

**"THE LITTLE SHOES—THEY DID IT ALL."**

"One night on the verge of ruin,  
As I hurried from the tap,  
I beheld the landlord's baby  
Still on its mother's lap.  
'Look here, dear father,' said the mother,  
Holding forth the little feet,  
'Look, we've got new shoes for darling!  
Don't you think them nice and neat?'  
You may judge the thing was simple—  
Disbelieve me if you choose;  
But, my friends, no fist e'er struck me  
Such a blow as those small shoes.  
And they forced my brain to reason;  
'What right,' said I, standing there,  
'Have I to clothe another's children,  
And to let my own go bare?'  
It was in the depth of winter;  
Bitter was the night and wild;  
And outside the flaring gin-shop  
Stood my starving wife and child.  
Out I went and clutched my baby,  
Saw its feet so cold and blue:  
Fathers! if the small shoe smote me,  
What did those poor bare feet do?  
Quick I thrust them in my bosom!  
Oh, they were so icy chill!  
And their coldness like a dagger  
Pierced me. I can feel it still.  
Of money I had but a trifle,  
Just enough to serve my steed;  
It bought shoes for little baby,  
And a single loaf of bread.  
The loaf served us all the Sunday,  
And I went to work next day;  
Since that time I have been teetotal.  
That is all I've got to say."

—Selected.

**SIX O'CLOCK IN THE EVENING.**

It was six o'clock and after, but the little Burtons were not in Grandma's room. Instead, they were wandering drearly through the quiet halls, uncertain what to do with their desolate little selves. No story for them to-night. It was not that they had forgotten to select their verse. It was little Sarah's turn, and she had chosen the one so easy to learn, "It is finished."

The others had agreed that they were glad for little Sarah's choice, because they did not see how grandma could make a story about it, but they knew she could, for Grandma never failed on a Bible verse.

Besides, they had shown her their choice, and she had promised to be ready.

Then what was the trouble? Why, simply this: Grandma had gone away! This in itself was something very strange to the Burton children. During all the years which they could remember, Grandma had not been away from home after the gas was lighted. Whoever might come or go, whatever changes occurred in their young lives, they were sure of Grandma, safe in Grandma's room.

Now they looked sorrowfully at one another, and could not seem to make it possible that she was gone.

Then too, all the circumstances of her going had been so strange!

On Sundays, when she went to church, the carriage always waited at the door until she and Grandpa came down the stairs, and he helped her in, and took his seat beside her.

When, on rare occasions, she went into town to spend the morning with aunt Alice, there was always a little bustle in the house of getting her ready. Mamma packed a bag, with her cap and her other spectacles and her knitting, and went, at Grandma's direction, to such a drawer and such a shelf for packages ready to be taken to aunt Alice's children. And when she was quite ready, they all trooped down to the carriage to see her off, and if the weather was chilly, Ann followed with an extra wrap for her feet, or, if it was warm, with a palm leaf fan; and always Grandpa sat beside her and arranged the cushion at her back, and papa as he held open the carriage door to say good-by, would add: "Now, mother, John will come for you not later than three; don't you worry."

But with this going away there had been no such careful and yet cheerful preparations. No bag had been packed; it hung at this moment on its hook in Grandma's clothes-press. No carriage had waited; nothing had been said about going away. They had been sitting in the deepening twilight in Grandma's room, the children and mamma; Grandpa had been reading aloud a little bit about an old hymn, and Grandma had said: "They used to sing that a great deal when I was a girl. They have left out one verse that I used to like. It was about spring. I always think of it these October days when winter is near. I never did quite like winter, and I just enjoy thinking of a country where it can't come," and then

Grandma had lifted up her sweet old voice and sung:

There everlasting spring abides,  
And never withering flowers,  
Death, like a narrow sea, divides  
That heavenly land from ours.

Grandma's voice was low, but very sweet. The children loved to hear her sing. They thought their mother liked it, too, and they were hushed and a trifle startled as they looked over at her in the dim light and saw that she was brushing away tears from her face. This sight kept them still for a little, and the twilight deepened. Grandma leaned back in her chair, and Grandpa rested his chin on his hand and seemed lost in thought.

Presently, mamma said: "Mother, would you like to have the gas lighted now, or do you want to sit in the dark a while longer?"

But Grandma made no answer, and Grandpa, after a moment, arose and bent over her in a startled way, and the children were frightened when they heard his voice, and frightened more still, at his words:

"O, Helen, she is gone!"  
Gone! What could Grandpa mean?—when she sat in her arm chair, and they could see in the fast fading light, a smile on her face!

There had been great confusion after that—hurrying up and down stairs, slamming of doors, ringing of bells, but none of these things disturbed Grandma. It was true, as Grandpa had said, she was gone!

Little Sarah did not understand it. Grandma was lying on a couch in her room, her beautiful satin hair combed smoothly, her beautiful hands folded, and a flower between her fingers, but she slept and slept, all day. The children tried to explain it to little Sarah, but it seemed so sad, and so mysterious even to them, that they did not succeed well. And now as the twilight fell again, they felt so utterly alone without Grandma that they could not keep back their tears as they went on tiptoe past her closed door. It opened suddenly, and Grandpa came out. Marion noticed that he stooped as he walked, and he seemed a great deal older than he ever had before.

Little Sarah's tear-stained face seemed to stop him, and he stooped and took her by the hand.

"Poor children!" he said. "You are lonesome too."

Marion tried to hush little Sarah, lest she should deepen Grandpa's sorrow, but the little girl sobbed outright.

"We want our story; it is the time for it. She said she would, and she always did, and I can't wake her up!"

Grandpa's lip quivered, but he kept close hold of the little hand, and led the way. "Come with Grandpa, all of you," he said, and they went to the study.

A cheerful fire was burning in the grate, and Grandpa's arm chair was near it. He sat down, took little Sarah in his arms, and questioned about the story.

"Yes," he said with trembling lip, "that is true, it is finished."

"What is, Grandpa?" Little Sarah was the only one who could talk. "Grandpa, I want the story about it."

"I'll try to tell it," said Grandpa. "This is the story, little Sarah; Grandma has finished all the tears; she will never cry again. She has finished all the trouble; she will never have any more. She has finished all the sickness; she will never have another ache nor pain. She has even finished the dying"—and he tried to keep his voice steady—"death can never touch her again. She has gone up to live with God, whom she loved, and to wait and watch for us all."

"Why, then, we ought to be happy!" exclaimed little Sarah, and her voice was very bright. "I love Grandma enough to be happy if she is glad. Don't you?" A faint smile trembled for a moment on Grandpa's lips, as he said:

"Grandpa will try, Sarah; he will try hard. He has only a little while to wait before his story, too, will be finished."—Pansy.

**I WOULD NOT CHOOSE.**

BY ESTHER CONVERSE.

The light burned dim in the sick room, and cast long, shapeless shadows upon the wall. The nurse from her low seat by the fire glanced uneasily towards the bed where restless movements indicated the wakeful condition of her charge. She arose and went to the bedside to smooth again the pillows, and again offer the cooling drink.

"I cannot sleep," said the sufferer, whose bright eyes gleamed with more than natural brilliancy. "How long the night is!"

The nurse soothed her with gentle words, and turned away with an anxious face. Entering an adjoining room where the mother lay in heavy sleep, she softly awoke her.

"Alice has not slept," she said. "I fear the most serious consequences if she does not rest to-night. Can it be that something weighs upon her mind? It seems like that."

"I will go to her," said the mother; and in a few moments she had taken her usual place by the bedside.

"Alice," she said, taking her hand, "can you not sleep?"

"No, mother, I seem to grow more wakeful and restless. Tell me, mother, am I going to die?"

"I hope not, dear; we think you will be better soon if you rest well to-night."

"What does the doctor say? Does he think there is hope?"

"He thinks there is hope, but there is danger also. I tell you the truth, my child, for I know you do not fear death."

"I do, mother," and the flushed face wore an expression of acute distress. "I cannot die yet; I am not ready. I think I love my Saviour; I have given myself to Him, but I want to live in this beautiful world. Heaven is so indistinct; we know so little of it. I want to live so very much, mother."

The appealing look that accompanied these last words gave the mother strength. "I hope you may, dear, but you know our times are in His hand. I love to think of death as a sleep from which we shall awake in heaven."

"But I do not want to go to heaven now," said the agitated girl, "I want to live longer."

"Listen to me, Alice," replied the mother, holding firmly the restless hands. "Would you like to live until old age takes from you sight, hearing, strength and intellect?"

"Oh, no! not so long as that."

"You would rather stay here to see more suffering, sorrow and care; to lose father, mother, brother, sisters, one by one, until you are the last of the family?"

"Oh, no, mother, no!"

"Would you wait until you enter the new home that will be made desolate by your death, leaving, perhaps, children who need a mother's care? Would it be better to live until new pursuits, new friendships, new ties bind you more firmly, and lead you, perhaps, to wander from your Saviour?"

The restless hands grew more quiet, the excited expression of the eyes more mild, as she answered,

"I could not choose the time, mother."

"It will come to us all soon or late. Would you choose to die in a foreign land, by accident, by loathsome disease, dear, or here quietly with loved ones by your side?"

"I would go when He wills, and as He wills, mother. Please tell Him so for me, and let me say 'Thy will be done.'"

When the mother arose from her knees, she saw a look of peace upon the troubled face, and a sweet smile accompanied the scarcely audible, "Thy will be done." The bright eyes closed, the restless movements ceased, and Alice slept. Once she awoke, and with a smile repeated,

"Lord, I would clasp Thy hand in mine  
Nor ever murmur nor repine;  
Content whatever lot I see,  
Since 'tis God's hand that leadeth me."

In the morning, when her mother entered the room, she greeted her with a glad smile, saying, "I am better, mother; can it be that I am to get well?"

When assured of the strong hopes entertained she asked,—

"Why should I live? It seems better to go now."

Gently the mother repeated,—

"Lord, it belongs not to my care  
Whether I die or live;  
To love and serve Thee in my share,  
And this Thy grace must give."

"Then if my life is given me, it will be that I may serve Him, that I may do good in the world; I will not forget that."

The patient, docile spirit contributed largely to her recovery, and health soon returned to Alice. She is still living; she has passed through seasons of sorrow, suffering and trial. She has been called to part with children and friends near and dear, but her life seems ever to repeat,—

"Content whatever lot I see,  
Since 'tis God's hand that leadeth me."

**Question Corner.—No. 22.**

**BIBLE QUESTIONS.**

**BIBLE ALPHABET.**

- A was a monarch who reigned in the east,
- B a Chaldean who made a great feast.
- C was veracious when others told lies.
- D was a woman, heroic and wise.
- E was a refuge where David spared Saul.
- F was a Roman accuser of Paul.
- G was a garden, a frequent resort.
- H was a city where David held court.
- I was a mocker, a very bad boy.
- J was a city preferred as a joy.
- K was a father, whose son was quite tall.
- L was a proud one who had a great fall.
- M was a nephew whose uncle was good.
- N was a city long hid where it stood.
- O was a servant, acknowledged a brother.
- P was a Christian greeting another.
- R was a damsel who knew a man's voice.
- T was a seaport where preaching was long.
- U was a teamster struck dead for his wrong.
- V was a cast off, and never restored.
- Z was a ruin with sorrow deplored.

**BIBLE QUESTIONS.**

1. Who are spoken of as three typical righteous men who yet could not deliver the land by their righteousness as it had gone so far astray?
2. What two men are spoken of in Jeremiah as examples of successful intercessors?
3. Would their intercession have been successful in the given case?
4. Where is Job spoken of in the New Testament?

**ANSWERS TO BIBLE QUESTIONS NO. 21.**

Samuel, Ahab, Eli, Lois, Saul.

**BIBLE SCENE.**—Acts 23. 16-35.

1. Exodus 7. 9.
2. Exodus 40. 20, 21.
3. 2 Chron. 27. 4.
4. 2 Chron 29. 11.

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