

into the water. It was 'touch and go' with him."

"How did it happen?"

"Oh, the ice is breaking up with the thaw. It's nothing but cracks and holes," and the man went out.

It was a windy night, the moon broke out from the black masses of clouds at intervals, but for the most part, everything was wrapped in darkness. The clouds had gathered rapidly during the last hour.

Mark stood still, and looked at me in silence. The great struggles of life are for the most part, silent. He loved that woman! He loved her more than his life, a later action on his part, revealed that fact. Another had stepped in between them, and had shadowed his life for ever. And now—now, in the darkness came a gleam a faint uplifting of that shadow, a straw held out to a drowning man, an awful hope!

If John Dalgliesh should sink to-night beneath the dark waters, if the ice should close above him, what then? Dear possibilities in days to come, rose up before him, the sweetness of the future was calling to him, the tenderness of the past was appealing to him. In between the child face he was looking at, two shadowy eyes gazed up at him.

Then suddenly came a revulsion of feeling. What had she said? "Mark, help me!" and his answer, "I would give my life for you or yours." For you or yours! And perhaps with that thought, came some higher motive too—a breath of that divine power, which has moved men in all nations, and all ages, to do and dare and suffer; who can say?

Mark Brandreth took down his cap and overcoat.

"Where are you going, Mark?" asked Aunt Hannah, hearing his step in the hall.

"As fast as I can to catch Dalgliesh and prevent him trying the ice to-night."

He opened the door and went out, then came suddenly back, caught me in his arms and kissed me.

"Good-night. God bless you, my Bebe."

This little action surprised me. Mark was often so busy, he would forget all about me.

"You'll soon be back, won't you Mark?" I asked.

"Within an hour," he answered, "but you won't be up then."

But Mark did not return within the hour as he had said. Aunt Hannah packed me off to bed, a little later, and then concluding that Mark had gone to see a patient, and had been detained, left the lamp burning in the hall for him, and went to bed herself.

In the dark, early morning, I was awakened by a ring at the bell. This was not an unusual sound in a doctor's house, and it has often puzzled me since, why that night, I should have jumped up, and ran to the head of the stairs. I heard Aunt Hannah tell Fanchon our servant girl, to lie still, and then she went to the door. In came John Dalgliesh. I hardly recognized him. He walked as a man who had been drinking, he wore a different overcoat, and his breath came in great gasps.

"Mrs. Somers," he said, "I am the bearer of bad news."

I began to shiver, then a nameless dread came over me, and froze me where I stood, in my little white flannel gown, upon the stairs.

"Mark!" I heard Aunt Hannah gasp.

He pulled a chair forward for her, but she remained standing, firm and rigid, lamp in hand.

John Dalgliesh passed his hand across his brow.

"As far as possible I will tell you what happened. I went to Morton's house when I left here, and from there to the ice, put on my skates and started. I was a fool to go that way" he stopped with a sudden groan, "the ice was not safe, I had not started two minutes before I went through, the river is full of holes, I caught at the ice in falling, and managed to keep myself up, and shouted. Just then the moon shone out and I saw someone coming towards me. It turned out to be Dr. Brandreth." He was trying to prolong the story now, fearful of what was to come. The perspiration stood out in beads upon his forehead. I thought he would have fainted. "It seems he had come to warn me about the ice, having just heard of the condition it was in, and he helped me out. It was no easy matter, the ice was so brittle, but I don't suppose I was in two minutes. Just as I had scrambled out, the ice on which he was standing gave way, and—and—" he paused for a moment, "Some men who had heard me shouting, came up then and we did our best, but it was no good, poor fellow—ah, poor fellow! the ice had closed above him. I went on shore, just stopped for a change of clothes and one of the men offered to drive me up here to break the news. Mrs. Somers, words are useless, but believe me I would give the world if it were I who had gone down beneath the waters to-night," and the strong man fell sobbing like a child into the chair he had placed for Aunt Hannah.

"My boy, oh, my boy!" I heard Aunt Hannah wail.

It was only for that moment she gave way, then with the gentle courtesy and consideration for others, for which the Brandreths have ever been distinguished, she bade him sit nearer to the fire and offered some refreshment. He shook his head and only stayed a few minutes longer. He asked to be allowed to fetch some one to stay with Aunt Hannah, but she refused.

When he was gone her eye fell upon me on the stairs. I was utterly stunned and confused. The story had reached my ears but not my brain. I knew what had happened, but could not realize the knowledge.

"Where is Mark?" I cried, "O, aunt Hannah, where is Mark?" She lifted me in her arms.

"He has gone home, dear Bebe," she said softly.

A feeling of solemn reverence came over me, swallowing up the dread, such as I fancy must be felt by dying mortals when they come face to face at last, with the majesty of Death.

"The home where God is?" I asked in an awestruck whisper.

"Yes, Bebe, the one and only home for each one of us, dear child."

So runs the story, it needs no comment of mine.

Time rolls on and men barter, and toil and suffer; the greed of gain, the struggle for riches, the seething interest of the multitude knows no cessation; then lo! in the darkness, here and there flashes forth a light. One who has caught and carried into action, the mighty motive of human life—the sacrifice of Self in the interest of Humanity—and has raised himself above his fellows, and the sordid aims of men.

Are they but meteor flashes in the world's darkness, lighting up their surroundings for a moment and then dying away, as though they had not been?

Not so, though the doer dyeth, the deed liveth on throughout the ages, the voice may be silenced and forgotten, but the word it uttered shall indirectly touch the world!

#### Lilian Claxton.

Lilian Claxton, the youngest child of the Rev. J. D. Claxton, Vicar of St. Philips', Earls Court, was born in Kensington, London, England. On the death of her father the family left London for the country, and resided some time in the beautiful neighborhood of Bournemouth, on the Hampshire Coast.

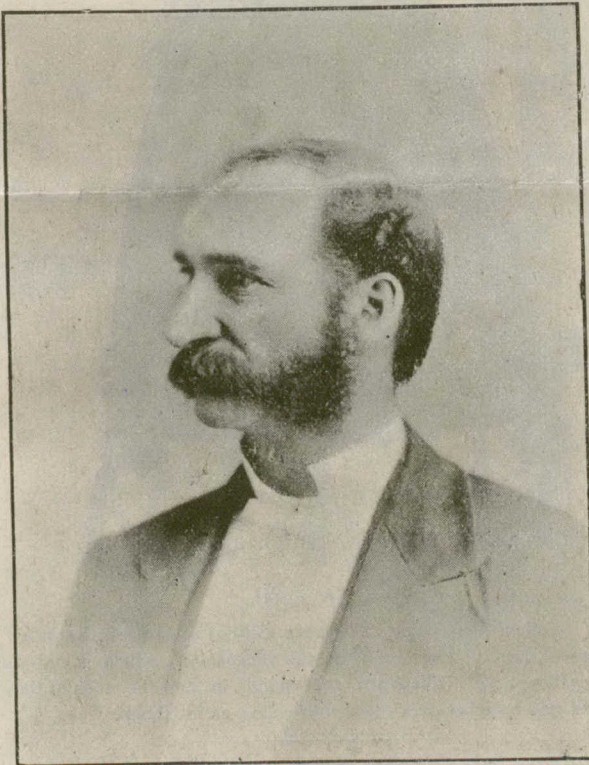
When at a boarding-school at Southampton, at the age of fifteen, her first poem was printed in *Every Girl's Magazine*, published by Messrs. Routledge (for which periodical she continued to write from time to time), followed by a story in *The Mirror*. Shortly after this, in 1884, the family emigrated to Canada, and after a year's experience of bush life, settled in the neighborhood of Kingston. Lilian Claxton has also had tales and poems accepted by George Munro, Edward Bok, and the editors of the *Toronto Globe* and the *Week*; also a serial story, "Violet," appeared in the *Canadian Churchman*. Last year a poem of hers, "A Voice from the City," was printed by Edmund Yates in *The World*.

### Our Weekly Sermons By Celebrated Divines.

Written specially for the LADIES PICTORIAL WEEKLY.

#### One Sermon Suggests Another.

"Say ye to the righteous that it shall be well with him: for they shall eat the fruit of their doings."—Isaiah 3-10.



H. I. M. Mullen

With us ministers a common experience is that one sermon suggests and leads to another. And it might often increase the interest of our hearers if we pointed out to them the nature of the connection between one sermon and another. Last Sabbath morning the discourse was devoted to showing how severely the word of the Lord tried Joseph during his lengthened imprisonment, and how wonderfully in the end his sufferings and imprisonment were by God's providence overruled for his elevation to ride in the second chariot and bear rule next to the King over all Egypt. And the obvious lesson for suffering believers is one of comfort and hope in their trials.

It may probably have occurred to some of you then present that every case of mysterious and hard suffering on the part of godly persons does not issue so happily as did the suffering of Joseph. Many a noble character with a noble record of well-doing sinks under what, to human eye, seems a hard and very mysterious fate. In a case like that of Joseph we see the divine ways justified in the end, faith honored and rewarded, and all temporary mystery cleared up. But do we see that in every case? Is innocence always vindicated and defended and does virtue always prove victor before the eyes of men?

My object in this discourse shall be to deal with certain cases in which to outward appearance virtue is not rewarded and God's

ways towards suffering innocence are shrouded in mystery, and yet to show, as the text declares, that it is well with the righteous.

Let us then at the outset suppose that Joseph had died in prison, innocent as he was, and suppose that his faith in God had remained unshaken to the last. In that case the perplexity felt by you and me in view of his case would have been very much greater. But even then would it be impossible to show that it is well with the righteous? Would it be impossible to show that after all Joseph was a happier man on account of his innocence, and that virtue in Joseph's case did not lose its reward? The sole difficulty in the case would consist in this—that goodness and virtue did not receive vindication and reward immediately in this life.

Some have on this ground argued against religion and against the view that a divine power friendly to religion and virtue reigns over the affairs of this world. It has been urged that men who make no pretence to religion, or even virtue, get along as well and are as much favored in the natural course which things take as are the most pious and exemplary. Rain comes on the fields of the unjust as well and regularly as on the fields of the just. Lightning strikes the barn or house of the righteous just the same as that of the unrighteous. "Nay, at times the wicked prosper when the righteous are in deep adversity."—Psalm 73, i, 12. David was sorely perplexed with this very mystery.

This is one of the problems worked out in the book of Job. Job's friends reasoned against his profession of integrity on the principle that an innocent man could not suffer such visitations of adversity, i. e., that virtue and goodness is necessarily rewarded before the eyes of men in this life. Indeed, this was the argument of Satan against Job's sincerity and unselfishness in his religion at the very outset of the problem: "Hast thou not set a hedge about him, etc." (See chap. 1-9, etc.)

Job's friends and Satan are at agreement as to the principle in the case. Satan claims that Job has present reward for his religion, and that he is animated by no higher motive than a shrewd selfishness. Job's friends, when his calamity has come, maintain that it cannot be the lot of an innocent man; Job must be guilty of hidden iniquity, i. e., the righteous cannot suffer. This reasoning was refuted by the subsequent history and proved to be unsound. Job's integrity was vindicated in opposition to the contention of his friends, and his unselfish sincerity in his religion was tested and proved in refutation of the libellous charge of Satan. Hence we see that calamities that wear the appearance of judgments often fall to the lot of the righteous, while on the other hand the wicked go unpunished and prosper.

Now, the question arises—is this system of government over human affairs one worthy of God, and on the whole the most favorable to the nurture and maintenance of true religion on the earth from generation to generation?

I am well aware that in raising and trying to answer this question I am dealing with one of the greatest and most prevalent or commonly felt difficulties with which the faith of Christians has to grapple; and if I can cast some light on it I will be helping every believer present to fight the good fight of faith more intelligently and courageously. The conclusion to which I wish to bring you is that the divine system of administration under which we live, and under which innocence often suffers and noble deeds go for the present unrewarded is the best for the continuance of true piety on the earth.

Many doubt this, nay dispute it, and maintain that if goodness were never permitted to suffer, but always immediately rewarded, a very powerful influence would then be brought to bear on all men, persuading them to a life of goodness and religion—and further, that a very powerful proof of a divine reality in religion would then be supplied, a proof which they claim is now lacking.

Well, let us thoroughly look into this problem and see which view is the correct one.

1. Suppose that the ministers of this town, backed up by some wealthy and good men, succeeded in inducing all neglecters of public worship to attend church regularly, and that the method by which they did it was a profound secret between the ministers and the persons induced to attend church. The change in the town would be to the outward eye of the community very great. The churches would be crowded at every service, and expressions of surprise and gratification would be heard from the lips of all the Christian people in the place. Church enlargement and church building would be the popular theme in every congregation. But suppose that by and bye the secret leaked out that the ministers were paying \$2 a Sabbath to every former non-church-goer for his attendance, and that the money was secretly paid after every Sabbath's attendance! Suppose that the ministers, when challenged, admitted this to be the fact. How would the Christian people of the place regard the matter then? Would they think that the ministers had made a good impression on the minds and consciences of the non-church-goers? Would not the Christian people say to the ministers, "You have put these people further away from faith than ever. They look upon you as insincere bribers, and as regards their own feelings and motives they know that their attendance at church is procured and kept up through no higher consideration than sordid selfishness."

2. But suppose that instead of a syndicate of rich men supplying the ministers with the money, the money came in answer to prayer, and a fund was kept up in that way—would that change the arrangement from being one of bribery? Not at all. But suppose that by and bye the ministers said to these persons, "We have effected a new arrangement by which the money will come directly to yourselves; the church members have found fault with the present system. Now, you come to church just as formerly and you will find the money in your pocket on leaving the church every Sabbath evening." Suppose they did, and found the money as stated, would that arrangement have a powerful influence to make them Christians and devout lovers of what is good? Assuredly