

MY LIFE-PRAYER.

More love to Thee, O Christ,
More love, O Christ, to Thee!
Hear Thou the prayer I make,
On bended knee.
This is my earnest plea—
More love, O Christ, to Thee!
More love, O Christ, to Thee!
More love to Thee.

Once earthly joy I craved,
Sought peace and rest;
Now Thee alone I seek;
Give what is best!
This all my prayer shall be—
More love, O Christ, to Thee!
More love to Thee.

Let sorrow do its work,
Send grief and pain;
Sweet are Thy messengers,
Sweet their refrain,
When they can sing with me,
More love, O Christ, to Thee!
More love to Thee!

Then shall my latest breath
Whisper Thy praise!
This be the parting cry—
My heart shall raise,
This still my prayer shall be,
More love, O Christ, to Thee!
More love to Thee.

ELIZABETH PRENTISS.

FEET OF CLAY.

BY AMELIA E. BARR.

* He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls.—Proverbs xcv. 5.

Looking through an old diary to-day, I came across an account of a sermon preached by the famous Dr. W. Anderson of Glasgow, on the golden image of Nebuchadnezzar—a wonderful sermon, though he gave it neither a prophetic nor a political significance. To his vision, on that sweet summer Sabbath, it represented the complex image of mortality, with its mixture of good and bad, of strength and weakness—the golden head too often having feet of clay. And the stone which smote and broke alike the gold and clay to pieces was the avenging arm, and the great wind which carried all away, the sure punishment of transgression. And, thinking of this fatal mingling of the clay of earth with the gold of our higher aspirations, I remembered the sad story of poor Sholto Karnegie, as an illustration of the idea.

You may travel far on the Fife coast and not find a glonier bit of land than that which comprised the Karnegie estate. Vast brown moors, and treacherous bogs, and dark woods of pine, and bare towering crags, were its chief characteristics. The Mansion House was not unlike the country which supported it—a square, lonely place, with gardens dark with box and fir and yews, and the men and women who had lived in it for many generations partook of its character. Indeed, "the dour Karnegies" had become a country-side proverb, and they well deserved the expressive little adjective—silent, self-contained men, hiding fierce passions in their hearts, and constantly breaking out into tempests of rage. And, strange as it may seem, they not only prided themselves on their high tempers, but the surrounding country also admitted the excuse with a singular good nature. It had become a kind of tradition that the Karnegies were not to be crossed, and that their outbursts were not to be severely judged.

Fifty years ago Sholto Karnegie, tarrying in London, heard of his father's death, and went home to take possession of his inheritance. People hoped many good things from the young laird. It was true that, during his father's life, little had been seen of him, but that little had been very pleasant. He was exceedingly handsome, he had taken high honors at his college, and during his last visit home it had been noticed that he was kind and courteous to his mother, and a regular attendant on divine worship. What if the old laird had had three quarrels? Every one knew that old Simon Karnegie had "the devil's ain temper," and had to be taken by every one as he was, and not as he ought to be.

At first the young laird won golden opinions; but it is easy for a man to be good when there is no temptation to be otherwise. Sholto was lord and master in his house. The servants had been taught implicit obedience; his mother had been ac-

customed to regard the Laird of Karnegie as a petty sovereign, who could do no wrong and who, if he did do wrong, ought to be at once excused and forgiven.

For two years the house of Karnegie had a strange peace in all its rooms. Sholto seemed to be devoted to his studies and his estate, and as he did not drink, the devil could not enter into him through whiskey. But the Highlandman says "Where the devil can't go he sends a woman." And in this case he sent a very beautiful one—Helen Mar, the only child of a neighboring laird.

At first sight the young people seemed well suited to each other. They were both young, handsome, well educated, and possessed of wealth. But Mrs. Karnegie saw farther than her son, and to her it was evident that Helen had a proud and overbearing temper. She never thought of opposing Sholto in his determination to marry Helen, but she did think it right to point out the lady's fault.

Sholto heard her with a pleasant smile. "I am not blind, mother. I ken well that Helen has a temper of her ain; but if 'like cures like,' she'll be apt to find a cure in this house. 'Lanna ye doubt that, mother.'"

"She has aye had her ain will, Sholto. In Mar Place it has been her will and her way from the time she could walk her lane."

"Johnnie Mar is a weak body. But I'm not the man to be twiddled round any woman's finger. It is not Helen Mar that, either by will or wisdom, or temper either, will turn my Yes into No."

"But oh, the weary fight o' it Sholto," Sholto shrugged his shoulders and smiled. In the dull, monotonous life of that lonely coast he began to feel a certain pleasant excitement in the battle for supremacy which he saw before him. A gentle, timid girl, who would have literally and absolutely kept the marriage obligation to "obey," had no charms for him. He would make Helen give him a reasonable service. And yet in his heart he had fully determined that any contradiction on her part would be unreasonable.

On her part, Helen made no secret of her arbitrary temper; she showed it plainly to her lover if she wished to do so. Their courtship was varied by a series of disputes, in which neither had gained any decided advantage. Their first open quarrel regarded their marriage ceremony. Helen was determined that her own minister should perform it.

"He baptized me, and he taught me my catechism, and he gave me my first communion, Sholto," she said with an air of determination, "and he is going to marry me."

"But he canna possibly marry me, Helen. He is a Dissenter. I dinna approve of Dissent. As Laird o' Karnegie, I canna approve of it. Besides, I am free to say that he has views on church government that I couldna in conscience appear to sanction."

Having made a matter of conscience of it, Sholto on no account would retract a step. On such high ground as this he felt sure of universal sympathy. And, of course he got it; even the slighted minister advised Helen on no account to force her lover to trifle with his sense of right and wrong.

"We canna say 'Yes' and 'No' to our conscience, dear lassie; and a man has as much right to choose the creed that suits his spiritual life best as he has to choose the woman that he thinks best for this mortal life."

So Helen, not quite willing to surrender without conditions, accepted an extra £1000 to her marriage settlements as a compromise. And as a moral victory is greater than a money victory, she virtually lost the first battle.

The marriage took place according to Sholto's wishes in every respect. He had paid £1000 for the privilege of ordering it, and in the exercise of that petty authority his peculiar temper received its first dangerous impetus to little acts of tyranny. He objected to the bridal veil as an English fashion savoring of Episcopacy—perhaps Popery—and insisted that his wife must go to the altar with the loosened tresses and the silken snood of a Scotch maiden. Here Helen's vanity aided him; she had beautiful hair, and he carried his point also.

An evil grows upon the wrong that feeds it. Few people suspected the tragedy—

the long, dull, dumb tragedy—daily enacting in the handsome home of the Karnegies. Only Helen's old nurse Ailsie was a witness to the nights of passionate weeping, the sullen, silent days, the hopeful concessions, the despairing resistances, which filled up the first two years of their married life. And by this time it had become a kind of mania with Sholto to force his wife into acts of absurd obedience.

She would not complain to her father. Sholto's mother had gone to her own dower house, and she was far too proud to allow her friends and neighbors to know the miserable subjugation into which she had fallen. The birth of a son added nothing to her influence; on the contrary it supplied her husband with a very powerful means of annoying her. When she had shut herself up in an impervious silence and indifference he could always arouse her to retaliation through the child; and to such madness had his willingly indulged temper grown, that he was ready to make the son he really loved suffer, if by so doing he could rouse in the mother a passion equal to his own.

But a mother with a babe in her arms is a dangerous antagonist. One day as Helen sat feeding it before the fire Sholto entered. The straight drawn lips, and the devil in his eyes, announced that he had come to make trouble.

"Helen," he said in a cold, sneering tone, "you feed that boy to much. I won't have his digestion ruined to please your whims." And he took the porridge from her hand, threw up the window, and dropped it into the court.

The child gave a quick cry, and Helen faced her husband with words of passionate scorn.

"Now you are in a rage again you are not fit to rust with the boy. Give him to me."

Helen pressed the child tighter to her breast, and looked piteously at Ailsie. Never before had the woman interfered between her master and mistress. But now she rose in a passion to which Sholto's worst outbreaks were tame. The hot Celtic blood of her race relieved itself in a torrent of fierce and sarcastic Gaelic—a tongue Sholto well understood. For a minute he was stunned and amazed at the fury of the old woman and before he could recover himself, she had taken him by the shoulders and put him out of the room.

Of course after this scene there could be no pardon or tolerance for Ailsie in Sholto's house, and she received immediately an order to leave at the end of a month. Ailsie knew she she had been unbearably insolent but she was not the woman to retract a word she had once said, and Sholto a Highlander himself—ought to have known that he had roused a humble, but by no means contemptible, enemy. Uneducated as Ailsie was, she had a shrewd nature, and her natural abilities had been quickened by extensive travel; for her husband had been a private in the famous "42nd," and she had followed the regiment over half the world.

What passed between Ailsie and her mistress after this interview could only be conjectured by results. Sholto had ordered her to leave the house at the end of a month, and the night before the term expired she disappeared, and with her the wife and heir of the Laird of Karnegie. For a day or two Sholto would make no inquiry. He was wretched enough, but he had no doubt that Helen and the boy were at Mar Place, and was determined that Helen should make the first overture if not, she would understand that she could always get her own way by deserting him. But when three days passed, and nothing was heard of the fugitives, he went himself to reason with Mr. Mar for encouraging his daughter in her disobedience.

Mr. Mar knew nothing of Helen's whereabouts. He admitted that he was aware of her intention—and approved it—but he denied having a positive knowledge of her retreat. "But let me tell you, Sholto Karnegie," he said, "the wildest rook of the Hebrides were a better home for my child than your house, and I rue the day I gave her to you."

Sholto now found that he had good cause for anger. All business relating to Helen's private fortune had been transferred to a firm in Liverpool; and his wife had not only taken away his heir, but had declared to her father and lawyer that his cruelty and evil temper made the step an obligation on

her. It was a retribution whose bitterness not even Helen could measure. He idolized his own reputation, and he loved his son, yet, even his wife, after his own fashion. Indeed Helen had become a necessity to him in the stagnant life which he had fallen into; and he was left alone with his enmity, his remorse, and the silent scorn of the neighborhood.

For two years he made constant but vain efforts to discover Helen's retreat. Then Mr. Mar disappeared in the same silent fashion. Mar place was sold to a stranger just as it stood, and the new-comer was quietly living there when the fact became generally known. Further enquiries revealed that Mr. Mar had turned everything he possessed into gold; and there was no doubt he had joined his daughter.

Then Sholto brought back his mother, and shut himself up from all outside companionship. He had entertained an evil spirit until it absolutely "possessed" him. And oh, what a tyrant it was! It gave him no rest or recreation. It made books hateful, and conversation and company intolerable. "Like" "the possessed" of old he was really driven into the most desolate of wildernesses by it, into the solitude in which he heard no voices but those of hatred and jealousy, anger and remorse.

Once every year Helen's lawyer sent him a letter. The formula never varied; it was always, "Your wife and son are well and happy." This letter generally made a madman of him for a week or two. No one but a mother at this time would have endured his sullen, unreasonable moods; and indeed the stout-hearted little lady gradually sank under the wretched influences surrounding her, and in the eleventh year of Helen's absence gladly welcomed her release. Sholto had no sympathy, and he said he wanted none. Far and wide now he was left alone by those who had once visited him.

The winter after his mother's death, as he was gloomily brooding over the fire one snowy night, an old man—almost the only servant he now endured—entered the room with a letter. Sholto took it without a word, and held it long in his hand. He had no curiosity about its contents. It was not yet time for his wife's yearly bulletin, and he had no other correspondence but what related to his crops and rents. But when he did look at it, he saw it bore the Liverpool postmark, and his interest was at once aroused. Something was wrong; he lit a candle and opened it with anxious haste. A letter dropped out—it was Helen's handwriting, he knew it at a glance, and he slowly, and with forced composure, opened it.

"Dear Sholto: I have heard that your mother is dead, and that you are alone. I have forgotten all but that I love you. I can see that I often was wrong in the past; if you will forgive, I will come back and try and do better. Send me a word to the care of Bell Brothers, Liverpool."

He let the note fall with a laugh. Even in this moment he thought first of the triumph it would give him in the village. Then he remembered his son, now twelve years old, and his wife's beauty and grace, and how pleasant they might make the lonely old house again. But a stubborn spirit had nullified all these gentler hopes and dreams. He hardened himself with remembrances of Helen's bitterest humiliation of him, and it was only after long hours of struggle that he could bring himself to write three words, "Dear wife; Come."

The permission having once been given, for a while he allowed himself to be almost cheerful in the prospect of the change. He had the house somewhat renovated, and recalled two of the old servants. But week after week went by and Helen did not come. He began to think that he had purposely tantalized and humiliated him again. Then he grew with every day more fierce and angry. At the end of the fifth week he gave up all hope, and hated his wife with that intense hatred whose foundation is a selfish mortification. He imagined the recalled servants were mocking him in the kitchen; and having turned miserably in his solitude, he counted up against Helen every shilling of extra expense that he had been put to.

He was doing this very kind of arithmetic one night, six weeks after he had sent Helen his gracious permission to return, when she, accompanied by her son and Ailsie arrived. No sooner did he see them than the old aggressive spirit rose within