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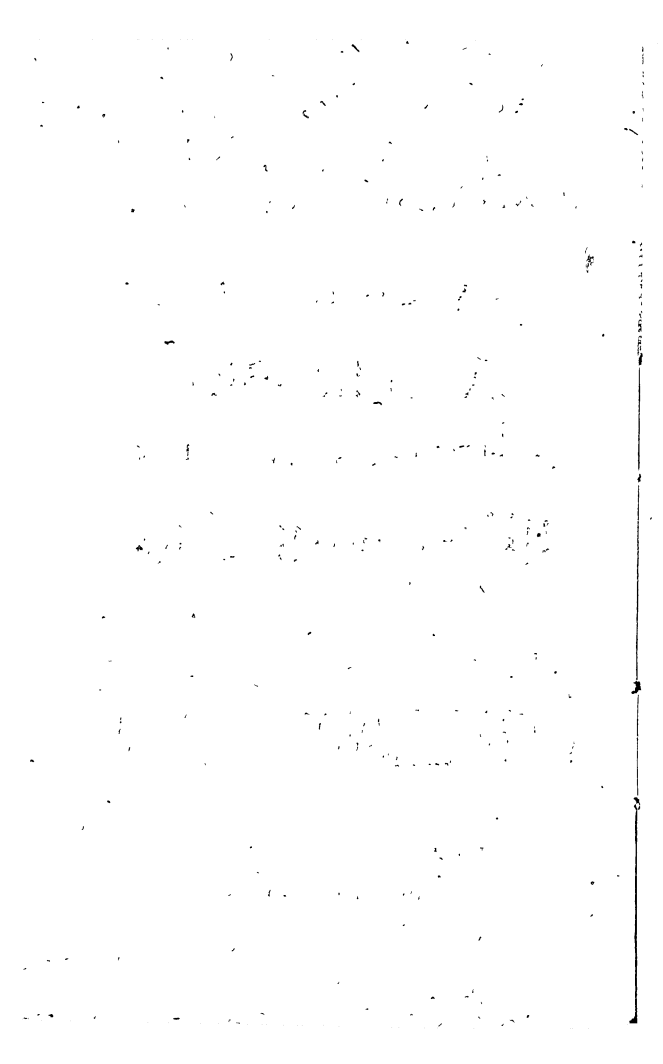
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A Little Girl
AND HER
Missionary Jug.



Woman's Foreign Missionary Society.
Presbyterian Church in Canada.
(Western Division.)



A Little Girl and Her Missionary Jug.

FATHER, what is a missionary?" asked little Lucy Gray, running into the house, with flushed cheeks and excited eyes.

Dr. Gray lowered his paper and looked over his spectacles, as he answered shortly, "A fanatic, child, a fanatic."

"A—a what, father?" she asked, with a puzzled air. "Is it nice to be what you say?" Lucy was a little doubtful from the tone in which it was spoken.

"As nice as to be a missionary, I reckon," replied, her father, taking up his paper again.

"Then father," with slow decision, "I wish I was a—a fanatic, 'cause I think a missionary is drefful nice."

Dr. Gray laughed, and laying aside his paper he drew his little daughter to his knee, as he asked, "What do you know about missionaries, little one?"

"O father," she replied earnestly, "a missionary man talked in Sunday School to-day, and he was splendid! He told us stories about a country away 'cross the sea where he lives, and where the people are so wicked they don't even love their little children, and they sometimes kill them."

"It must have been interesting," interrupted the doctor, with a slight sneer, which, however, was lost on little Lucy.

"But, father, wait," she said eagerly. "This is what they do before they know about Jesus; but when they love Him, they love the little children and everybody, and are not wicked any more."

"Oh!" said her father. "And did he ask you all to go to that heathen country to convert these interesting people?"

"Oh, no," Lucy replied, looking inquiringly into his face, for she did not quite understand the tone in which he spoke, as it was one rarely used to her; "but he said we could help to send somebody else while we are little, and I mean to try. Do you mind if I do, father?"

"Oh, no, child; do anything you like if it amuses you; but give me a kiss now, for I must go to see some sick folks. That is my missionary work."

Dr. Gray was the only physician in a small village. His skill in the profession caused him to be in the greatest demand, and his practice extended through all the country round about. Married late in life, all the love of his mature years was poured out at the feet of his pretty young wife; and although people shook their heads at what they considered a strange match they watched in vain for any evil to arise. Even the most prying eyes could discover naught but happiness in their pleasant home. We see many strangely matched teams in this world every day that nevertheless pull pretty

heavy loads together; and the burdens of life seemed very light to Dr. Gray, as he journeyed on with his fair young yoke-fellow by his side.

But one day she grew weary and laid down to rest, and the light and love faded from her sweet eyes and left him in darkness. Then he who had so often been instrumental in restoring the comfort to other homes when it had well nigh departed, was comfortless. Thus it remained through many weary months, until one day, as he looked on the face of his baby-daughter, he saw the likeness of her mother there. From that day the tendrils of her young love twined themselves around his heart and bound up the bleeding wounds, and he was comforted. Oh, it was a rare love that encircled the heart of little Lucy Gray, as she grew more and more in the likeness of that dear dead mother, so that she did not miss the mother-love that she had never known.

Dr. Gray was a Christian. That is to say, he had joined the church when quite young, and was for years an active member, rarely missing a service. But in later years, as his practice increased, it grew to be quite the natural thing for him to start on a long drive into the country to visit his patients as the church bells were calling others to the house of God, so that now he was seldom seen in church. His life was upright and conscientious, and he felt rather gratified than otherwise that his name, fair and clean, could be seen on the church roll; but as to any active service for the Master, he knew

it not. In dealing so much with material things, he neglected the spiritual; and in the study of these human bodies of ours, that are so fearfully and wonderfully made, he forgot the divine Creator.

After her father left her that Sunday afternoon, Lucy sat down and thought of all the missionary had said. How terrible, she thought, to live in a land where they had no Sunday Schools and never heard of Jesus! It seemed to her that the sun could not even shine so brightly as in this Christian land. She wondered how she could send missionaries to teach the people to be good. No one would be likely to go away over there just for the asking of such a little girl as she, and she could think of no other way to send one. Then she did not know anyone to ask. True, there was Miss Lewis, her Sunday School teacher; she was so good, she might be willing to go. But what would her class do without her? They could never love another teacher as they did her. No, indeed; it would never do to ask Miss Lewis. They could not spare her, and someone else, who was not so nice, would do quite as well where they did not know her dear teacher. You see little Lucy in her ignorance argued very much as some people do who are neither so young nor so ignorant. But whom could she ask to go, and how could she send anyone? Her small head ached as she tried to solve the mystery; and at last she rose from her chair with a sigh, and decided to ask Miss Lewis the next Sunday, for the more she thought about it the

more puzzled she became to know what the missionary meant.

The next Sunday Miss Lewis told her class that she was going to have a missionary society, and she wanted them all to be members; and if they would come to her house the next afternoon she would tell them what a missionary society was, and what they had to do to belong to it. When the hour appointed came, there were ten little girls with bright, eager faces, seated around Miss Lewis's parlor. She told them they would have three things to do in their society. The first was to learn all they could about the missionaries in the different countries; the second was to pray for them and their work; and the third was to give their money to pay the expenses of others, for that was the way they could send them if they could not go themselves. "Girls," she said, "I want to call our society the Thanksgiving Society. Don't you think that is a nice name? I'll tell you why. We all have so very many things to thank God for every day that I thought whenever we had anything come to us that made us feel thankful to Him, we would give a penny to help to send the news of His love to those who do not know Him. I am going to give you each something to put your pennies in; and you can keep it where you can see it every day, and it will help you to remember."

Then she gave them each a little round terra-cotta jug, with a slit in it that looked very much like a wide mouth, and a little round knob over the slit that was intended

to be ornamental, but made one think of a pug nose. She told them that she hoped they would give what was really their own, what had cost them some effort or sacrifice, for that is what makes a gift acceptable to God. "For," she said, "we must live up to our name, and make our money a real thank-offering to Him. We will not have any entertainments, but give only so much as the Spirit of God prompts us to; and I feel sure that He will open our eyes to see how we can get this money by our own private efforts and sacrifices, which will make the gift great in His sight whether it be little or much, and I know it will please Him best." She then told them, with a smile, that if any other members of their families should wish to put any money in their jugs, it would be perfectly fair and right.

A more enthusiastic missionary meeting never adjourned. As they separated to their several homes, each with jug in hand, their small heads were full of schemes for raising all the money they could, and I fear the other rules of their society were forgotten for the time being. Not entirely, however; for when they left her Miss Lewis had gone to her room, and as they walked away she was pouring out her whole heart in prayer for the work they were about to undertake; and in a few days they each received a copy of "Children's Work for Children," which this zealous young teacher sent them.

When Lucy Gray entered her father's sitting-room she found him sitting before the

fire, having just returned from a long, cold drive.

"Well, little girlie, where have you been?" he asked with a smile. No matter how cold and tired and anxious Dr. Gray was, he always had a smile for his little daughter.

"I've been to Miss Lewis's, father," she replied, "and we are going to have a missionary society to meet at her house every month. We are going to learn all we can about missionaries, and give all the money we can send to them, and she gave us each a jug to put our money in; and we are going to put in a penny every time we feel thankful for anything, 'cause our society is named the Thanksgiving Society."

Lucy paused, quite breathless, as she handed her jug to her father, who looked at it with a smile, partly of amusement at her enthusiasm.

"But where are you going to get your pennies?" he asked, looking at her sweet little face, with a firelight gleaming on it.

"Oh, I've lots of pennies," she said with a bright glance.

"But if you put your pennies in this wonderful jug, what about that doll with real hair that you have been wanting so long?"

Lucy's face grew very sober, for oh, how much she did want that doll! At last she looked up into her father's face, with a smile, and said, in a voice that would tremble just a little in spite of all effort. "I can get a cheaper doll, father. A doll doesn't have to have real hair to be loved."

There was a sudden mist in the eyes of

Dr. Gray, as he drew his little daughter to his side and kissed her tenderly; and as Lucy put her little arms around his neck she said, "And, father dear, when you are very thankful for anything, you can put a penny in my jug, 'cause you haven't any of your own."

It was a very opportune moment for the suggestion, while the mist in his eyes was still undried, and with a laugh he said, "You sly little puss, so I may use your jug, too. may I? Well, I feel very thankful now, so I think I will have to make my first contribution."

He slipped his hand into his pocket, and to Lucy's delight she saw a bright coin drop into her jug. A whole sixpence! How nice it sounded when she shook the jug!

"Why, father, are you thankful a whole sixpence-worth? What is it for?" she asked.

"For my precious little daughter," he answered, as he folded her in his arms; and, with his cheek resting on the little curly head, they sat in silence, with eyes fixed on the dancing firelight, the minds of both filled with their own thoughts.

After that it became quite a common thing for the doctor to drop a penny into Lucy's jug, just to see the smiles chase each other over her face. It was a very simple way to give the child pleasure, he told himself. One evening when he came in he found her sitting over her little missionary magazine. He lifted her in his arms, magazine and all, and before he knew it—in fact he could not have told how it happened—he had taken the little paper from her hands,

and was reading aloud to her, while she lay in happy contentment, curled up in his arms. He read it almost through before he stopped, it was so pleasant to watch the absorbing interest in her little face. In all the world of science and art there was no study that attracted Dr. Gray as did the face of his child.

So the days went by, and as Lucy shook her jug there was always a heavier jingle. It seemed as though she could hardly wait for the three months to pass before it should be opened. It soon seemed very natural to the doctor to slip something into the jug, and he often did it when Lucy was not by to look on; and, as was also very natural, his thoughts often recurred to the object to which this money was to go. No matter in what direction our money goes, our thoughts are pretty sure to follow, and our interest, too; for where the treasure is, there will the heart be also. In reading Lucy's little magazine to her, he soon found that it was very pleasant and interesting to himself, for it is only where there is lack of knowledge that the interest is lacking. Dr. Gray was a busy man, but the long drives that were necessary to visit some of his patients gave ample opportunity for thought, and he was surprised one day when it occurred to him how much his thoughts were in foreign lands, and how deep an interest he felt in the work of saving souls going on there. With a bound his heart awoke from its long sleep.

The next Sunday morning, as Lucy was

about starting for church, she was not surprised to see her father preparing to go out, for it was quite customary; but when he took her hand in his and said: "Daughter, do you want father to go to church with you to-day?" the big brown eyes were raised to his face with surprise that soon changed to delight as she saw that he was in earnest.

"O father, how nice! It is so lonely to go all by myself."

"I hope you will never feel lonely again, darling," he replied in a trembling voice, "for father intends to go with you always after this."

Everybody was glad to see Dr. Gray at church, for they all loved him, and the hearty greetings he received on every side made him feel as though he had just returned home from a far country. That evening he and Lucy sat together in the twilight, as they both loved to sit, she curled up in his arms like a kitten. She put her hand up and patted his cheek, as she said softly, "Father, don't you think mamma must have been very happy to-day, when she looked down from heaven and saw us going to church together?"

"I hope so, my child," he answered sadly, for oh, how he longed for her sweet presence that night!

"And Jesus, too, father. I know He was glad, 'cause Miss Lewis says He wants everyone who loves Him to go to church. You love Jesus, don't you, father? You never told me."

It was hard for Dr. Gray to control his

voice as he replied, "My dear little Lucy, father loved Jesus a long time ago, but he let the love get buried in his heart under a great many worldly things. It was there, daughter, all the time, although he had almost forgotten it and it has come to life again, and he will never let it get buried any more."

They sat very quietly for a few moments, and then Lucy slipped out of her father's arms and ran from the room. She soon returned, with her little hand full of pennies, and taking down her jug from off the mantle-piece, she said, with her face radiant with happiness, "Father, dear, I am so thankful that it will take every one of my pennies; but I am glad of it, for I don't care for the doll now," and she dropped them slowly into the jug, pausing to hear them jingle as they fell. "O father," she exclaimed suddenly, looking into his face with sparkling eyes, "to-morrow is the day we are to open our jugs. I do wonder how much I have in mine? Do you think it will be much?"

"I think it will be a great deal in the Savior's eyes," he answered tenderly. "Lucy, may I come to your Thanksgiving Society to-morrow? I like that name."

"Why, father," Lucy answered in surprise, "I guess so; but we never have any big people come."

"Well, let me come just once," he answered, smiling. He went, and was warmly welcomed by all those little people, who, at some time or other in their short lives, had

looked to the kind doctor to heal their sicknesses.

The business of the day was the opening of the jugs, and they all went to work at once, Miss Lewis counting the money for them. When she held up Lucy's and exclaimed, "Twenty-one shillings and sixpence!" Dr. Gray saw the big brown eyes, so like her mothers, open wide with wonder, and the cheeks grew rosy red with delight. Then he told them, in very simple words, what great good and happiness had come to him during the past three months, all through a magazine and a terra-cotta jug in the hands of a little girl.

—*The Interior, Chicago.*



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