

The Home Mission Journal.

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The Coming of Caroline.

BY MARY E. Q. BRURH.

CHAPTER II.

By this time Mrs. Rossman had nearly reached the little cluster of houses that formed one of the suburbs of the town. These buildings had been put up by a real estate agent. New, the most of them were, all beginning with a ghostly attempt at an elaborate Queen Anne or colonial style and ending with a lamentable lack of good paint.

Nothing, however, could be said against the respectability of the inmates. The expressman lived next door to Mrs. Rossman—an honest, worthy man, who had for a spouse a dame of Hibernian tongue and temper; the little Jew tailor lived across the way; he made, mended and pressed male habiliments, and sometimes these hung on the clothesline in his front yard, or, if the weather was inclement, a line strung from post to post of the little verandah, was decked with coats, vests and trousers all swaying and dancing in the wind after a manner suggesting the "headless horseman" of Sleepy Hollow. The grocer's clerk and the man who ran the "Star Laundry" lived on the right-hand side of Mrs. Rossman, while directly opposite was Miss Spooler, the dressmaker.

Although she and these same neighbors had lived here year in and year out, Mrs. Rossman hardly knew one from the other, certainly not more than by sight. Their joys and sorrows were as a closed book to her; she was supremely indifferent to their affairs. She was, I fear, according to the verdict of the dwellers on "Stubbs' Extension," as the street was unpoetically called, "stuck-up." At any rate it must be acknowledged that she was not "after their kind." She had seen better days, as the common expression is.

Grief, pride and a natural inclination made her hold herself aloof from these people who were so different from her, but she was not ostentatious in her avoidance of them.

She was blessed with but few worldly possessions; all she had was a very small income—an annuity—and the simple little cottage with its five rooms and shed. There was, however, a certain refinement about the place. The windows were always clean and shining; the porch floor void of footprints; the little patch of lawn was kept closely shorn, well-watered and weedless. She rose early and did the work herself. To this latter fact, Mrs. Saltsby, the wife of the expressman, could testify. She had had her suspicions of her neighbor's economy, and, spurred by inquisitiveness, had risen one morning very early—risen not only "at the sound of the bird," but also at the sound of a lawn mower, and had peered through half-closed blinds, and thereby been an interested witness of Mrs. Rossman's maternal labors.

"Eh! To think of the loikes av her a-scttin'

herself above me, when she can't afford to give a boy a quarter to mow down the grass!" had been Mrs. Saltsby's comment as she trailed away like a calico aurora.

The truth was, Mrs. Rossman was trying to save her quarters. There were scores of avenues down which they might roll their silvery discs! There was a little white tombstone to be placed at the head of baby Lois's grave; there was the kitchen to paper and the verandah floor to paint. Then there were the wood and coal to buy for the winter, besides many other things. Also for a woman of Mrs. Rossman's tastes, books, magazines and such things were a necessity; for the brain must have food as well as the body. In her lonely life, books were as true friends, stimulating, sympathetic; but I must say, and say pityingly, the leaves of the Book of books she seldom turned. Though she had heard of the words, "Love thy neighbor as thyself," the beautiful, gracious meaning was as naught to her. She was like too many of us; she viewed society only in a one-sided way and had a contempt for it accordingly. The people with whom we are to come in contact are merely the means to our own selfish ends. We want to get something from them—social recognition, the pleasure of hospitality, money, the stimulus of pleasant companionship; if they can give us nothing, why then they are only great bores! We are prone to forget the other side, the nobler one, that we may give out instead of receive, which is truly "more blessed."

But Mrs. Rossman's ambition had never extended in this direction. Coldly civil, she held herself proudly aloof from her neighbors. "They are all the kind who run in at your back door gingham aprons on, at all hours of the day; they'll want to borrow this or borrow that and they'll bore you with gossip of all kinds. And even if you listen and make no comment, they'll be inventive enough, after they depart, to relate a lot of things you are supposed to have said, and then, the first thing you know, you'll be mixed up in some petty neighborhood squabble! No; let them go their way and I'll go mine!" groth Mrs. Rossman with a little supercilious glance at the cottage nearest her.

Being of this mind, she was not a little puzzled, as well as annoyed, on drawing near her cottage, on this particular occasion, to perceive that for the time being it was apparently the centre of observation; subjected, in short, to the concentrated glances of all around her. The little tailor, who had been brushing off a navy-blue ulster and had come out to hang it on the line, was staring with all the power of his horn-rimmed spectacles across the road. Miss Spooler, in her eagerness to look, had knocked off a flower-pot as well as her pet kitten from the window-sill. Mrs. Barney and Mrs. Cooney, who in their respective yards were taking in their respective weekly washing, stood transfixed, with clothespins in their mouths. As for Mrs. Saltsby, who had just been out to give a belated order to the grocer's boy, Mrs. Saltsby had even ventured to the end of Mrs. Rossman's sidewalk, and, with her apron thrown over her head to keep out the chill of the keen, wintry air, and with one hand holding high the tail of a much-begragged and buttonless watteau-wrapper, keeping it from an adjacent snow-bank, was gazing with her mouth of generous proportions all a-gape, while she ejaculated rhythmically "Well! I never!! Did you ever!!"

Possibly Mrs. Rossman herself felt somewhat like echoing these exclamations as she drew nearer. "What can be the matter with my house?" she murmured, much puzzled. "Is it a fire? or has the cat tipped over the pail of milk the milkman was to leave? Everybody on the

street seems to be staring at my front verandah!"

When she came in sight of the latter, she too stared, for there, on the upper step was a bundle—a big, fantastically-shaped bundle, done up in faded blue denim and all tied in a doughy knot. And close beside the big bundle, sat a little bundle, and this one was not quite so stationary! It moved and stirred restlessly, yawned, stamped its feet, as if from cold, and coughed huskily.

Yes, it was a child—a queer little creature in shabby cloak and hood! A little girl of five or six years, and as Mrs. Rossman drew near she beheld a wan, wistful, little face, a pair of large, eager, brown eyes, a tangle of dark, silky curls, a wondrously luminous smile; while a small, piping voice rang out in tones of great relief: "You're Mrs. Rossman, aren't you? I've asked so many ladies on the street, and they said they weren't! But you are she, I'm sure. I am Caroline, Mrs. Rossman, and I've come to stay with you!"

(To be Continued.)

Baptist Doctrines.

IV.

The Study of Doctrine.

JOSEPH SAGEHEER, PH. D.

The New Testament is a book of doctrine. It is the product, in part, of the human reason and it appeals to the human reason. Its trustworthiness is to be tested by the usual laws of the mind. The production of the Bible was in part a matter of inspiration, but the understanding of it is a matter of the reason. To say that the understanding of the Bible is not a matter of the reason would be a contradiction in terms. There is a divine assistance in the devout study of the Bible, but a mind enlightened by God is still a mind and has acquired no new laws or processes that are not common to other minds. An enlightened mind cannot assent to a self-contradictory proposition any more than an unenlightened mind can. To do so would be an immoral and wicked thing, no matter who made the proposition. There are no self-contradictory propositions in the Bible; but if there were, every sane mind would be forced immediately to reject them as untrue. It may not be possible for one thoroughly to understand all the doctrines of the New Testament; but he can at least understand what phase of the doctrine it is that is not clear to his mind. For example, the doctrine of the Trinity of the Godhead. There are some things about this doctrine that every Christian should know as the result of his own original research; he may be convinced that the doctrine is nowhere taught in the New Testament; or, he may find that it is taught, and may be able to make a reasonable statement of the whole teaching of the New Testament on this subject; or he may be convinced that some of the difficulties of the doctrine arise from our use of the word *persona*, so common in the Latin theologues; or, he may be convinced that the doctrine is a transcendental formula, a formula not derived from knowledge, but necessary to knowledge otherwise gained, and that its necessity is a proof of its truth. He can certainly come to one of these conclusions, and any of them would be better than no conviction at all. The same is true of every doctrine. Religion is brought into contempt when the young Christian says, "I believe in the Atonement, but I have no idea what the Atonement is." He ought to have some definite idea what the life and passion and resurrection of Jesus means; and what he thinks they mean is his theory of the Atonement. There are some doctrines of which the young Christian, by reason of the times, is under the necessity of having a very clear idea. One of these is the doctrine of the Inspiration of the Sacred Scriptures; he should have some clear convictions on that subject, and he should know what those convictions are; and even if he has a theory of a mechanical inspiration and thinks that God speaks out of the Bible as Gladstone speaks out of the phonograph when one has dropped a nickel in the slot, altho such a young person would be the subject of