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The Conversion of Ald. Murphy

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possessed her when she arose in the morning. Mrs. Schwind usually took life easily, and always found a way out of every difficulty. The elimination of Tom Murphy, however, she had never considered, and the fact that she had even listened to a protest against him made her feel guilty.

"There's somethin' in what they said, jest the same," she murmured obstinately. "But Jim will be awful mad, and I guess I'd better ask Mr. Williams; he generally knows."

Although not church members, frequent christenings brought the Schwinds into contact with St. John's Chapel. Before the children returned from school she ran over and laid the case before the rector.

"I see," he said firmly. "Temptation comes in many ways to women. This is a new one. I am sorry that you did not hear my sermon on Sunday. I preached on 'A Virtuous Woman,' taking my text from Proverbs, 'She worketh willingly with her hands.' Do you believe that the woman described in this chapter was truly virtuous?"

Mrs. Schwind nodded—not because she wished to answer in the affirmative, but because she dared not argue with the minister.

"Well," triumphantly, as though he had achieved a great moral victory, "she did not win the praise of Solomon by mixing with the affairs of men. The home is woman's sphere, Mrs. Schwind. Leave Tom Murphy to Mr. Schwind. You can do more for humanity by taking care of—Why, little Tom Murphy is your youngest, isn't he? You'd better join our Mothers' Aid Society."

"Thank you," said Mrs. Schwind, "I guess I'll have to."

She was not prepared to oppose Tom Murphy, Mr. Williams, and Jim; submission was then the only course. Rebellion was a new sensation; but on the way home, certain phases of life came to her in a new light.

"It's easy enough for them all to talk, but after a woman's had 'em, and nursed 'em, and scrubbed for 'em, and fed 'em. It does seem as if she ought to get some fun. There's a lot in what was said to the meeting, so there is! Men has got most everything."

She finished the morning's work with a rising mutinous feeling, and then prepared dinner for the children. The older ones went back to school. Tom Murphy, Junior, was cutting a tooth and too peevish to stay in the day nursery. Royal and Patricia did not go to the settlement playroom, and she gave herself to caring for them all.

Dear as she loved her brood, she thought it would be pleasant to change places with Jim once in a while. Standing by a subway ticket chopper all day was easy compared with cooking for

about her, Tom Murphy, passed and jeered at her: "Now let them voting women pay your rent!"

The depression created by this dream arose in the morning. Mrs. Schwind usually took life easily, and always found a way out of every difficulty.

fourteen, sewing for fourteen, and straining every nerve to make ends meet on the pittance that was theirs.

Jim came home in a jovial mood and made preparations for shaving.

"Goin' out again?" she inquired.

"Sure thing! The boys is givin' Tom Murphy a racket to-night. Grandest spree the alley ever seen."

"Don't you never take your wimmen folks?"

"Sure not! What do they want of a racket? Ma, you're gettin' queer notions since you was to the meetin'."

"I guess I be," she said. But she thought: "That's just what the lady said about our place. Just home. No racket, no chowders, no tallyhos, no nothin'; and Mr. Williams, too, with his 'woman's spear.' Tain't fair."

Jim did not return until long past midnight, and when Mrs. Schwind tried to arouse him the next morning, he refused to get up.

"I work hard," he muttered, "and I've got a call to take a day off when I please. You mind your own business."

"Then you stay here and mind the house," said his wife. "I'm goin' out."

The day before she had decided not to serve on the suffrage committee, but Jim's conduct stirred her to action. Moreover, she was angry with Tom Murphy for letting Jim drink too much.

"This will put us back in the rent again," she said grimly as she walked to Solenski's hall to attend the committee meeting of the precinct suffrage captain. "If Jim didn't go to Tom's and spend his money, there'd be no need to Tom helpin' with the rent. I guess it would be good to learn him a lesson about woman folks."

Mrs. Hanchett, the chairman, was dressed in violet broadcloth and wore ermine. For once, Mrs. Schwind was not in awe of elegance. There was considerable discussion about Thomas Murphy. It was decided that the first step toward militancy should be a boycott of his saloon.

"We will have pickets," said the chairman. "It will be just like a strike, and the pickets will walk up and down and tell people not to go in."

Mrs. Schwind, still thinking of Jim and the racket, volunteered for picket duty at once. She was sure that Jim would drift over to Tom's to talk over the night's festivities, and probably to drink more. "I can help the women," she reasoned, "and mebbe give Jim a scare, too."

Tom Murphy could hardly believe his eyes when he saw Mrs. Schwind and the gorgeously dressed Mrs. Hanchett stationed a few feet from his door. Curiosity turned to rage when their purpose dawned upon him.

"If you interfere with my business, I'll have you pinched, you — voting women!" he shouted.

"Pay no attention to him," said the calm Mrs. Hanchett. "We are quite within our rights if we walk up and down."

Her cool manner irritated Tom still further, and he began a volley of oaths.

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