

LOOKING FOR PEARLS.

The Master came one evening to the gate Of a far city; it was growing late, And sending His disciples to buy food, He wandered forth intent on doing good, As was His wont. And in the market place

He saw a crowd, close gathered in one space.

Gazing with eager eyes upon the ground, Jesus drew nearer, and thereon he found A noisome creature, a bedraggled wreck— A dead dog with a halter round his neck; And those who stood by mocked the object there,

And one said scoffing, 'It pollutes the air!' Another jeering asked, 'How long to-night,

Shall such a miscreant cur offend our sight?'

'Look at his torn hide,' sneered a Jewish wit,

'You could not cut even a shoe from it!' And turned away. 'Behold his ears that bleed,'

A fourth chimed in, 'An unclean wretch indeed!'

'He hath been hanged for thieving,' they all cried,

And spurned the loathsome beast from side to side.

And Jesus, standing by them in the street,

Looked on the poor spent creature at His feet,

And berding o'er him spake unto the men:

'Pearls are not whiter than his teeth!'

And then The people at each other gazed, asking 'Who is this stranger pitying the vile thing?'

Then one exclaimed, with awe abated breath,

'This surely is the Man of Nazareth; This must be Jesus, for none else but He

Something to praise in a dead dog could see!'

And, being ashamed, each scoffer bowed his head,

And from the sight of Jesus turned and fled.

BISCUITS AND DRIED BEEF.

A PANACEA.

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By S. H. M.

CHAPTER IV.—Continued.

'While in London,' Mr. Jones essayed, 'I purchased a copy of Drummond's new book—"The Ascent of Man." What do you think of his theories, Mr. Forest?'

This was too much. To have all these people chattering about the new books of the season, and asking his opinion of them, while he had not had a new book of any kind for months, was almost too much for his sensitive soul. To the last question he replied:

'I have not had a new book of any kind for many months. I have not had the money to buy one, and so, of course, had to go without.'

Fortunately, Mrs. Forest came in just then and invited her guests 'to the table.' She did not say 'to tea,' for that would not have been correct under the circumstances. The poor woman was pale and nervous. How could she stand the ordeal? But she knew her husband wished her to be bright and cheerful, and so, brave and good as she was, she had nerved herself to it.

How beautiful the table looked with its snow white cloth, decorated with several vases of flowers! Mrs. Forest attempted to make up in tasteful arrangement what was lacking in the delicacy of the menu.

Grace was said, and all took their seats in a very happy frame of mind, unless we except the host and hostess, who were somewhat perturbed in spirit. The query came to them both, 'Is it right to so display the poverty of our inner circle?' Mrs. Forest did not try to answer the question for herself. She relied too much on her husband for that, feeling that

what he did was the right thing to do. The rector inwardly answered it to his own satisfaction, knowing that the situation was not of his own making, and that if the sum which was due him had come an hour or two before the supper time, he would have provided a proper repast for his guests.

'What beautiful biscuits!' Mrs. Smith remarked, as she broke one in two, and placed the steaming halves on her plate, evidently in haste for the butter to spread upon it before it had cooled.

'Yes, indeed,' Mrs. Brown echoed. 'You must have an excellent cook, Mrs. Forest. I do find it so hard to get a cook to make nice baking powder biscuits.'

Mr. Forest, seeing his wife's embarrassed look, at once said:

'We have a first-class cook, Mrs. Brown, and she sits at the head of the table.'

'Oh, indeed,' came in chorus from all the ladies.

Mrs. Forest meekly smiled: 'I've not had a maid for six months. Baby has been so good, and Mr. Forest so helpful, that I've gotten along very nicely.'

But no one had eaten a mouthful. Several had sipped at the glass of water beside them. The chipped beef had been passed, and the apple sauce had gone the rounds. Just then the baby cried, and Mrs. Forest said, as she hurriedly rose: 'Excuse me, please, while I see to baby.'

Blessed baby! How the fond mother hugged him to her bosom as she lifted him from the crib! The tears ran down her cheeks, for her nervous condition could stand the strain no longer. Baby had saved her from making a scene at the table. She was so glad to flee from it.

But the time had come to make some kind of an explanation. So Mr. Forest said:

'My friends, when I invited you to take tea with us I had hoped to entertain you as became your station; but we have been reduced to the present state of our larder. The last butter was used this noon. We are out of tea, and so can give you only pure cold water. But to me biscuits and dried beef are quite a relish, and I hope you will enjoy both.'

He paused, but no one broke the silence. He tasted of his apple sauce, and said:

'Mrs. Forest emptied the sugar bowl to season this sauce, but I think it would be improved with a little more sweetening.'

Mr. Jones laughed. Then Mrs. Jones laughed, and all the rest tried to laugh, but it made a queer sound without much hilarity in it.

'A pretty good joke the rector is playing on us,' finally remarked Mr. Brown.

'No, my friends,' said Mr. Forest, 'there is no joke about it. At the last Convention the Bishop counselled his clergy to "owe no man anything." My wife and I decided to adopt that course. I have not a cent in the house, and our breakfast will consist of what you leave from this meal. We are determined not to buy one cent's worth on credit. We can live comfortably on our salary; and if it is paid to us promptly each month we will get along nicely.'

'Do I understand,' said Mr. Jones, the senior warden, who now saw the seriousness of the rector, 'that Roberts has not paid you your salary?'

'He has paid part of it; but he tells me that there is no money in the treasury to meet the balance,' said Mr. Forest.

'What difference does that make,' Mr. Jones fairly roared. 'Why doesn't he pay it?'

'I suppose he can't pay if the treasury is empty,' remarked Robinson.

'Humph! Yes, I suppose so,' and Mr. Jones recalled to his mind the conversation he had had with Mr. Roberts the day after his return.

Mrs. Forest returned to the table bringing the baby with her.

'What do you feed him?' inquired Mrs. Brown, who thought biscuits and dried beef would be a poor diet for a small babe.

'Milk,' Mrs. Forest replied. 'Our good neighbor, who is a Methodist by the way, has a baby about the age of ours. They bought a Jersey cow so as to have good rich milk for the child, and knowing how difficult it is to always get good milk for such purposes, she kindly proposed that I accept a quart each day and night for our baby.'

'How very kind!' several said at once.

'Yes, I don't know what I should have done without it, for it would take some pennies each day to provide for it otherwise.'

The biscuits were eaten. The chipped beef had been nibbled. The apple sauce had been tasted, and all were ready to rise.

'Mr. Forest,' said Mr. Jones, 'I will call the vestry together to-morrow, and we will see that all arrears are paid at once.'

'Thank you,' was all the rector said.

The story got out. Jones drew his cheque for all arrears on his pledge. He wanted to berate Roberts, but he dared not, so long as he had been the most delinquent of any one in the parish.

'It worked nicely, didn't it, dear?' chuckled Mr. Forest, when a messenger called with a cheque for the full amount to date of his salary.

'But, oh, John, I never want to go through another such trial,' said the poor wife.

'You won't have to, dear, so long as we stay in this parish. Biscuits and dried beef were the panacea the people needed to cure their disorder.'

'And unsweetened apple sauce and cold water,' added Mrs. Forest.

THE END.

[For the 'Messenger.'

PLANS AND COUNTER PLANS.

(By Gussie M. Waterman.)

Belle, Gladys and Bess were in their room at a dormitory of the Lakeside school. It was the fall term, and the girls had just come from their country homes a day or two before.

'Well, Gladys Perley, you look like an embryo school mistress, don't you, leaning over that story book as if you meant to devour it? I daresay you'll be a perpetual thorn in my side!' Sister Bess shot a reproving glance from her clear, blue eye at easy-going Gladys before taking up her algebra.

'My dearest Bess!' cried Belle Bly, looking up from the essay she was writing upon the 'Character of Sir William Wallace, how quickly you forget that your sister is but a beginner in the preparatory department, and that she cannot be expected to feel the importance of utilizing every moment as we do.'

'Oh, girls!' Gladys suddenly cried out, 'don't you think this room terribly bare and cheerless? Only a bed and a cot and a table and three chairs—ugly wooden things! Let's steal some from our rainy day funds and brighten surroundings a little, or a good deal! I believe the genuine love of study, of which I confess I lack much, would run into my cranium like everything could I but behold beauty and cosiness around me! Leave off your dry old studying for a while and let's plan!'

'Oh, of course we ought to have the room prettier and pleasanter,' assented Belle; 'we meant to, didn't we, Bess?'

'Certainly, in time,' admitted stately Bess. 'What do you mean to do, sister mine, spend the ten dollars grandmother sent you on a spring rocker and a dressing-case?'

'There, Betsey, I didn't say so; but if I did what of it? It's my money. I'll buy a chair anyway; I can get a lovely one for five dollars.'

'And I'll get one too,' chimed in Belle, and a Turkish rug; rugs look so homelike.'

Gladys gave Belle a quick, startled look just then, and sat very sober for a minute or two, while Bess, with a critical glance round the room, declared what her quota should be.

'I've twenty-five dollars of my own laid away for a reserve fund. We may as well enjoy our school life as much as we can, and I do love some luxuries. Wouldn't I spend money on elegant surroundings if I had it?'

'Why, Bess, I didn't know you had such luxurious tastes! Our talk has roused a demon within you which must be subdued right away. I must see Dr. Day, and have the matron serve you with bread and water for a week!' Belle laughed merrily.

'Tut! Such levity in a school-ma'am of nine months' service is unpardonable,' said Bess, severely. 'I shall buy something handsome to make covering and pillows for Gladys' cot, thus turning it into a nice lounge in the daytime; then I must have some pictures and a vase or two, perhaps a China silk throw, and— Oh, another Turkish rug.'

Gladys, who had, with hands clasped round her knee, been looking delightedly up into her sister's face, suddenly sobered again, dropping her dark eyes.

'Beautiful!' cried Belle.

'And I believe I will get a lace curtain for the window,' Bess resumed.

'Oh, do!' Gladys was alert again. 'Do, Bess, and I'll buy some lace and drape a lovely dressing-table. I'll get some one to make the frame for us.'

'Now, do stop a little,' commanded Bess, when they had spent some time in discussing colors, textures and prices, and Belle had summed up the cost on a bit of paper—only about twenty-five dollars,' she had complacently announced.

'Do stop and work a while.' She took up her book again, while Belle turned to her essay, saying laughingly, 'After we've dressed up the room let's buy a big turkey and eat our Thanksgiving dinner here!'

'Oh, turkey!' Gladys' tone was like a half groan.

Bess looked up with a swift glance into Gladys' eyes, while a quick rush of pink dyed her own fair face.

'See here, I must find out the meaning of this,' spoke up Belle, authoritatively. 'Here's Gladys starting and sobering three times at the mention of Turkish and turkey, and here's our queenly Bess blushing like a little girl caught stealing jam! Confess now! Are you two concerned in a plot with some far-off Abdul Hamid Hassan to give the Sublime Porte a dose of dynamite or—'

'Tell her, tell her, Bess! You know what it is just as well as I do!' Gladys cried imploringly, 'you are the one to tell her, not I. I don't profess the same as you!'

Bess, to Belle's great wonder, bent her head low upon her hands for several minutes.

'Don't mystify me any longer! Tell me, one of you.'

'Do speak, Bess!' Gladys cried again. 'It's the missionary meeting, Belle, the meeting of the branch at Earlstown, you know. Those poor little Turkish brides! Aren't we dreadfully selfish, Belle Bly?'

Bess's fair face paled and flushed again as she lifted her head and spoke in firm, decided tones:

'I'll tell you what Gladys has been thinking about, and what I, too, should not have forgotten. We attended the State Missionary meeting in September, and heard Miss Wright from Marsovan, Turkey, give an account of the women and children there. She told us of the families living all in one room, and often sharing it with the animals; of the poor brides, subject to the caprice of the mother-in-law, before whom they must patiently stand, though ever so tired, until she gives permission to sit down.'

'And the mother-in-law may jump on the daughter-in-law's back while the poor child sweeps with her short-handled broom, and make her carry the old thing about!' put in Gladys, indignantly.

'These brides are never allowed to speak aloud before the men of the family or the mother-in-law. It made me feel so sad when she told of those sorrowful women, with mouths bandaged, faces veiled and