

*Life and Light*, noted the dates of the meetings,—the first Wednesday in each month,—and made up her mind to double her subscription, so did not pay the dollar she had brought for the purpose.

Then came the pictures of the different meetings. The first Wednesday in March saw her tied to the sofa, filled with real regret that she was too ill to attend. She had planned to spend the hour reading the first number of her *Life and Light* that came that morning, but it had unfortunately fallen into the clutches of her Skye terrier and been torn in pieces. The day of the April meeting found her sitting by the fire with an old friend, indulging in school reminiscences, comparing notes as to household affairs, the "blessed babies," and their hopes for the future,—a sweet and peaceful picture were it not for the disapproving conscience which constantly reminded her that, in her joy at seeing her friend in the morning, she had entirely forgotten the auxiliary meeting, and urged her to stay for the day.

The first Wednesday in May she saw herself hurrying into the meeting half an hour late, having stayed in town on a shopping expedition much longer than she intended. Some one was reading a paper when she went in, of which she did not hear the title nor the introduction, and she could not fix her thoughts upon it. A short missionary letter and some business finished the meeting. The business suddenly brought to her mind the fact that she had not paid her annual fee, although the collector had called twice for it, and she had promised to send it. She could not pay it this afternoon, that was certain, as she had spent every cent she had in town. A most delightful picture in June was a perfect day, a pleasant ride of ten miles to a large, inspiring Branch meeting, delightful Christian fellowship, and a strong impulse in the good cause. In July and August there were no meetings; and since her return in the autumn, to her shame she confessed they had passed from her mind altogether. Could it be possible? She had attended only two meetings, had not paid a cent into the treasury, and had let more than half the numbers of the *Life and Light* lie unread on the table. A whole year gone, and she had had almost no part in the ongoing of the kingdom of her Lord in the foreign lands! Ah! the might-have-dones were weighing heavily upon her. Would the shall-be-dones be increased in the year to come?

Among those present in the afternoon was Mrs. Goodyear, who had never attended a missionary meeting in all her life before. She knew, of course, that there was an auxiliary society in the church, and that it had meetings, but she was busy here and there, and did not think it concerned her. Once or twice when the condition of heathen women had been brought to her notice she had been quite troubled by it, but had turned it off with the thought that very likely they were reasonably happy, after all; she didn't see why she should be troubled about it. She had gone to the church in the afternoon to carry some flowers for the meeting, not intending to stay, but she had been seized by two or three friends and persuaded to remain. Her kindly soul had been stirred by the story of the life in India which the young missionary told. "To hear that girl talk, and to know how much she had done," she said to a friend afterward, "makes me feel as if I had done nothing but match ribbons all my life." One sentence from the address rang in her ears as she entered her beautiful home: "Remember, dear friends, that these are sensitive, delicate women; of the same flesh and blood as ourselves, with eyes that weep, and cheeks that burn, and hearts that ache over cruel wrongs; and then let us try to think for a moment what our lives would be if all that pertained to Christianity were taken out of them." She could not get the words out of her mind even when she lay down for her usual Sunday afternoon rest.

She did not know how quickly she had passed into the land of dreams, and it seemed a part of her waking thoughts when a young Hindu woman stood beside her, dressed in the brilliant costume of her country, with flashing jewels in nose and ears, on neck, and arms, and ankles. Her dress was in strong contrast with the sorrow in her face and in her voice as she said: "Do you know what your life would be without your

Christ? Come, and let me show you. This garled and twisted staff in my hand represents heathenism; see what it does."

"I felt irresistibly impelled," said Mrs. Goodyear, in writing of the dream, "to follow her without saying a word. Her first movement was toward the copy of the Sistine Madonna over the mantel, which she touched with her staff, and it turned into a piece of soiled canvas. 'Of course,' I thought, 'if we had no Christ we should have no pictures of Madonnas.' Then she turned to Raphael's cartoon, the healing of the cripple at the Beautiful Gate of the Temple: her touch eliminated the stately figures of Peter and John, leaving only the maimed and loathsome cripples on the ground. In the same way the lovely figures bowed in prayer in Millet's 'Angulus,' hanging near, disappeared, and left only the barren moor. Looking in pity on my distressed face, she led me down stairs to the library, where she carried dreadful havoc among Henry's books. Who would have believed that Christ and his teachings formed so large a part of the books of all time? By the time she left, there were great gaping holes in the different shelves, and there was hardly a book that was not scarred and blurred by the inexorable touch that would not leave a word that referred to Christianity. She dragged me into the music room, and in an instant all the hymn-books arranged for the family singing after tea, every exquisite bit from an oratorio, every piece of sacred music had vanished, and there was hardly a song that was not cut and slashed to take away the expressions of love to God or man. And so she took me through the other rooms, till every one was dismantled, marred, with all the soul taken out of it.

"Then she took me into the street, and her first stopping-place was at the Church of the Good Shepherd,—the beautiful piece of architecture so perfect from cellar to steeple top,—and at the orphanage near to it, and in a flash the staff had razed both houses to the ground. The silver-tongued orator, with the words of life still burning on his lips, was turned into the street, silent henceforth; and the little ones were homeless, shelterless wanderers once more. With a cry of dismay I tried to stay the hand of my guide, but she went relentlessly on, till every church, every hospital, every building for charitable purposes, every poor house, every asylum of any kind that she could find, was as if it had never been. Every bookstore, and newspaper, and periodical felt the chilling blight.

"As we passed through the business streets, the shop windows were resplendent with holiday goods, and fragrant Christmas greens were in every hand, but all disappeared in the twinkling of an eye. 'No Christ, no Christmas, you know,' said my guide. 'Can you imagine the loss of the blessed time of "good will to men" in your beautiful America?

"I cannot stand it, any longer!" I cried; "I cannot see all the beauty of my native city ruined!"

"Cannot bear it?" she answered; "and you do not know the half of the misery we bear in India; yet we must bear it."

"She took me back to my home, and I hurried to my pretty tea-table to tell my tale to sympathizing ears. But there were no sympathizing ears to hear it; my husband treated me as if I were a child of ten, to be potted, and soothed, and sent away; my boys looked at me in supercilious wonder that I should dare to seat myself at the table with them. The pretty china, the shining glass, the tempting food were there, but there was no place for me. Gradually I perceived that I was no more than a slave in my own house, and in horror, I rushed from the room, to fall fainting on the floor outside.

"After awhile I opened my eyes,—and could I believe it! I was in my own room, with all its adornments untouched, and my boys were calling me to tea."

It was only a dream, but it had its effect. "To think," she exclaimed to a friend next day, "that I have lived all these years and never lifted a finger to help these women! How much I might have done!"

Ah! the might-have-dones of the year that is past! Shhll