

**The Home Mission Journal.**

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**The Coming of Caroline.**

BY MARY E. Q. BRURH.

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**CHAPTER VII.**

"Pray, be seated, Mr. Leonard. I am sorry that you had to wait for me. May I trespass on your good nature still further, by asking for a minute's space of time in which to make myself a little more presentable?"

But here Caroline drew her into the sitting-room, gave soft, smoothing pats on the tumbled hair, dettily drew off the soiled apron, and meanwhile Mr. Leonard, in tones of friendly ease and interest, was asking about the unfortunate young Saltsby, so that almost before Mrs. Rossman knew it the thick ice of reserve was broken, embarrassment was a thing of the past, and she found herself chatting familiarly with a creature toward whom she had always manifested considerable dislike—a real minister.

And then, Caroline, conscious of having done her part most nobly, ran out to play, saying to herself gleefully: "My! I guess they'll be really truly friends!" Perhaps her exit passed unnoticed, for certainly Mrs. Rossman and her caller were busily engaged in most pleasant conversation. It was a long time since the lady had met with a person of such culture and congenial tastes an appreciative listener and a brilliant conversationalist. Moreover, Mr. Leonard had within him a certain power of magnetism, an earnest, persuasive personality; not the ordinary kind, meaning merely a pleasing manner, a powerful intellect, the ability to read people and so govern them—it was something more and finer—it was the strong spirituality of the man; the endowment of the spirit of Him, who "lifted up," shall draw all men unto him. Thus though the half-hour's talk was on things temporal—books, nature, current events—there was underlying it an earnestness, a broadness of vision and thought, a prophecy of something even better ready to come forth; and when Mr. Leonard rose as if to take his departure, his hostess experienced a feeling of genuine regret.

She had forgotten her simple work dress, her plainly furnished room, or rather, perhaps she and all her belongings had been brightened by the stimulating interchange of high thoughts.

So she said shyly, but sincerely, "I think you, Mr. Leonard, for your call, it has brought a lot of pleasure into my lonely life."

Her visitor stood before her—tall, stately, yet friendly and benignant.

"Your life is lonely?" came the sympathetic interrogation.

"Yes! Inexpressibly lonely—until recently. Since Caroline has come, things have seemed brighter."

A sweet, winsome look overspread Mrs. Rossman's face as her glance involuntarily sought the window from which she could see the little girl playing.

The minister smiled. It was a curious little smile that quivered about his strong, yet gentle mouth. He twirled his hat in his hands rather boyishly. Then, suddenly, he resumed his seat and looked keenly at Mrs. Rossman with his frank, merry eyes.

"So little Caroline has given a stimulus to your life?" he said slowly. "Suppose I tell you that she has given one to mine! I was rather uncertain whether I should tell you the story

when I came here. But I do not hesitate now—because—because, I feel that I have the honor of knowing you so much better than when I first entered this room. So, with your permission, I will tell you how Caroline came into my life.

It happened only a few days ago. I am, as you know, pastor of St. John's; it is a large congregation, an important charge, that is, in the eyes of the world, perhaps, for my people are all wealthy and aristocratic. I must confess—here Mr. Leonard's tone was one of honest humility—"I must confess that there have been times when I have been very complacent!

"But one morning last week there came a ring at my doorbell and my maid ushered in a wee lassie. It was your Caroline—"

"My Caroline," Mrs. Rossman interrupted, with a puzzled laugh.

"Yes. She introduced herself very politely and then launched bravely into her purpose of coming. I have not the time, nor have I the ability to repeat what she said, word for word—nor the ingenious way in which she said it! The simplest things in the simplest way—yet she handled truths as strong and lasting as granite, as sharp as a Damascus blade! I felt—"

—here the minister's voice faltered—"I felt that her innocent eyes were the eyes of a judge—that I and my congregation were arraigned before a solemn bar. Yet she was not rude, nor unkind, she had planned no dramatic effect. Her exquisite frankness and gentleness were all-powerful. She asked me why poor folks were not welcomed at my church? If there was no place for them there, did I know of any other church where they might come, 'a real Jesus church' she said. And was there any 'real Jesus minister,' who would preach gently and helpfully to poor folks; who would come into their homes and be kind to them and teach them to know and to love God? For, she said—here Mr. Leonard's eyes rested keenly on the flushed, interested face before him—"she knew 'a lady—the sweetest, lowliest lady'—I am giving her own words now—who wasn't quite friendly with the dear God! And to be friendly with God meant to be happy. She wanted this lady to be happy, she wanted her to go to church and believe and love the things the Captain did, and she told me, of course, about the Captain. But she wanted the lady to go to 'a real Jesus church,' where folks would be kind to her, and where the minister would preach like the dear Jesus did when he was walking along the seaside and in the pleasant groves, heading people, comforting them, because He loved them so—He loved them so!" Mr. Leonard paused; his voice was not quite steady, and there was a mist in his eyes.

Then he continued earnestly: "As I said, I felt myself arraigned! I lay myself in the past, content myself with polishing my sermons with scholarly zeal to please eyes if and my rich, comfortable, cultured congregation. I had been thinking more of heads than of hearts. I had had true evangelistic fire! I had been cold—'Ice—narrow!' It made me very contrite—very humble. And with this feeling there came a great glow of earnestness—a great desire to do better, to reach out and into the world; to seek and serve; not to be content merely because the church officials were satisfied with my work, but to have a ceaseless hungering for souls. And there has come to me a great longing to help others. And there has always come to me a faint conception, a beautiful vision, one growing daily more strong and clear of the glorious part the church as a whole, pastors, officials, members, may take in the regeneration of the world, in the coming of Christ's kingdom. I want to understand this more fully; to learn it patiently, practically. It is my hope to lead my people to feel this way; to arouse them, to lift them above the petty things of life; to open unto them splendid possibilities. And cannot you come Mrs. Rossman, and work with us? I promise you to do my best to make St. John's what little Caroline calls a 'real Jesus church!'" Mr. Leonard's words had gradually grown more earnest and impassioned as he went on, and now his whole face seemed to glow with the inner light. Somewhat against her will, his hearer felt herself thrilled; his evident sincerity hushed the words of cold, polite refusal with which she had intended to reply to his appeal.

"My dear sir," she began slowly, "I had

promised myself that I would never again enter a church—that is, one of the so-called fashionable ones, but—perhaps—"hesitatingly, as she looked up and met the pure, earnest, Christlike gaze, "perhaps," softly, "I may come sometime, to your St. John's. I—I want to see, if there is such a thing as a 'real Jesus church!'"

(To be Continued.)

**The Sunday School.**

NOVEMBER 16.

The Time of the Judges.

Judges 2: 7-16.

**GOLDEN TEXT.** They cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and he saveth them out of their distresses. Psalms 107: 19.

In the portion of the book of Judges which is assigned for our study in this lesson, we gain, as it were, a bird's eye view of the conditions which prevailed during almost the whole period covered by that book. The essential characteristics of that period are reflected with startling fidelity, and as we study the picture thus presented, we are rejoiced to perceive how far Israel wandered from the path of holiness and obedience to God.

**THE STIMULATING INFLUENCES OF A NOBLE LIFE.**

The book of Judges is closely linked with the book of Joshua, and in the opening verses of our lesson we catch a glimpse of the stimulating influence which even the memory of their noble leader had upon the people of Israel. A good life is never lived in vain, and the influence of Joshua's consecrated life, which continued long after he himself had passed from the earth, is an illustration of this truth.

**BACKSLIDING ISRAEL.**

The inspired writers of the Holy Scriptures never conceal the truth, however disagreeable it may be. It would have been pleasanter never to have recorded the terrible backsliding of the nation which God had chosen for his own peculiar people, but the writer of the book of Judges does not hesitate to show wherein Israel failed. It is, indeed, a dark picture that he paints, but it is written for our instruction, that, seeing the pit into which others have fallen, we may be spared the humiliation of a like fall.

Idolatry was the enticing and besetting sin which led the Israelites astray, and in yielding to this temptation, they were soon drawn into other grievous sins. Sin is cumulative, both in its influence and in its results, and in the case of Israel we have abundant illustrations of this fact.

**UNDER THE DIVINE WRATH.**

God is a covenant keeping God. Every promise of blessing had been extended to the Israelites if they would walk in the ways of Jehovah. On the other hand, they had been told that if they departed from the ways of the Lord their God, misfortune and disaster would inevitably follow them, and now these sad predictions of woe found an exact and literal fulfillment.

**PROOFS OF GOD'S MERCY.**

The divine justice is ever tempered with mercy, and even while God is smiting with the rod of chastisement, he is also offering the opportunity for repentance and reconciliation. So in this time of Israel's decadence, when defeat seemed to encompass them on every hand, because of their unbelief and faithlessness, God raised up for them leaders or judges, who brought deliverance.

**HEAVENLY AID FOR EVERY TIME OF NEED.**

The choicest teaching of this lesson is summed up in the thought of God's readiness to help in every time of need. The people of Israel were in desperate straits when deliverance came by the hands of the judges whom God raised up for them. So, however great our need, we may rest in the assurance that God will help us, if we look to Him.