

THE MESSENGER.

of delicate fern. 'I know you love flowers.'

'Bless your kind heart, Miss Marjory! Yes I do love the bonnie things. They're like your own sweet face,' said the man with a pleased smile.

'Now, I want you to promise you'll do something to please me,' said Marjory, coaxingly.

'I'll do anything I can to please you.'

'Well, you know we're going to have a meeting in the school-house to-night, and I want you to go to it. Mind, you've promised, and I'll look for you there. Good-bye,' and without giving time for a reply, Marjory ran gaily out of the open door of the cottage. Her next visit was paid to Peggie Simpson, who was quite sober to-day, and seemed to be trying to make up, by her unusual tenderness to little Bob, for what she had caused him to suffer; for the child had been seriously ill in consequence of having imbibed the alcohol from his mother's broken teapot.

'I brought a story book for Bob, and mamma has sent him some strawberries,' said Marjory, as she entered the humble room, which to-day looked rather less untidy than usual. 'Shall I sing you a hymn, Bob?' she asked, turning towards the little boy.

'Please sing, "Tell me the old, old story,"' lisped little Bob; and Marjory, who possessed the gift of song, did as she was desired. Then turning to the child's mother, who had listened with tears in her eyes to the sweet-voiced singer, she said, 'We're going to have a meeting in the school-house to-night, Mrs. Simpson. Won't you go and take little Tim with you? I'm sure it will be a nice meeting.'

'I want to be a better woman, Miss,' answered Peggie, 'and I wad fain go to the meetin' if it wad do me ony gude; but wee Bob canna be left his lane.'

Now, Marjory had looked forward with much pleasure to this meeting, and she and her brother, Frank, who had come home for the holidays, had helped to adorn the room with flowers and ferns for the occasion. Then she longed to hear dear Mr. Brown again, and to be present at the formation of the Temperance Society. She was silent for a minute, during which a struggle went on within her little heart. 'Ought I to take care of little Bob, and let his mother go to the meeting,' she said to herself; 'perhaps Jesus is showing me some work I can do for him.' When she spoke again it was to say, 'You can go to the meeting, and I'll take care of Bob, and sing to him, and read him a pretty story.'

'Won't that be awful nice?' chimed in Bob; and so the matter was arranged.

Marjory's next stopping place was the house of Ted Wallace, 'the drunken gardener,' as he was often called. He had been head gardener to a gentleman; but, having become intemperate in his habits, lost his good situation, and now earned a somewhat precarious livelihood as a jobbing gardener. On him the little girl employed all her powers of persuasion; and on receiving his promise that he also would attend the meeting, she hastened home with a glad heart, to find that Mr. Brown had already arrived at the manse.

There were two ministers in Burnbrae besides Mr. Allan, and he had asked them to co-operate with him; but old Dr. Black excused himself on the plea of ill-health, whilst young Mr. Whyte said he was not prepared to identify himself with the total abstinence cause, although no one deplored the increasing prevalence of drunkenness more than he did; but really did not see it to be necessary for him, who never had exceeded in his life to become an abstainer. The

meeting, however, proved a decided success. The chair was taken by a gentleman who had lately come to live at Burnbrae, and who was in full sympathy with the cause; and his wife, who, like Mrs. Allan, possessed a melodious voice, joined that lady in singing some sacred songs. Then Mr. Brown proved a host in himself; and Mr. Allan spoke with a simple pathos that went to every heart. The blacksmith had slipped quietly into the room as if ashamed to be seen there; but when Mr. Allan, at the close of his address, exclaimed, 'Dear brethren and sisters, I will be the first to sign the pledge; who will be the next?' he marched boldly up to the platform, and said, with much emotion,

'I will; and may God help me to keep it!'

The smith's example was followed by many, including Peggie and her husband, and the drunken gardener; and a Band of Hope was also set agoing ere the meeting separated.

Two years passed, during which period the temperance cause made considerable progress in Burnbrae. The blacksmith had stood firm, and so had Peggie Simpson, who was now the happy mistress of a pretty cottage. Mr. Allan and his good little wife had, however, met with various disappointments in their work; and one of those who disappointed them was the gardener. He had gone to a wedding; and on being taunted by some of those present because he had refused to drink the bride's health in whiskey, he yielded to temptation. Immediately the old craving for spirits returned with all its old force. On his way home he went into a public-house, and drank deeply; and he knew or remembered nothing more until he awoke to consciousness next morning in his own house, with an aching head and a sprained ankle. When Marjory heard of his sad fall she was greatly troubled.

'O mamma!' she said, 'do let me go and see him. I know how sorry he will be to-day.' And mamma gave her consent, saying she would have gone herself if she could, but she did not feel well enough to go out that day.

Marjory found the poor man looking very wretched and evidently suffering pain, and her tender heart ached for him. She asked him if she might read a chapter to him; and after doing so she sang with touching pathos one of her favorite hymns, 'The Ninety-and-nine.'

'I am that lost sheep,' said her listener, sadly, when she had ended.

'But the Good Shepherd seeks you, and will bring you home to the fold, if you ask him,' said Marjory, earnestly. 'I have asked him to help you to keep in the right way; you know we all need his help. Where is little Tim?' she asked after a pause.

'He's out playing, Miss,' answered his father. 'Tim was an only child, and the pride of his parents' hearts, and he had lately become one of Marjory's little Sunday scholars. So, after bidding good-bye to the father, she went along the road beyond the cottage to look for the child. She had not proceeded many yards, when suddenly a piercing shriek fell upon her ear, which seemed to proceed from the direction of the burn which flowed near, and which was at present considerably deeper than usual owing to recent heavy rains. As she reached the spot she saw little Tim struggling in the stream, and wading in until the water reached considerably above her waist, she succeeded in seizing hold of the child's dress. With difficulty she dragged him up the steep bank, and then taking him in her slender arms, bore him to his home. She saw him open his blue eyes, and then leaving him to the care of his mother who had just come in, without waiting for a word of thanks from

the grateful parents, slipped quietly away; then, after wringing some of the water from her wet, clinging garments, got home as quickly as her shivering, trembling limbs would carry her. The next day Marjory was too ill to rise, and the doctor was sent for, who said that the wetting, together with the excitement undergone had been too much for her delicate frame, and he feared an attack of inflammation of the lungs.

Marjory rapidly grew worse, and ere long the physician gently told her anxious parents that he feared he could do no more for their child; but whilst life remains there is hope, added the good doctor, and we know that with God all things are possible.

Quickly the sad news spread through Burnbrae that Marjory Allan, the light of the manse, the darling of the village, was dying; and great lamentation was made for the sweet, bright young creature who had endeared herself to so many hearts.

'If she hadn't, dear angel that she is, nursed wee Bob yon evening, an' let me gang to the meetin', I might hae been i' a drunkard's grave,' said Peggie Simpson, the tears running down her cheeks as she spoke, for what I heard yon nicht made me see my sinfulness an' need o' God's grace to keep me from that awfu' drink.'

Ted Wallace, the gardener, came to the manse bringing beautiful flowers for the young leddy.

'She is the fairest flower o' them all,' he said in a choked voice, 'and if ever I find a place among them that wear the white robes I'll owe it under God to yon blessed child!'

All day long Marjory had lain in a semi-conscious state; but, as the long summer day was lowly fading into twilight, she suddenly opened her eyes and said, 'How's little Tim?'

'Quite well, my darling,' answered her mother with a sob; 'he owes his life to you.'

'Am I going to die, mamma?' asked Marjory.

'You are very, very ill, my pet,' replied Mrs. Allan, trying to speak calmly, 'and perhaps Jesus may soon come to take you to himself.'

'If Jesus comes for me I will not be afraid to go,' said the child. 'I know he loves me, and has washed away my sins. If he takes me home you must not grieve too much for me, papa dear: you know you will still have Frank and Willie, and little Katie will soon grow up to take my place, and will, I hope, be a better daughter to you than I have been.'

'Never!' groaned the sorrow-stricken father.

'Poor papa!' said Marjory, tenderly. 'Yes I know you will all miss me, but we'll be all together again. If I die, tell my little scholars and our Band of Hope children that there's room for them all in the "many mansions." Then the sufferer lay quiet and exhausted on her pillow, and ere long fell into a gentle sleep, which the anxious watchers feared might prove to be the sleep that knows no earthly waking.

But little Marjory did not die. Our kind father in heaven, whose ear is ever open to listen to the prayer of faith, vouchsafed a gracious answer to the many fervent supplications that were offered for the recovery of the apparently dying girl; and health slowly but surely returned to the wasted frame.

Some years have passed since the events we have recorded took place, and Marjory is now working in the cause of Gospel temperance in a distant land, where she is the happy wife of one who is worthy of her brave and tender heart. Her sweet influence will long be felt in Burnbrae, where her old