

'You threw that can!' 'Come down; I'll dast ye to!' 'Come down an' I'll give it back to ye!' were some of the least offensive of their offensive challenges, to which Frida answered never a word.

'Frida, come here; I want you,' called a fretful voice from inside and Frida turned and slowly entered the house. A woman lay upon a disordered bed, which alone occupied a quarter of the entire space of the little room.

'Bring me water, Frida,' and the child went to the hydrant and returned with a brown, cracked teacup, which she offered to the sick woman. She raised herself upon her elbow and held it to her hot lips eagerly, but after the first swallow put it away with a disappointed air. 'Ach, it iss warm; put it away,' and rolling her thin, soiled pillow under her head, she lay down again with a groan.

Her face was flushed and quivering and the child could only look at her in helpless perplexity. She also had her own troubles.

'Mother,' said she, 'when are you going to get well? I'm just as hungry as I can be.'

'Oh, mein Gott! I know not,' burst from the woman's quivering lips and she pressed her hands over her eyes. 'You must something find; I can no help.'

'But I can't find anything, mother; not in the court, nor clear over into Dalzie street. I can't find even a piece of bread,' and Frida's own eyes were filling with tears and her lip quivered.

The woman started to her feet, but reeled dizzily back onto the bed. 'Oh, mein Gott! mein Gott in himmel! I must work,' she groaned, and the child, frightened now as well as hungry, burst into loud sobs. But quickly checking them, she sat down in the door, the tears still rolling down her cheeks.

Presently, as the shadows in the court began to deepen, she aroused herself and listened. The Fogarty children, who lived below, her special enemies, were away. She fancied she could hear their voices out in the street. She stole cautiously down the stairs, stopping at every sound. At the bottom she looked eagerly around, but not so much as a crust could she spy. It was a potato snatched from that same floor that morning which had brought upon her the sudden descent of her enemies with the cry of 'thief,' but she was so very very hungry that she cared little for that. She skulked around the court, her eager eyes searching every nook and corner for the coveted morsel, and finally slipped right through the long dark passage and stood again in the street. The children had evidently forgotten the quarrel of the afternoon, for they let her pass with only an indifferent glance. She had gone a block or more, when she suddenly found herself face to face with the woman who had been the innocent but immediate cause of the quarrel—'Miss Five Cents.'

Her first impulse was to dart out of sight again, but her need, together with some idea suggested by the queer name, inspired her with a sudden boldness, and she walked directly up to the woman and said:—'Please, will you give me five cents?'

The deaconess paused and looked into her face, still smiling. Then she put out her gloved hand and took the little cold, dirty fingers in a warm clasp and said: 'Show

me where you live, little one. Have you a mother?'

'Mother's sick,' returned the child, soberly, and led the woman back toward the court. It was Frida's hour of triumph when she led 'Miss Five Cents' through the group of children who clamored in vain for her to wait, and she could not repress a backward glance as they climbed the steep stairs together.

'Here's a lady, mother. It's Miss Five Cents' was her introduction.

The deaconess took the sick woman's hand, sat down by her side and soon had the whole sad story. She had moved into the court but a few weeks before, expecting to support herself and her child by washing, but hard work and a sudden cold had prostrated her more than a week ago, since which time their small resources were exhausted, and without care or medicine she was growing worse rather than better.

'When I have some food den I get well, but I no eat,' she explained apologetically, adding with some bitterness, 'I tink Gott does not remember us any more.'

The visitor did not see fit to argue the point just then. She rose and put back her chair hastily, saying: 'I'll be back in a few minutes, Mrs. Olson,' and was gone.

Half an hour later she was climbing the stairs again with a heavy basket.

'I've brought you something to eat,' she said, breathlessly. 'Mrs. Fogarty in the flat below has just got home from her work and I'm going to ask her to let me broil you a bit of steak on her fire. Mrs. Fogarty and I are old friends.'

Frida gave a gasp of dismay, but the mother was too faint and ill to protest, and the visitor hurried out again.

Soon after Mrs. Olson had another caller. It was Mrs. Fogarty, red-faced and strong-armed, bearing a steaming tray, the odors from which roused the woman with a sense of eager hunger. 'Oh, give me something quick,' she demanded.

'The saints preserve us! Why didn't ye let folks know ye was sick? I'd a give ye a sup from our table any day. It ain't much we have for sure, but we kin always divide wi' them as has less. Fer mesilf, I'm out to me work by five ivery mornin' scrubbin' the te-ay-ter, an' I niver knowed that ye wasn't out yersilf jist the same. An' it's starvin' yersilf ye was. Sure, an' if the dayconess hadn't come in I'd niver knowd it' till ye was stone dead.

'Wass you call her?' said the sick woman, looking up with a cup of steaming tea poised in a shaking hand, 'Dat woman—Frida calls her a queer name; she call her Miss Five Cents.'

'Five cents, nothin'. That's the name the childer give her in fun—the spalpeens. Her name is Nichol, an' a nickel is five cents, ain't it? I'd break their necks if they called me names loike that; but she jist laughs an' thinks it's fun. My youngsters all set great store by the dayconess.'

Meantime the deaconess herself had hurried out on her way home. But in the dark passage a little form suddenly pressed close to her and two thin arms were upstretched in the darkness. 'I want to come by your Sunday-school, Miss Five Cents.'

There was a little touch on the child's forehead. 'So you shall, dear; I'll call for you myself. Run home now and get your supper while it's nice and hot.'

The Mission to the Streets

When Margaret Andrews was twenty-five she received what she thought was a call to the foreign mission field. Her parents, although at first they tried to dissuade her, put no obstacle in the way of her hopes, and full of eagerness, she began her training at a school in another city.

One day she received a telegram. Her mother had met with an accident, just how serious could not at once be known. Margaret packed her books and took the first train home, expecting to return in a few weeks. Long before the weeks had passed she knew that her dream must be given up. Her mother would never be able to do anything again and Margaret, instead of making her journey to strange lands, saw herself shut in to the duties of housekeeper and nurse.

For a year or two she bore her disappointment in silence; then she went to her pastor with it. The pastor was an old man, who had known Margaret all her life. He looked at her steadily for a moment. Then he said slowly, 'You are living in a city of two hundred thousand people. Isn't there need enough about you to fill your life?'

'Oh, yes,' the girl answered quickly, 'and I could give up the foreign field. It isn't that. But I haven't time to do anything, not even to take a mission class; and to see so much work waiting, and be able to do nothing—'

'Margaret,' the old minister said, 'come here.'

Wonderingly the girl followed him to the next room, where a mirror hung between the windows. Her reflection, pale and unhappy, faced her wearily.

'All up and down the streets,' the old minister said, 'in the cars, the markets, the stores, there are people starving for the bread of life. The church cannot reach them—they will not enter a church. Books cannot help them—many of them never open a book. There is but one way that they can ever read the Gospel of hope, of joy, of courage, and that is in the face of men and women.'

'Two years ago a woman who has known deep trouble came to me one day, and she asked your name. "I wanted to tell her," she said, "how much good her happy face did me, but I was afraid that she would think it presuming on the part of an utter stranger. Some day perhaps you will tell her for me."

'Margaret, my child, look in the glass and tell me if the face you see there has anything to give to the souls that are hungry for joy—and they are more than any of us realize—who, unknown to themselves, are hungering for righteousness. Do you think that woman, if she were to meet you now, would say what she said two years ago?'

The girl gave one glance and then turned away, her cheeks crimson with shame. It was hard to answer, but she was no coward. She looked up into her old friend's grave eyes.

'Thank you,' she said, 'I will try to learn my lesson and accept my mission—to the streets.'—'Youth's Companion.'

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