

The Home Mission Journal.

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The Coming of Caroline.

BY MARY E. O. BRURIL.

CHAPTER XII.

AN old tenement stands overhanging the river just where the tide creeps up, where there is a forest of shipping and the air smells of oil, tar and disagreeable fishy odors. In the day time, the adjoining streets and alleys are full of bustle; singing, swearing stevedores are loading and unloading the cargoes; great vans and wagons roll up and down; Irish apple-women are sbricking in rivalry with Italian fruit vendors. At night there is less noise—that is, of the honest bustle of trade. But there are other sounds—staggering footsteps, shrill bursts of unbecoming laughter, the tumult of angry quarreling, often with the accompaniment of a shriek, a struggle, a thud on the pavement, or oftener, maybe, a dull splash in the water, with only the outward bound waves to record the fact that a crime has been committed.

There is an evil name to the locality—hideous rumors ever lurking round Blackthorne Tenements. Foreign-looking sailors pass in and out of the doorways; bold women leer from the windows; the rattle of dice, the oaths of the gambler, and the clinking of glasses are heard until the coming of the gray dawn.

It was to one of these foul, old tenements that Mag Smith had taken little Caroline, and when the child awoke from the stupor caused by the fumes of the chloroform, her little heart was almost broken because of grief and fear.

She sat there by the window in the fourth story, looking out upon the black, oily waters below—a little figure, innocent and pure, strangely out of place in the dirty, untidy, poorly furnished room. Mag had stripped from her the dainty dimity dress, the sash and jaunty rosettes of pink ribbon, the bronze slippers with their buckled bows, these, together with the daisy-garlanded hat, had all been greedily exchanged for sundry bottles of whiskey, rum and gin. Now Caroline's tender body was clad in an ill-fitting, coarse calico frock; her little feet were bare and her silken curls all a tangle. Even the expression of the child's face seemed changed.

All the rose-tints were gone; all the sparkles from the innocent eyes; all the sweet, laughing curves of the red mouth. Pale, listless drooping like a flower, the little girl sat there, hour after hour, looking out on the moving water and the moving crowd of the street bordering the river.

Once, aroused to sudden desperation, she had leaned recklessly far out over the rotting window-sill and called for help from a couple of sailors rowing down the stream, for their honest, merry laughter and good-natured faces gave her a gleam of hope that they might help her.

The men did not hear the pitiful call—but Mag did, unfortunately, and, rushing in from the adjoining room, she seized the helpless child by the arm, drew her back; then, shaking her soundly, slapped her until there were red streaks on the little, white cheek.

"Do that again if you dare!" hissed the woman. "And if you do, when night comes, I'll pitch you down into the water!"

Thus she threatened, then paused, half-abashed at the lightning of righteous wrath flashing from the child's stern eyes.

Caroline drew herself up like a little queen as she said in low, steady tones:

"It is not I, Mag, who need to be afraid. It is you who are so cruel, so wicked, you need to

fear death! Oh, if the Captain were here, you would not dare to treat me so!"

"Pshaw! I guess the Captain passed in her checks months ago. She hasn't been bothering around here lately with her sanctimonious prying, at any rate," was the tough rejoinder. "As for that Mrs. Rosman of yours, we'll see how much her affection is worth. If she cares to plunk down a thousand dollars or so she can have ye; if not, you had better make up your mind to put up with my quarters; you've done it before. And it won't be long now before you can begin to earn your own living and bring in a little money for me. I've had a mind to send you out bagging when we get back to New York!" and Mag grinned maliciously, then added: "But I guess I'd wait till I hear from yer mammy, as we call her. It was a cute thing of Bill to put up the job of stealer ye."

Bill was Mag's partner in iniquity. A thief and a gambler he was, and one of the evil characters who frequented Blackthorne Tenements. Many a policeman would have been glad to find the man whom Miss Spoker had described as "a sporty man, kinder pick-pocketery with a purple necktie, but he did wear the red face."

"Mrs. Rosman isn't a rich lady," said Caroline soberly, when Mag had finished her chuckle over Bill's "cuteness." "She was rich once, but she isn't now and she has to work hard. Sometimes she sits up, oh, ever so late at night writing and it makes her tired. A thousand dollars is a lot of money! Can't you make it less, Mag? I—don't really think I'm worth it," and Caroline's lips quivered as she sat there with her small hands crossed on her knee, and looked pleadingly at the woman.

The latter turned abruptly. Hardhearted as she was, there was something in the innocent gaze that she dared not meet. And the red streaks on the cheek were a reproach.

"Oh, I guess you're worth a thousand dollars, Caroline," she said with a forced laugh. "I only wish now that I'd said two thousand. Bill and I made inquiries about Mrs. Rosman before we went into this little game, and it seems she's looked on to some rich acquaintances. She can get a thousand dollars easy enough if she tries—borrow it, I mean."

And so saying, Mag went out for her usual evening dram. She locked the door behind her, for she kept Caroline a prisoner.

The little girl sat there in silence, her heart heavy with grief and longing. Suddenly her face brightened a little as a thought suggested itself.

"Perhaps if mammy does borrow the money, I can help her pay it back," she said to herself. "My patchwork quilt is almost done and Mrs. Dent thought it was so pretty; maybe she'd buy it. And then, too, I can help mammy find names for her stories, and I'll do lots of the housework so that she'll have more time to write. Oh, if I can only get back to her again—back to the nice pretty home"—and the sentence ended in a sob.

The shadows deepened in the miserable room; they seemed to take grotesque shapes unto themselves and to dance, imp like on the wall and in remote corners.

From the saloons far below there floated upward the usual nightly sounds of boisterous mirth, quarreling and cursing. It was all very lonesome and depressing, and though not generally a timid child nor a morbid one, Caroline, on this particular night was filled with terror. She crouched there in the darkness, a little shivering heap. Her vivid imagination pictured many things, possible and impossible. Suppose Mag should drink—drink—drink at the saloon and come home in furious passion and hurt her, Caroline was afraid of Mag now; afraid of the red glances in the big, black eyes; afraid of the fierce strength—of the evil demon in the woman. She had a fear, too, of the black, reckless tenements with their disreputable inmates—the noisy, quarrelsome slatterns and foul-mouthed men—afraid of the ugly, jeering children. She was afraid—yes, actually, afraid of the black shadows lurking in yonder corners of the room.

And so, trembling throughout every fiber of her little body, she sat there as hour after hour passed.

Suddenly, there was a louder noise below—a different noise! There came the tramp of many feet on the stone pavements, mingled with the sound of fife, drum and cornet. With a little cry,

Caroline ran across the room, and, scrambling up to the window, looked down.

There on the street, which led to the bridge crossing the river, was a flickering line of torches waving this way and that; now and then arose a hearty shout of "Praise the Lord!" "Hallelujah!" heard between the blasts of the little band that was doing its best to bring out the stirring strains of "Onward, Christian Soldiers."

"Oh, it's the dear good Salvation Army!" Caroline exclaimed joyously, and somehow a intense relief and of security came over her as she beheld the well known uniform—that uniform which does penetrate even where that of the army is not to go. "Oh, if my Captain were only among them!" Caroline sighed. Standing on tip-toe, she peered out. But the flickering light of the torches and the wind-fluttered gas jet of the street lamp on the corner, did not make it easy to recognize any particular wearer of the dark-blue garb.

Onward then, ye faithful,
Join our happy throng
Blend with ours your voices
In the triumph song!

To be Continued.

Acknowledgment.

Tuesday evening Jan. 13, a large representation of the church met at the varnouse at Upper Jensen. Tables were set and lo dded with good things. The spirit of happiness prevailed the gathering. After justice had been done to the dainties provided, the pastor and wife were made rich—in material blessings—to the amount of fifty-six dollars, thirty-seven of which were in cash. We wish to make mention for this kindness. We appreciate these gifts for the good-will they reveal. May the Master "that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraided not" enrich his people in His own way, that they may receive a hundred fold.

REV. W. J. GORDON.

Queen's County Quarterly Meeting.

The Queen's Co. Quarterly meeting convened with the Upper Gagetown Baptist church on Jan. 9th inst. 7 p. m. Pastor W. J. Gordon preached from Matt. 25:23, after which a number took part. At 10:30 Saturday morning, Pres. Colwell led devotional service, after which the business of the Quarterly was taken up. The Quarterly Conference met at 2:30. Pastor F. N. Atkinson presiding. In the evening the subject was Home and Foreign Missions. Addresses were heard from Pastors Atkinson, Mutch and Gordon, Dea. Hoben and Pres. Colwell, Sunday at 10 a. m. Devotional service led by Pastor Mutch. Quarterly sermon at 11 by Pastor Atkinson. Text I. Cor. 3:9. At 3 o'clock the Sunday school session met, quite a number of addresses were heard from different workers present. Also reports from the schools represented. At 7 in the evening Pastor W. J. Gordon preached from Psl. 39:15. The collection for Home and Foreign missions amounted to eight dollars and forty cents. After the usual vote of thanks to the church and friends. Also a vote of sympathy to Mrs. Cottle, widow of the late N. B. Cottle, the meeting closed with prayer.

W. J. GORDON.
(Sec. Pro Tem.)

WAITING FOR ANSWERS.

The apostles were told to wait for the gift of the Holy Spirit. It had been promised and prayed for; now they had nothing to do but wait. A Welsh preacher once compared most prayers "to the mischievous tricks of children in a town, who knock at their neighbors' houses, and then run away. We often knock at Mercy's door and then run away, instead of waiting for an entrance and an answer. Thus we act as if we were afraid of having our prayers answered."