

THE OLD FAITH.

"Thus saith the Lord: Stand ye in the ways and see, and look for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls."—Jeremiah 6:16.

THE INITIATION

By BELLE MANIATES

HELEN WHITE, most becomingly gowned, came into the music room after dinner, shaded the lights, turned on the gas logs and arranged the music on the piano.

"Nell, I see you are making elaborate preparations to receive callers," said her brother Fred, banteringly. "I am sorry to convey to you the disappointing intelligence that there is no prospect of your receiving a call to-night—that is, from a man. All the men you know are otherwise engaged."

Helen's face fell perceptibly. "Oh, Fred, what is going on?" "Can't tell you."

"Stag?" "Nell," he laughed, putting on his outer coat and taking a cap from his pocket, "you always ask too many questions. Would it give you a ray of comfort if I told you it was purely stag?"

But Helen swept from the room without descending to speak further on the subject. Fred was surely the most provoking of brothers. He was so mean about introducing her to the "new man," Wendell Lane, who was a friend of Fred's. He was not a society man, so she had no prospect of meeting him at dances. He was extremely good looking and so desirable in every way, but Fred had stubbornly refused all her entreaties to bring him to the house.

"He doesn't care for girls—sensible fellow—and besides you've turned down hard two or three of my friends whom I have introduced to you."

"I wonder what's on to-night!" she thought, going to the library window and flattening her face against the pane. Through the dusky gloom she discerned Fred's vanishing figure faintly outlined. He wasn't going toward the street, but across the lawn.

"To the stable!" she thought. "And the cap! He only wears that when he drives or goes on 'expeditions.' Perhaps he is only going for a drive with some other man and said that about no one's calling to tease me."

She hoped devoutly that some one would call. The time was so propitious. Her father and mother were away on a journey and now Fred out for the evening. She did everything she could think of to pass away the time of that awful interval from seven to eight—the hour of suspense. She read the evening paper, played the piano abstractedly with her foot on the soft pedal that she might hear the doorbell. Finally she went upstairs to see what her little brother Tom was doing. She found him putting on his coat and hat.

"Why, Tom, where the you going?" "Out with some fellows. Mother said I might have one night out, you know."

"Yes. Everyone is having a 'night out' but me," said his sister, with a mirthless laugh.

"Well, I guess Fred'll be back soon," said Tom, consolingly.

"What makes you think so?" she asked, curiously.

"You just look in the den and you'll see," he replied, with a chuckle.

Helen quickly sought Fred's den and gazed in consternation at the preparations and supplies for a spread that she encountered.

"The plot thickens!" she thought, following Tom down stairs. He went out the front door and from the window she saw him, too, cross the lawn and go in the direction of the barn.

"Well," she exclaimed to herself, "the whole White family seem to be drawn barnward. I think I had best follow suit."

She sat down for a few minutes to plot and ponder. Fred had evidently planned a sub rosa feast, else he'd have asked her to help in the preparations. He probably counted on returning after her retiring hour, which was early when there were no callers. It occurred to her that he was going to drive first. Well, she could prove or disprove that suspicion right away.

She stole out across the lawn, down the gravelled walk, around the curve and out to the stable which was at considerable distance from the house. It was entirely deserted. She had a key with her and

easily found a lantern in the carriage-room. Investigation showed her that the team of dapple grays were quietly resting, as was Fred's own horse.

She locked the door and extinguished the lantern. When she came out she was startled to see three or four men come out of the old root cellar. She drew back into the shadows with palpitating heart and felt quite faint from fear until, as the men passed, she recognized Fred's voice. Then her fear was superseded by curiosity and excitement. She felt that she was on the track of the mystery.

As soon as the figures had disappeared from sight she relighted the lantern and sought the cellar. The door was partially open and a faint streak of light shone out. She looked in. Lying on a pile of lumber was a man, bound hand and foot, gagged and blindfolded.

Again terror seized her and she was about to flee when she recognized the form as that of Wendell Lane. In an instant she had removed the gag from his mouth and the bandage from his eyes.

"Isn't this Miss White?" he asked. "You'll pardon my not rising, I am—" "Mr. Lane," she replied. "But how can I cut these cords. I cannot untie them."

"There's a knife in my pocket." Helen soon severed the stout cords that bound him and he was on his feet. "Quick!" he exclaimed. "Let's get away before they come back!"

Leaving the lantern they sped away in the darkness, not pausing until out of range of the cellar.

"Do tell me why you were in there and bound so cruelly."

He laughed. "I have recently joined the club of which your brother is a member, and they were initiating me to-night. They took me in that place, telling me it was the vault of the cemetery, and I almost believed them. This was only the preliminary to several pleasant things they had in store for me."

"Oh, what a good one on them!" cried Helen, ecstatically. "Fred thinks he is so 'foxy.' He has a banquet spread out in his den for you all. Won't you come up to the house. We'll make way with the 'cats.'"

"Indeed I will!" was his hearty rejoinder. When they reached the house and enjoyed a friendly chat, he suddenly exclaimed:

"When they come back and find me missing they'll get out a search warrant. Won't they come here?"

"Oh, no! Fred will never look for you here!" declared Helen, confidently.

"Why not?" "She blushed a little but frankly told him how she had tried in vain to prevail upon her brother to bring him to the house. Presently they adjourned to the den and Wendell made caviar sandwiches and opened olives while Helen made the coffee.

As they were enjoying a cozy little meal they heard the outer door open. "Fred!" cried Wendell, in consternation.

"No," said Helen, listening. "It's Tom!" "Come up here, dear!" she called. "This is Mr. Lane, Tom. You can sit down and have luncheon with us, if you like."

"Oh, Helen!" cried the lad in a tone of wild excitement. "I've got more to tell you. You see I belong to a secret society and we were going to meet at the root cellar. I got there first and I saw some men carrying another man in there and he was tied and gagged. The men went away and left him and I ran and got our fellows all together, and we thought it was a murder, so we went and told the men in the grocery and they got a policeman and all went to the root cellar, but the man wasn't there. They found the rope and the gags, though. They are going to find out all about it."

Wendell and Helen listened to this recital with delighted interest and at its close gave vent to laughter.

"Well, 'tain't no laughing matter," said Tom, indignantly.

"You'll think it is when we tell you," assured Helen. "Tom never tells anything," she explained to Wendell.

"I'd never tell anything Helen told me not to; she's a brick," declared Tom.

"I think so, too," agreed Wendell, and he proceeded to relate the circumstances of the initiation to Tom, who highly appreciated the situation.

"I really think you had better go, now," advised Helen to Wendell. "Fred may be coming any minute now."

"And may I come soon—to-morrow night?" he asked, earnestly, as he was taking leave.

Later, Helen, locked in her room, laughed softly to hear her brother and his companions go into the den and give exclamations of regret and consternation.

"Fred," she said, languidly, at breakfast the next morning, "Tom and I got hungry last night and we found such lots of delicacies in your den!"

But Fred was cross and irresponsible. That evening when he came home he was dumfounded to find Wendell there chatting away and on friendly terms with Helen.

"Where did you two meet?" he asked, bluntly.

"Oh, Mr. Lane introduced himself to me one time when we were thrown into each others society," she said, demurely, and Tom didn't even smile.

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NEWS OF THE WAR IN FAR EAST TWO FORTS CAPTURED BY THE JAPANESE. St. Petersburg, Dec. 1.—Official dispatches received here indicate that the Japanese are falling back below Sintsintin, where for several days they had apparently been attempting a turning movement. After four days of tolerably severe but unsuccessful fighting, they are now retiring, with the Russians in pursuit.

TERRIBLE SLAUGHTER AT PORT ARTHUR. London, Dec. 2.—The correspondent at Che Foo of the Daily Telegraph says that the attack on 203 Metre Hill resulted in heavy losses to the Japanese stormers. Simultaneously with this assault men of the Ninth and Eleventh divisions advanced and menaced the Rihlung and Kekwan forts. It is stated that within the last 24 hours the Japanese casualties have totaled 15,000, and it is asserted that the attacks have been planned to continue until December 10, when, it is hoped, the capture of Port Arthur will be completed.

RUSSIANS CONCEDE THAT PORT ARTHUR MUST FALL. St. Petersburg, Dec. 3.—With the confirmation of the news that the Japanese have occupied 203 Metre Hill and the report that the Russians unsuccessfully attempted its recapture, officials at the war office are beginning to prepare themselves for the inevitable. Golden Hill and Liaoti Hill are higher and dominate 203 Metre Hill, but the officials say that if the Japanese succeed in mounting heavy guns upon the latter it probably will be only a question of days or weeks before the fortress falls. Still, there is not the slightest idea among Gen. Stoessel's friends that he will surrender.

Mukden, Dec. 3.—From 2:30 o'clock Friday afternoon until late last night sounds of a rapid cannonade were heard on the Russian southwest front, such as has not been experienced here for a long time, but no excitement has been caused by the incident. Gen. Rennenkampf, with his cavalry, is following the retreating Japanese, giving them no time to occupy a position. It seems that the Japanese in attempting to seize Russian positions recently, so extended themselves as to deplete their reserves.

London, Dec. 3.—The possibility of Russia trying to send her Black Sea fleet to the far east strongly engages the attention of England in view of the complications which would result if such an attempt were made. At the beginning of the war Baron Hayashi, the Japanese minister here, questioned Foreign Minister Lansdowne on the subject and received the most formal assurances that Great Britain would oppose any attempt of the Black Sea fleet to pass into the Mediterranean.

ON A CHARGE OF FRAUD. Detroit's Sheriff-elect is indicted by a Federal Grand Jury.

Detroit, Mich., Dec. 1.—County Coroner John D. Hoffman, sheriff-elect of Wayne county, was arrested Wednesday by a United States deputy marshal on an indictment charging him with using the United States mails to further a scheme to defraud the state, just as he was leaving the police court, where he had been bound over for trial on the charge of obtaining money under false pretenses by means of charging the investigation in the death of Mrs. Josephine Summers to the state when she was a resident of this city. The federal grand jury returned the indictment against him. The grand jury found that Mrs. Josephine Summers, on the investigation of whose death the police court case is also based, was a resident of this city and that therefore the coroner was not entitled to collect fees from the state for conducting the inquest into her death.

A Great Drouth in Kentucky. Lexington, Ky., Dec. 1.—Drouth in central Kentucky is the worst in the history of the state. Pasture lands that have been in grass 20 years will have to be resown, even the roots being parched. Creeks, ponds and wells are drying up and stock is cut down to one drink of water in 24 hours in many sections. Railroads and farmers are buying water at city water-works and hauling it miles. The Lexington reservoir is practically inexhaustible and affords the only hope about Lexington. The big blue grass stock farms are in dire straits.

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