

# Democratic Watchman

Bellefonte, Pa., Jan. 10, 1896.

## WHEN THE MASTER COMES.

BY FANNY ALRICKS SHUGERT.

Slowly the dusky curtains of night Are silently lifted—softly the light Is glimmering over the eastern sky, Brightening dark places where shadows lie; While the dawn is creeping over the hills, And the new-born day with rapture thrills The waking earth, to life and joy serene, Comes with noiseless footfall, a guest unseen, Whispering to man, who fain would flee: "The Master is come and calleth for thee."

The reapers sing with a glad refrain, As they bind the sheaves of ripened grain; In the rumble and stir of the city's din The toilers are striving fresh laurels to win; Each weaving a woof in the noontide hours Of fancies bright, where no storm-cloud lingers, Ere the brilliant pictures have faded and flown, Comes into each circle a guest unknown, And to one of its numbers sayeth he: "The Master is come and calleth for thee."

Twilight is trailing her mantle of gray, O'er land and sea at the close of day, For the day is spent, and its burdens of care, With all goings, oblivion share, There's a hush in the air that betokens rest The tired bird seeks his downy nest; And man creeps repose, for his labo, is done, In the tranquil eve comes, unbidden, one Who tenderly says: "Wear'y child, list to me— The Master is come and calleth for thee."

Not with trumpet's blast, nor roll of drum, But unheralded doth the Master come, From the lowly vale and the mountain tall, From the humble cot and the stately hall, From the busy room and the workshop's glare, From the giddy dance and the houses of prayer, From the battle's smoke and the ocean's foam, From the haunts of vice and the happy home, From the ice-bound pole and the torrid line, From the broad plain's sheen and the gloomy mine,

From the Bedouin's tent and the purpled throne, From the jungle wild and the desert lone, From the infant's cradle, the couch of age, From the peasant's plow and the desk of sage— Each answers the summons, and then, alone He crosses over to realms unknown, And that voice floats on through eternity; "The Master is come and calleth for thee."

## FOR CONSCIENCE SAKE.

BY MARTHA McCULLOCH WILLIAMS.

Mrs. Southall sat upon her back porch shelling black-eyed peas into a bright new tin pan upon her lap. Whenever the bottom of it became well covered she emptied the shelled peas into a big wooden tray that sat upon the floor back of her left hand. At the right was a big splint basket full of the long yellow-red pods, with just beyond it another in which she cast handfuls of the snaky hulls. A mat of honeysuckle curtailed the porch so thickly that only a stray sunbeam got through it here or there to make a round yellow blur upon the clear cedar floor. Though it was August, and all the yard dry as powder, a foot-mat of plaited cornshucks lay at the porch steps, so well worn as to show that use of it was imperative. The sun full upon it; the porch faced south. At one side a big tawny settee lay lax and panting, now and again rolling upon his back, but evidently without energy to snap at the flies which tormented eye and nose.

The house wall was of hewn logs, with cracks neatly pointed, and white-washed. The door and windows had casings of smooth unpainted poplar, clean as soap, sand, and could make them. There were two square front rooms, with a passage between. The porch started at the back door of it, and ran down the side of the kitchen, which was lower than the rest of the house, and set on to it a low fashion.

Mrs. Southall could look into the kitchen windows without stirring from her seat. Just now she had little intention of stirring, despite a strong inclination. She was a dumpy, roundish woman, with no lightness of motion, to whom her fifty years had brought a greater weight of flesh than her frame could graciously bear. Besides, one foot, swathed in flannels, lay at ease upon the cricket in front of her. A severe sprain had left her for three weeks past confined within her own yard, when she especially wished to be up and doing.

She had strong homely features under thick shiny skin. A patch of stiff hair barely threaded with gray was strained back from her narrow bulging forehead. Her eyes were gray, so deep-set and intense as to redeem her face from commonplaceness, while they accented its lack of charm. She wore a clean stiff-starched, purple calico gown, girt about the waist with a leather belt, over which a scant check apron was held in place by very narrow strings.

Presently she called through to a slim girl at work inside. "Ma'y Frances, are you ready ter make them pie?" "Most, Aunt Cin; the dough jus' needs a little more workin'," a young voice replied.

At once Mrs. Southall sat more upright saying: "Ma'y Frances how often must I tell you my name is Lucindy? Heaven knows I wish it wasn't! I do think my mother might uv give me Scripahone name. But Lucindy Bascom I was christened in ter the Methodis' Church, an' ter change hit is sacrafice; so let me hear no more of yo' Aunt Cins. We've all got enough original sin about us, with out havin' any more tacked on to save yo' breath."

"Yes'm, I'll try. I forgot," Mary Frances said, meekly. "But about the pies; you want apple and grape and plum, don't you? and a peach-cobbler too?"

"Yes, I reckon you had better make a peach-cobbler; that ain't nothin' yo' uncle Dan'll likes better hot fer dinner. An', Ma'y Frances, in makin' the others, don't forget ter make one o' each sort extra deep an' extra sweet—yo' uncle Dan'll does hate er po' pie—an' nothin'—only my duty. You know

mark the crust different, so I can tell where ter cut him a piece."

"I'll pinch the others round the edges and mark his with the fork," Mary Frances said, obediently, though a laugh lurked in her eyes. She was too young, too unformed, to see anything but the humor of Aunt Lucindy's affection for the sulky fellow, at least fifteen years younger than herself, whom she had married in the second marriage that is said to visit on single ladies at forty-five.

Mrs. Southall dropped her eyes a minute, then raised them to say: "No, come to think uv it, you'd better make 'em all alike—all good; it won't break us, I reckon, ef sugar is so high. You Uncle Dan'll be mortified ter death if anybody was ter come tomorrow an' he found out that was difference in what was set before him an' them." H' is mighty high-toned, your uncle Dan'l is. I never fergit how he set an' cried—yes, actually cried, him er man—the first Christmas after we got married, when every nigger on the place was off festivalin', an' I had ter feed the stock an' milk 'em keep up fires—said it hurt 'im so ter see his wife doin' sech. He, poor dear, tried his best ter help; but Sook cow kicked him over when he was pullin' the calf erway; an' the devil yes, the very devil—got in them mules' horses; they'd bat their ears an' kick the minute he stuck his head inside the stable do'. You, uv all folks, Ma'y Frances,ougher known how high his feelin's is; fer when yo' par died an' lef' nothin' the wide world but you an' er passerel debts, you remember how he said: "Lucindy, I see the Lord's hand in this; He don't mean that you shall be by yo'self no' when business keeps me late in town, ner that ther shan't be some er yo' name ter sing ribble in Asbury meetin'-house when hit pleases Him to take away yo' voice."

"Yes, I remember," the girl said, very low, with a sort of catch in the words. She was a pretty fair creature, wholesome as the spring, with blue eyes now dim and wet, hair yellow and olive looking as the silk of young corn and cheeks as delicately pink as a fresh-opened wild-rose. She did remember only too well the day of desolate misery; back of it the merry, kindly, easy-going life with the father who was so unlike his sister. It they had had but a dinner of herbs, love and mirth gave sance and savor to it. By contrast, she fairly hated the stolid prosperity, the grinding plenty about her. She would run away from it out of hand, only there was Alan—and hope.

As if in answer to the feeling that was not yet conscious thought, a knock fell on the front door which stood wide. At once the red setter gave a sharp sonorous bark that changed to a howl of welcome as a tall young fellow came through the passage with a covered earthen dish in his outstretched hand.

"Howdy, howdy—bless my life! Ma'y Frances, come out yere; here's Alan Keith come ter see us! Set a chair fer 'im, an' give 'im er fan—then new turkey-tail one by the metal-shell; an' er drinker water too. I know he's hot an' thirsty. Who's this fer, Alan—me? Oh, thanky! It's the beatifullest white honeycomb that ever I did see!" Mrs. Southall said, volubly, affecting not to notice how the young folks had reddened at the touch of hands, nor the tremor in Alan's throat as he greeted Ma'y Frances. Finding the pair speechless, she went on: "Take off yo' apron, Ma'y Frances, an' set an' rest awhile. Yincey can tend ter the rest o' the cookin'." Then to Alan: "I jes had this girl a-makin' pies. I don't wan' ye ter think I'm ever goin' ter put drudgery on my own flesh—an' blood. Ma'y Frances ain't all the niece I've got, but I'm bound ter say she's the best. That ain't no sort er work that she can't do, an' ain't more'n willin' ter turn 'er world to."

"Do hush, Aunt C—Lucindy, I mean," Mary Frances said, imploring.

It revolved her unutterable, this parade of her excellencies to one whose judgment of her meant all the world.

He looked over at her with a little embarrassed smile; then, seeming to take courage from her distress, said, with half a twinkle of the eye: "I'm mighty glad to hear it, Mrs. Southall. I'm such a lazy fellow myself I want to know all the industrious girls who could take care of me, if I could persuade them to have me."

"Oh, so you are going to turn Mor-man!" Mary Frances said, laughing. "Well, if you get about six real smart wives, maybe you'll live in clover!" "No; I'll try it with just one," Alan retorted.

Mrs. Southall laughed indulgently. Mary Frances had fetched spoon, a chin saucer, and a crisp flaky biscuit.

Her aunt was eating bread and honey with the satisfaction of a child. Between morsels her eyes went from one to the other of the young pair in a way which made it plain that the course of their true love would run smooth as she could contrive it. Fidgeting with her bit of honeycomb, she said:

"Well, I ain't afraid er missin' my dianer when I come ter see you, Alan, not even ef yo' wife ain't a great wor-

er. With the start you've got—house an' land an' stock—I don't believe you could fergit ter work of you tried even so hard."

"Needn't take the trouble. I know it; you want Ma'y Frances; you'll never git her with my consent. You'd better go on home an' quit thinkin' about her," Mrs. Southall said, frigidly, though curious small tremors ran through her voice.

Keith turned to Mary Frances and held out his arms. With a little shamed cry she slipped within their clasp, then sprang away, bidding her face in her hands. Keith drew them down tenderly, saying:

"Little girl, you'll marry me, what-ever happens?"

"Then she'd better do right off; she can't stay here no longer ef that's her

purpose," Mrs. Southall said, her lips narrowing to a line.

"The sooner the better for me," Keith said. "Get your bonnet, sweet-heart. My mother is ready and waitin' to welcome her daughter."

Mary Frances went close to her aunt put out a timid hand, and said softly: "Aunt Lucindy, please—please don't be so mad. Alan didn't know—if it be had dreamed how you felt about it. I—I can't bear to—leave you—this way—after you have been

"You can stay; but if you do, you'll never speak ter him ag'in," Mrs. Southall said, nodding her head.

Then, as Mary Frances began to sob, she broke out wildly:

"Lord! God! Father almighty!

What has Thy po' servant done that this thing should come upon her?

Haven't I been faithful in season an' out, goin' Sundays, rain or shine, ter Thy po' temple ter sing Thy praises

an' raise the tunes?" An it seemed

You had give this child ter me that was childless. Have I made an idol of her? Are ye jealous that I must

lay her on the altar?"

"Come away; we make her worse by staying," Alan said, again taking Mary Frances's hand. The girl made

as if to renew her appeal, but shrank

from the set face and tense gaze that fronted her.

Bending, she laid her

light to drop honey on her purple calico front.

Her face grew almost as deeply purple as she reiterated, "The what? say that over, Alan, unless you're jes' jokin'!"

"There's no joke that I know of; the church has got an organ; that's all there is to it," Alan said, respectfully.

"How did it come by it; tell me that, please? Thar wasn't no money raised, no talk uv it that I ever heard when I got laid up three weeks back.

Do you mean ter tell me that Asbury

stewards an' preachers and all have

done this thing underhand without tellin' me, that is the mother of the church?"

"No, ma'am; no, indeed! You see it this way? Somebody gave the organ.

All they did was to take it and be thankful—it was all they could do," Alan said, eagerly, intent to explain away the hurt to sister Southall's churchly dignity.

"Who was that 'somebody'?" she demanded, fiercely.

"What makes you want to know?" asked Alan.

"Because I'd like ter wring his neck an' make organ bellows out er him," Mrs. Southall said, her square jaws setting hard.

"Young man," she went on, "I hope you've spoke the truth; that you, my church brethren an' sistren, have not been colloguin' to trick me. Twenty years ago they tried the same thing. I fit them, tooth an' nail, aginst the descretion er the sanctuary. You don't remember it. You warn't much more'n four then; but I beat the organ crowd that I've stood flat-footed aginst ever sence, an' shall stand till I die."

"Why Aunt Lucindy, what difference can it make?" Mary Frances broke in. "I'm sure the music will be better, an' certainly you believe God ought to have the very best of every thing for His house and worship."

"Don't talk yo' Piscopie ways ter me," Mrs. Southall said, angrily.

"Child, it ain't the sound, but the spirit that is pleasin' ter our Lord.

You must sing with the soul when you come up ter the holy place, an' what soul, I'd like ter know, is that in er box er wind an' brass?" To my er

soul, it's a heathen sound, worse'n the abomination of desolation. I've sung trillie in Asbury meetin'-house thirty-five years, but jes' as shore as they keep that thing thar—try ter praise God by machinry 'stid er the humble an' contrite heart, I'll never set foot agin alive, an' ef they carry me in me in my coffin I'll do my best ter rise an' confound 'em!" Mrs. Southall said, gettin' unsteadily to her feet and leaning heavily upon the back of her chair. Mary Frances ran to her side, but was waved off. For a minute the elderly woman stood a statue of tremulous fury, then she bent her gaze full upon Alan Keith, saying slowly.

"Alan—I don't know as you know anything more'n you've told—but this I say—if you do know whar that—er

"I'm afraid er missin' my dianer," Keith said, reflectively.

"I want to tell you ter tell them that sent it never ter come about me no more. I've no fellowship for 'em—no Chirstian feelin'.

Dan'l shall take our letters at once—we'll go ter some little church whar the members don't wanter mix fashion with thar religion.

It comes hard ter leave the place whar my fathers an' mothers have set under the gospel droppin'—but I'll do it rather ter hear that squakin' an' boomin'—ter see the place I love made er theeyter, with the little preacher fer play-actor. I mistrusted him when I found that poetry book in his saddle-bags; now he's showed the cloven huff an' all I can do is ter say, him an' his organ crowd keep far away from me."

Young Keith stood up very straight.

"Mrs. Southall," he said, reflectively.

"I never meant ter tell anybody—it seemed too like boastin'—I bought the organ all by myself. I love the sound of it; it helps ter take my soul from earth. Last fall I sowed extra wheat

to purpose to make the money, and from the way it yielded I can't think

God saw anything wrong in the purpose. I bought it—it's only a little

one—wishes I could buy better, the very best. Now you say I sha'n't come here no more. Then I must say somethin' else before I go!"

"Needn't take the trouble. I know it;

if you want Ma'y Frances; you'll

never git her with my consent. You'd

better go on home an' quit thinkin' about her," Mrs. Southall said, frigidly.

"I wanted ter hear it of a Sunday, so

here's a bullet hole in his head.

The place where the body was found is a lonely spot far from any habitation."

Ex.

"Dan'l Dan'l, you needn't go 'way

ter hear 'em," Mrs. Southall sobbed,

clinging fast to his hand. "Stay,

we'll come ev'ry Sunday," she pleaded.

"Only don't leave me—don't Dan'l,

don't sound so strange."

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