

Interesting Story of a Heathen

Of how much value are the Old Testament Scriptures for spiritual life! The Burman Missionary tells this story of an old and blind man, who thirty years ago came into possession, through a countryman stopping overnight at his house, of a book printed in Burmese, and containing only the Psalms and a part of the Prophets. Before he had finished the Psalms, he cast away his idols and Buddhism, and believed in a living God—Creator, Preserver, and Judge of men; and from that time he has worshipped and prayed to the Eternal God. He committed many of the Psalm-prayers to memory, and daily offered them, especially the 51st. For twenty years he lived in this way before ever hearing of Christ and the atonement. Coming then from the interior to Prome, he heard of a foreign teacher residing there, and from him received a copy of the New Testament. He says that if a man should go about and attend to his business twenty years by starlight, and the sun should then rise on him in all its glory, he thinks it would produce about such a change in his eyes and vision as the Gospel of Matthew produced on his mind; that then the long night of praying to God and hoping for mercy without a mediator or an atonement came to an end, and for the past ten years his hope has been firmly fixed on Christ, and there it rests.

A Good Meeting

Three families from the city, spending the summer vacation in an out-of-the-way corner, took much of their pleasure in the touring car that one of the families owned. One evening the three men and their wives left the children to go to bed by themselves, and set out on a moonlight ride.

The evening was clear and cool, and the car ran smoothly and steadily over the roads. About eight o'clock they passed through a scattered village, and turned the corner at a little church. Lights shone from its windows.

"It is prayer-meeting night," said one of the men. "Let us go in, and see what kind of meeting they have."

About a dozen people were gathered in the front of the room. The visitors entered during a hymn, and attracted little attention as they took seats in the back of the room.

An elderly layman led the meeting. As he was nearly blind, he repeated the Scripture lesson, from memory. He added a few simple and commonplace words of interpretation, and then spoke with more freedom of the value of the truths that the lesson contained. "We cannot afford to let such precious truths drop out of our lives, or to lose any opportunity of coming together and reminding one another of them," he said. "You remember we debated whether it was worth while to keep up this meeting during the summer, but we decided to do so, and though our numbers are few, I am sure we shall have a good meeting. Will some one select a hymn?"

The hymn was sung; and then there were short prayers and testimonies from the little group at the front.

Then, one by one, the visitors rose, and spoke brief words of experience and encouragement. After the meeting they were greeted by the little company with heart-warming sincerity.

"We always have good meetings," said one of the women, "but I think this is the very best one we have ever had."

The six friends returned in the moonlight. The air was sweet, the moon was glorious, and in their hearts was a tranquil joy from the half-hour in the little church. That had made the evening not merely enjoyable, but memorable.

A Passing Touch

Mrs. Phillips, waking to the glory of a May morning, was ashamed of herself at the sinking heart with which she faced it. But the task had to be done. Jennie had outgrown all her last summer's dresses and must have new ones soon, for hot weather might be upon them any day; besides, putting it off only made it so much the harder. Yet even as she told herself these things, she was almost hoping that Mrs. Burgess would not be able to take care of Little Brother after all.

Mrs. Burgess, big and cheerful, put an end to that way of escape an hour later, when she ran over for the baby. "I've just been longing for a chance to run off with him," she assured his mother. "Don't be surprised if you find us both missing when you come back!"

Mrs. Phillips tried to smile as she put Jennie's best hat over the carefully brushed hair. Jennie was very quiet, but her soft eyes were shining with excitement. She was just beginning to be old enough to want new dresses. Her mother, understanding the look, turned sharply away. That was what she could not bear—the buying cheap things for Jennie; that was what made shopping-day a torture in anticipation, an agony in retrospect.

When they reached the city, she hurried past the windows where little girls' dresses were displayed, and turned her head resolutely when they passed the spring hats, decorated with bewildering knots and clusters of flowers. Jennie's hat would have to be trimmed with stiff bows—if only Jennie's mother had had any knack in her finger-tips!—and Jennie's little new gowns would have to be the cheapest gingham.

Setting her lips firmly, she led the way to the gingham department; she went straight for a counter marked "Domestic—6½ cents a yard," and began to look for something in blue to match Jennie's eyes. As she stood there, two beautifully gowned women passed. One of them shivered fastidiously, and said to her companion:

"Oh, do you see how any one can buy such cheap stuff?"

Mrs. Phillips' hand dropped from the counter, and the hot color surged into her face. The next moment a pleasant voice spoke beside her:

"Aren't these the prettiest things for little girls' dresses? And they wear so splendidly! I always think if I had a little girl, I'd love to make her dresses like these—pretty enough for anybody, but not too pretty to live in, you know."

Mrs. Phillips' eyes, full of pain, met a pair of sweet and friendly ones beneath a marvelous hat.

"Do you really?" she cried.

"I do, indeed," the other answered, gently. "You see—I have no little girl."

Mrs. Phillips drew a sharp breath, but the look in her eyes changed.

"Jennie," she said, "which do you want—the pink or the blue?"

Personal Visitation

Well did John Wesley say to his young preacher, "Were the angel Gabriel to take charge of a congregation, he could not secure its spiritual prosperity without visiting from house to house." We may plead the claims of study; the pressure of the age on the pulpit; all this and more; yet the imperative duty of personal visitation remains. More sinners are convicted by winning, than are won by conviction. And winning is done by the hand to hand, and face to face. Our poor nature, even under contrition or suspense, likes to make answer to the truth and to the appeal; and Jesus goes out to meet it by the wayside and the well. It cannot make answer to the pulpit; to the pastor at the fireside, it can and does. It is a relief to do it; it is submission, often; with thousands, it is salvation. In one season of religious interest, out of thirty who professed Christ, I have reason to believe that not more than two would have done it without personal interview with the pastor. And in that neglected interest of souls, all the year through, between the great efforts and the great visitations, few indeed ever come to Jesus save by the pastor's hand, not his pulpit.

A Nebraska farmer, who had been counted doubtful at the best, greeted in a most unexpected way three prohibition workers who approached him. He was a big, sturdy giant, and out in the field picking corn. As the crew from the federation came toward him, headed by a stocky business man, whose flushed face belied his habits, the farmer stopped his team, squared himself around, assumed a defiant attitude, and cried: "Come on, boys. Come on and talk to me all you want to. But I tell you right now, no matter what you say and what you promise, I'm going to vote her dry."—The Christian Herald.

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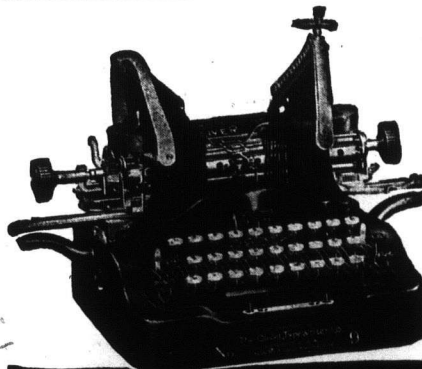
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