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The Mysterious Box and What I Found in it.

(‘Friendly Greetings.’)

Rat-tat, rat-tat. It is the postman. It is not the postman I want to see so much as the letter or parcel he has brought, and sure enough he pronounces my name, and a small brown-paper parcel is handed to me.

It comes just a few days before the anniversary of my birthday, and as I look at the handwriting, I see it is from the Rev. P. B. Power, M.A.

A birthday present, surely. I at once untie the string, and there, what do I see? A cigar-box. A strange present, you say. What does it contain? I open it, and what do you think meets my view? A dirty, filthy piece of rag, made up into the form of a garment, all spotted and stained. It looked for all the world as though a man had been handling black, tarred coal-sacks, and desiring to cleanse his dirty fingers from the stains, had wiped them upon a rag, and thrust it into a box. What did it mean? Ah! here’s an explanation on the cover. I read,

‘As you are in yourself. Thus must you appear before God in judgment, covered with your sins, unless they be blotted out by the blood of Jesus. Do you think that any one covered with filth like this can enter heaven?’

I turn the box over and have another look at it, and I discover it has a second lid on the other side. I open this, and there, with a red back-ground, lies a spotlessly white garment. What does this mean? I have not far to look for an explanation, for on the lid I have just opened are the words,

‘As you may be in Christ. Thus shall you appear before God in judgment. All pure and white, if your sins have been washed away by the blood of Christ. The saints “have

washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.” (Rev. vii., 14.)

I would like the reader in imagination to accompany me and the little cigar-box into some of the coal depots I visit. Work is slack just now, and a group of men quickly gather round me. Taking out my little box, their curiosity, I produce the dirty, filthy, piece of rag, and read the explanation on the lid, ‘As you are in yourself,’ and then I quote Isaiah lxiv., 6, ‘We are all as an unclean thing and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.’ Yes, all without any exception, as the Psalmist says (xiv., 3.)

Every eye is now fixed upon the box, and placing the filthy rag by the side of the white garment, I say to one of my audience, ‘Which describes your condition?’ He replies:—

‘Well, ter tell you the truth, I’m not so bad as this first one, nor am I as good as the second one. I’m neither one nor t’other; I’m something in between the two.’

I reply by telling him that there are only two ways described in the word of God, viz.: ‘The broad and the narrow.’ There are only two masters. There are only two conditions: Possessing ‘everlasting life,’ or under ‘the wrath of God.’ There are but two destinations to which we are all hastening, heaven or hell, for there is no neutrality in religion. We must either be for or against Christ.

Doing things by half.—I hate to see a thing done by halves. If it be right, do it boldly; if it be wrong, leave it undone.—Gilpin.

How the Minister’s Salary Was Raised.

(Susan Hubbard Martin, in the ‘Ram’s Horn.’)

The minister’s little wife, although a sweet, gentle woman, had decided ideas of her own. She went hand in hand with the minister in every good work, but there were things in the church of which she did not approve. She liked social meetings and she was kind and friendly at all times, but she often questioned in her own heart whether the ways and means of raising money for the church were quite acceptable to her God; but in other channels she was indeed a faithful helper. She was always at prayer meeting, she taught in Sunday school, she never failed to attend the Aid meeting and the Missionary Society. If she ever felt the deprivations of the small salary and the struggle necessary to keep up the little parsonage, no one ever heard her say anything about it.

She prepared the plain meals, she made over the old clothes, she mended and darned and sewed and she did it so cheerfully, one never guessed that at times, the sweet smile hid a heartache; for she never spoke of it.

‘God has placed us here,’ she would tell the children, ‘so we must not dishonor Him by complaining.’

Burdens pressed a little heavier now than usual, for the salary fell behind and more sacrifices had to be made.

The ladies were talking over the situation one afternoon in the church parlors. For a wonder, the minister’s wife was not there. ‘Yes,’ said young Mrs. Granger, ‘we are two hundred short in the salary this year. The treasurer told me so. We’ll have to make it up.’

‘But how?’ spoke up another.

‘I’ve just been thinking,’ replied Mrs.