

ANGELS and DEVILS

(By Emily Wright)

The words Angels and Devils immediately suggest Heaven and Hell respectively, and visions of Gabriel and Satan, as conjured up by Dante or Milton, or our own imagination, appear before our mental eyes. We are not, however, using the terms in a strictly Biblical sense. There are plenty of angels and devils in human form here on earth, although most of us probably belong to an intermediate class.

According to Biblical records, angels were constantly spoken of as "men." Nowadays the term has a feminine significance. We no longer think of an angel as a supernatural being, a messenger of God, but as a woman who has somewhat of the qualities we might expect to find in such. She may have beauty and brightness, a loveliness of character, a gracious charm of manner, and kindness of heart. Beauty and charm alone might possibly suggest the angel of evil, the modern vampire type of woman, but taking the whole together we have the person who is described as an "Angel of a Woman."

On the other hand when we think of a devil in human form we think of a "man"—not quite always, we are sorry to say—who is wicked or cruel. Thus we speak of a "devil of a man." The lighter sense in which this word is used, meaning "rascal," as when the minister looked at the photograph of his white-surpliced boy choir and said, "They look like angels, but they act like devils," does not concern us here.

Neither of these appellations, however, can be reserved for either sex. There are angels of men—men amongst men—just as there are angels of women. They do not necessarily occupy public places. An angel of a man, for instance, is not always found in the pulpit, where we might most expect him to be. Indeed many are there who would make better politicians or real estate agents than professional preachers. This is not in any way disparaging that noble profession, nor suggesting that politicians are fallen angels, but simply denotes the fact that many ministers have missed their vocation as men in other spheres of life have missed theirs.

That men and women of high standing in public life are apt to think too much of what they are, and have said and done, is regrettable. Too often has this detracted from otherwise beautiful characters, and we wonder that these people, cultured and learned as they are, cannot see the little flaw which mars the picture their lives present. The "lesser lights" are astonishingly quick to see the other's faults, just as quick as they are correspondingly slow to discover their own greater defects.

As we have already said, angels are not always found in public life. They are hidden in the homes, the stores, the workshop, the office, the slum. They do not know that they are angels. They are fulfilling their self-appointed mission with all humility, they are giving of themselves, physically, morally, spiritually to the limit. In this respect we found an interesting case in Vancouver, that of the proprietress of a certain store. Her spirit of goodness permeates her establishment. Her employees describe her as, "a lovely woman," "a perfect angel." So far as her private life is concerned, it seems to have been exemplary. Some years ago she adopted five children. She educated them, equipped them properly and launched them into the world successfully. Some of them are now married, but they are all her "children" to this day. Emulating her example, one of her employees, a woman with a sick husband, adopted a boy who was left an orphan. Just recently she has adopted another. The influence of the mistress of that store is strong and is wisely directed. A splendid feeling of comradeship exists between the employees, and also between these and their employer. The semblance



—Photo by J. C. Wright.

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of a quarrel is nipped in the bud. Madame has the happy knack of speedily and effectively adjusting differences. Her religion, so far as we can gather, is a mixture of New Thought and Theosophy. Whatever it may be called she seems to have got the essence of Christianity. The "Brotherhood of Man" is being carried out in her store. Annie Besant may claim this theory for theosophy, but nothing can alter the fact that it is one of the fundamentals of Christ's teachings. She may claim that the time is at hand for the birth of the next Race, which shall produce the Leader who shall turn the chaos of society and labor into a new order of things, but already it is going on in our midst, and is developing rapidly towards the end based on the teaching of Christ, Whose relationship to the Godhead and humanity makes the "Brotherhood of Man" possible.

In contradistinction to the foregoing, there are the women who belong to the nagging class. They are not exactly wicked, but those who have to come into daily contact, or rather, conflict, with them are of the opinion that they come very close to being devilish. Many a good man has been on the verge of committing a crime through his wife's exasperating manner of harping upon the one subject and her determination to have the last word. Even the sweetest-tempered of people have felt the sleeping little devil of temper awakening somewhere within them, when in company with such women, and have felt it gathering in force and power until the limit has been reached. How often is a severed friendship, a broken relationship the result! If we could only be prevailed upon to study ourselves, how much unhappiness might be averted! But we are all too busy studying the "other fellow." Matters might be facilitated if we permitted our friends or relations to tell us of our faults. This, however, would unfortunately do away with friends and we should all hate our relations.

However deplorable a nagging woman may be, she is as nothing in comparison with a nagging man. The latter, generally a bully, imbued with an exaggerated sense of his own importance in the domestic scheme of things, still clinging to the fast-dying notion that he is lord of creation and supreme ruler of his household, becomes a devil in the true sense of the word. He meets his affinity (the irony of it!) in an angel of a woman. Then there is tragedy. Not necessarily the taking of life, but there is the destruction of hope, and joy and love, and the creation of misery, fear and despair. Possessed with