

Little Marjory;

OR, 'SHE HATH DONE WHAT SHE
COULD.'

A STORY OF A SCOTTISH MANSE.

(Prize Tale, 'Scottish Temperance League'.)

A merry little group of children, of various ages, was seated round the table in a cheerful parlor, amusing themselves with some quiet game, when Harry, the eldest boy, suddenly started from his seat, exclaiming, 'Come, girls, it is time to get ready. You'll go with us, won't you, Marjory?'

'Where are you going, Harry?' asked the little girl addressed.

She was a bright, pretty child, with large, dark eyes, a wealth of sunny curls, and delicate features and complexion; and over her fair head some eleven summers might have passed.

'We're going to a Band of Hope meeting,' answered Jessie, the eldest of the little party. 'It has been lately formed for the children of our church, and Mr. Brown, our minister, has asked mamma if we may join it.'

'What is a Band of Hope?' asked Marjory, whose home was in a distant country village where the temperance cause had as yet made but little progress, whilst Bands of Hope were things quite unknown. The little girl was at present on a visit to her aunt and cousins in the city.

'It is,' Jessie began to explain, but she was interrupted by impetuous Harry with 'Come to the meeting with us, Madge, and no doubt you will hear all about it. It is time to start.'

The little party soon reached the hall where the meeting was to be held, and found a number of children and young people already assembled.

The meeting was opened with prayer by the Rev. Mr. Brown. Then followed two or three simple addresses, all bearing upon the subject of temperance; and between the speeches hymns were sung with much heartiness by the youthful audience. Then the pastor spoke, and to him even the youngest children listened with rapt attention, as he told them some interesting stories with much simplicity and pathos; and Marjory, who had a loving, tender little heart, was deeply touched, and the tears rolled down her cheeks as she heard of the misery of the slave of strong drink, and of the sad fate of the drunkard's child. 'Do not you long to do something to help them, dear children?' said the speaker. "But what can children do?" you ask. It is true you can do nothing of yourselves, but you can ask Jesus ere you go to sleep to-night to give you some little work to do for him and to teach you how best to do it.' He ended with an earnest appeal to his youthful hearers to give their hearts to the Saviour, and then asked those who had not already done so to join the temperance band.

When Marjory's cousins went up to receive their cards of membership, she stood beside them; and Mr. Brown asked her if she would join the Band of Hope.

'I don't live here,' she answered, 'but when I go home I mean to try ever so hard to begin a Band of Hope in our village.'

'May God bless you, my dear, and prosper your efforts; I shall be glad if I can do anything to help you,' said the minister kindly, as he looked into the sweet, earnest, upturned face.

During the homeward walk Marjory could talk of nothing but the meeting, and when she went to her room that night she did not

forget to ask the Saviour, to whom she had already yielded her young heart, to give her some work to do for him. A day or two afterwards, Marjory, who was a child of the manse, returned to her home in the village of Burnbrae.

The Reverend William Allan, Marjory's father, had labored at Burnbrae for fifteen years; and so far as making any perceptible impression upon the drinking habits of the village went, the good minister often felt that his work had been almost wholly fruitless. He had annually preached an eloquent sermon against drunkenness, and had even urged some of his neighbors, who were but too evidently the slaves of intemperance, to sign a total abstinence pledge; but though they for the most part listened respectfully to the words of the kind pastor, who was universally beloved, they would say behind his face: 'The minister, good man, whiles takes his glass of wine and toddy himself; example's better than precept.'

Mr. Allan's household consisted of his wife, a bright little woman, and a true helpmeet for her husband; Marjory, her father's darling, whom we have already introduced to our readers; two children several years younger than Marjory; and a faithful domestic. Frank, the eldest of the family, was away at school. On the evening of the day of Marjory's return from her visit to the city, as the family sat around the tea-table, she gave a glowing account of the meeting which she had attended, and ended by saying, 'Do you think we could form a Band of Hope here, papa? Do let me try. I know nearly all the children in the village, and I'm sure I could get some of them to join; and then, you know, papa, at our meetings you could both teach the children to hate drink and tell them about Jesus and his love, as Mr. Brown does; and perhaps we could get some fathers and mothers to come too.'

'I will think over your plan, my dear,' answered her father, with a loving glance at the bright little face, 'and I will see what we can do.'

'O, papa,' resumed Marjory, after a pause, 'could we not do anything for those poor people in Thomson's Row, Peggie Simpson, and Wallace the gardener, and the rest? I've heard you say that they are so poor because they drink.'

'I have tried to help them, God knows,' said Mr. Allan, sadly. Then turning towards his wife, he continued, 'I have sometimes felt of late, Annie, that I am laboring in vain.'

'There is one thing we have not yet tried,' returned the lady, speaking very earnestly; 'I mean the influence of our personal example. How can we ask others to banish drink from their homes, if we will not set them the example of doing so. It were surely a very small sacrifice to make for his sake who gave his life for us!'

'I believe you are right, my dear,' said the minister thoughtfully. 'People may call us singular; but surely that need not trouble us. Christ, our great example pleased not himself, and we ought to strive to follow in his steps. Gladly would I for his sake give up anything by which my brother stumbleth, or is offended or made weak, if by any means I might gain some.'

'I am thankful we have had this talk, William,' said Mrs. Allan, 'for I had been feeling very uncomfortable to-day in regard to this very subject. As I came out of the grocer's shop this morning, where I had gone to order the ale and wine you wished me to get, I saw Peggie Simpson, who used to wash for us before her marriage, coming out of the public-house opposite. She tried to avoid me, but I crossed the street and spoke to her, and told her how sorry I have

been to hear of her frequent visits to the Golden Lion. You have a good husband Peggie,' I said 'whose home you have rendered miserable, and two dear little children whom you are sadly neglecting. Will you not for their sakes try to give up the drink?' Peggie burst into tears, and, with a reproachful look which I shall never forget, said "Deed, mem, it was you and leddies like you that first learned me to like the drink. Ye gied it me whiles when I used to wash for ye." If anything happens to that woman, William, when she is in liquor, I can never forgive myself. I was her temptress. I should feel that her blood lay at my door!'

'You haven't heard all my story yet,' continued Mrs. Allan, as her husband was about to speak. 'I walked on towards Thomson's Row, as I wanted to take some tea and sugar to blind Betsy Scott. As I passed Peggie Simpson's cottage I heard loud screams, and hastened to discover the cause. I found little Tiz standing shrieking beside her brother Bob, who lay unconscious on the floor, while on a broken chair stood a teapot without a spout. Tiz told me that little Bob climbed up to look on the shelf for something with which to amuse himself, and found the pot in which mother had hid her whiskey, because father had said he would beat her if he found another bottle in the house. Bob drank the contents of the teapot, and was now dead drunk. I lifted the child upon the miserable bed, got the assistance of the blacksmith's kind little wife, who promised to care for him, and then went to Dr. Bryce, whom I was lucky enough to meet near the house. On sending to inquire this afternoon I heard that the little one is not yet out of danger, and that Peggie is going about saying she has killed her child.'

Ere the worthy minister retired to rest that night he resolved to take immediate steps for forming a total abstinence society in Burnbrae, and to write to Mr. Brown to ask him to come and help him to hold the first temperance meeting.

For some days previous to that on which the meeting was to be held Marjory, who was delighted at the prospect of seeing and hearing Mr. Brown again, went from house to house inviting all, old and young, to attend the meeting. She knew almost every man, woman and child in the village and neighborhood, for she was a frank little creature, and her sweet face and her winsome ways made her a welcome visitor wherever she went. One of her last visits was paid to John Duncan, the village blacksmith. When Mr. Allan began his ministry at Burnbrae this man had been a most regular attendant at church, a liberal contributor to every good cause, and to all appearance a true Christian. Now he was rarely, if ever, seen in a place of worship, his pretty house had been exchanged for a dilapidated cottage in Thomson's Row, and his once busy forge was more than half the time silent and deserted, whilst more and more of his time was spent at the public-house.

Marjory first went to the smithy, where she had often watched the burly kind-hearted smith at his work, but it was quite deserted; so she bent her steps towards the cottage in Thomson's Row. Her gentle knock was answered by a gruff 'come in,' but at the sight of the youthful visitor the tone quickly changed; for John Duncan had always been fond of little Marjory, who somehow reminded him of a wee, golden-haired Jeannie, once the light of his home, who had gone to live with the angels years ago. 'I've brought you some flowers, Mr. Duncan,' said the child as she entered, uncovering a basket that hung on her arm, and laying on the table a bouquet of fragrant roses with fronds