

ure. His voice was weak and husky, and before the service was over, a cough told of weakened lungs that needed rest and watchful care.

'I think it's mean,' said Bessie Harris, walking home after service with a number of other girls; 'the idea of sending us a man like that as a possible future pastor! It makes me feel queer just to look at him, and that voice and dreadful cough—'

'Hush, Bess,' interposed one of the girls in a rather shocked tone, 'It's a shame to speak so about the poor man. I felt so sorry for him while he was preaching, he looked so feeble.'

'Yes, he does,' joined in another girl, 'I felt sorry for him, too. I couldn't listen to the sermon or enjoy the service a bit, for I kept thinking all the time how hard it must be for him, when he is evidently worn out.'

'I should think a minister would retire when he gets unable to do his work. We surely can't call such a man to be our pastor,' said Flora MacIntyre, severely.

'Of course not. I suppose they sent him first in hopes of getting him settled and off their hands. When they find we won't call him, maybe they will send us something better,' said little May Clyde, with a wise nod of her head.

'I hope so,' said Margaret decidedly as she opened the home gate and bade the rest good-bye. They did not mean to be harsh in their judgment—these bright, happy young people—Christians all and members of the church for which they were so anxious to secure a good pastor. They did not dream how cruel they were, in this summary disposal of the candidate. Would that they might have seen him that afternoon alone in his room, and could have heard the husky voice whisper: 'Oh, Lord, thy will be done. If this be not the place for me, do thou lead me on.' Surely they could not have hardened their hearts against the man who put his future so trustingly into his Lord's hands; and though he had seen in the faces of the people, in spite of their pity, something that forbade him to hope that this might be the haven for which he longed, yet still trusted that God would provide for him.

It seemed as if the young people had voiced the sentiments of the entire congregation. They pitied the broken-down old minister, but they were not willing to call him to the vacant pulpit. They wanted a man of strength and energy, not one who was so evidently worn out with much previous serving.

It was really decided, before the mid-week prayer-meeting at which the vote was taken, that this candidate was not to be called.

And then, on the very morning of that day, came the letter that changed it all.

It was from their former pastor, and in its sentences they could almost hear the ring of his beloved voice.

'I am more glad than I can express,' it said, 'to hear that poor old Mr. Nelson has been sent to you; for there is thus given to you an opportunity of a life-time to do God's work in accepting this man for your pastor. His life has been as truly a martyrdom as was the death of any saint of old. He gave his life, when it was young, to home mission work, and for thirty years has been doing in the north and west a work that only God can appreciate or reward. He lost his wife in a blizzard five years ago—she was going to meet him on his way home from a distant meeting and

was lost in the storm—and he and his noble daughter have since carried on the work together.

'The climate got hold of him at last, however, and he has come East, hoping to get a little church where he can support himself and daughter, and recruit his failing health. He is a wonderful man, with a wonderful record in Heaven, I am sure, and as I said it is your opportunity, even more than his. I have no doubt what your decision will be.'

He had no doubt of their decision!

Neither had they, before the letter came, but now it was all in such a different light that they hardly knew what to think. Not their benefit—not what would please them most—but their opportunity—the opportunity of a lifetime—to do God's work.

The letter came to Elder Whitney, and he read it aloud to his family. Margaret's eyes were shining before he was through, and when he read the last sentence she sprang up excitedly.

'I'm so ashamed of what I said to the girls last Sunday, about hoping they would send us a better man,' she said, 'I'm going to vote for this one and I hope every one else will too. May I tell the girls about the letter?'

'Certainly. I'm afraid we were all inclined to think only of our needs, and not at all of the minister's,' said her father, thoughtfully.

Margaret made a very enthusiastic advocate, and before the evening meeting all the young people of the church and a good many of the older ones knew the story of the candidate and were enlisted on his side. More consciences were aroused at the prayer meeting when Elder Whitney rose and read the letter, and when the vote was taken after the meeting the result was unanimously in favor of the Rev. Mr. Nelson.

It is quite needless to say that the call was accepted, after the minister had thanked God for this answer to his prayers and needs.

They—the new pastor and his daughter—were soon settled in their new home and work. Daughter and congregation united, with unspoken, sympathetic understanding, in keeping all burdens off the narrow, bent shoulders of the pastor. He was cared for in a way that he had never known in all his hard-working life, by the entire congregation; and it was all done in a way that made it seem the perfectly natural and proper way to treat a minister.

In less than a year they had their reward. Under their care and kindness the pastor grew well and strong once more, and almost before they realized it they found that he had become a real leader, and in his ringing tones and shining eyes they caught the thrill of that zeal that had driven him on in the past, even to the gates of death. And never was the Oakville church in a stronger, healthier, more flourishing condition than it became under the charge of 'the successor.'

Through the Strait Gate

In a garden one exquisite summer afternoon, just after the limes had blossomed and were filled with the murmur of the bees, I was standing with a friend by his beehives. He is an enthusiast for bees. Empires may rock to ruin, but so long as the shock does not disturb his bees he can view with equanimity the wreck of worlds.

He told me many things which were immensely interesting, such as the rigor with

which the sentinels watch the entrance to the hive, the quickness of sight by which bees are able to discern the distant clover field, the laws which determine their swarming and settling, and many similar items, But I was most interested by the following, which I give on his authority.

When the bee is in its earliest stage of existence, it is shut up in a hexagonal cell, with a store of honey on which it feeds, like the little chick which lives on the white serous matter stored for it in the egg. The cell is closed with a capsule of wax. By degrees the bee consumes this store, grows too big to be contained in the cell, and prepares, guided by a God-given instinct, to force its way into the outer air.

Between it and liberty, however, stands that capsule of wax, as formidable as the iron gate that intervened between Peter and the home of Mary, with all that it meant. However, there is no way of getting through but by forcing a passage, which straightway it essays to do. It is not easy, however, 'Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way.' Thereupon ensues a process of striving, struggling, pushing—I know of no word that so well describes the process as the old Greek word 'agonizing'; and so at last the bee gets through, and on the other side finds itself possessed of wings.

What has happened? Ah, in the process of struggling through, the delicate membrane by which its gauze-like wings were bound to its sides gets rubbed away, and the wings are able to unfurl themselves. I have not met a better illustration of the method which God adopts with us all, to give us powers to soar, to fly, to do our best work, in this world and the next. It is only through much tribulation that we enter the Kingdom, only through strong crying and tears that we attain its maturest, noblest life. Often in young life troubles come so crushing and overpowering that it seems impossible to get through them; yet how often these are the very crises when we become delivered from our fetters, when we burst the restraining membrane and acquire our wings!

My friend told me that on one occasion a moth managed to get into the hive. It did no damage to honey or bees, but contented itself with eating off the wax capsules by which the cells were sealed. The result was that the bees within the cells had a very easy time of it. The door stood wide open, and they had nothing to do but walk out into the hive; but they appeared amid their brethren and sisters without wings. They were therefore good for nothing, were stung to death, and their bodies thrust ignominiously out of the hive.

How often we shrink from painful experiences, thinking that they will maim us for life, not knowing that it is a wise Providence that refuses to hear our cries and tears, and urges us on in spite of all! Without that loss of money, that sore disappointment, that bitter sorrow, that accident or illness, you would be without wings—never yours the clover fields, never yours the limes, never yours the busy life of gathering and storing and contributing to the well-being of the world.—Rev. F. B. Meyer, in 'The Christian Endeavor World.'

The Belgian administration has issued an order prohibiting the sale or consumption of intoxicating drinks in the vicinity of the Chambers during the sittings of Parliament and henceforth only tea, coffee and other non-intoxicants will be obtainable by the legislators during the sessions.