

Mrs W Prentiss 10/10/1901
Greenville
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UFTF

A VOICE

FROM THE FIELD

"Put ye in the sickle; for the Harvest is ripe."

VOL. 2. MONTREAL, FEBRUARY, 1891. No. 11

A KNOT OF WHITE RIBBON.

MINDAH E. MERRIFIELD.

The rain fell in a heavy mist and the wind souged mournfully through the trees, sweeping the dead leaves in showers over the fast fading grass and wet pavements. The street lamps gave out a faint, flickering light and the pedestrians drew their wraps closer and shivered as they hurried along. For an hour or more the figure of a woman might have been seen wandering up and down the streets, and the face upon which the light shone was that of a young girl scarce twenty. The brown hair was pushed back from the white face, and a pair of dark hazel eyes looked with a frightened expression upon the passers-by, who did not seem to heed her presence in the least.

The girl leaned for a moment against a fence, and a great tearless sob broke from her lips; and at that moment a lady who had just passed with several others, stepped back, and laid a gentle hand on the girl's arm. A voice sweeter than the sweetest music to a troubled heart, spoke, and a face made beautiful by its love of God and humanity, with the same love shining in the kindly blue eyes, bent over and asked:

"Let me help you, you are in trouble."

The girl looked up with a bewildered air; such words she was not used to, but in a moment she found voice to answer:

"No, you can't, unless you give me work, and my reference is, I have been one week out of jail."

The lady gave a start, and the girl continued with a laugh:

"I knew you would turn away; no less than a hundred have done the same thing the past week."

"Surely," the sweet voice whispered, "you were not guilty?"

"Yes," she answered, "I will not lie to you, I was guilty."

The noble, loving heart gave a great throb of pity; this was her work, here was one of her chosen ones to whom she was devoting her life work. A clear, cold voice, with a sound like a bell on an icy morning, broke the momentary silence.

"My dear Mrs. Barney, don't you think you are wasting time, we will be late, and Dr. Ellis is so particular?"

For a moment she hesitated; there was an audience waiting for her, who, with God's help, she must interest; and yet this one must not be left without a word of comfort. She hastily thrust a card into the girl's hand, together with a shining silver piece, and whispered hurriedly, "Come to me in the morning at this address," and she was gone.

Something fluttered noiselessly to the walk, and the girl ran and picked it up; it was a knot of white ribbon.

"I wonder if she wants it," she soliloquized. "I guess not; I'll keep it because she dropped it." She opened her hand and looked at the silver dollar lying within. "Now I can have some supper," she thought, and she hurried away in the direction the party had taken, but they were well in advance of her. After turning several corners, she found herself in front of a brilliantly lighted church, and an illuminated card announced that Mrs. J. K. Barney would give an address. She stopped short; that was the name the lady had called her benefactor. She looked at her card, and there it was, Mrs. J. K. Barney. Supper was forgotten, and she went into the church, and slipped into one of the back seats. The Center church was crowded, the organ played and the choir sang, the pastor gave thanks for blessings past and to come, and at last gave way to the speaker of the evening, and a slender little black-robed lady, with blue eyes shining like stars, with their hope and earnestness, arose before a church filled with a fashionable and critical audience, to tell them what the mission of the white ribbon was, and how it led her out into the by-ways to search out the despised and forsaken, and tell them of Christ's love, for He came to save the fallen, and, as she went on, the girl in the back seat clasped her ribbon closer and her eyes lost their wildness, and a look of content came into her face.

The voice of the speaker rang out clear and sweet to the listeners as she spoke of the enemy who stole away home and happiness; and, if he did not darken their home, someone's household idol was sacrificed on the altar of mammon which they would in a measure be called to answer for, as the professing Christian would pray, "Lead us not into temptation," and then give their influence for that which destroyed both body and soul. "Thy kingdom come, and thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven." The voice was wonderfully pathetic as it repeated the precious words.

"How can His kingdom come amid such blighting sin, and His will is not done on earth because it is not in accordance with God's will to ruin," and then the speaker's voice grew soft and pleading as she begged more to vote right, to uplift the standard of right for the boys to follow, and she showed the truth for women's feet to tread, to win many to the narrow way for Christ's sake.

When at last the clear voice ceased and the speaker took her seat, the Rev. Dr. Ellis arose, and after a few complimentary remarks in regard to Mrs. Barney, and a few more invoking God's blessing, the meeting was over,