

THE DOMINION PRESBYTERIAN

that's clamoring to be done. And I've tried so hard."

"Edith—my dear!"

"I can't help it," choked the woman. "I've been just bursting with it all ever since last night. I didn't sleep—I was too tired to sleep, anyway, and I could only think and think. 'Young and sprightly!' As if I didn't want to be that myself—but how can I be? I don't see any one but sick folks to help and poor folks to feed. I don't hear any music only hymn tunes and church anthems. I don't read anything but religious articles and missionary reports—I don't dare to; there isn't time for frivolous things when there are so many serious things that need every atom of my strength and money. But in spite of that I've failed; and the worst of it is that never was I so much of a failure as I am this minute, right now, to talk—talk—like—this!" And with a big sob she flung herself on her knees at her husband's side and buried her head in her arms.

Rev. George Sandhurst sat very still, his eyes wide open and startled. The bottom seemed dropping out of his world. His sane, sweet, self-reliant Edith—surely his ears had not heard aright! Then, as if in a vision, the daily life of this woman rose before him as he had known it for the past twelve years. For a long minute he did not speak; then he gently patted the bowed head on his knee.

"You must go away, my dear, and have a little rest," he said, in a matter-of-fact voice, as if pleasure trips were an every-day occurrence in the family.

"Away!" Edith's tear-stained face came up with a gesture of shocked surprise. Why, George, of course I can't go away!"

"But you must."

"No, no, I didn't mean—I don't want—oh, George, I was wrong to talk like that—as if you were to blame! Of course I didn't mean—but it did me good," she broke off. "See, I'm better already. I won't be so foolish again!" And she smiled radiantly.

"Edith," nursed the man in a quiet voice, "didn't you have a letter from Mrs. Gould yesterday asking you to come to Boston for a visit?"

"Yes."

"Well, you must go."

"No, no! Why, George, I couldn't possibly leave; besides, I would have to have a hat and shoes and gloves. I wrote her I couldn't."

"Is the letter posted?"

"No."

"Then write another. And will ten dollars—do?"

"Do! George Sandhurst, as if I'd spend ten dollars on myself just for foolishness!"

"But you must; and it isn't foolishness. Call it medicine, if you like—pills in the shape of shoes, and a tonic in the shape of a new bonnet! Now, come, we'll go down stairs and tell the children. The matter is settled."

In spite of Rev. George Sandhurst's assurance, however, the matter was not settled; and not until after long and urgent pleadings did Edith begin to yield. Even then she would not go until her husband's sister Jane came and unmistakably demonstrated that neither the family nor the house would suffer during the absence of the mistress, no matter how prolonged it might be. Then she went.

"And you're not to write us for two whole weeks," commanded her husband, in parting. "Now mind—there's not to be one single duty that you must perform—not even a letter. You're to rest—play; you're to forget that you ever had a husband and children."

"Oh, George—as if I could!"

"No, of course you couldn't," admitted the husband, fondly. "And I shouldn't want you to—do quite that. But all the same we don't want you to write. If you're sick, Mrs. Gould will let us know.

I have written to Mr. Gould, and she has instructions," he laughed, as the train began slowly to move out of the station.

One by one the days passed, but the two weeks were not quite complete when the letter came.

"As if I could keep still any longer!" wrote Edith, and the very dots to her i's and the crosses to her t's seemed to dance with glee. "Oh, George, you don't know what a good, good time I have had. But in all the ointment of my happiness, there has been just one fly—that I could have talked as I did that awful day in the attic!"

"Please, please forget it all, George. I can't think what possessed me; and please, please understand that I'm just longing to get back to the women's meeting and the prayer meeting, not forgetting the hymn tunes and the missionary reports. Of course this sort of thing I've been doing wouldn't really do to live—not right along—any more than chocolate drops would do for three square meals a day.

"But I have had a good time! The Goulds are lovely to me. Do you know? I should think they might have been in league with you. I don't believe they've let me do a really useful thing since I've been here. I've risen at the sinful hour of eight o'clock every morning, and dawdled over my breakfast while we talked of what we would do for the day. And such doings! A walk down the avenue or through the stores for a forenoon's work—only think of it! And for the afternoon, a drive through the Newtons, or maybe a concert or lecture before some woman's club.

"Music!—I've been to the Symphony twice, and never again will I be without music in my soul; for any time that I have a mind to close my eyes I can hear those marvelous tones rise and fall and sink to a whisper, and then swell louder and louder until they end in one mighty crash as if heaven's whole orchestra was at the end of that one man's baton. Oh, George, I wish you could hear the Symphony!"

"As for the lectures—if there is one fibre of my being that has not responded to the music, it has answered to the call of a human voice. If I live up to one-quarter of the fine ideas and lofty conceptions that have raised me to the third heaven of exaltation and determination, I shall be a saint indeed.

"But it hasn't all been music and poetry, George—dear me, no! For twelve whole days I have reveled in the fact that I hadn't the least idea what I was going to have for breakfast, or for dinner or for supper; and there have been times when I have hung entranced for whole minutes over a bit of pasteboard, trying to decide whether chocolate ice cream or English plum pudding would be the altogether delightful finish to my repast. As for cake—I haven't had a piece since I came that wasn't blighted and befrested to within an inch of its indigestible life!"

"And now I want to come home. My fingers are tingling to take up the work—all of it; there isn't a bit of it I'd count out. I haven't said a word about you and the children. I couldn't. If I'd once begun I shouldn't have talked of anything else, my heart is so full of you all, and I want—want you! Oh, how I want you! And to think that I've been away from you almost two whole weeks! I shall be there day after to-morrow.

"With a world of love and a kiss all around, Edith."

A Christian man may pray for what he desires. But if he never does more he remains upon the lowest level of prayer. The heights are for the Christian who prays that he may be delivered from all desires except those which please God. Deliverance from self—there lies the path upward.

ONE OF THE TEMPERANCE VANGUARD: REV. W. A. MACKAY, D.D.

If one were asked to name the most prominent champion of the temperance cause within the Presbyterian Church in Canada during the past half-century, one name would occur to the mind, that of the late Rev. W. A. Mackay, of Chalmers Church, Woodstock, Ontario.

"All at it and always at it," was his motto, and he practised as well as preached it with all the vigor of his Highland nature. His was indeed an example of the strenuous life. Right up almost to the year of his death, it could be said of him that he did not know what a holiday meant. His only conception of a rest seemed to be a change of occupation. More frequently than in any other way his holiday was apt to be spent in the work of rallying the Christian people, perhaps in some distant part of the Province, to a sense of their duty in opposition to that which he regarded as the greatest foe to the progress of the Gospel of that Saviour he loved so dearly and served so faithfully—the drink traffic. "Tell me one redeeming feature of the bar-room, and I will forever hold my peace in opposition to this traffic," was the challenge he gave from a thousand platforms, and that challenge was never accepted.

His advocacy of temperance legislation was neither idle sentimentalism nor blind, unreasoning dogmatism. While his chivalrous spirit was ever roused to indignation by the enormity of the blight that followed in the wake of the drink traffic, it was only by plodding, rational effort that lasting results could be hoped for. He did not hesitate to declare, however, that the experiment of the barroom as a means of dealing with the traffic had been a deplorable and unmitigated failure.

Of him it could truly be said, "He gave his life to his work." Had he spared himself more, he would in all human probability have been longer spared, but what of the work? Would as much have been accomplished? He rests from his labors; but his works do follow him.

When falling health forced him to give up the ministry, he did so with great reluctance. In his farewell letter to the people among whom he had lived and labored for over a quarter of a century and which has been termed by some a classic, occur these words, which show the inmost spirit and heart of this valiant soldier of the cross: "If, indeed, you should hear my voice no more, I can only in this feeble way adjure you, my beloved friends, young and aged, not to forget the words which I spake unto you while I was yet with you. Ministers may come and go, but the ever-blessed Saviour abideth the same, unchanged and unchangeable. Hear ye Him.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.

M.—Separation. Num. 6: 1-3.
T.—Sad warnings. Prov. 23: 29-32.
W.—A prophecy. Isa. 25: 1-8.
T.—My brother's keeper. Gen. 4: 8-12.
F.—The better way. Rom. 4: 19-26.
S.—An exhortation. 2 Pet. 1: 5-8.
Sun. Topic—One of the Temperance Vanguard: Rev. W. A. Mackay, D.D. Lev. 10: 5-11.

Christ did not allow the men of the talents to bunch their talents and strike an average. Each man's worth in the Kingdom of God is proportionate to the personality expended. Here is a chance to bring up our personal equation by a little expenditure of self.

*V.P.S.C.E. Topic for November 29, 1908. Lev. 10: 8, 11.