



**DO** the duty which lies nearest you, and which thou knowest to be a duty. Thy second duty will already have become clearer.—Carlyle.

## The Second Chance

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"THE dirty spalpeen!" John Watson exclaimed angrily. "Ye may well say that, Pa, after all she had to stand from the old man. But that's what the piece said: 'But Tom, too, took to drinkin'.' He said 'twas a harmless thing; So the arrow sped and my bird of hope

Came down with a broken wing." The Watson family were unanimous that Tom was a bad lot! "Tom cut up worse than the old man, and she used to have to get some of the neighbors to come in and sit on his head while she tuk his boots off, and she'd have clean give up, if it hadn't been for her little boy, like Danny here; but if I ever thought that our Danny would go back on us the way that young Jim went back on his ma, I don't know how I'd stand it."

"What did he do, Pearlie?" Mary asked. "Soon as he got big enough nothin' would do but he'd drink too, and smoke cigarettes and stay out late, and one day stole somethin', and had to scoot, and she says so pitiful:

"I've never seen my poor lost boy From that dark day to this."

Then the poor woman goes to the poorhouse, mind you!"

"God help us!" cried Mrs. Watson, "didi it come to that?"

"Yes, Ma, but what d'ye think? One day a fine lookin' man came in to see all the old folks, silk hat and kid gloves on him and all that, and this poor woman got talkin' to him, and didn't she up and tell him how the whole story, same as I'm tellin' you, only far more pitiful, and sure didn't she end up by beggin' him to be kind to her poor Jimmy if he ever comes across him; and tellin' him how she always prays for him and knows he'll be saved yet. She never held it against the young scamp that he never writ back even the scratch of a pen, just as full of excuses for him, as Ma would be if it was one of you lads," and Pearl's voice quivered a little.

"But, sure, now, it is wonderful how things turn out!" Pearl went on, after she had wiped her eyes on the sleeve of her checked apron, "for wasn't this Jim all the time forinist her, and her not knowin' it, and didn't he grab her in his arms and beg her to forgive him, and he cried and she cried, and then he took her away with him, and she had a good time at last."

The next day Pearl borrowed the book from Maudie Ducker and learned the words, and for several evenings recited them to her admiring and tearful family. Then, to make it more interesting, Pearl let the young Watsons act it. Jimmy spoke right up and says he: "I bo' to be the old man, and come home drunk," but

as this was the star part, Jimmy had to let Tommy and Billy have it sometimes.

The first scene was the father's spectacular home-coming. The next scene was the wedding, and Jimmy made the speech after Pearl had coached him, and in most feeling against the flowing bowl, and told what a good girl his little Nancy was, and what a bad pa he'd been; and then he broke down and cried real tears, which Pearl said was "good actin'." The third scene was where Tom came home drunk. It was somewhat marred by Mary, who was playing the part of the broken-hearted bride, and was supposed to burst into tears when she saw the condition of her husband, and say:

"So the arrow has sped and my bird Comes down with a broken wing."

Now Mary had her own ideas of how intemperate husbands should be dealt with, and she had provided herself with a small flat stick as she sat waiting in what was supposed to be joyful anticipation for her liege lord's homecoming. When she discovered his condition she cut out the speech about the "bird of hope," and used the stick with so much vigor that it seemed he was in more danger than the bird of hope of having a broken wing. Billy, the bridegroom, was naturally indignant, but his father was disposed to approve of Mary's methods. "Faix, I'm thinkin'," he said, "there'd be less of it if they got that every time they come home that way."

Scene IV. was the young son (Patsy) fleeing from the hands of Justice. Pearlie hid him behind the flour-barrel until the two sleuths of the law, Danny and Tommy, passed by, and then he was supposed to do his great disappearing act through the cellar window.

Scene V. was the most important of all. It was the poorhouse, and required a good deal of stage-setting. All evidences of wealth had to be carefully eradicated. The cloth was taken from the table, and the one mat lifted off the floor. Newspapers were pinned over the windows, and the calendars were turned with their faces to the wall. The lamp with the cracked chimney was lighted instead of the "good lamp," and then Pearlie, with her mother's old black shawl around her shoulders, ceased to be Pearlie Watson and became poorhouse Nan, widowed, deserted, old as she sat herself, with heartbreak and tears. John Watson sat and listened to her with a growing wonder in his heart, but as the story went on even he forgot that it was Pearl, and shed many unshed tears over the sorrows of poorhouse Nan.

Camilla came in one night and

heard Pearl recite it all through. The morning of the contest an emergency meeting of the W. C. T. U. was hurriedly called at the home of Mrs. Francis. What was to be done? Maudie Ducker and Mildred Bates had the measles, and could not recite, which left only four reciters. They could do with five, but they could not go on with four. The tickets were sold, the hall rented, the contest had been advertised over the country! Who could do a recitation in a day? Miss Morrison was sent for. She said it was impossible. A very clever pupil might learn the words, but not the gestures, and "a piece" was nothing without gestures. Mrs. White again exclaimed: "What shall we do?"

Mrs. Francis said: "We'll see what Camilla says."

Camilla came and listened attentively while the woes of the W. C. T. U. were told her. It was with difficulty that she restrained an exclamation of delight when she heard that they were short of reciters. "Pearl Watson knows Maudie's recitation," she said quietly, "and recites it very well, indeed!"

"Prompt!" Miss Morrison exclaimed. "She had it!" "I think she watched you training, Maudie," Camilla ventured.

"Only once," Miss Morrison replied, "and she can not possibly know

### Thanks to Her Friends

I herewith acknowledge the receipt of the dinner set sent me as a premium for securing nine new subscribers for Farm and Dairy. I am very much pleased with it, and the prompt manner in which Farm and Dairy forwarded the same. I also wish to thank Farm and Dairy for the pure bred Ayrshire heifer calf sent me through Mr. M. H. Scott, of Iron Hill, Que., as a premium for securing 25 new subscribers for Farm and Dairy.

Kindly extend through your valuable paper, to the friends who favored me with their subscriptions, my sincere thanks for their kindness in helping me secure these premiums.—Annie M. McLeod, Soulanges Co., Que.

the gestures; but we will be glad to have any one fill in. People will not expect her to do very well when she has had no training," she added charitably.

When Camilla returned to the kitchen she was smiling gently. "There's a surprise coming to little Miss Morrison," she said. "That night the hall was full to the door, and people stood in the aisles. Everybody loves a contest. Pearl and the other four contestants sat in a front seat. The latter were beautifully dressed in white net over silk, with shoes and stockings of white, and numerous bows of ribbon."

By the draw that Miss Morrison made, Pearl came last on the programme, and Miss Morrison kindly asked the chairman to explain that Pearl had had no training whatever, and that she had only known that she was going to recite that morning. Miss Morrison wished to be quite fair!

Camilla sat beside Pearl. She had dressed Pearl for the occasion, and felt rather proud of her work as she sat beside Contestant No. 5. Pearl's brown hair was parted and brushed smoothly back, and tied with two new bright red ribbons—Camilla's gift. It did not occur to Pearl that she was in the race for the medal. She was glad of a chance to fill in and help the contest along.

John Watson, Mrs. Watson, and all the little Watsons were present, and filled two rows of seats. Mrs. Francis had heard something from the fact that caused him to send tickets to the whole Watson family, and even one himself, which was an unprecedented event.

Lucy Bates was the first contestant, and made her parents and many admiring relatives very proud of her, as she recited "Salons Must Go." She stated her little white face and stoutly declared that Watsons must go, and then backed away, leaving beautifully all a flutter of lace.

Maudie Healy—the star reciter of the Hullett neighborhood—recited "How Father signed the Pledge," a good, clear, ringing voice, and the Hullett people thought they were as sure of the medal as if they saw the chairman pinning it on Maudie.

Two other girls recited, with numerous gestures, sections of the same class, in which waywardness, sleep, nights, and railway accidents figured prominently.

Then the chairman made the explanation in regard to Pearl's appearance, and asked her to come forward and recite. Camilla gave her hand an affectionate little squeeze as she left the seat, and thus fortified, Pearl Watson faced the sea of faces as she stepped forward.

Then came that wonderful change, the little girl was gone, and a woman, so bowed, so broken, began to tell her story, old enough to make up a strong always in its gripping pathos, the story of a child, cheated of her birthright of happiness, because some men will grow rich on other men's losses and fatten on the tears of little children. The liquid traffic stood arraigned before the throne of God as the story went on, unlighting darker and darker shadows along the woman's life. It had been the curse that had followed her along, had beaten and bruised her, and made her a martyr.

The people saw it in their anguish, and the pity of it rolled over them as they listened to that sad, cracked voice.

When she came to the place where she begged the well-dressed stranger to try and save her boy, and seeing her trembling hands brought to God of Heaven to bear with her a little longer, and let her see the desire of her heart, her son redeemed and forgiven, there was an audible gasp from some one in the back of the hall, and many a boy away from home, careless and forgetful of his own mother, remembered her now with sudden tenderness. The words of the prayer were still so quaint, so simple, when did the Spirit of God descend upon felicity of expression? It was about wherever there is the base heart, and when Pearl, with her long down her cheeks, but with voice steady and clear, thanked God of all grace for sending her the answer to her prayers, even the deafest listener got a glimmering of a truth that there is "One behind the shadows who keeps watch above his own."

When Pearl had finished, the audience sat perfectly motionless, and then burst into such a tornado of applause that the windows rattled on their hinges.

John Watson sat still, but his face was singing within him, "Praise be, Pearlie, God bless her!"

When the judges met for their decision it was found that they had forgotten to mark the winner. Pearl's memory, gesture, pronunciation, and as their rules required them to do.

Father O'Flynn, the little lay priest, wiping his eyes and smiling said: "Gentlemen, my decision is Number 5." The other two nodded. (To be continued.)

The Upw

Avoid No.

For God hath not of fear; but of p and of a sound 1:7.

When once we occupation to which to believe that God have a right to exp upon our efforts, no nature may be, if v time with all our h God's will. It is even more than ou or missionary shou on conversions to the farmer should fa and not as before m ness man should a business should im The business man signed not to be slo (Romans 12:11)

In the home the pet to see her chi losing and capiti, and more affection ate, and the peace God to abound more is that we are se fulfilling the com ans 6.5 and 7, and