

"LOVED MUCH."

MRS. S. K. WRIGHT, London, Ont.

WHEN Mr. Wilfred told his wife the result of the afternoon's meeting, she received the news with a merry outburst of laughter. "It is too comical for anything, Wesley, me a president of a missionary society, and I don't know the first thing about missions."

"Perhaps, May, God has called you to this work," Mr. Wilfred tenderly said, while his hand fell with caressing touch on the golden-crowned head.

"Called to that work,"—and there was a mischievous twinkle in the blue eyes as Mrs. Wilfred said—"Why, Wesley, is it possible you have not discovered long ere this that the highest form of work I am called upon to do is fancy-work?"

"And what of our baby, Doris?"

For one-half moment an almost solemn look came over Mrs. Wilfred's face, but vanished as she again laughingly replied: "The baby Doris; we will manage her most beautifully! You no doubt will endeavour to bring her up on theology and Church discipline, while I will provide the more substantial diet and embroider her little dresses most artistically, so she will be well done for."

"May, can you not for a time at least lay aside this joking mood and seriously consider what to us means a most serious question?"

After a half-hour's talk, Mrs. Wilfred said: "Well, I will do it; it will be a change, anyway, and how startled the girls will be when I write them the new role I am thinking of adopting."

Stifling a sigh, Mr. Wilfred sought his study, there to lay this matter where he had learned to bring every troubled question.

As the weeks and months drifted on little by little, Mrs. Wilfred commenced to realize the responsibility resting upon her. Then came such a sense of unworthiness, of utter inability, as had never before troubled her unruffled spirit.

"I must give it up, I dare not longer be President," she said one day to Mrs. Mervin; "I don't understand it at all. I wish there was no such thing as a Women's Missionary Society," she continued in half-petulant tones.

"Would you not rather, Mrs. Wilfred, understand all about the work, and the great need for us, as women, engaging in it?" gently queried Mrs. Mervin.

"Yes, I really would, I do feel so ignorant about all these matters," was candidly responded.

Mrs. Mervin supplied all information possible in the shape of leaflets, pamphlets, books, and with an earnestness of purpose which seemed quite foreign to the gay, careless nature, Mrs. Wilfred read, studied, thought, prayed.

One afternoon in February found her in her cozy sitting-room reading a work on "Girl Life in Heathendom." With a strange sickness of heart stealing over her at the awful portrayal of misery, she laid the book aside and buried her face in her hands. Could it be possible such degradation existed; such anguish endured by her own sex? Then came the thought, why had she been so highly favoured? Lower sank the head, for conscience now was busy. Her whole life passed in review before her from earliest childhood days when in luxuriant home she had enjoyed every advantage wealth could procure, and had what wealth could not purchase—the tender guardianship of a loving mother. How happily, too, her school-days had passed, for butterfly-like she had only sipped at life's flowers where the honey was sweetest; and, lastly, this new life of wisdom and motherhood in which, if having to lay aside the many luxuries of her old home, there was enough of true womanliness in her to feel that loss had been more than counterbalanced by the tender love of her husband and ever-winsome Doris, and

at the thought of her baby-girl, and how they had rejoiced in the sweet ownership, tears filled her eyes for those other baby-girls who were so unwelcomed that the horrors of infanticide was oftime resorted to; and, shudderingly, she thought the ones spared were less fortunate, for alas! to so many of them life held nothing but anguish and sin and shame; parents so dead to every parental emotion that their little daughters were unhesitatingly made merchandise of, and for infinitely less in some of the Chinese provinces than they would sell a silk quilt. She had been so utterly selfish in her happiness, so entirely forgetful of those to whom He was as yet unknown, that she wondered if she could ever dare ask forgiveness, knowing "unto whom much is given, of him shall be much required," and she had given absolutely nothing in return for all the love and tenderness so lavishly bestowed upon her.

The daylight was fast fading, and twilight shadows filled the room and enveloped her in the soft mist. Still, with bowed head and accusing conscience, she lingered. Then bringing a tiny ray of light and hope came the thought, she would love the Great Giver in a way she had never done before, the remainder of her life would be too short to prove this love that even now she felt welling up in her heart. Quick as lightning-touch the words, "Her sins which are many are forgiven, for she loved much," flashed into her mind, and she took them as a seal of God's forgiveness.

The lamps were lighted, the shades drawn, when Mrs. Wilfred entered her husband's study. Her face still bore marks of the afternoon's sorrow, yet a happy light beamed in her eyes and helped tell the glad story.

"Wesley," she brokenly said, "I understand now, as I never understood before, how sinful my past life has been; I was so wrapped up in self that I never gave a thought to God's suffering children." Her voice faltered now, but in lower tones she added, "And, Wesley, I promised Him this afternoon that the rest of my life would be consecrated to this work, because I do love Him, and want to have a little share in sending the glad tidings to those who sit in darkness, and I think, because of this, I will be a greater help in the church work at home, a better wife to you, a better mother to Doris."

"Let us thank God together, May, for answered prayers," said Mr. Wilfred, in a voice husky with emotion; "I believed this time would come, for 'He is faithful that promised,' but I never dreamed God would use the Women's Missionary Society as a channel in which to do so, and such is the perversity of human nature that with shamefacedness I acknowledge a year ago I was so opposed to its workings that had I thought of such a thing, my prayer might have been, 'Lord, any other way than this'; now I thank Him from the depths of my heart that He ever sent me to Clintondale, and that an organization of the Women's Missionary Society was effected here."

At the close of the first year the Auxiliary held an open meeting, presided over by Mrs. Wilfred, whose love for the work had banished her natural timidity.

The church was crowded from altar steps to farthest pew, and yet there was scarcely a face that did not, in some form or other, bear traces of emotion as Mr. Wilfred was speaking. He said, "My dear people, I feel to-night that it is my imperative duty to publicly confess how opposed I was to the work of the Women's Missionary Society. Had it been possible, I would have vetoed an organization here, but I dared not take so much upon myself; and I thank God I have not the sin on my conscience of stopping a work which so bears the marks of His approval. I was selfish enough to think only of ourselves, while had I but bent my ear and listened I would have caught the echoes of an anguished cry wrung from suffering millions clamorous for Life's Bread,