

HOW MRS. HOFFMAN HELPED.

The annual fee of the Women's Foreign Missionary Society of the West Street church was one dollar, and though a few of the ladies gave much more, the majority of the members gave, as a matter of course, just that amount, never reflecting that there was no law against their giving something more. Mrs. Pratt, who was one of these dollar contributors, had it suggested to her in rather a mortifying way that it was not absolutely necessary that she should confine herself to such a small sum. She was a praying member of the circle and talked of missions very enthusiastically—"gushingly," some ill-natured people call it. One day, as she was going home from a missionary meeting, she met Mrs. Hoffman, who did not believe in missions, but who knew all about the society and how much everybody gave.

"Ah!" said the latter, "here you come. Been to your missionary meeting, I presume, judging from your exalted look?"

"And O, what a meeting it was!" Mrs. Pratt began, the ready tears springing to her eyes. "If you had seen the chart we had there showing how little of the world is Christian, and how much is given over to false religions and dark heathenism!"

"Must have been interesting," sneered Mrs. Hoffman.

"But we have the promise," Mrs. Pratt pursued, too much uplifted to notice what the other said. "The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea."

"If this is to be accomplished by human instrumentality, how long do you think it will take at the rate some people are giving?" Mrs. Hoffman asked.

"Why, what do you mean?" demanded Mrs. Pratt, quite started.

"O, nothing," Mrs. Hoffman answered with a shrug, only it *does* seem to me that there is a great deal of praying and fussing done over *one dollar!*"

She walked off, happy in having relieved her mind, while Mrs. Pratt went home pondering deeply.

She entered her pleasant home—so thoroughly comfortable it was, almost bordering on the luxurious, "the most complete house!" her friends all said—and wandered all over it, looking at the pretty furniture and multitudinous decorations as though she had never seen them before. She had had the decorative craze-badly,

and the house fairly bristled with screens, lam'brequins, tidies, splushers, plaques, portieres and things of which only the initiated know the names. There were forests of cat-tails and congregations of one-legged storks. There were "toys" of all nationalities, Japanese, Turkish, Russian and Early English. It seemed as though there was not room enough for another article, yet the owner of it all had just been meditating a "lovely sofa-pillow like Aunt Fanny's," and an elegant hand-painted, satin, meal-bag pin-cushion, after the pattern given in the last *Bazar*. She went into her own room, and opened the bureau drawers and wardrobe, and surveyed her ample stock of thoroughly good and pretty clothes, and the many luxurious toilet articles scattered around. Then she sat down in the big easy-chair and soliloquized:

"What an abundance of everything I have! Really a great deal more than I need, and here I've been satisfied to give, year after year, one paltry dollar for foreign missions! It would be bad enough for a person who is totally ignorant of the condition of the heathen world and the operations of missionary societies, but I know about such things. Month after month do I go where they are talked of and prayed over. No wonder Mrs. Hoffman is disgusted with such a missionary worker as I am, and has so little faith in the cause that is so poorly supported by those professing to be deeply interested in it. We hear a great deal about accompanying our gifts with prayers, but I'm afraid my gifts have not been at all in proportion to my prayers. To think how fervently I prayed this afternoon that Japan may speedily become thoroughly evangelized, that very soon Korea may be opened to the Gospel, and for the success of mission efforts in all parts of the world, and then handed to the treasurer one dollar as my contribution to help on with all this work! And there are all my new things! I wish I hadn't had my black silk beaded; 'twould have done just as well without trimmings. That cloth suit I don't need at all, for my other ^{new} ~~one~~ is perfectly good yet, and I wish I had not been in such a hurry sending word to have my sealskin coat made into a dolman, O, dear! I might have saved in a dozen ways."

But regrets were useless. The money which she would now so willingly have poured into the Lord's treasury was no