

A WOMAN'S PRAYER.

O Lord, who knowest every need of mine, Help me to bear each cross and not repine; Grant me fresh courage every day, Help me to do my work as I am able...

THE CHOICE.

Stilling, that night after dinner, had surprised himself. He always did, Wrayford reflected, when the small fry from Highfield came to dine...

The motor-boat was Stilling's latest hobby, and he rode—or sailed—in and out of the conversation all the evening...

But the dinner-guests—the Rector, Mr. Swordsley, and Mrs. Swordsley, Lucy and Agnes Granger and their brother Addison, and young Jack Emmerton...

Isabel Stilling, sitting beside Mrs. Swordsley, her hand slightly bent above the needlework with which, on such occasions, it was her old-fashioned habit to be engaged...

But at the same moment, from his inevitable position on the hearth-rug, cigar in mouth, his hands in his waistcoat pockets, Stilling was impressively perorating.

"I said, 'If I have the thing at all, I want the best that can be got.' That's my way, you know, Swordsley; I suppose I'm what you'd call fastidious. Always was, about everything, from cigars to woin'—his eye met the apprehensive glance of Mrs. Swordsley, who looked, in evening dress, like her husband with his clerical coat on slightly lower—"

"Here, have a nip? Gad, I need it badly, after the shaking up you gave me this afternoon." Stilling gave a short laugh, and carried his glass to the hearth, where he took up his usual commanding position.

"Why the deuce don't you drink something, Austin? You look aslug as Isabel. One would think you were the chap that had been hit."

Wrayford threw himself into the chair from which Mrs. Stilling had lately risen. It was the one she habitually sat in, and to his fancy a faint scent of her always clung to it. He leaned back and looked up at Stilling.

"I want a cigar?" the latter continued. "Shall we go into the den and smoke?" Wrayford hesitated. "If there's anything more you want to ask me about—"

"Gad, no! I had full measure and running over this afternoon. The deuce of it is, I don't see where the money's all gone to. Luckily I've got plenty of nerve; I'm not the kind of man to sit down and snivel because he's been touched in Wall Street."

make them. "Well, then, Swordsley—" He held out a thick, red hand that seemed to exude beneficence, and the clergyman, pressing it, ventured to murmur a suggestion.

"What, that Galahad Club again? Why, I thought my wife—Isabel, didn't we—No? Well, it must have been my mother, then. And of course, you know, anything my good mother gives is—well—virtually—You haven't asked her? Sure? I could have sworn; I get so many of these appeals. And in these times, you know, we have to go cautiously. I'm sure you recognize that yourself, Swordsley. With my obligations—here and there, to show you don't bear malice, have a brandy and soda before you go. Nonsense, man! This brandy isn't liquor; it's liquor. I picked it up last year in London—last of a famous lot from Lord St. Oswyn's cellar. Laid down here, it stood me at—"

"He broke off as his wife moved toward him. "Ah, yes, of course, Miss Lucy. Make Agnes—a drop of soda water? Look here, Addison, you won't refuse my tippie, I know. Well, take a cigar, at any rate, Swordsley. And, by the way, I'm afraid you'll have to go round the long way by the avenue tonight. Sorry, Mrs. Swordsley, but I forgot to tell them to leave the gate on the lane unlocked. Well, it's a jolly night, and I dare say you won't mind the extra turn along the lake. And, by Jove! if the moon's out, you can get a glimpse of the motor-boat as you turn the point. She's moored just out beyond our boat house; and it's a privilege to look at her, I can tell you!"

The dispersal of the remaining guests carried Stilling out into the hall, where his pleasantries echoed genially under the oak rafters while the Granger girls were being muffled for the drive and the carriages summoned from the stables.

By a common impulse Mrs. Stilling and Wrayford had moved together toward the hearth, which was masked from the door into the hall by a tall screen of lacquer. Wrayford leaned his elbow against the chimney piece, and Mrs. Stilling stood motionless beside him, her clasped hands banging down before her. The rose on her breast stirred slightly.

"Have you any more work to do with him tonight?" she asked below her breath. Wrayford shook his head. "We won't do it all up before dinner. He doesn't want to talk about it any more than he can help."

"No; but he's got to pull up." She paused, looking down at her clasped hands. He listened a moment, catching Stilling's farewell shout; then he changed his position slightly, and laid his hand on her arm.

"In an hour?" "I'll tell you all about it then. The key's in the usual place?" She nodded again, and walked away with her long, drifting motion as her husband came in from the hall. He went up to the tray, and poured himself a tall glass of brandy and soda.

"The weather's turning queer—black as pitch out now. I hope the Swordsleys won't walk into the lake—involuntary immersion, eh? He'd come out a Baptist, I suppose. What'd the Bishop do in such a case? There's a problem for a lawyer, my boy!"

He elapped Wrayford, who was talking over to his wife, who was gathering up her embroidery silks and dropping them into an old-fashioned work bag. Stilling took her by the arms and swung her playfully about so that she faced the lamp-light.

"What's the matter with you tonight?" "The matter?" she echoed, blushing a little, and standing very erect in her desire not to appear to shrink from his tone. "You never opened your lips. Let me the whole job of entertaining those blessed people. Didn't she, Austin?"

Wrayford laughed and lighted a cigarette. "She wasn't quite up to the mark." "There! You see even Austin noticed it. What's the matter? Are you're not good enough for you? I don't pretend they're particularly exciting; but, hang it! I like to ask them here—I like to give pleasure."

"I didn't mean to be dull," said Isabel, appraisingly. "Well, you must learn to make an effort. Don't treat people as if they weren't in the room just because they don't happen to amuse you. Do you know what they'll think? They'll think it's because you've got a bigger house and more cash. Shall I tell you something? My mother said she'd noticed the same thing in you lately. She said she sometimes felt you looked down on her for living in a small house. Oh, she was half joking, of course; but you see you do give people that impression. I can't understand treating any one in that way. The more I have myself, the more I want to make other people happy."

Isabel gently freed herself and laid the work bag on her embroidery frame. "I have a headache; perhaps that made me stupid. I'm going to bed." She turned toward Wrayford and held out her hand. "Good night," he answered, opening the door for her.

When he turned back into the room, his host was pouring himself a third glass of brandy and soda. "Here, have a nip? Gad, I need it badly, after the shaking up you gave me this afternoon." Stilling gave a short laugh, and carried his glass to the hearth, where he took up his usual commanding position.

Wrayford, in his turn, flushed slightly. "You want me to tell her?" "Hang it! I'm soft-hearted—that's the worst of me." Stilling moved toward the tray, and lifted the brandy decanter. "And she'll take it better from you; she'll have to take it from you. She's proud. You can take her out for a row tomorrow morning—you can take her out in the motor-boat, if you like. I meant to have a spin in it myself in the morning; but if you'll tell her."

Wrayford hesitated. "All right, I'll tell her." "Thanks a lot, my dear fellow. And you'll make her see it wasn't my fault, eh? Women are awfully vague about money, and if you appear to back me up, you know—"

Wrayford nodded. "As you please. Good night." "Good night. Here, Austin—there's just one more thing. You need n't say anything to Isabel about the other business—I mean my mother's securities."

"Ah?" said Wrayford. Stilling shifted from one foot to the other. "I'd rather put that to the old lady myself. I can make it clear to her. She hates me, you know, but hang it! I've got a good record. Up to now, I mean. My mother's been in clover since I married; I may say she's been my first thought. And I don't want her to hear of this from Isabel. Isabel's a little harsh at times—and of course this isn't going to make her any easier to live with."

"Very well," Wrayford assented. Stilling, with a look of relief, walked toward the window which opened on the terrace. "Gad! what a queer night! Hot as the kitchen range. Shouldn't wonder if I had a fever before morning. I wonder if that infernal storm took in the launch's awnings before we went home."

Wrayford passed a moment in the doorway. "Yes, I saw him do it. She's shipshape for the night." "Good! That saves me a run down to the shore." Stilling strolled back into the room, whistling cheerfully.

"Good night, then," said Wrayford. "Good night, old man. You'll tell her?" "I'll tell her," Wrayford answered from the threshold. "And mind about my mother!" his host called after him.

The darkness had thinned a little when Wrayford scrambled down the steep path to the shore. Though the air was heavy, Stilling's farewell shout; then he changed his position slightly, and laid his hand on her arm.

But in the densely massed shrubbery about the boat house the night was still black, and Wrayford had to strike a match before he could find the lock and insert his key. He left the door unlocked, and crossed the way in. How often he had crept into this warm pine-scented obscurity, guiding himself cautiously by the edge of the bench along the side wall, and hearing the stealthy lap of water through the gaps in the flooring! He knew just where one had to duck one's head to avoid the two canoes swung out the rafters, and just where to put his hand on the latch of the door that led to the balcony above the lake.

The boat house represented one of Stilling's abandoned whims. He had built it some seven years before, and for a time it had been the scene of incessant nautical experiments. Stilling had roved, sailed, paddled, and sailed, and all Highfield had been impressed to bear him company and admire his versatility. Then motors had come in, and he had forsaken aquatic sports for the guidance of the flying chariot.

The canoes of hick bark and canvas had been hoisted away in the litter and had rotted at the rafters, and the movable floor of the boat house, ingeniously contrived to slide back on noiseless runners, had lain undisturbed through several seasons. Even the key of the boat house had been mislaid,—by Isabel's fault, her husband averred. How often he had been called in to make a new one when the purchase of the motor boat made the lake once more the center of Stilling's activity.

As Wrayford entered he noticed that a strange oily odor overpowered the usual scent of dry pine wood; and at the next step his foot struck an object that rolled noisily across the boards. He lighted a match, and found he had overturned a can of grease which the boatman had no doubt been using to oil the runners of the sliding floor.

Wrayford felt his way down the length of the boat house, and noisily opening the balcony door, looked out on the lake. A few yards off the launch lay motionless in the veiled moonlight; and just below him, on the black water, he saw the dim outline of the skiff which Stilling used to paddle out to her. The silence was so intense that Wrayford fancied he heard a faint rustling in the shrubbery on the high bank behind the boat house, and the crackle of gravel on the path descending to it.

He closed the door again turned back; and as he did so the other door, on the land side, swung inward, and a figure darkened the dim opening. Just enough light entered through the round holes above the respective doors to reveal it as Mrs. Stilling's cloaked outline, and to guide her to him as he advanced. But before they met she stumbled and gave a little cry. "What's it?" he exclaimed, springing toward her.

"My foot caught; the floor seemed to give way under me. Ah, of course—" She bent down in the darkness—"I saw the men oiling it this morning."

suppose I had. In fact, he asked me to." "Is he asked you to?" "Yes." She sounded a sharp note of contempt. "The coward! he's afraid!" Wrayford made no reply, and she went on: "I'm not. Tell me everything, please."

"Well, he's chucked away a pretty big sum again—" "How has he done it?" "He says he doesn't know. He's been speculating, I suppose. The madness of making him your trustee!"

She drew her hands away quickly. "You know why I did it. When we married I didn't want to put him in the false position of the man who accepts everything; I wanted people to think the money was partly his."

"I don't know what you've made people think; but you've been eminently successful in one respect. He thinks it's his—and he loses it as if it were." She shivered a little, drawing her cloak closer. "There are worse things. Go on."

"Isabel!" He bent over her. "Give me your hand again." He lifted it and laid a long kiss on it. "Yes, it's—exactly—that he wished you to tell me?" she asked. "That you've got to sign another promissory note—for fifty thousand this time." She drew a deep breath. "Is that all?"

"Yes, for the present." "She made an answer, her head bent, her hand resting passively in his. He leaned nearer. "What did you mean, just now, by worse things?" She paused a moment. "Haven't you noticed that he's been drinking a great deal lately?"

"Yes, I've noticed." They were both silent again; then Wrayford said with sudden vehemence: "And yet you won't—" "Won't?" "Put an end to it. Good God! Save what's left of your life."

She made an answer, and in the deep stillness the throbbing of the water underneath them was like the anxious beat of a heart. [Concluded next week.]

—Do you know that you can get the finest oranges, bananas and grape fruit and pine apples, Seobler & Co. From Ocean to Ocean in a Flyer. BY M. V. THOMAS.

[Written for the WATCHMAN and continued from last week.] Night has settled over the land before we reached St. Paul, therefore the first thing in order, when you get there is to hasten to the proper window to secure your sleeper ticket, which has been reserved for you if you have exercised foresight and secured your berth by telegraph, a day in advance. Having secured your ticket you board the sleeper and, if you are wise in your generation, you approach the porter after the most approved manner observed in porters, at the same time dropping a mere hint that you expect him to look out for your comfort. His hearty "yo' bet I will," is good to hear, especially if there is a long trip before you. Subsequent events may show that you have made the porter your friend now to soon. You may find that some one, assigned to an upper berth has "pre-empted" your lower one.

If so, don't get excited, just notify your obliging friend, and watch results. There may be a war-cloud above the horizon; but a skirmish, of words, will clear the atmosphere, and after a few scattering shots or parting salutes, you will have the satisfaction of seeing a disgruntled usurper crawling out of comfort. At last you come into your own.

If you are a lover of nature you may tell the porter to wake you as soon as it is light enough to see. His characteristic question, "What c'a ye see in No'th Dakota, lady?" is an index to his opinion of the country you will reach when daylight comes.

If you will exercise your imagination to a degree it may not be difficult for you to compare your entering the sleeper at St. Paul to being swallowed by a great red worm. And during the night while you are sleeping the worm is speeding across the great farms of Minnesota. Yesterday you saw farmers plowing and animals basking in the spring sunshine. But during the night a change has come over the atmosphere. You wake in the early morning while it is yet dark, with a feeling of chilliness. As approaching day gradually dispels the darkness you wonder what makes the ground look so white; but, by and by you see that it is covered with snow, for it was snowing and freezing there last night (April 20). See those icicles hanging from the water-tank, and there on the ground is a pool of water frozen over. You mentally answer the porter's question by thinking, "I see some snow, some ice, and some of North Dakota."

Here comes the obliging porter to carry out your orders, but you are already astir, for if you wish to use the Northern Pacific Railway company's mirrors in making your toilet, you will "come early and avoid the toilet." Now look out through the window, do not give all your attention to your fellow travelers; all your will have them with you for several days, but you will not have this particular bit of landscape more than a few minutes. For the great worm which swallowed you last night, stops only long enough to fill his empty maw with water and coal and then rushes westward in a mad race with the sun, impatiently snorting, "I'm getting there—getting there—getting there! Among other things, you notice that the snow has all disappeared, the sun is shining now, but soon it will darken and a snow squall will come blowing across the plains, which will give you some unpleasant feelings as you remember what you have read about a North Dakota blizzard. But it is soon over and the sun shines again.

There across the field you see a man starting out, riding his sulky plow, drawn by six horses. The wide stretch of rich black soil which spreads out behind him shows that he is turning many furrows. As you notice mile after mile of furrows that he has already plowed, you begin to wonder if he will get home to dinner. Here and there a herd of cattle or horses can be seen grazing; here and there a small house and barn with a wind-mill near. Very rarely is a dug-out seen and the houses are not all small. Occasionally one can see a large commodious looking farmhouse. Suddenly you awake to a realization of the fact that you have ridden for hours without seeing a tree. As far as the eye can see the unbroken level of the prairie, everything has the color of dried grass except where it has been burned or plowed, and that is black.

Here are saw mills; large pastures in which are horses, cattle and ponies in herds, cropping the fresh, green grass; small but neatly built farm-houses surrounded with rich meadows, and plowed fields showing the rich black soil. Yonder is an attractive little school building with Old Glory floating above it. A short distance away are two Indian maidens riding their ponies; and over under a tree is an Indian tepee. Away in the distance, beyond all this, rise the snow covered peaks in silens grandeur. As we view this scene we start down grade and now we seem to be running a race with the sparkling waters of a gurgling mountain stream. As you are carried down through the valley you see pretty towns, artistic cottages, wigwams, and farm-houses nestling as it were under the protection of the mighty mountains, and looking out over the green waters of Clark's Fork, as it winds in and out among the tall trees. As you come to a pretty town called Plains you learn that you are traveling through the Flat Head valley and the Indian reservation of that tribe. As twilight falls we are still speeding by over-hanging rocks far above us while under their shelter yellow daisies and mountain pinks are blooming.

Daybreak finds us in the Yaquina valley; its rich alfalfa fields, and its great orchards in full bloom, its fertile farms planted with various crops, and among these, its barren plains where there is no irrigation. Far to the southward is Mt. Adams, its majestic snowy crown rising above the clouds which can be seen floating about it. Now we are climbing up, up, with two engines puffing and proclaiming "we're getting there, we're getting there!" We are descending the Cascades. Again, darkness comes upon us at intervals as we enter the several tunnels on this part of the route, the longest of which requires eight minutes to pass through. And before emerging from this one we can hear the brakes at work and tell by the motion of the train that we are running down the mountain. Do not fear; the lever is under the control of nerves of steel and a will of iron. Look down the mountain below you at the saw-mills, see the timber which has been recklessly wasted, left to decay, and hundreds of acres of standing timber which has been destroyed by fire. Here we are down at last beside the Green river with its beautiful scenery. Sparkling, leaping, laughing, stinging cascades come bounding down the mountainsides surrounded by verdure of wondrous richness. But we cannot enjoy it long. We simply get passing glimpses of its beauty as the train dashes along. We are over an hour late; and are now engaged in a wild race against time; and time is several lengths ahead. On arriving at Tacoma we find that with all the efforts put forth we have lost the race. The Southern Pacific train left the city before we entered it, and so we have eight hours to wait for the next train.

Let us improve the shining hours. We will take this car to the wharf on Puget Sound. See those large ships, they will soon be laden and ploughing the broad Pacific. Over there on the bench is a large sign which says, "Watch Tacoma Grow." And truly when you have seen more of the place you will decide that it grows "while you wait." As soon as you board the car you are impressed with the politeness of the people. The car we have boarded runs from the wharf to McKinley Park, from where you can look over the city, and a beautiful city it is, built upon the hills. It looks like a city of homes, dainty cottages which are marvele of art and beauty, surrounded with brilliant flowers and smooth, green lawns. There are no street crossings, they are not needed for the streets are paved from end to end with bricks, concrete blocks, or solid concrete. There are signs reading saloon, barroom, etc., but you can see no drunk men nor loafers, everyone seems to be too busy to patronize these places. We learn later that the laws are strict and the citizens have the backbone to see them enforced. Seeing several church spires we decided to view the churches, but at the end of an hour or more we have seen only a few of them, so we return to the station. Here is a man who wears an official cap, but on being asked how many churches are in the city he answers "You've got me there, I can't tell how many, but I know there are a good many."

In the station we find a representative of the Y. M. C. A., who kindly hands us a copy of the directory and volunteers many bits of useful information. From the directory we get the following information. There are seventy-seven churches representing fifteen denominations; eleven un-denominational organizations for the uplifting and christianizing of mankind; twenty-eight church auxiliary societies; thirty schools and colleges, educational and industrial, not counting the common schools which number twenty-three. The dainty homes show the pride of ownership, public works, the pride of citizenship.

[To be Continued.] A woman who has mislaid her hat has been known to look for it in her purse, among other impossible places. If women realized that much of the medical treatment received from local practitioners was an effort only to locate disease, and a search for it in most unlikely and impossible places, they would place a higher value on the opinion of a specialist like Dr. Pierce. His wide experience in the treatment and cure of more than half a million women enables him to promptly locate the disease by its symptoms. For all diseases of the delicate womanly organs there is no medicine so sure to heal as Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription.

Sick women are invited to consult Dr. Pierce by letter, free of charge. All correspondence strictly private. Address Dr. R. V. Pierce, Buffalo, N. Y.

Here are saw mills; large pastures in which are horses, cattle and ponies in herds, cropping the fresh, green grass; small but neatly built farm-houses surrounded with rich meadows, and plowed fields showing the rich black soil. Yonder is an attractive little school building with Old Glory floating above it. A short distance away are two Indian maidens riding their ponies; and over under a tree is an Indian tepee. Away in the distance, beyond all this, rise the snow covered peaks in silens grandeur. As we view this scene we start down grade and now we seem to be running a race with the sparkling waters of a gurgling mountain stream. As you are carried down through the valley you see pretty towns, artistic cottages, wigwams, and farm-houses nestling as it were under the protection of the mighty mountains, and looking out over the green waters of Clark's Fork, as it winds in and out among the tall trees. As you come to a pretty town called Plains you learn that you are traveling through the Flat Head valley and the Indian reservation of that tribe. As twilight falls we are still speeding by over-hanging rocks far above us while under their shelter yellow daisies and mountain pinks are blooming.

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