

Only a Crack.

Only a crack; only a crack in the wall.

On one side of it was a soldier's eye, on the other side a besieged town.

The town had been holding out against an army to which that curious eye belonged.

That night the soldier moving along the way saw suddenly—what was it?

He went eagerly to it, and there his searching eye began to investigate.

The white moonlight was falling on the streets—empty. Where was the garrison? Warily, with his hands, the soldier made the opening larger, pulling away here and there, the aperture growing larger, until his body went in. There in the shadow of the buildings he made an investigation unmolested.

He went back to his army, communicated all his new knowledge gained that night, and soon an attacking force moved out into the moonlight.

The town was entered and captured!

Only a crack in the wall.

Only a careless thought or an idle tale. Only a wrong deed known only to yourself. A crack in the wall. But the enemy of our souls, the enemy of truth and purity, is already trying to make it larger. Will you let him?—'Pluck.'

Religious News.

The Rev. Hugh Taylor gives in 'All The World,' an instance showing how the Word of God satisfies heart-hunger among the Laos of Siam:

Four years ago we were camped by one of the chief temples of the district. The head priest of the temple came out to see me, and asked about things he saw lying about. He came upon a book and wanted to know what it was. Being told that it was a book, he wanted to know whether it was English or French, and was surprised to find it written in the most beautiful characters he had ever seen. 'Who wrote it?' 'Not written, it is printed.' 'How did they do it? What is it about?' Being told that it was a dream that a man who was in prison had written out, he started to read. When he was compelled to leave he asked to borrow the book. Next morning he brought it back to ask permission to keep it longer; he had read it all night, and had not finished. It all ended in his accepting 'Pilgrim's Progress' as a present, and the fame soon spread through the neighborhood, and we disposed of all the literature we had brought with us and two loads more, but as brethren from the north were coming through Pen Nyow they camped by that temple. The priest called on them and told of the book, and that it had been stolen from him during a Shan raid. He wanted another, and also a copy of the Bible to which the book referred. The old priest received the books with marked gratitude, and seemed especially pleased to get the Bible. We are praying that God will use His Word to the salvation, not only of the priest, but also of many of his followers.

The Rev. A. Hough, of the London Missionary Society, Samoa, gives an account of a visit to the most active volcano in the world, which has recently devastated a large part of the island of Savaii, where important mission work was conducted. The volcano began in August, 1905, in a hollow about eight miles from the sea. It has built up a crater which to-day stands over 2,000 feet above the sea level, and the whole country between it and the sea was covered with lava. Mr. Hough writes: 'There was rock-bound coast, thirty feet high, being formed every moment under our very eyes. It was a huge black mass, weird and fantastic, but repulsive and awful. Village, after village lies buried beneath that fearful mass. Their existence can only be known from the fact that now and again the tower or spire of a church is seen above the lava. The most fertile land in all Samoa lies buried and lost, and perhaps will remain so for hundreds of years.'

One purpose of Mr. Hough's visit was to advise the friends in Savaii as to the continuance of mission work there, but the question was settled by the words of the missionary's wife, who said, 'So long as our people stay, we stay.' The volcano is situated about four miles behind the mission house, but the flow is toward the east, so that for the time the

house is safe. Hitherto the lava has only come very slowly, and as yet no life has been lost. Samoans have had time to save their goods, and in some cases have had time to dig out the large posts of their houses. All the churches have, however, been lost.

The part which Indian women played in the recent national congress is causing comment. Over 100 Madras Hindu ladies assembled at the social congress, when several read papers before a large audience of men. 'This is the first time that a caste woman in Madras has ever spoken in public,' was the comment of a Brahman lady. The faces of the men were an interesting study, for the large audience seemed to be vastly amused, astonished and pleased to think that their women folk could speak so well in public. The papers read showed that thoughtful and careful consideration is now being given by Indian women to important domestic subjects. The papers were on 'Marriage expenses,' 'The raising of a marriageable age for girls,' 'Should English be taught to our girls,' etc.—'Madras Statesman.'

Two Christian Chinese opened a bank at Chefoo, last summer, and marked the occasion by a religious service. Mr. Elterich says that every opening of a heathen business firm is attended with superstitious practises. He understands that one-twelfth of the profits of this Christian bank are to go to the Lord's work, one-twelfth to the employees, and the balance to the firm. What would be the result if our church-members at home would conduct their business enterprises on this basis.—'Woman's Work.'

Work in Labrador.

A TRIUMPH OF TRUST.

In a Labrador Hospital.

It was raining, and raining hard. For over a week there had been none, and the earth was very thirsty, the mosses were beginning to look grey and wizened and the bakeapple plants seemed scarcely able to support the small orange-colored berries that were fast ripening. The wooden walk that was the only road of the Labrador Harbor was dirty with the tramp of many feet.

The grass, what little there was of it, had, in hopeless longing for the rain, grown weary with waiting, and was daily shrivelling up toward the death that seemed inevitable.

Even the birds as they tried to sing some gladness into the sullen earth sounded husky. And all for the want of rain.

Then it came, and the grass and the mosses were drinking it in eagerly. The sky was full of clouds that promised an abundance of rain, and the little feathered creatures hopped around twittering contentedly as they watched the puddles beginning to form.

It rained like a fierce musketry on the roof of the hospital, and pattered like the tapping of a million fingers on the windows, dancing a merry quickstep on the pebbles outside.

Night came and still it rained.

Just before midnight the steamer's horn sounded, and lights began to appear in windows here and there which had hitherto been dark.

Not a sound had broken the stillness of the night until then but the rain, but soon figures in oilskins moved ghostlike amid the darkness—will-o'-the-wisps with flickering lanterns.

One or two boats put out from shore with the splash of heavy oars, and as other boats passed them there was a shout of greeting or inquiry as the case might be, although neither crew recognized the other. The hospital was well lit up by this time, and some one was moving quickly to and fro in the upper corridor as the steamer's crew landed and made their way to the long, white building just visible half-way up the hill.

A loud rap at the front door was answered by a nurse in dark blue uniform, and as she sought by the aid of the hall lamp to see the faces of the men, one of them stepped half inside so that the light fell full on his face.

'Good evening, Sister,' he said, respectfully raising his cap, 'we've got two sick men here and a little fellow from down along,' waving his hand over the three in introduction.

'Oh, yes, come in,' she replied in a business-like but kindly tone, and reaching out her hand she welcomed them into the hall where chairs stood ready for any new arrivals.

They looked sorry figures with their wet oilskin coats, dripping sou'westers and heavy sea boots, each holding tightly the small bundle of worldly belongings he had brought with him to the hospital.

'Come along, now,' she said, cheerily, 'we will get you upstairs to bed. I'm sure you won't be sorry to have another sleep.'

So the quaint procession wended its way to the warmer atmosphere of the upper corridor, and into the ward.

The two men were soon comfortably resting, and the little boy, who had been hurriedly deposited on the floor for want of room amid many and sundry blankets, very shortly fell into a sound sleep.

No one woke as the sister passed quietly through the ward with shaded lamp, bending to listen here and there, tucking up the blanket of some restless sleeper, filling an empty cup at another's bedside, glancing at the clock and seeing that the mercury registered the right temperature.

Then closing the door softly, with lamp still in hand she passed along the corridor and lowered the lights, for across the hills a streak of gold heralded the coming day.

The rain had ceased by this time, and four hours later, when another busy day had commenced in the hospital, the rocks and hills were bathed in all the glory of the summer sun.

'Can I see the missis, my maid?' asked one of the newcomers as the wardmaid was busy sweeping.

'Sister will be in directly,' she answered, continuing her work, and at that moment the nurse herself entered.

'Good morning,' she said, taking a general survey of the ward, 'and how has everyone slept? Has the hand pained much, Will?'

'No, Sister, just a nice pain, as you might say, now and again,' and he stroked the injured hand tenderly.

The two newcomers watched her as she walked down the ward, stopping to speak a word at almost every bedside.

Then as she passed the end of his bed, the man who had previously wanted her, ventured to speak again.

'When you have time, Ma'am, I'd like for you to look at me and tell me what you thinks o' me.'

'You mean the swelling, Isaac?' for she had ascertained his name the night before, and noticed the swelling while putting him to bed.

'Yes, Ma'am, I suffers ter'ble pain in it, sometimes most more 'n I can stand. I had a fair sleep last night though, but this morning I feels sommat sort o' eatin' my flesh there now and agin. What do you think on it, Ma'am? Do you think as it's serious?'

'I'm sure I can't say,' was the reply. 'Doctor will be able to tell you what he thinks of it when he comes round.'

This satisfied him for the time being, and very shortly after the doctor was carefully examining him.

(To be continued.)

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Address all subscriptions for Dr. Grenfell's work to 'Witness' Labrador Fund, John Dougall and Son, 'Witness' Office, Montreal, stating with the gift whether it is for launch, komatik, or cots.