

vision. To them all her heart responded quickly and fervently.

The design and labors of the American Tract Society were made known, and a third silver pile was on the counter.

Then came the most marvellous revelation of all—that Christian men and women carried the Bible to heathen lands; translated it into other tongues; preached in the languages of India and China and Africa; that these Gospel messengers were supported by Christians in our own land; that money and the necessities of life were sent to them from New York and Boston; that supplies for missionaries among the Indians beyond the Mississippi were sent from the spot where she then stood; and that all this was done through a missionary society.

Then followed renewed astonishment, increased opportunity and another group of silver coins—this for the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions.

At this distant day I cannot recall the number of societies whose acquaintance this woman formed in that single hour; but of this I am confident, that her purchases—money and gifts amounted in all to about sixty dollars, all in silver pieces.

A clue was finally found to her name, and we are now prepared to call her Mother Strickland, by which she was thenceforth known in Cincinnati by a few who became acquainted with her history.

From herself and other sources the following facts were finally gathered. She lived about twenty miles from the city, not far from the Ohio River, on a farm products of which she brought to market three or four times a year. For these she had received the coin which she paid out at the Bible Depository, just as it had come into her hands. "The farm is mine," she said in justification of her right to give its proceeds to him who said: "The silver is mine." Had she not applied to herself his words by Hosea, "I gave her corn . . . and multiplied her silver?"

Her home was such only in name. She shared it with a man who could lay no claim to manliness. However evenly they might have been yoked at first, they became most unevenly so when she obeyed the Master's command, "Take my yoke upon you." She spoke of him and their neighbors as *Universalians*—a rustic term common in the West in those days. Whatever of belief or of practice it might express, his character was not elevated nor purified thereby. This may be inferred from the constant presence of his liquor-jug in the best room. There was not only want of sympathy with the religious views and practices of his wife, not only lack of respectful indulgence, but there was violent opposition. His hatred to the Bible was intense. He was a veritable Jehoiakim casting her precious volume "into the fire that was on the hearth." Her hymn book had a similar baptism. Tried by fire they were both rescued, becoming fit emblems of their owner.

She was without Christian companionship, church privileges, or any aid to spiritual guidance and improvement except her Bible and hymn book and the Spirit of God. These kept her separate from her surroundings and preserved a deep and tender interest in spiritual things. These were her light, comfort and strength in her isolation and persecutions.

In that divided household there were five to whom the appellation *Mother Strickland* could be literally applied. We know not the attitude of these sons toward

the unchristian father or the Christian mother, but of the motherly thought for them, we do know. When at last she looked upon a Bible suited to her purpose, saying; "I will take five of these," the unspoken thought was, "These are for my five sons." And when, with closed eyes over those Bibles, she "prayed unto the Lord and wept," when "only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard" by those who "marked her mouth," we can believe that it was for these sons that she prayed.

Dr. Wood's home was a *Saints' Rest* where very many angels were entertained, awares or unawares. Pilgrim saw it from afar, and from every direction. He came sometimes alone, and sometimes Christians and the children accompanied him. It seemed a more fitting abode for *this* Christians than was her market wagon, which she was accustomed to occupy. So she was invited to this *Saints' Rest* whenever in the city, but she still abode in the street.

She urged her would-be host to call upon her the next morning after her purchase, when her street dormitory would be changed into a shop. This he did in making his usual visit for family supplies to the country market, which then and there was composed of farmers' wagons extending along the street to great distances. He stopped before hers to make the promised morning call, which he was not allowed to finish until his market basket was full. This was only a foretaste of more to come. Soon after he reached his home there followed other gifts from her wagon for the more abundant supply of his larder. His protestations were useless. She seemed to have the impression that nothing could be too good for one sustaining so many Christian relations. Because of his loving service for Church and people she thought that "he was worthy for whom she should do this."

The explanations made to Mother Strickland concerning benevolent societies were supplemented by reading which was furnished her. Its careful perusal became manifest in her rapidly increasing knowledge and correspondingly deepening interest. Especially was *The Missionary Herald* a messenger from afar, proclaiming in tones unfamiliar to her the woes of heathendom and Christian effort in its behalf.

Rejoicing in the work done, her heart went out toward the workers. Her thought travelled quickly from the printed page to their distant and lonely homes. She thought of their domestic life, even of their physical tastes, without opportunity to gratify them. This was why the rich apple-butter of her farm was a condiment year after year on missionary tables in the Western wilderness. She believed that the implements of refinement should not be denied the self-denyng workers in the midst of barbarism; and this is why spoons found their way to a table on a Nestorian mountain, engraved with the name—one of blessed memory—of Asahel Grant. Her "*Universalian*" neighbors sustained no Dorcas Society; but she was entitled to the name, since every year she brought to the city a consecrated missionary box of what she had "wrought with needlework."

Allusion has been made to the avidity with which she gleaned knowledge of Christian labor in heathen lands. Her relative progress in such learning was surprising. She was discriminating. Not all fields were of uniform interest to her; some were of special. One of these was the Gaboon Mission, on the western coast of Africa; but