

THE ACADIAN

AND KINGS CO. TIMES.

HONEST, INDEPENDENT, FEARLESS.—DEVOTED TO LOCAL AND GENERAL INTELLIGENCE.

Vol. VIII.

WOLFVILLE, KING'S CO., N. S., FRIDAY, JULY 19, 1899.

No. 48.

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WOLFVILLE DIVISION 8 of T meets every Monday evening in their Hall, Witter's Block, at 8:00 o'clock.

ACADIA LODGE, I. O. G. T. meets every Friday evening in Music Hall at 7:30 o'clock.

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TEMPERANCE.

POETRY.

"The Least of These."

She had little of earthly beauty,
She had less of earthly lore;
She climbed by a path so narrow,
Such wearisome burdens bore!
And she came with heart a-tremble,
To the warden at Heaven's door.

She said, "There were hearts of heroes,
I had only my little children;
That called to me day and night;
I could only soothe their sorrows,
Their childish hearts made light."

And she bowed her head in silence,
She hid her face in shame;
When, out from the blaze of glory,
A form majestic came;
And, sweeter than all heaven's music,
"Lo, some one called her name!"

"Dear heart, that hath self forgotten,
That never its own path sought,
Who keepeth the weak from falling
To the King hath jewels brought;
Lo, what they had done for the children,
For the Lord himself hath wrought!"

—Woman's Journal.

STORY.

THE SOLDIER'S PRAYER.

It was the fall of 186—, during those troublous times that tried men's souls and broke women's hearts, that a slip of a girl of about nine years stood on the platform at the depot in one of the suburban towns of Cleveland and watched the waiting train with its coachload of soldiers on their way to the front. The pale face of the woman was so full of admiration, and sad with a pathetic longing in it as well, that more than one boy in blue remarked it. Finally one, with laughing impudence, called out: "Hello, little maid, is your sweetheart off to war?" "You are all my sweethearts," answered the child. "Come in and say good-by to us."

The child ran forward, and clambering up the steps, went into the car. The soldier who had accosted the little maid was the counterpart of hundreds who went out to battle in those days, and who sleep the last long sleep under the southern stars; full of vigor and life, a little "fast," perhaps, but sweet and honorable at the core. As he walked with the child, watching the color come and go, and caught the glance of the great big grey eyes darkened so early with the shadow of a great sacrifice, he became unusually interested.

She was a helpless plain mite, the only redeeming thing about her being the big, luminous eyes and long, glossy braids of soft, brown hair. The soldier's hand was toying half unconsciously with one of these plaitings when he asked what she would be willing to give a soldier who was going out perhaps never to return. There was a real sincerity in the reply: "Anything." Some spirit of mischief must have entered the man, for lifting the braid that lay shining over his wrist, he asked: "Will you give me this?" The answer came very quickly: "Yes." Taking from his pocket one of those "housewives" furnished the boys by loving friends, he took out the scissors and clipped off the braid close to her head, while the man standing around them exclaiming at his wantonness and shamed him in no light manner. When the hair lay coiled on his knee and the child was looking smilingly up into his face, he reached into his haversack, brought out a bottle, and, taking off the metal cap that answered for a cup as well, he poured out some of the liquor, and raising it, cried out, gaily: "Here's to my little sweetheart!" Quick as a flash the slender fingers clasped his wrist, and the shame and wonder that child's face expressed will never be forgotten by those around. "Oh! soldier," and the sweet voice rang with passion of entreaty, "please, please don't do that."

There was perfect silence over the group in a moment. Something in the snap of that little hand on his, and the wistful pleading in the startled gleam of the grey eyes lifted so earnestly, touched the soldier, and a strange expression grew slowly in the handsome, soldierly face while the eager voice of the wee maiden sounded clearly through the car: "I gave you just what you asked for; O, won't you do something for me? A moment's hesitation, then he answered: "Yes, little woman, I will." I have wondered many a time and oft in the years that

lie between then and now if any of those gathered there felt that a point was reached in that man's life when he should choose at the bidding of a little child, which path he would tread.

"Then will you sign the pledge with me?" A shout went up from the boys in blue, "She's got you, Charlie; sign it, sign it," came from all around. "Will you write one, girlie?" said Charlie, but a blank book with portable fastener and pen in the side. Carefully, in big round letters, the child wrote the only pledge that occurred to her.

"I will never drink anything that will make me drunk as long as I live." Seeming to think that the latter clause made it very strong the soldier took the pen, and, in a firm, scholarly hand, wrote "Charles D." underneath the childish written name of the little girl.

While all this was transpiring, a tall, fine looking soldier, bearing the rank of colonel, had paced back and forth several times, and now pausing before the open window, called out: "What's going on in there boys?" "Come in and see, colonel. Charlie has signed a temperance pledge." While the colonel walked through the car he heard the story from half a dozen different voices. His hand lay caressingly on the head of the little girl, and a strange expression of almost affection shone in his face as he read his pledge. Taking the pen he wrote "in witness" and beneath a name that is written in the history of this nation—a name loved and revered as the one of our martyred presidents, James A. Garfield.

Taking the hand of the child in his own, he said: "Boys, this is the daughter of Chaplain W—, of the Seventh. He is summoned to the front to-morrow, and was anxiously looking for little Mary a moment ago, Charlie, I know some one in Pennsylvania who will be glad to hear of this." Every soldier touched his cap as he walked through the car, and the escort delivered little Mary to her father and told the story of the missing braid, while the chaplain held her close in his arms and his lips pressed her forehead more than once during the recital. Col. Garfield closed his story by saying: "He is a young man with a bright future, his only fault being this habit, and, as he is honorable to a nicety, he will never break his word. You have sown good seed, chaplain."

With the remaining braid in his breast pocket, Chaplain W—had been many weary months at the front, and the quiet still grew hotter and more bitter. During one of those painfully depressing times it was evident a traitor had placed in our councils, for every important move was made known to the enemy. Gen. Rosencrans issued the order that spies were to be tried and shot without delay. Excitement ran high and a spy had small chance for his life. Chaplain W—was summoned one morning to visit the guard-house, at the request of a prisoner who had been brought in during the night and condemned as a spy at early morning roll call. He had been discovered skulking around camp, and when taken had asked to be reported at headquarters immediately. Upon learning that Gen. Rosencrans was twenty miles away he seemed disturbed and disquieted, but only insisted on reaching him by some way or means. And finally begged for the Chaplain's presence.

Chaplain W—went as requested, and found the prisoner, a man of splendid physique, with a face bearing unmistakable marks of thought and cultivation. Being questioned, the prisoner said: "I am a Union soldier, I am scouting, but not for the rebels. I have information that must go to Gen. Geary immediately. I thought I had struck headquarters; that's how I came to be caught. If those fools shoot me to-day, promise to see Gen. Geary and repeat these words, will you chaplain?" Refusing to talk about subjects that would naturally interest a man condemned, the prisoner earnestly implored the chaplain to carry his message. After promising to take the long ride to headquarters and to see Geary within three hours, the prisoner repeated over softly a few words that sounded to the listening chaplain like

an unmeaning jumble of words.

Then pausing a moment, the soldier bowed his head, and his voice trembled as he repeated a message for his mother to be delivered to this address, slipping his hand inside the old gray blouse and bringing out a package wrapped in worn paper. As he fumbled for a paper and pencil, in his agitation the package fell to the floor, and stooping to restore it the wrapper fell away, and in the chaplain's fingers lay a long braid of soft brown hair and a slip of paper with a queer, childish written pledge, and three names beneath it.

White as death grew the chaplain's face, and with a queer, choking in his throat he stammered out: "Where in heaven's name did you get this?" crossing the clinging eaves, the moisture dimming the grey eyes so like the ones that shone upon the prisoner on a sunny September day in Ohio.

"That's my name, chaplain; and this, touching with a tender motion the braided hair, 'belonged to the wee maid whose name is written there. She gave it to me on my way to the front two years ago. I guess you may know the other name.'"

The proud head of the chaplain bowed low and a tremor passed over the stern face and his voice quivered as he half whispered, "My little Mary, my precious little daughter," and with uncertain fingers drew out from his inside pocket the mate to the prisoner's treasured braid. Speaking rapidly, after the story had been told in a few words, the soldier said: "I have always kept it, chaplain. Many a time when it was bitter cold and the canteen passed round I could just see that earnest little face and the child's hand writing so carefully her name. I never forgot it, sir. If they shoot me to-day send it to my mother, will you?"

The chaplain was stirred, and visiting the officers interested, he argued with them, telling them the story of the pledge and the twin braids, petitioning that the man might be kept well guarded until Gen. Geary could be communicated with. The strange, pathetic story, eloquently told, won the day. As soon as Geary could be reached the prisoner's discharge was ordered immediately, as he proved to be one of the most valued men in the secret service, and was then in possession of news of the greatest importance to our leaders.

Years drifted past, the war was over and Gen. Geary was governor of Pennsylvania. Invitations had been sent out through the quiet old Dutch city, calling those of the governor's immediate circle to meet a valued friend before his departure to take a position as American consul in a foreign land. One of the guests, a slender young thing, remarkable only for a pair of wonderful grey eyes, had just been introduced to the grave, fine looking gentleman who stood near the governor's wife, when supper was announced. It was such an informal evening that the guests were grouped with regard to congeniality and social affinity rather than strict adherence to rank, so a kindly face placed the lass on one side of the honored guest. Noticing that the gentleman turned down his wine glass the girl studied his face a moment, then flashing a glance up at him she questioned him softly in the pause of conversation: "Did he not drink wine?" He answered in the negative, noticing also her empty glass. "May I ask you why?" A look of haughty surprise at the impoliteness passed over his face, but without waiting for his reply this strange little lady followed her former rudeness by the astonishing remark that the last time she had seen him he was preparing to drink from a bottle to her health.

Without making any further revelations she called out in agitated tones: "O, Mr—don't you remember cutting off my hair and signing the pledge for me; don't you remember me?" Her eyes were all aglow and the mobile mouth quivered. Turning, the American minister grasped both her hands in his and answered, visibly shaken by the emotion, "Little Mary, the chaplain's little maid; God bless you, my child; I have the braid of hair and the pledge yet."

The governor and his wife forgave the sensation when they heard the story. Do any of you remember how

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what the defendant's counsel has told you, then you will give a verdict for the defendant. But if you are like me, and don't believe what either of them said, then I'll be plagued if I know what you will do. Constable, take charge of the jury."—Mifford (Ind.) Herald.

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