

people who called Annis the 'Damsonfield Journal.')

'Do you mean a call to the city church?' asked Annis breathlessly.

'Of course! but you won't breathe it to a soul?' answered Theodora more as a form than from any real sense of indiscretion.

'You don't think I would?' said Annis reproachfully. And at the time she felt and meant utter loyalty to her friend. But oh, dear! There are tongues so like a jack-in-the-box!

Theodora had to entertain Parson Root while her father was gone. He was very dyspeptic, and he made such queer noises in his throat at family prayers that she could not keep the boys from giggling. And she could not make over her old blue cheviot so that the sleeves would be stylish. But the dazzling hopes before her cast their radiance even upon these trials.

It was hard that she could not share these hopes with her mother or the boys. Theodora was of the temperament that longs to share its joys or its sorrows; but her mother's weak heart made even the slightest excitement dangerous, and the boys were too young for discretion to be expected of them.

Prudence had come after her first excitement was over, and she had not confided in any of 'the girls.' She had even cautioned Annis Pritchard again, Ann's who had almost tearfully protested against her lack of faith.

Theodora's last doubt fled when she saw her father's face as he alighted from Lon Stevens's accommodation-carriage at his own door on his return from the city. It was rejuvenated; there was a fine radiance upon it, as of one who has suddenly seen a new and wonderful vista open before him.

'I was able to reach them, Theodora!' he said softly even as she removed his old gray shawl from his shoulders. 'I felt as if my lips had been touched by a coal from the altar. The city life, the pursuit of riches, shrinks men's souls, Theodora!'

Then flashed into Theodora's mind a recollection of the blue cheviot sleeves and of the cold pork that was all she had to set before the minister,—the donations had been 'so porky,' lately, as she pathetically said,—and she felt a rebellious longing for some of those same soul-shrinking riches.

'And—and, O dad, did they give you a call?' she demanded breathlessly.

'Why—why—dear child, did you think of that?' asked the minister in astonishment. 'It did not occur to me that such a thing was possible. But they did, Theodora, they did! And the salary? Think of it, child!' The parson laughed; he chuckled jovially. 'They offered your old dad four thousand dollars a year to preach for them. Four—thousand—dollars!' He repeated it slowly, incredulously, as one would speak of a mine of Golconda.

Theodora felt for an instant stunned, bewildered, by the realization of her dazzling visions.

'When—when are we going?' she stammered.

'Going where, dear?' The minister looked altogether amazed. 'You don't think, Theodora, that I could accept the call?' He bent over her,—she had dropped into a chair,—and he spoke huskily. 'Why, child, think of the new mills! of the men and boys that God has sent to me, many who never went to church in their lives! There is no such opportunity in that city. And my people, Theodora, my dear old people to whom I have ministered so long, who need me so! Why, I never thought for a moment that God meant that as a leading! O, no, no, child, I know He did not. There is need of me here.'

His dear people—who paid them nine hundred dollars! thought Theodora bitterly. They were prospering since the new mills had been built, but it had not occurred to them that a minister should be paid more than their fathers and grandfathers had paid him. And her father had never even thought of the salary!

Theodora still sat in silence, with bowed head.

'I have longed for wider opportunities for you, dear child,' said the minister, turning back at the door; 'but where God places us, with our hands full of duties, I think

is always best unless other leadings are clear—clear.'

Theodora tried to force herself to assent, his face was so noble and so dear to her; but the sudden vanishing of the vision was too sharp a blow. If he had only realized how hard it was for a minister's daughter to do everything and suit every one, and how difficult it was to keep the boys' clothes darned and patched when there was no money to buy new!

'But—but you will let them know that you had the chance?' she said suddenly, eagerly.

The V above the minister's nose deepened sharply and painfully.

'I could not bear to make such a suggestion. If they do not feel like making an addition to my salary, it—it must be because they do not feel that I am worth any more to them, or that they cannot afford it.'

'They can; they're stingy things,' said Theodora—inwardly.

She was in her mother's room an hour afterwards when Deacon Alvah Plummer was seen coming along the garden path. The deacon was well-to-do, and an influential man in the town, as well as in the church.

'Your father got home? You don't say! Well, it isn't the minister that I came to see; it's you,' he said, as Theodora met him at the door; and his thin, shrewd face was irradiated with smiles.

He sat down comfortably in the Morris chair in the parlor, and drew a small package from his pocket.

'You see, it's this way,' he said after the same preparatory 'ahem' with which he spoke in meeting. 'Folks have thought for some time that you had considerable on your hands for a young girl, and that you—ahem!—attended to it pretty considerable well; and they kind of put their heads together, and made up their minds to make you a little present to show how they felt about it. This here gold watch—the deacon had slowly unwrapped the package, and now, with great deliberation opened a box—is a token from your father's parishioners—the deacon was evidently repeating a lesson not without difficulty—'of—of—their appreciation of your—your faithful performance of your duties.'

A pretty watch with blue enamel and a tiny rose diamond. Theodora knew that Lawyer Gardner's wife, who went often to the city, must have selected it.

Her eyes sparkled: a nineteen-year-old girl's eyes will sparkle at sight of a watch like that; but her heart was filled with such conflicting emotions that she could only stammer her thanks and run out of the room.

'My dear people!' said her father when he saw the watch, and he wiped a moisture from his spectacles. 'Theodora,' he added, gently, 'I trust you understand that I am making no sacrifice of my personal feelings in declining the call. What I feel sure is the will of God is also my heart's desire. I love my people.' His tone was almost appealing, and he looked wistfully into Theodora's face.

'He wants me to say that I love them, too, but I can't!' thought Theodora.

'They were kind to give me the watch—but I should like to pawn it to buy the boys some new jackets! Dad, dear, if they only knew about the call, they would understand something of your value; and, if they would pay you more salary, things might be so much easier!'

This protest came from the fulness of Theodora's heart, almost without her will. When she saw the distress in her father's usually serious face, she repented.

'I trust that my value to them is reckoned in a better way than by dollars,' said the minister in a tone of gentle reproof. 'And I am sure that for our temporal wants God will provide. Be careful for nothing, dear child.'

'I will try to trust, as he does, even if the flour-barrel is low and the donations are all rutabaga turnips!' And Theodora dashed the tears half-savagely from her eyes.

It was three weeks later that Theodora, patching the boys' winter flannels in the waning light, saw Deacon Plummer again coming up the garden path. The minister had gone over to Town Hill to visit a dy-

ing parishioner, but the deacon came in and sat down. He repeated his preliminary 'ahem' several times, looking reflectively at Theodora and her basket of mending.

'I expect, now, you rather want your father to accept that call to the city, don't you?' he said deliberately at length; and Theodora jumped to her feet, overturning the mending-basket.

'How did you know?' she gasped.

'Well, it was nigh upon a week ago that Annis Pritchard told my daughter Phoebe that she thought he had had a call; that, anyhow, she knew you expected he would—'

('O Annis, Annis!' murmured Theodora with awful reproach in her tone.)

'And some of us were kind of stirred up about it, and we sent to the city to find out. To lose your father, you know—' The deacon's voice came so near to breaking that he was forced to pause. He stirred uneasily in his seat, and finally blew his nose very loudly. 'It was just as if the solid ground had given way under our feet, or more as if the sky had tumbled down. It didn't seem as if we could put up with it, anyhow. Of course we have known right along that we couldn't pay him anything like the salary that he could command, and I expect we had kind of got to thinking that there was so much love betwixt us that the minister could live on that.' The deacon's shrewd eyes twinkled. 'This brought us up with a round turn, I can tell you. Mr. Judd, the mill-owner, said right away that he would add five hundred a year to the minister's salary if we would raise another five hundred among us. That was done on the spot, and I guess there ain't any doubt but we can offer him two thousand a year to stay with us, though, land's sake! we know well enough he would go to the city for nothing a year if he thought 'twas the Lord's leadings.'

'Yes, he would,' said Theodora. And she let the deacon go away in doubt. She thought that he deserved it.

But her heart was dancing in her bosom. O the delightful ease of having enough money! O the joy of her father's heart at this proof of his people's love!

'Annis Pritchard is the 'Damsonfield Journal,' she murmured, 'I suppose it is wicked, but I should like to kiss her!'

Not Ashamed.

Dr. Norman McLeod, the great Scotch preacher, tells the story of Tom Baird, who stood at the door of his working-man's church for many years.

When the minister asked him to stand at the door of the working-man's church, he was a little afraid Tom would be unwilling to do so in his working clothes. 'If,' the minister said, 'you don't like to do it, Tom; if you are ashamed—' 'Ashamed!' He exclaimed, as he turned around on his pastor, 'I'm mair ashamed o' yersel, sir. Div ye think that I believe, as ye ken I do, that Jesus Christ, Who died for me, was stripped o' His raiment on the Cross, and that I—Na, na, I'm proud to stand at the door.'—'Christian Age.'

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