone away, but Mrs. Scott laid hold of her, and she was carried with the crowd contrary to her inclination. What a pleasant, social hour she spent with these ladies! They were so cordial, and the flavor of their conversation, like that of their viands, was so agreeable that she enjoyed it.

There was no train that she could take until evening, so she made a day of it at the missionary meeting, and not reluctantly either, for her interest continued until the end. But on the whole it proved a trying day for Mrs. Brown. The shock of the morning had its effect upon her nervous system. Then, too, her conscience was ill at ease, which was indeed a new sensation; and finally, the promise of fair weather had proved deceptive, for, when the meeting closed, the rain was falling, and the sidewalks were sloppy, while she, usually the most prudent person in the care of her health, was provided with neither waterproof, umbrella, nor rubbers, and rode home with damp clothing and wet feet.

It was easy to foresee the result. Sally, her faithful maid of all work, used vigorously the simple preventives at hand, but could not avert the dreadful chill, followed by fever and delirium. In the night she roused up Abner to go for the doctor.

'Mis' Brown is out of her head,' she said. 'And I'm afraid she's going to die, for she's talking religion as I never heard her before.'

For a week Mrs. Brown hovered between life and death. It was pitiful to hear her talk so incessantly yet incoherently of talents, stewardship, unprofitable servant, treasures laid up upon the earth, and the like. Once when Abner came to look at her for a moment she exclaimed: 'Don't sow wheat this year, Abner; sow the good seed, which is the Word of God,' and poor Abner rushed out crying like a baby.

Mrs. Brown came slowly back to health and strength, a holier and happier woman because of the refiner's fire by which she had been tried. She said to Mrs. Scott, sitting by her bedside during the time of convalescence:

'A sick-bed is not the worst thing. It has been a blessing to me. For twenty years I have been trying to understand what my husband wanted me to do, and tried to tell me upon his death-bed. It is all clear now, for I have felt in the same way. He was troubled because we had done so little for the Lord, and it is such a mercy that it has not come to me too late, as it did to him. No, I am not talking too much; I shall get well faster if I tell you some things which are on my mind. That day I was at the missionary meeting, I had with me \$1,000 in cheques and bank-notes, that

I was to exchange for a bond. You probably know what prevented. Sad and shocking as that event was, it is well for me that I did not make the investment. I can do better with my money now. Now, in my husband's name, I wish to endow a scholarship in some seminary down South, and also take a few shares in that school in Japan, that I never heard of till that day. You may take the money now for both objects, if you will, and then it will be off my mind.'—'Canada Presbyterian.'

### Let it Alone.

(By the Rev. W. F. McCauley, Litt.D., in the 'C. E. World'.)

'I can drink or let it alone,'

Then let it alone, my friend!

For a habit but partly grown

Is a troublesome thing to fend.

It is better to let it alone

Than to check it with blow and moan,

And have it cling on to the end.

Says the boy, 'I can let it alone.'

Then let it alone, my friend!

Why not prove that your soul's your own,

That your will is too firm to bend?

O, you 'sometime will let it alone,'

But just now you are no one's drone!

Then look out for the bitter end!

So the drinker can 'let it alone.'

Then let it alone, my friend!

To your cups you're already prone,

And your ways give no sign to mend.

You just say you can let it alone,

That you are not overthrown;

But you drink right on to the end!

And the drunkard can 'let it alone.'

Then let it alone, my friend!

'No!' he shrieks; 'I for years have known

Deeper woes than were ever penned!

For the drink will not let me alone.

There it sits in my being's throne,

And lashes me on to the end!

I can't 'drink or let it alone,'

But can let it alone, my friend!

O'er the wrecks in their passion strown

I can help to the tempted send.

I can let it entirely alone;

I can keep me in safety's zone.

And quaff its pure springs to the end.

Yet you never must let it alone.

Do not let it alone, my friend!

Cast it out to the Shapes that groan

From the hearts it would sear and rend.

Never fancy to let it alone

Till you bury it under the stone,

And write, 'You are there till the end!'

'I can drink or let it alone,'

Then let it alone, my friend!

Ere your hopes to the grave are flown,

To this counsel of mine attend.

If right now you can let it alone,

Let your purpose be daily shown,

And let it alone to the end.

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