

gered, shivering under the intense heat of the sun. He had the instinct of a wounded animal to go home. On the brow of the hill above stood his neat frame cottage, with a path roughly worn between the bridge and his own door. The high-road, much the longer way, wound leisurely down the hill. Willet shambled in the direction of the road; he and the boy always went by the path.

With a sensation of the greatest relief, the men followed, one carrying the little drowned body, and two others so moving that they could still manage to shield it from its father's eyes. Mitchell stayed behind on duty at the switch. The air was full of the happy twitter of birds, the hum of insects, the distant rumble of waggon wheels and the lazy paddling of river craft, which make up the thousand and one sounds along the Hudson in summer time. The sad little procession had gone two-thirds of their way, when suddenly other music burst upon their ears. A woman's voice, round and comfortable, with a touch of the brogue in it, was singing cheerily:

'Oh! whin will my lo-ove come ba-ack to me?

Some bright summer day in the morning,  
Some bright summer day in the mor-orn-  
ing!'

It was Hannah Willet—Hannah going about her household duties, and, perhaps, ready to step to the kitchen porch and signal her man Jim and her boy, as she usually did at the hour when Mitchell or Dougherty took Willet's place at the switch. If she came on the porch now she would see them. Dougherty, lumbering along at Willet's heels, turned sick at the thought.

'For the love o' the Lord, Connolly, bhoys,' he whispered thickly over his shoulder, 'run up to the house, will ye an' sthoph the singin'. Do it widout killin' her. She's got to have the news broke before her heart is.'

Connolly handed the dead child to the man nearest him and nodded. Then came a fresh burst of song, louder than the first, clearer, nearer, which seemed to swing down the hillside and strike the men full across their faces.

'Oh! whin will my lo-ove come ba-ck to me?

Some bright—'

The voice stopped. It neither broke into a shriek nor a moan. It simply stopped short, as if ruthless fingers had seized the poor singer by the throat and held her. Hannah Willet stood on her kitchen porch.

There was nothing for the men now but to go on and face her as best they could. They had the impulse to turn and run, which the bravest, they say, will have in a moment of supreme danger.

'The Lord help us!' groaned Dougherty again, with a piety that was new to him. 'Shtand stiddy, bhoys. Ye'll not see poor human critters in much wuss thrubble. I'll do the explhainin'.'

Connolly seized Dougherty by the arm and jerked him backward. 'Look-a-there!' he whispered, excitedly. 'Do ye mind that, now! See him!'

With the others Willet had paused irresolutely. Then he dully raised his head and saw his wife. A quick sob, and he strode forward, erect, both hands outstretched. 'Hannah!' he cried, brokenly 'Hannah!' It was the first time he had spoken since the accident.

In a pitiful attempt not to understand, the woman glared wildly from one grief-stricken face to another, all the youth and

happy good-humor of her own looks blotted out. Finally her glance met her husband's and rested there. The terror of apprehension faded from her face, giving way before a compassion that was divine in its self-forgetfulness, that transformed her from the plain wife of a common working man into the very embodiment of tender, womanly pity. To Willet she seemed by a superhuman intuition to have understood everything. The only words that could warm through the numbness around her heart she spoke. The one phrase that was tickling clock-wise in his brain, she repeated aloud for him, and so took away half of its torture, 'You had to see him die,' was what she said, 'Oh! my poor man! my poor man! Little Jim was drowned, and you couldn't save him!'

'Give him to me,' she commanded Connolly, holding out her arms for her child. 'Let him lay here on my breast, like he did whin a slip of a baby. It'll make his father's heart easier to see him so.'

She gathered the body to her bosom, and she folded Connolly's coat more tightly around it and began softly to rub the shock of damp hair on the cold little head. It should be dry, dry entirely, or it might do him hurt; his mother wouldn't never let him stay cold like that! No, she wouldn't never. 'Poor Jim, poor Jim!' she went on, still keeping up that instinctive, motherly chafing of the child in her arms—'Poor Jim! You had the hardest, Jim! I couldn't ha' been there an' not killed myself, forgetful of you. It was you as brought him home. You came all that cruel way to bring him to me. Oh, Jim, Jim darlin'!'

Her voice was less unnatural now; it had dropped to a note of human distress that was fast bringing her to a full realization of her pain. Tears, which Willet was as yet unable to shed, rained down her cheeks; but she was not conscious that she wept. The men began to shuffle awkwardly away, muttering their clumsy words of consolation. They need not have taken the slightest precaution in the manner of their going; neither Willet nor his wife remembered they had come, nor knew when or how they left. Timidly Jim drew near and laid reverent fingers upon Hannah's sleeve. It was good to touch her and feel that she was there. Under her all-comprehending pity he was able to speak and think once more. She humanized him into himself.

'Lay little Jim on his bed, Hannah, darlin', he said, gently. 'There can't come no harm to him no more. The rest of my days I'll have his call a-ringin' in my ears. He was down by the bridge, you know, where it's so shaller an' safe, an' he a-splashin' an' a-laughin'! Then he called; sudden, sharp. He drowned afore I got to him. Oh, my God! afore I got to him!'

The woman shook herself free of his hand and stepped back.

'Afore you got to him?' she repeated, in a voice that was hushed in very wonder. 'He drowned afore you got to him, an'—an' little Jim called—little Jim called.' She paused for breath, then went on with an effort, as if the breathing hurt her: 'I thought first that you had to see him die while you was tryin' to save him; but it wasn't true. He was there in the water, an' he called, an' you couldn't get to him.' She dropped her face a moment over the dead child. When she raised it, it was set hard, pitiless. 'A mother's feet would ha' carried her,' she whispered only just above her breath; 'an' he was mine the same as yours. You let my boy die. I

never gave you no right to let my boy die.'

Slowly, deliberately, she turned and entered the house. Willet stood where she left him, motionless, staring straight ahead. From the bridge at the foot of the hill the men gazed upward, watching. They saw Hannah move, and Dougherty drew a long breath of satisfaction. It's well wid 'em, now, poor things,' he announced, sagely. 'The wust is over. They bore it bravely, an' they stood by each other. Did you see how Hannah took to comfortin' Jim from the first? You've got to leave troubles to time, anyways; but the wust is over whin folks is lovin' an' sympathizin' enough to keep each other up.'

### Increase Our Faith.

A boy lay dying. His short life of ten years had been bright with earthly good, and he would soon enter into the possession of a large inheritance, if his days could be prolonged. But death had set its seal upon the lad, and he was sad, not because he must leave his inheritance here, but because he had not a clear title to the one beyond the tomb. He longed for a treasure worth more to him than gold or silver.

A beloved uncle came to see him. Sitting beside the boy, he took the thin hand in his, and asked why he was so sorrowful. 'Uncle,' the lad said, 'I want to love God. Won't you tell me how to love God?'

He said this in such a piteous tone, and with such a troubled look, that the tender heart of the listener was deeply touched. Well was it for the dying child that he had found who could help him in this vital matter.

'My boy, trust God first, and then you will love Him without trying at all.'

The answer was a great surprise. He asked to have it repeated. Then a relieved look came into his large brown eyes, and a flush of hope upon his cheek. He said, slowly:—

'Well, I never thought of that before. I always thought I must love God before I had any right to trust him.'

'No, my dear boy,' his uncle answered, 'God wants us to trust him. That is what Jesus asks us to do first of all; and he knows that as soon as we trust him we shall begin to love him. This trust is called faith. You remember the prayer of the apostles: "Increase our faith." That is the prayer you need to pray, and that is the way to love God, to put your trust in Him first of all.'

Simply and tenderly his uncle went on to make the matter plain. He spoke to him of the Lord Jesus, how, all through his life, he tried to win the trust of men; how grieved he was when men would not believe in him, and how everyone who believed came to love without trying to love at all.

The lad listened eagerly. Then he simply said, 'I will trust Jesus now,' and put his young soul into the safe keeping of Christ. Then love, and joy and peace filled his heart. With life to the soul came vitality to the body, and he lived to know that he loved Jesus and that Jesus loved him. Faith always precedes love.—S. S. Lesson Illustrator.

For the structure that we raise,  
Time is with materials filled;  
Our to-days and yesterdays  
Are the blocks with which we build.  
—Longfellow.