

The Home Mission Journal.

A record of Missionary, Sunday-School and Temperance work, and a reporter of church and ministerial activities and general religious literature. Published semi-monthly.

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Rosecroft.

CHAPTER XIV.

"Isn't it dreadful, Diantha, to think of such a bold robbery taking place in our quiet town of Berwick! I'm sure after this I shall lay awake nights half the time and fancy that every sound I hear is from burglars."

The speaker was Miss Agnes Woolsey, an old friend of Miss Hathaway's, who lived in a neighboring street. She was an elderly woman, slight and fragile looking, with a refined face that had once been very pretty, and beautiful white hair.

Genie as her face was, it lacked the expression of repose that made Diantha Hathaway the very embodiment of peace and quiet happiness. The curves of Miss Woolsey's mouth, the anxious look in her blue eyes, the wrinkles that had aged her face years before, above all, the fluttering involuntary gestures she so frequently made with her tiny hands all betrayed a highly sensitive, nervous temperament. And this afternoon she was more excitable than usual, on account of the burglary they had been discussing, which took place the night before.

Miss Diantha herself looked considerably disturbed, though she tried to soothe the fears of her friend. But Elsie sat by a glow of resolution in her dark eyes, as she thought how she and Rags would guard her little Aunt and come to her rescue in case a burglar should break into their house.

It was a somewhat sultry July afternoon, and the little parlor, pleasantly shaded and fragrant with flowers, seemed a most inviting haven of rest. Miss Woolsey looked wistfully at Elsie as she said:

"What a comfort it must be to have your dear niece with you! Ah, if I had some one to share my room with me I should not be so alone at night. To be sure, brother Guy has the room adjoining, and wakes easily, and says he would come to the rescue with his pistol, if I gave the slightest alarm. But that doesn't comfort me much, for he would more likely than not shoot himself or me instead of the burglar, always provided the ruffian didn't shoot him first."

"Oh, my dear, you must have more confidence in your good brother. He always seems so cool-headed and self-possessed."

"Oh, but you must remember that he isn't so young and vigorous as he used to be, and can't see well without his glasses, either. And I'm sure he would never think to put them on if he heard me call for help. And though I shall always keep a night-light burning after this, it would be pretty dark in the room, and with his glasses off he might so easily mistake me for a burglar, or get shot himself!" Miss Woolsey paused expressively.

Miss Hathaway's eyes twinkled with mild amusement at her friend's naivete, but she pitied her nervous distress and said kindly:

"After all, Agnes, you are more favored than we, who have no man to depend upon except our good neighbor next door, Mr. Himsdale. We have arranged together that in case of any danger from fire or robbers I am to ring a big bell out of my chamber window, when he will come to the rescue. But he is such a sound sleeper, I don't know as we could count upon his help, unless his wife or children roused him."

"Well that is a discouraging outlook, Diantha! Why don't you try the plan I thought of, and which I would certainly carry out if Guy were willing. I suggested that every night we should put our two good watches, pocket money, and what little silver and jewelry we have into a

basket, and leave it on the front hall table with a lamp burning near it so that the burglars would see it at once. To make sure they did not come upstairs I would write a card in big printed letters, saying that was all the silver we had, and that we kept our money (except the amount in the basket) in a New York savings bank, and would they please go quietly away with the basket, shutting any doors or windows they might have left open. Oh, Diantha, I see you are trying not to laugh, you and Elsie both, and I really didn't know but brother Guy would have a fit when I suggested this plan to him a month ago, after we heard of that burglary in Orange. He's teased me about it in his god-natured way ever since, keeps bringing me the most ridiculous placards in prose and poetry addressed to the burglars! I can't help laughing at some of them myself, though I'm ready to cry too, I'm always so nervous about robbers and fire. And I must say I think my little plan much more sensible than to run the risk of being murdered in our beds. Our old Martha is so faithful and honest she would never even think of taking anything we left out, or of tattling about the matter, either."

"But, my dear Agnes," said Miss Hathaway, good-naturedly, "don't you think it would be quite an encouragement to crime making presents money and valuables to burglars? Why, if everybody undertook to carry out your plan, we might have a regular invasion of robbers in Berwick."

"Dear me, I never thought of that," said conscientious little Miss Woolsey. "I wouldn't willingly do anything that was wrong. But I am so nervous and upset about the burglary last night. To think how they succeeded in chloroforming the whole family except Squire Remington, and they fired twice at him when he was chasing them! Such a rash thing for him to do, and what a mercy he wasn't killed!"

"What a mercy indeed! Well, Agnes, you must remember that Squire Remington is a rich man; our wealth is hardly likely to tempt burglars!" She laughed as she spoke, but went on after an instant's pause, with a half-playful half-serious smile. "We shall have to take comfort in the text that is such a comfort to Mother Adams, 'Thou shalt not be afraid of the terror by night.'"

"Dear old saint! She always has a text for everything. I wish I had her faith, I might be able then to sleep like a bobby the whole night through, as she does, for all her eighty years," sighed Miss Woolsey, who was really a good Christian, and an intelligent, agreeable woman also, except when her nervous fears were excited.

That night Miss Hathaway read the ninety-first psalm. Then, kneeling down with Rosie and Elsie she asked in somewhat trembling tones for God's protection through the night, after which they all repeated together the Lord's prayer and sang an evening hymn. Elsie felt when they parted for the night as if God's benediction were resting on them. At the same time the spirited and resolute young maid remembered sturdy Cromwell's maxim: "Trust in God and keep your powder dry." What if the Great Deliverer designed through her to protect the gentle-hearted, fragile little woman who loved and cherished her like a mother! Her heart thrilled at the thought and when she knelt to pray, she asked that she might be made strong and very courageous in case of any peril from robbers or fire.

Her room and her aunt Diantha's were exactly opposite, and they always left their doors open at night so that they could call upon each other in case of any emergency. Rosie's pleasant little room was at the east end of the hall, overlooking the kitchen garden. The faithful creature had, unknown to her mistress and Elsie, bought a pistol that afternoon, with her own wages, which she had locked up in a drawer. It must be confessed, however, that though no coward, Rosie looked upon her new acquisition with the greatest distrust and aversion. Except for a few minutes' instruction from the gunsmith about loading it and pulling the trigger she didn't know in the least how to use the weapon, and was mortally afraid she might hit the wrong person.

In spite of her misgivings, however, Rosie tried to keep up a brave heart and a cheery face before the others. As she said good-night to Miss

Diantha and Elsie, she urged them to call her at once if they heard any unusual noises in the house, "though I don't think we're rich enough to tempt the rascals," she added consolingly.

(To be Continued.)

Victory Co. t. in

The fight is on. The lines are drawn. Whether we accept the fact or dispute it, the fact remains. The conflict against intemperance has taken the form of a contest between the church and the liquor traffic.

The church will win. There can be no doubt as to the result. The uncertainty is as to the length of time for which the fight may be prolonged. This also is a matter for the church to determine.

The warfare is in one sense something like the warfare between the British and the Boers in South Africa. On the one hand, a small though earnest and determined minority, cut off from outside help, and on the other hand, a mighty array with a vast empire of open resources behind it.

Compared with the liquor traffic, the church is vast and powerful. If Christians were united and earnest, the contest would be very brief. The odds against the liquor traffic are too great to give any chance of winning.

It exists to-day because the forces that make for righteousness are not sufficiently consolidated to meet the organized opposition which is therefore able to defeat them, and because men are not roused to the necessities of the situation.

There is in the Christian Church to-day a power that, if operative, would bring the legalized liquor traffic to an end in one election campaign. Where rests the responsibility for the continuance of the traffic?

We repeat our assertion of the ultimate result. Evil will be utterly overcome of good. Meantime those who fail to do all they can to suppress the evil, cannot evade responsibility for the results of its operation.

And Yet We All Would be Rich

The late Cornelius Vanderbilt is quoted as having said to a friend, just before he died: "I don't see what good it does me—all this money that you say is mine. I can't eat it; I can't spend it; in fact, I never saw it, and never had it in my hands for a moment. I dress no better than my private secretary, and cannot eat as much as my coachman. I live in a big servant's boarding-house, am bothered to death by beggars, have dyspepsia, and most of my money is in the hands of others, who use it mainly for their own benefit."

The more active we are in missionary work, the deeper we go into it, the more glorious and rewardful it becomes to our souls. The splendor of the conception of proclaiming the redemptive love of Almighty God far surpasses in grandeur the warrior's far-reaching plan, the statesman's endeavor for national conquest, the poet's dream of human brotherhood, the philosopher's theory of universal linguistic unity. The soul that truly takes Christ's sublime thought and command for the redemption of humanity is in turn taken control of by the command, every impulse and power sweetened, broadened, vivified, energized.