

nocent pleasure" had grown into a hideous crime. What he did for the enjoyment of his son had ruined him forever.

He related all the foregoing circumstances to our friend, seeking neither to justify himself, nor "innocent pleasures," but confessing his error, and owning that games which are vicious in places of public resort cannot be wholly innocent in the parlour. -- *American Messenger*.

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**'SIR, I SHALL PRAY FOR YOU  
TO-NIGHT AT TWELVE.'**

The cars were hurrying towards the city as if conscious that business hours had begun. Our party was seated comfortably, full of plans for doing all that we wished to do while in town. Presently a friend seeing us came over and took a seat with us, and happily diverted our cumbered brains by incidentally mentioning that he had travelled to and fro over the State of Maine time and again. We were all interested at once, for was not that our Fatherland, and did we not feel as if "our foot was on its heath?"

After much chit-chat and many tales of adventures, our visitor becoming more serious said, I left one of those towns one fine September morning in a top buggy with a good horse. Two or three miles out I noticed that the road stretched up and over a long steep hill. As my horse crept up, I noticed not far before me a person walking. She looked very old, and scarcely appeared to move, so slow was her gait. As I came up I said, "Why, mother, what are you doing here?" "Why, man," said she, "I am going to the next town to visit my son." "But, marm, it is seventeen miles." "Oh well, I shall call at some farmer's for the night, and hope to-morrow evening to drink tea with my William." "If," said I, "you think you can trust me, I shall be glad to give you a seat in my carriage, as my route lies through that town."

"Now, child, this is good of you and praised be God." With much ado she was finally seated and we jogged on. She entertained me with an account of her family, why and when she came from Scotland; said she was eight-five years

old, and with many pious expletives, unwittingly taught me a lesson of gratitude. When she alighted at my William's door, she heaped her blessings upon me, thanking me over and over, and saying, "I shall be on knees at twelve o'clock praying to God for you, and remember, sir, that God has promised to hear the prayer of the widow and the fatherless." I smiled my thanks unconcernedly, and said, "Good-bye, good-bye, I must go," and she held my arm saying, "Remember, boy, I shall pray for you to-night at twelve." Thanking her once more, I was soon seated, and trotted off at a brisker rate than usual; for must I not reach Penobscot and take the Boston boat for Bangor? So on I went, and as I drove into town in ample season to secure my passage, I moralized that my good speed was because I honoured that hoary headed woman, and I believe also that my life and the lives of others were spared that night from death in answer to that midnight prayer. That very hour was one of the darkest of my life, for I was on board the steamer *Cumbridge*, and the fierce gale of September 8, 1869, was upon us; our vessel lay in the trough of the sea, a helpless thing. As the clock in the saloon pointed to twelve that night a steam pipe burst, and almost in an instant the ship was filled to suffocation with the vapour. Every moment we expected to see the flames burst out. The terror of the hour can better be imagined than described. There were seventy-five ladies and more than twice as many gentlemen. The officers found all discipline impossible; even the coal heavers entered the ladies' state-rooms and took life-preservers from them. As I rushed to the forward deck my heart was full, and I could only cry, Oh, that the widow's prayer might be answered, and we yet be saved. The night wore on, and still we were afloat, and neither fire nor water had devoured us. The next day there loomed up in our wake a large white steamer, white and fair as the wings of Mercy. She threw us a line and brought us safely to port. Here our friend paused, but as no one spoke, he said, Now this is no exaggeration, and I believe that the prayer of that woman saved the ship. There was an exclamation of yes, yes, from all, and as