

Northern Messenger

VOLUME XXXVIII. No. 16

MONTREAL, APRIL 17, 1903.

30 Cts. Per An. Post-Paid



His Old Enemy.

(‘Friendly Greetings.’)

The wind wailed and shrieked round the house; the snow was coming down so thickly that it was difficult to see one’s way out of doors. Suddenly, there came a knock at the door of the minister’s study.

‘Please, sir, they’ve found a man in the snow, and don’t know whether he’s dead or not. Will you come down?’

Downstairs ran the minister, to find a snow-covered man lying insensible on the kitchen floor. A tradesman’s cart had nearly driven over his prostrate body in the lane near by, and he had been brought to the minister’s house as the nearest place of refuge.

As quickly as possible the doctor was fetched. The patient was partly roused to consciousness while being undressed and put into bed, but dropped off again into a deep sleep without speaking.

‘He is in grave danger,’ said the doctor, ‘and it will require great care to pull him through. Is there anything about him that will tell us who he is?’

‘There is a brandy flask in his pocket, and some letters,’ said the minister. ‘Robert Dale!’ he exclaimed, with a start, as his eye fell on the address.

Bending over the man he looked earnestly at his face. ‘I knew a Robert Dale once,’ he said, turning to the doctor. ‘He is sadly altered, but I have no doubt this is the same man.’

‘Well, I must be off,’ said the doctor. ‘I will send round at once a mixture to be given him through the night. Don’t let him have any more brandy—he has nearly killed himself with it already. He must have lain down in the road in a drunken sleep. Someone, of course, must sit up with him.’

‘I will do so myself,’ said the minister. ‘Good-night.’

HE THREW THE BRANDY FLASK OUT OF THE WINDOW.

Left alone with Robert Dale, his mind became filled with struggling thoughts that he had believed long since laid to rest. In early life Robert Dale had been his bitter enemy. They had both wished to marry the same woman, and Dale, to gain his own desires, had done his utmost to blacken his rival’s character.

Henry Maxwell had left home under a cloud; he passed through his college course, and settled down in a distant part of the country. His angry feelings died away, and he honestly thought he had forgiven his enemy.

But the sight of the man who had injured him called back the memory of that time in all its force. In the bitterness of his heart he had vowed to have his revenge on Dale some day. Now his enemy was in his power. He need do nothing; he had only to let him alone, and he would die in his sins. His death would be on his own head, for he had brought it on himself by dissipation and drink.

He started with horror at his own thoughts. He who preached forgiveness to others, to harbor such thoughts for an instant! He dropped on his knees. ‘O God,’ he prayed, ‘give me grace to forgive, as I hope to be forgiven!’

But the struggle was a long and severe one, and it was a long time before the minister could say ‘I forgive him fully.’ And then, rising from his knees, he threw the brandy flask out of the window.

‘Drink has brought him to this,’ he said; ‘God grant that I may be the means of leading him back to a better life.’

Another struggle was to take place in the minister’s house—a struggle with death. For Robert Dale had so weakened his constitution by his wicked life that his chance of recovery was small. But care and prayer won the day, and at last the doctor was able to pronounce him out of danger.

‘I owe you my life,’ he said, as he grasped the minister’s hand. ‘I did you a great wrong years ago; you must have forgiven me, or you could not have treated me as you have done. But I can never forgive myself. I killed poor May by my evil life, and since then I have had to drink to drown memory.’

‘But you will do so no more?’ said the minister. ‘The past cannot be undone by drowning the memory of it. I forgive you fully, now; but there is God’s forgiveness, which is more important, to be obtained. Ask him to give you true repentance, and his Holy Spirit to amend your life according to his Holy Word. Christ is able to save to the uttermost those who come unto God by him.’

Many an earnest talk took place between the two men before Dale was well enough to travel. He had proved that ‘the way of transgressors is hard,’ and began to tread with faltering steps the upward path that leads to life. But difficult though that way is, those who tread it are sure of God’s help, and the end is joy for evermore.

Old Chinese Joe

THE FIRST CONVERT IN NORTH HONAN.

(‘The King’s Own.’)

The missionaries spell his name, C-h-o-u, but you will be more likely to pronounce it alright if it is printed ‘Joe.’

The Street chapel, in which I heard him tell his story, was crowded; and everyone listened with an attention at that time rare on the part of a Hsin-chen audience.

‘For six years,’ he began, ‘I was a blind man.’

‘You will probably have some idea of what that means.’

‘I would have given almost everything I had to get my sight again.’

‘No matter where I went, I sought it in vain.’

‘I consulted some of our native doctors.’

‘They put stuff into my eyes and inflamed them, and made them, if anything, worse.’

‘I went the round of the temples.’

‘Before many a shrine I knocked my head on the brick floor, and burned incense to the gods, imploring them to give me sight.’

‘Stupid things!’

‘They had eyes themselves, but could not see with them.’

‘What help could they give a blind man?’

‘In desperation, I called my family to-