

## How Things Brightened in the Daysville Auxiliary.

(Miss Alice M. Kyle, in 'Life and Light'.)

'I'm clean discouraged,' said Miss Roxy, throwing 'Life and Light' down on the table and sinking into an easy-chair with a sigh that emphasized her words. Her very bonnet strings had a limp, dejected air, and flopped helplessly about as she nodded her head at her invalid sister and repeated, 'Yes, Susanna, I'm clean discouraged.'

'Poor Roxy,' and her sister reached out a thin, white hand and patted Miss Roxy sympathetically. 'I do believe that auxiliary meeting will be the death of you yet. What is it this time?' And Miss Sue's tone indicated that nothing would surprise her.

'O, nothing new; only this was our annual meeting, and so it seemed a little worse than usual. There were only ten people there to begin with, but lame Jane Hall slipped in toward the last. Poor thing, I don't believe she felt repaid for her long walk, for all she heard was my report, and you know that was not very encouraging. Only think, Sue,' and here Miss Roxy sat up, and looked so indignant that her bonnet strings began to bristle in sympathy, 'only seventeen paying members in our church of over two hundred women, and five of them haven't paid this year! And our thank offering was so small—only seven dollars and twenty-nine cents—so we really have not raised the twenty dollars we always pledge for Mrs. Bright-hope's salary; and to fail this year, when all the American Board work has been cut, too!'

'It does seem hard,' murmured Susanna.

'I would not feel so bad, sister, if the people were poor,' went on Miss Roxy, 'but they're not. Of course we ain't, so to speak, a rich church, but we always pay our minister reg'lar, and you know the ladies are real generous about Thanksgiving dinners for the poor, and the barrels for Miss Cathcart, but when it comes to "foreign" missions some of 'em do find the greatest amount of excuses. I met Mrs. Candour, as I was comin' home, and as I 'most knew she didn't send her envelope into the thank offerin', and she wasn't there to-day, I stopped and told her 'bout bein' seventy-nine cents short on our pledge, and how bad I felt. "Law, Miss Roxy," says she, "I'd give you something in a minute if I had it, but Mari-etta and I went in town to hear M. last Tuesday, and we were so delighted that we just had to go again, and so I haven't a cent this time. Maybe Miss Dale can help you out;" and as Miss Dale came tripping along in her lively way, Mrs. Candour told her about it. But Miss Dale had been buying Christmas presents, and showed her empty pocketbook and laughed as she said: "O, I forgot all about the meeting—how many were there? I don't suppose I lost much! Good-by; I'm due at my physical culture class;" and away she flew, busy and generous 'bout everythin' else. What a help she would be in our auxiliary! But she was more'n half right about the meeting. The vestry was cold, and there wasn't a soul there to play, so I had to start the tune; and you know, Sue, I wasn't cut out for a singer, so it went kind of limpy and we didn't sing no more. Then Mrs. Borous wa'n't there, and Mrs. Call asked me to pray—Mrs. Borous generally does that, you know—and really, Sue, I do wonder how she ever manages to think of so much to say? I was so scared I could hear my heart beat, and I don't believe any one but the Lord heard a word I said! I thought before I went I never see such an interesting number of 'Life and Light,' but I declare, Miss Slowman and Mrs. Lowe read so low I couldn't hear more'n half of it, and the pieces seemed amazin' long, someway. Mrs.

Call was going to resign being president, but no one else would take it; so she finally said she would for one year more rather'n see the auxiliary die, because her mother would feel so bad if it should be given up. You know old Mrs. Doing organized our society nigh onto twenty years ago, and we used to have a lot of members, and real good meetin's—you know how 'twas, Susy. I declare, I don't know but it might as well die 's live on at this poor dyin' rate. I'm just as discouraged as I can be!'

'Sho, now, Roxy, I wouldn't feel so. Here comes Katie. Maybe she can help you to mend it up as good's new, or better,' said Miss Sue, always a comforter, though she had lain ten years on her couch a helpless invalid. Just then the door opened, and their niece came hurrying in out of the cold, home from her day's work as teacher in the High School. The good ladies were very proud of this niece—their brother's only daughter—a college girl, who was spending her first year after graduation with them.

'What is the matter, auntie? You look as though you hadn't a friend in the world. O, auxiliary meeting to-day, and it was worse than usual? Dear me, I wish I knew how to help you! Mamma is president of ours at home, but I've been away so long at school I'm afraid I don't know as much about such things as I ought. But I'll write to mamma this very night, and then I'll help you plan the next meeting. We'll surprise the good people, so cheer up, you blessed old soul!'

A busy month followed. Many letters passed between Miss Roxy and her brother's wife. Kate enlisted some of 'the girls,' and dainty notes of invitation found their way into the home of every woman who attended the Daysville Congregational Church. These notes read as follows: 'Miss Susanna Ready desires the pleasure of your company at her home Monday afternoon, February the fourth, from three to five, to meet the charter members of the Woman's Auxiliary.'

The day, into the thought of which had gone so much of planning and praying, dawned clear and beautiful. Early in the afternoon carriages began to stop in front of the humble little home, and a number of elderly ladies, all evidently feeble and some of them crippled, were assisted by strong arms into the house. Later a goodly company of younger ladies gathered—some from curiosity, others from a real desire to honor these mothers in Israel.

The old-fashioned parlors wore an air of decorous festivity, and the exercises opened with a carol of 'Welcome,' written by one of the musical young daughters of the church and sung by a bevy of Katharine's girls, who were having a week's vacation, and had all been enlisted for this meeting. Mrs. Call read the forty-fifth Psalm, and her voice trembled as she glanced at the dear old mother, present for the first time for five years at her beloved 'meeting,' and the prayer of thanksgiving 'for the beautiful lives lived among us' was neither long nor formal. Then came an account of the early days of the Woman's Board and the story of its marvelous growth, pithily written and charmingly read by one of the Sunday-school teachers, whose invalid mother, for the first time in ten years, had been brought outside the four walls of her home to meet with the dear workers of other days. A friend of Katharine's, who was visiting her, told of the very successful Cradle Roll in her home church; and as she pleaded for the little ones of Christless lands, and told of the poor mothers whose babies are torn from them and hurried out of the world by the fathers, who scorn the little girl lives, tears filled the eyes of many happy women. The minister's

wife, who had a new little darling in her home, was especially moved, and whispered to her next neighbor, the mother of three little daughters, 'I don't see what we are thinking of not to have a Cradle Roll here.'

Mrs. Newcomb, who had become a resident of Daysville within the month, bringing with her all the enthusiasm for missionary work which characterizes the ——— Branch, gave a report of the annual meeting of the Board. She spoke of the many sufferings and hardships borne so uncomplainingly by the devoted women in Turkey, China, and other fields. 'I always think of these words when I see our missionaries,' she said, reverently, "'This I did for thee. What doest thou for me?" for you know they are really our substitutes. They bear the heat and burden of the day, while we sit at ease in happy Christian homes.'

Then there followed a 'Privilege service,' when one after another of the dear mothers and grandmothers spoke of their joy at meeting once more with the auxiliary, and of all the blessings brought into their own lives by the foreign missionary service. Miss Susanna, her pale face aglow with joy at the 'luxury' of attending a missionary meeting, made an appeal for new members.

Little pledge cards were distributed bearing these words: 'Acknowledging the personal claim of foreign missions, I will endeavor, God enabling me, to pray for missions every day; to attend the regular meetings of the auxiliary; to give for their support . . . per week through the Woman's Auxiliary of Daysville Congregational Church. Signed, . . . . .'

No one was surprised when the treasurer, with beaming face, announced that twenty of these little cards had been handed to her signed.

'You see,' said Miss Dale to her dearest friend, as they went home together, after the happy social hour and tea drinking which followed the meeting, 'I never dreamed it could mean so much to be a live member of a missionary society. Those dear old saints so thankful over this one meeting, make me want to realize what a model missionary society might do here.'

Esther Dale was one of the twenty, and all the others were apparently of her way of thinking.

A year has gone by since then, and almost all of the new members—not to mention the old—have brought yet 'another woman' into the auxiliary. The attendance at the meetings has trebled; the young mothers, who gave their babies without much thought to the Cradle Roll, came one by one to realize that they must be ready by and by to answer eager little questioners who should ask, 'What is it, mamma, to be a little light bearer?' So it came about that there were new names to the list of 'Life and Light,' and 'Dayspring' subscribers, new and earnest voices in the prayer service of the missionary meeting, and one day, lo! the old formal routine had quietly slipped forever out of sight.

The Prayer Calendar found its way into many a home, the lesson leaflet became a well-loved visitor each month, and when it came time for the annual thank offering, a happy host of workers brought generous gifts.

Perhaps Esther Dale spoke for many as she said to Miss Roxy, at the close of that meeting, 'People used to urge me to "take an interest" in missions, "because," they said, "it is more blessed to give than to receive;" but I've been receiving ever since I came into this blessed society! I want to begin to give, now. Miss Roxy,' and the fair young head was bowed to whisper the words, 'Miss Roxy, do you think I might give myself and be—a real, live missionary?'