

WHO REFORMED THE MISSION CIRCLE.

BY MARIANA M. BISBEE.

Mirandy and I hadn't never been to mission meeting, for all we'd lived in Summit goin' on three year. We'd never got any particular invitation, though, to be sure, our minister read it regular, Sunday, amongst the other notices. But somehow it never came home to us that 'twas our duty to take holt without waitin' to be asked, till one Sunday we had a stranger preach for us.

He was a real smart, pleasant-spoke man—though not a bit better than our minister,—and when he give out notices he read off notice of mission meetin', and then says he, "I do not know whether it is your pastor's custom in reading these notices to make further remarks on them. But this mission circle is of course supported by all the Christian ladies of the congregation, and I suppose you all make special effort to attend the meetings."

Then he went on preachin'; but Mirandy and I set there kind o' dumb-founded. You can't think how ashamed we felt. 'Twant but a little thing the pastor had said, but somehow it took right holt of us, and we made up our minds that, come what would we'd go to the next mission meetin'.

Seem's though we couldn't wait for Wednesday to git round, we was so anxious to make up for past failures. And really there hadn't been the least mite of excuse for us, living as we did—just two old maid sisters by ourselves; only, as I said, it hadn't come home to us before.

Well, we started out. The meetin' was at three o'clock, and 'twas quarter of, when we left home. But there was no one in sight when we went up the hill to the meetin'-house. "Perhaps our clock was fast," says Mirandy. "Or slow," says I. "Mebbe we're late."

But when we got into church we heard laughin' and talkin' somewhere, so we knew meetin' hadn't begun. There was a little blue-eyed lady—a stranger—standin' by the stairs, lookin' kind o' perplexed, but she brightened up when she saw us. "I didn't know just where to go," she said; "but you can show me now."

I looked at Mirandy. "Well, the fact is," says she, "we hain't been here before, ourselves,—but I guess we can find the way. They're in one of the small vestries." And she went ahead and pushed open the door.

We followed on, expectin' to see all Summit inside, but if you'll believe it, there set jest seven women! Two young ones, and three middlin' old, and Grandma Packard and another old lady. Then there was two children, set up stiff in chairs by the wall. I never was more beat.

But the circle looked more astonished than Miranda and me. They didn't seem to be expectin' company. However, they made us very welcome, and Mis' Brown—she's president—called the meetin' to order, then made a short prayer, and then called for the minutes of the last meetin'. Near's we can remember, there was six at that meetin', and they'd had eighteen cents tumbler collection.

Thinks I, well, these ain't much like Sunday meetin's—and I felt more ashamed than ever. Why, the sewin' they'd git done at one o' their meetin's wouldn't keep the smallest heathen in Ingy warm through summer. Well, they got the report read, and asked if there was any further business, and there didn't seem to be much. It got awful still, and them two children—old Mis' Packard brought 'em—laffed right out. Then the little lady that came with us spoke up and says she, "Perhaps this is not the right time for it, but I wish to join your society—to-day, if I may."

Mis' Brown seemed very glad to hear it, and while she was signin' her name, I nudged Mirandy and she spoke up sayin' we'd join too. Well, we got through the joinin' business, and one young lady read a piece about a lady missionary's trials among the heathen. 'Twas kind of interesting but I couldn't make out where the place was, or whether there was anything we could do about it. The lady that wrote the piece—seems though she was havin' a pretty hard time, for she said money was needed very much, and books and cards; but the circle didn't talk it over any, and when she got through readin' they hauled out some cotton pieces and went to sewin'. I went round amongst them and tried to find out what they was for. One young lady said

she thought the president would know—"but it's for a deservin' object," she said. We sewed till near supper time; and I declare I felt discouraged, for them seven women, president and all, jest sat talkin' scandal faster'n they worked. They tore the minister and his wife all to pieces, and forgot to put them together again, and they give everybody a bad name in the parish. I was thankful Mirandy and I come, for I didn't know what they might a' said if we hadn't been there. And them two children set by, scratchin' gathers and listenin' to every word.

Mis' Wilbur—that's the little lady's name—she didn't say anything, but she jest sat there with her blue eyes lookin' sort o' surprised, and sewed very fast.

When meetin' broke up she walked down a piece with us. "Wan't you most discouraged at the small number, Mis' Wilbur," says Mirandy.

"Oh, no," says she. "Seven women can do wonderful things. Besides, there are three more than there were this morning."

"I noticed you didn't take no part in the conversation, Mis' Wilbur," says I. "I thought you didn't approve of it more'n we did. There's a good deal to be done in that

The next meetin' was even better. Mis' Wilbur she brought her little girl to draw maps for us—she did it real cute, too,—and explain about the places; and she'd brought a lot of tidies and splashers marked in outline for the little girls to work with pretty colors while we sewed; she said she could find a market for 'em.

Then Mis' Brown's girl—she's getting to be quite a young lady—drawed somethin' on the board that was real curious. She made queer shaped figures of light, shinin' on to dark patches of the world, and explained that 'twas Christianity shinin' on heathen nations, and, my sakes! there wasn't but one little spot that she said stood for the number of Christian folks in the world, and such enormous patches of black! We all felt as if we'd better let our lights shine a little brighter.

Right in the middle of meetin' Mirandy leaned over to me, and says she, "How many folks do you see, that we sent tracts to?"

I looked all round, and I couldn't count up but two. We didn't know what to make of it. But goin' home we got our eyes opened. Mis' Brown's girl walked behind us, talkin' to a friend. "Oh, that little Mrs.

place, that it was in one of the Gospels or Epistles. Those were written for everybody as long as the world should last, but she never thought of finding any special word for her own life in the Old Testament. She read it because it was a part of the Bible, and she thought that she must.

So now this morning, as she read, her thoughts were not on her reading, but downstairs, wondering what kind of a spread would be prettiest for the little stand in the back parlor, and if the new statuette would not look better between the two front windows.

Suddenly she stopped. What was that she had just read?

"And if ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? and if ye offer the lame and sick, is it not evil? Offer it now unto thy governor, will he be pleased with thee or accept thy person? saith the Lord of hosts."

Her Bible slipped from her hands as she sat gazing into the fire.

What kind of sacrifices and offerings had she brought to God? His gifts to her had been rich and plentiful; what had she offered unto Him?

"The more John does for me the more I want to do for him," she thought, with crimsoning cheeks. "I just try to think of things to please him, and to do for him, but I am afraid it isn't so about God. I don't see as I've given anything but old clothes that we could spare as well as not, and the regular contributions, but then I spend twice as much for things I do not really need."

"I gave myself to God, of course, a long time ago, but I am afraid that has been anything but a perfect offering. And I do believe," she exclaimed in her earnestness, "that, imperfect as I am, instead of giving the best of myself to God I have given it to John, to society, and to my own pleasure."

"I never would have gone into any evening company as tired and worn out as I went to last Thursday evening's meeting."

"Oh, dear! if the Lord was displeased with His people in those days, what must He be with me?"

It was with a very penitent, humble heart that Mrs. Grey knelt to plead for pardon and help for the future.

She had an errand down town that morning. On her way home she met Dr. Rogers. She knew him slightly; he was a member of the church they attended, but she was not prepared for his bright smile of greeting and outstretched hand.

"I believe the Lord sent you to me," he said. "I was just asking him to show me some one for teacher in the Foundry Mission School. Won't you and your husband each take a class? I was almost in despair, for we are so short of workers just now; but I could not make up my mind to give up the field, for the harvest is plenteous."

Mrs. Grey was on the point of refusing decidedly, when suddenly her morning's reading flashed into her mind.

Here was a chance for a genuine sacrifice, for the mission school held its session Sabbath afternoon, the only afternoon in the week when John was home, and they did enjoy it so! To be sure, it would not take all the afternoon, but it would spoil it.

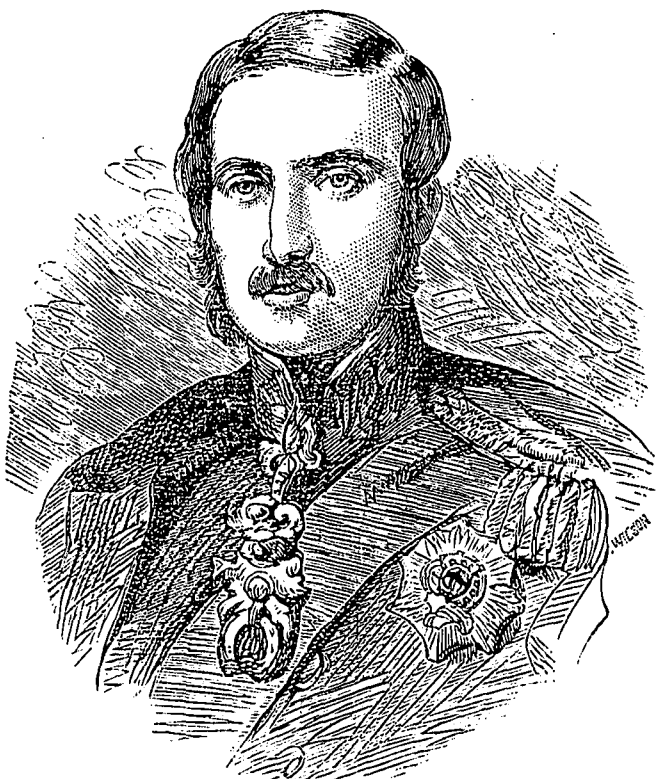
"It wasn't," she pleaded with herself, "as though they spent the time as some did, riding, paying or receiving visits. To think of giving up those nice long talks and hours of Bible study together for teaching those rough foundry boys and girls! No, she could not," she decided, as she hurried along. She wanted to get as far away from that troublesome doctor as possible.

And yet should she always offer unto the Lord that which cost her nothing, that which was cast off—like her last winter's cloak that she gave to a poor woman last week, that which was left over from everything else?

A sudden sense of bitter shame at her own ingratitude swept over Mrs. Grey. He, the Lord of hosts, had redeemed her; He had filled her cup of blessings full and running over. Could she refuse anything?

The hot tears sprang to her eyes, and turning, she rapidly retraced her steps to Dr. Rogers' office, to say, "We will take the classes if you are willing. I can promise for my husband without waiting to ask him. He is always ready to do his duty, and I hope I shall be in the future."—*Christian Intelligencer.*

Do noble! and the nobleness that lies In other men, sleeping, but never dead, Shall rise in majesty to meet thine own. —*Lowell.*



ALBERT, PRINCE CONSORT, IN 1840.

direction. We must make it a subject of special prayer." "And of work too," said Mis' Wilbur, as she left us at the corner.

Well, Mirandy and I prayed over it a good deal; that those mission meetin's might be blessed, and a goodly number present. And Mirandy found some excellent missionary tracts, and sent 'em round to a good many of the best families, and we jest folded our hands and waited for next Wednesday. We was so anxious to see some good accomplished!

Never shall I forget how pleased we felt when the time come, and one after another the women and young folks come in till there was twenty-six there! And such a good meetin'. Some one had brought in a blackboard and made a map on it of the mission fields, and marked how far off they was, and how many workers in 'em, and wrote the names of all the big places, so when pieces was read we could look right on and understand. An' the president read us a lot about some place where a missionary was just goin', and proposed that our society pledge to give a certain share of her salary every year. She had a letter from the missionary, too—come the day before, tellin' how she felt about goin' away, and what things she thought would be needed.

Well, we all got our spirits up, and when we got to sewin' there was so much to plan there didn't seem to be no time to gossip; and Mirandy and I felt that our prayers had done a great deal. We couldn't help feelin' real pleased and proud, too; and we went home pretty well satisfied.

Wilbur is such a worker!" she said, "Why she certainly brought as many as fifteen persons to the meeting. I wouldn't have come myself but for her coaxing. And she thinks up the nicest little ideas. She brought that blackboard, you know, and showed me how to make that drawing. And she's planned a lot of nice things with mamma. We're going to have a little entertainment at every meeting, and regular drills about foreign countries, and correspond with the missionaries ourselves. Oh, I'm real glad she made me come!"

Mirandy and I went home in silence. What were we to think? We had had faith and Mis' Wilbur had had works, and now the question was, "Who reformed the Mission Circle?"—*Morning Star.*

MRS. GREY'S SACRIFICE.

BY KATE S. GATES.

Mrs. Grey drew a little breath of pure content as she stood by the cheerful grate fire in her cosy little library. She had just finished her morning's work of putting the parlors to rights.

"I believe," she said softly to herself, "that I am just as near being perfectly happy as it is possible for anyone to be. I ought to be content, certainly, with such a dear, good husband and pleasant home."

Then, having assured herself that everything was in order for the day, she ran upstairs to her own room and took up her Bible for her morning chapter. It was in Malachi. She wished, as she opened to her