

Northern Messenger

Wm Bronscombe 30407

VOLUME XXI, No. 45

MONTREAL, NOVEMBER 9, 1906.

40 Cts. Per An. Post-Paid

Horace to the Rescue.

(Bertha E. Bush, in the 'Christian Endeavor World'.)

'The church demands too much,' declared Horace to the circle that somehow always gathered around him. 'Now, there's my sister Katherine. She's just overwhelmed with church-work. Morning and evening services, Sunday school, Christian Endeavor society,

stead of being days of rest, the very busiest days of their busy weeks?

It was evident that Horace had felt deeply enough to do some investigation of the subject; else how would he have succeeded in distinguishing and naming correctly all those multitudinous societies? He had indeed studied the matter, and he felt much disturbed about it. It was partly for the sake of Katherine, of whom he was very fond, and

meeting, and had quite forgotten that it came on Wednesday.

And yet Horace, in his schoolboy days before he went to the University, had joined the little church; and his name was still on the church-roll as a member. But he never attended there now. He had grown beyond such narrowness, he would have said. The minister wasn't interesting. It was much more comfortable to rest on Sunday mornings after working all the week, scarcely rising before time to go down to the nice Sunday dinner that Katherine always prepared.

He believed in the church the same as ever, he said lazily; but he didn't believe it would do him any good to go there and listen to sermons when he didn't want to. Why should a man exert himself to do what he didn't want to do, anyway?

Unfortunately almost all the male population of Holly Centre thought in the same way. It was essentially a woman's church. The Ladies' Aid Society raised the money for church expenses by a heroic series of fairs, festivals, and church suppers. A woman was clerk of the Church. A woman was Sabbath school superintendent. The only missionary organization was the Woman's Missionary Society.

And the church languished. All the suppers and fairs and festivals failed to bring in the minister's scanty salary. The weekly prayer meeting was counted well attended when ten were present. The men in the Sabbath congregations were very few and far between. The Christian Endeavor society had a membership of three young men and twenty young women. The only boys who came to the Junior meetings were under eight years old. The amount sent to missions grew yearly less in spite of most earnest efforts. The debt on the parsonage increased.

Meanwhile, the faithful women, because there were so few of them, did double and treble work. Every one had to put forth her best efforts in each branch of the church work, and there was no let-up.

But it did seem to come hardest on Katherine. She was young enough to belong to the Christian Endeavor society, and as a leading member held perpetual office and perpetual responsibility therein. She was old enough to be the youngest member of the older organizations, and was constantly put on soliciting committees and given the work that required running around. And she was Junior superintendent, first because they said that she was the best hand with children in the whole town, and, secondly, because no one else would take the position.

In one respect Horace was wrong in his enumeration. Katherine did not attend the Sunday school. Instead she came home after morning service to get dinner for the family of seven. Such good dinners as Katherine did prepare! She had a knack of succeeding at everything to which she turned her hand. The trouble was that just because of that knack she was constantly desired to do too much. Horace was right. Katherine had too



THE DOUGH STUCK TO HIS FINGERS.

Junior meeting, Ladies' Aid Society, Woman's Missionary Society, and I don't know how many more, Katherine feels bound by her conscience to go, and she is getting entirely worn out.'

And every man in the group around him believed every word he said. Weren't their wives and mothers and sisters and sweethearts also all tired out with church-work? Weren't there meetings innumerable which these weary women had to attend? Were their hands ever empty of work? If it wasn't a church supper, wasn't it a Sabbath-school picnic, or Christmas entertainment, or convention, or missionary society, or at least a prayer meeting? Weren't their Sundays, in-

partly because his own plans, which he had laid so pleasantly, had not come out at all.

'I should love to go sleigh-riding with you,' Katherine had said wistfully; 'but you know it's prayer-meeting night, and there are so few at our prayer meetings that the minister misses every one who stays away, and it's so discouraging to him.'

This after Horace had hired the rig and driven to the door to give his sister a pleasure! It was very provoking, especially when he noted the real longing in her eyes and realized how much the unusual outing would mean to her. How did he know that it was prayer meeting night? He never went to the