

The Christian Endeavor at Union Corners.

(By Alice A. Ferguson.)

Faith Harris had just returned home from the Christian Endeavor meeting at Union Corners. She was feeling rather discouraged. After removing her wraps, she drew up a comfortable chair to the fire, and thinking it all over, wondered what could be done. Fresh coal had been added to the fire and as she watched the darting tongues of red and blue flame, she thus summed up the meeting.

'Well, the attendance was fair, and the leader's paper a good one, but so few took part. The same two or three led in prayer; the same two or three spoke on the topic; night after night it was the same, and yet it was called a Christian Endeavor meeting. The Society seemed to be in a rut, and while a few were trying to pull it along, the majority smilingly got in, and allowed the others to do the pulling. Everyone must be made to feel that it is their meeting, and they are responsible for the success of it. If only those who wrote such good papers once in six months, would give us a little each week, what grand meetings we would have. I wonder'—

But just then the black coals took on peculiar shapes. The darting tongues of flame assumed the forms of minute beings—veritable imps. The scene was a dark cavern. In the centre on a throne sat an ugly black crone, the queen of the black imps. Around her leaped and danced the gruesome-looking creatures, darting here and there as others took their places. The queen was speaking.

'Well, my imps, so you have returned from the errand on which I sent you. Now report in turn and tell me what you did to try and make that so-called Endeavor meeting a failure. Come, Buzzy, you report first.'

'Your Majesty,' said he, giving his body a series of shrugs and jerks as he spoke, 'I visited about thirty young people, and kept their minds so busy that they never thought to pray for a blessing on the meeting. I may just mention that I had a couple of failures. I did try hard to make one think she had no time to pray, but at the last moment she got on her knees, and I saw there was no use there, so I made off, but I kept the rest from their knees.'

'Well done,' Buzzy, if only that could always be accomplished, we would have hopes of spoiling the Society yet. Now you, Dio, what have you to say?'

Dio was all grimaces, as he turned a handspring, which brought him before the queen.

'I went to the meeting,' grinned he, 'and sat in the back seats. It seems harder to handle front seat Christians than it does back seat ones; and then it is darker in the back seats and I cannot be so easily seen. I made the young folks believe they were not expected to take part, and made them feel quite comfortable within themselves,' and he turned a cartwheel into the corner of the cavern.

'And I,' said another, leaping into the place, 'I made several of those who would like to take part believe that because they could not speak like Deacon Jones or Sister Smith that therefore they had better not say anything, till they could in some way, become accustomed to speaking. Why, if they had even read a verse of Scripture or spoken a sentence it would have helped the meeting greatly, but I worked hard to keep them quiet.'

'Well done, my imp, you shall have an

extra dose of sulphur for your faithful services.'

'Next,' she cried.

Here a blacker, uglier imp than all the others, touched his black head to the burning steps of the throne, and said:

'I choked the fire so that it did not heat up the room, and because it was so cold, the meeting was made short, and some took cold, and others declared they would not come to get their death of cold. I felt chilly, too, and after throwing a chill over the meeting, hastened to warmer regions.'

'Well done, next!'

'Your Majesty, I made the young people believe that because they had never been accustomed to praying in public, and could not pray like a preacher, that they should not pray at all. I can hold my own pretty well in that. Very few cheat me there,' and he grinned a fiendish grin.

'And you?'

'I made the younger ones believe they were too young, it was only for older ones to take part.'

'And I,' hurriedly said another, 'kept most of them from studying the topic. Of course when their minds are on other things all week they cannot get room to be thinking about the Christian Endeavor topics, and so they have nothing ready.'

'I made them believe that the meetings were a great success, and that no added efforts were required,' said a sleek looking imp.

'Well done, one and all,' said the queen. 'If only you can get the Endeavorers to forget to pray about the work, and forget to think about the subject, and get them to be quiet in the meetings, why then we can afford to let the meetings continue. Not very much harm is being done. Of course there are a few with whom we can do nothing, but for the rest'—and then the whole impish company joined hands and danced around the queen, singing:—

'Christian Endeavorers, what's in a name!'

At this the cavern grew light, and the forms faded from sight. In place of it, beheld a garden of beautiful flowers, among which flew beautiful tiny-winged creatures, darting here and there in the rosy light.

Under a canopy of vines and flowers sat a beautiful little fairy queen, on whom it seemed a joy for the tiny flower fairies to attend. At a wave of her hand a number of beautiful fairies perched on the flowers around her.

'Now, my good sisters, I want your help and advice. What can you advise, and what can you do, to help make the Christian Endeavor Society at Union Corners a means of grace? Come, Hop-o-my-thumb, what can you suggest?'

'Most gracious Queen, I would suggest a Front Seat Brigade. Fill the front seats!'

'Good, and you Sunshine, what can you suggest?'

'A Comfort Committee to see that the church is warm enough in winter and well ventilated in summer, also that the lighting is good, and things comfortable.'

'Good, and you, Cheery?'

A United Prayer Band to pray for the success of the meeting, and for those who are not members that they might become Christians.'

'Get the members to take Christian Endeavor papers, and have something to say on the topic. If we can only get the members to take part we will be on the road to success.'

'Well done, thanks for suggestions,' exclaimed Faith, starting up.

But the beautiful garden had vanished, and the tiny fairies had disappeared. The

coal burned red and steadily and she was still in the arm chair.

'Why, I must have been dreaming,' thought she. 'However, I will try to act on the suggestions of the good fairies, and cheat those black rascals out of their fun. Trusting in God for help, we will have a good Christian Endeavor Society yet, in which every member is a true Endeavorer. Work and pray is my motto hereafter.'

One of the Sweet Old Chapters:

Mother was dying, and we, her grown-up children, were gathered in the old-fashioned room to witness the closing scene. We had known for some time that it was coming, for she walked with a feebler step each new day, and a sweeter smile rested upon her face every time we looked into it. Mother's smile had always been very sweet to us, but it seemed to become more tender and heavenly as the days went on, and we sometimes thought that she was looking right into the glory of the better life. Her eyes grew brighter at times, just as though unseen hands had lifted the thin veil between this world and the one to which she was going.

All that day we sat or stood around her couch of death, although it did not seem like death at all. The smile lingered constantly on her face, and her eyes were as clear and bright as the summer sky. She was evidently too happy to talk to us, and too much absorbed in heavenly things to notice earthly scenes. Sometimes her thin lips moved as if in prayer, and once she sang in tremulous voice, 'Nearer, My God, to Thee.'

None of us dared to weep in mother's presence, even if we had felt like it, for we caught, too, something of her holy joy and peace. So we could do nothing but smile also, as we stood around her bed.

Just as the light of the setting sun crept into the west window and fell upon her pillow, she suddenly said:

'Read to me one of the sweet old chapters.'

'Which one, mother?' we all asked in unison as the old family Bible was brought out.

She did not answer, and one of our number began to read the last chapter in the book that she loved so well. When the fifth verse was read she repeated the words.

'And there shall be no night there, and they need no candle, neither light of the sun, for the Lord God giveth them light and they shall reign forever and ever.'

We thought that mother did not notice any more of the chapter as it was read, for a far-away absent look crept over her face, and she kept repeating that one verse.

Soon a sweet, solemn stillness settled down upon her, and we knew that her happy soul had gone home. At first we thought that the sunlight upon the pillow had stolen up to her face and thus glorified it, but we soon saw that it was a fairer light than of setting sun. The peace of heaven was hers at last, and she would never need to listen again 'to one of the sweet old chapters,' for all of its precious promises had been fulfilled and blossomed out into eternal joy.

How sweet to meet the Master with the wedding garment on—how blessed to drift out upon the pulsing sea with every white sail unfurled in the pure breeze! Mother was ready to go, and this was why she went so sweetly away with the King of Glory.—Mrs. M. A. Holt.

A moral, sensible, and well-bred man
Will not affront me, and none other can,
—Cowper.