

## AN APPEAL FOR JUSTICE

MRS. NELLIE L. McCLUNG

It was the first of July, the day of the annual Pioneer's Picnic at Millford. Crowds were thronging into the little town, and among them the Watson and Cavers families.

Pearl Watson went with her two brothers, who took the green vegetables to the hotel. Jimmy had been accustomed to bringing milk to the back door and was quite an admirer of Mr. Braden, the genial proprietor.

Mr. Braden himself came into the kitchen just as they knocked at the door. He was faultlessly dressed, and in a particularly happy mood, for the first of July was one of his richest harvests, both in the dining-room and in the bar, where many a dollar would be laid on the altar of "auld lang syne"; and besides this, Sandy Braden was really glad to see all the old timers, apart from any thought of making money. He paid Jimmy for the vegetables, and gave him an extra quarter for a treat for himself and the others.

Acting on a sudden impulse, Pearl said: "Mr. Braden, you know Bill Cavers, don't you?"

Mr. Braden said he did.

"Well," said Pearl, "they've all come to town to-day. Mrs. Cavers hasn't been here for ever so long, but Bill promised to stay sober to-day if she'd come."

Pearl hesitated.

"Well, what else?" he said.

"They're goin' to have a photo taken to send home to her folks in Ontario. Mrs. Cavers is all fixed up, with her hair curled, and Libby Anne has a new dress made out of her mother's weddin' one, and Bill is lookin' fine—he hasn't been drunk since that Sunday you took him away from the school when we were havin' church."

Mr. Braden suddenly stopped smiling.

"And what I want to ask you, Mr. Braden, as a real favor, is not to fill Bill up until they get the photo taken, anyway. You know how his lip hangs when he's drunk—he wouldn't look nice in a photo to send home. Mrs. Cavers went all white and twitchy that day you took him away from church. I was right behind her, and I guess that's how she'd look in a photo if he got drunk, and she wouldn't look nice, either; and even Libby Anne wouldn't be lookin' her best, because she gets mad when her father is drunk, and says she'd like to kill you, and burn up all your whisky, and lots of things like that that ain't real Christian. So you see, it would spoil the whole picture if you let him get drunk."

Sandy Braden was not a hard-hearted man, and so, when Pearl told him all this with her eyes on him straight and honest and fearless, he was distinctly uncomfortable.

He tried to get a grip on himself. "Who told you to come to me about it?" he asked suspiciously.

"Nobody told me," Pearl said. "I never thought of it myself until I saw you lookin' so fine and such fine clothes on you, and you so full of good humour, and I thought maybe you're not as bad as I always thought you were, and maybe you don't know what a bad time Mrs. Cavers and Libby Anne have when Bill drinks."