

IN HIS STEPS.

"What Would Jesus Do?"

By CHARLES M. SHELDON.

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(CONTINUED.)

Suddenly she saw in the idle curiosity of the girls an opportunity. They had never seen the sin and misery of Raymond. Why should they not see them, even if their motives in going down there were simply to pass away an afternoon?

"Very well, I'll go with you. You must obey my orders and let me take you where you can see the most," she said as she entered the carriage and took the seat beside the girl who had first suggested the trip to the Rectangle.

"Hadin' w better take a policeman along," said one of the girls, with a nervous laugh. "It really isn't safe down there, you know."

"There's no danger," said Virginia briefly. "Is it true that Rollin has been converted?" asked the first speaker, looking at Virginia curiously. It impressed her during the drive to the Rectangle that all three of her friends were regarding her with close attention, as if she were very peculiar.

"Yes, he certainly is. I saw him myself on the night of the first interest shown, a week ago Saturday," replied Virginia, who did not know just how to tell that scene.

"I understand he is going around to the clubs talking with his old friends there, trying to preach to them. Doesn't that seem funny?" said the girl with the red silk parasol.

Virginia did not answer, and the other girls were beginning to feel sober as the carriage turned into the street leading to the Rectangle. As they neared the district they grew more and more nervous. The sights and smells and sounds which had become familiar to Virginia struck the senses of these refined, delicate society girls as something horrible. As they entered farther into the district the Rectangle seemed to stare as with one great bleary, beer-soaked countenance at this fine carriage with its load of fashionably dressed young ladies. "Slumming" had never been a fad with Raymond society, and this was perhaps the first time that the two had come together in this way. The girls felt that, instead of seeing the Rectangle, they were objects of curiosity. They were frightened and disgusted.

"Let's go back. I've seen enough," said the girl who was sitting with Virginia.

They were at that moment just opposite a notorious saloon and gambling house. The street was narrow and the sidewalk crowded. Suddenly out of the door of the saloon a young woman reeled. She was singing in a broken, drunken sob that seemed to indicate that she partly realized her awful condition. "Just as I am, without one plea," and as the carriage rolled past she leered at it, raising her face so that Virginia saw it very close to her own. It was the face of the girl who had knelt sobbing that night with Virginia kneeling beside her and praying for her.

"Stop!" cried Virginia, motioning to the driver, who was looking around. The carriage stopped, and in a moment she was out and had gone up to the girl and taken her by the arm.

"Loreen!" she said, and that was all. The girl looked into her face, and her own changed with a look of utter horror. The girls in the carriage were smitten into helpless astonishment. The saloon keeper had come to the door of the saloon and was standing there looking on, with his hands on his hips, and the Rectangle from its windows, its saloon steps, its filthy sidewalk, gutter and roadway paused and with undistinguished wonder stared at the two girls. Over the scene the warm sun of spring poured its mellow light. A faint breath of music from the band stand in the park floated into the Rectangle. The concert had begun, and the fashion and wealth of Raymond were displaying themselves up town on the boulevards.

CHAPTER VI.

For a game to get a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law, and a man's face shall be they of his own household.

Be ye therefore imitators of God, as beloved children, and walk in love even as Christ also loved you.

When Virginia left the carriage and went to Loreen, she had no definite idea as to what she would do or what the result of her action would be. She simply saw a soul that had tasted of the joy of a better life slipping back again into its old hell of shame and death, and before she had touched the drunken girl's arm she had asked only one question, "What would Jesus do?" That question was becoming with her, as with many others, a habit of life.

She looked around now as she stood close by Loreen, and the whole scene was cruelly vivid to her. She thought first of the girls in the carriage.

"Drive on. Don't wait for me. I am going to see my friend here home," she said, calmly enough.

The girl with the red parasol seemed to gasp at the word "friend" when Virginia spoke it. She did not say anything. The other girls seemed speechless.

"Go on. I cannot go back with you," said Virginia.

The driver started the horses slowly. One of the girls leaned a little out of the carriage.

"Can't we—that is—do you want our help? Couldn't we?"

"No, no!" exclaimed Virginia. "You cannot be of any use to me."

The carriage moved on, and Virginia was alone with her charge. She looked up and around. Many faces in the crowd were sympathetic. They were not all cruel or brutal. The Holy Spirit had softened a good deal of the Rectangle.

"Where does she live?" asked Virginia. No one answered. It occurred to Virginia afterward, when she had time to think it over, that the Rectangle showed a delicacy in its sad silence that would have done credit to the boulevard.

For the first time it flashed upon her that the immortal being who was flung like wreckage upon the shore of this earthly hell called the saloon had no place that could be called home.

The girl suddenly wrenched her arm from Virginia's grasp. In doing it she nearly threw Virginia down.

"You shall not touch me! Leave me! Let me go to hell! That's where I belong! The devil is waiting for me! See him!" she exclaimed hoarsely. She turned and pointed with a shaking finger at the saloon keeper. The crowd laughed.

Virginia stepped up to her and put her arm about her.

"Loreen," she said firmly, "come with me. You do not belong to hell. You belong to Jesus, and he will save you. Come."

The girl suddenly burst into tears. She was only partly sobered by the shock of meeting Virginia.

Virginia looked around again. "Where does Mr. Gray live?" she asked. She knew the evangelist boarded somewhere near that tent.

A number of voices gave her the direction.

"Come, Loreen. I want you to go with me to Mrs. Gray's," she said, still keeping her hold of the swaying, trembling creature, who still mumbled and sobbed and now clung to Virginia as before she had repulsed her.

So the two moved on through the Rectangle toward the evangelist's lodging place. The sight seemed to impress the Rectangle seriously. It never took itself seriously when it was drunk, but this was different. The fact that one of the most beautifully dressed girls in Raymond was taking care of one of the Rectangle's most notorious characters, who reeled along under the influence of liquor, was a fact astonishing enough to throw more or less dignity and importance about Loreen herself. The event of Loreen stumbling through the gutter dead drunk always made the Rectangle laugh and jest, but Loreen staggering along with a young lady from the society circles up town supporting her was another thing. The Rectangle viewed it with soberness and more or less wondering admiration.

When they reached Mr. Gray's boarding place, the woman who answered Virginia's knock said that both Mr. and Mrs. Gray were out somewhere and would not be back until 6 o'clock.

Virginia had not planned anything further than a possible appeal to the Grays either to take charge of Loreen for a while or find some safe place for her until she was sober again. She stood now at the lodging after the woman had spoken, and she was really at a loss to know what to do. Loreen sank down stupidly on the steps and buried her face in her arms. Virginia eyed the miserable figure with a feeling that she was fearful would grow into disgust.

Finally a thought possessed Virginia that she could not resist. What was to hinder Loreen from going home with her? Why should not this homeless, wretched creature, reeking with the fumes of liquor, be cared for in Virginia's own home, instead of being consigned to strangers in some hospital or house of charity? Virginia really knew very little about any such places of refuge. As a matter of fact, there were two or three such institutions in Raymond, but it was doubtful if any of them would have taken a person like Loreen in her present condition. But that was not the question with Virginia just now. "What would Jesus do with Loreen?" was what Virginia faced, and she finally answered it by touching Loreen again.

"Loreen, come! You are going home with me. We will take the car here at the corner."

Loreen staggered to her feet and, to Virginia's relief, made no trouble. She had expected resistance or a stubborn refusal to move. When they reached the corner and took the car, it was nearly full of people going up town. Virginia was painfully conscious of the stare that greeted her and her companion as they entered, but her thought was directed more and more to the approaching scene with her grandmother. What would Mrs. Page say when she saw Loreen?

Loreen was nearly sober now, but she was lapsing into a state of stupor. Virginia was obliged to hold fast to her arm. Several times she lurched heavily against Virginia, and as the two went up the avenue a curious crowd of people turned and gazed at them. When she mounted the steps of the handsome house, Virginia breathed a sigh of relief, even in the face of the interview with her grandmother, and when the door shut and she was in the wide hall with her homeless outcast she felt equal to anything that might now come.

Mrs. Page was in the library. Hearing Virginia come in, she came into the hall. Virginia stood there supporting Loreen, who stared stupidly at the rich magnificence of the furnishings around her.

"Grandmother"—Virginia spoke without hesitation and very clearly—"I have brought one of my friends from the Rectangle. She is in trouble and has no home. I am going to care for her a little while."

Mrs. Page glanced from her granddaughter to Loreen in astonishment.

"Did you say she was one of your friends?" she asked in a cold, sneering voice that hurt Virginia more than anything she had yet felt.

"Yes, I said so," Virginia's face flushed, but she seemed to recall the verse that Mr. Gray had used for one

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of his recent sermons. "A friend or publican and sinner." Surely Jesus would do this that she was doing.

"Do you know what this girl is?" asked Mrs. Page in an angry whisper, stepping near Virginia.

"I know very well. She is an outcast. You need not tell me, grandmother. I know it even better than you do. She is drunk at this minute. But she is also a child of God. I have seen her on her knees repentant, and I have seen hell reach out its horrible fingers after her again, and, by the grace of Christ, I feel that the least I can do is to rescue her from such peril. Grandmother, we call ourselves Christians. Here is a poor, lost human creature without a home, slipping into a possible eternal loss, and we have more than enough. I have brought her here and shall keep her."

Mrs. Page glared at Virginia and clinched her hands. All this was contrary to her social code of conduct.

How could society excuse such familiarity with the scum of the streets? What would Virginia's actions cost the family in the way of criticism and the loss of standing and all that long list of necessary relations which people of wealth and position must sustain to the leaders of society? To Mrs. Page society represented more than the church or any other institution. It was a power to be feared and obeyed. The loss of its good will was a loss more to be dreaded than anything, except the loss of wealth itself.

She stood erect and stern and confronted Virginia, fully roused and determined. Virginia placed her arm about Loreen and calmly looked her grandmother in the face.

"You shall not do this, Virginia. You can send her to the asylum for helpless women. We can pay all the expenses. We cannot afford, for the sake of our reputations, to shelter such a person."

"Grandmother, I do not wish to do anything that is displeasing to you, but I am going to keep Loreen here tonight and longer if I think it is best."

"Then you can answer for the consequences. I do not stay in the same house with a miserably—Mrs. Page lost her self control. Virginia stopped her before she could speak the next word.

"Grandmother, this house is mine. It is your home with me as long as you choose to remain, but in this matter I shall act as I fully believe Jesus would in my place. I am willing to bear all that society may say or do. Society is not my God. By the side of this poor, lost soul I do not count the verdict of society as of any value."

"I shall not remain here, then," said Mrs. Page. She turned suddenly and walked to the end of the hall. She then came back and said, with an emphasis that revealed her intense excitement and passion:

"You can always remember that you have driven your grandmother out of your house in favor of a drunken woman." Then, without waiting for Virginia to reply, she turned again and went up stairs.

Virginia called for a servant and soon had Loreen cared for. She was fast lapsing into a wretched condition. During the brief scene in the hall she had clung to Virginia so hard that Virginia's arm was sore from the clutch of the girl's fingers.

Virginia did not know whether her grandmother would leave the house or not. She had abundant means of her own, was perfectly well and vigorous and capable of caring for herself. She had sisters and brothers living in the south and was in the habit of spending several weeks in the year with them. Virginia was not anxious about her welfare, so far as that went, but the interview had been a painful one to her. Going over it, as she did in her room before she went down to tea, she found little cause for regret, however. "What would Jesus do for?" There was no question in Virginia's mind that she had done the right thing. If she had made a mistake, it was one of the judgment and not of the heart. When the bell rang for tea, she went down, and her

grandmother did not appear. She sent a servant to her room, and the servant brought back word that Mrs. Page was not there. A few minutes later Rollin came in. He brought word that his grandmother had taken the evening train for the south. He had been at the station to see some friends off and had by chance met his grandmother as she was coming out. She told him her reason for going.

Virginia and Rollin confronted each other at the table with earnest, sad faces.

"Rollin," said Virginia, and for the first time almost since his conversion she realized what a wonderful thing her brother's change of life meant to her. "do you blame me? Am I wrong?"

"No, dear; I cannot believe you are. This is very painful for us, but if you think this poor creature owes her safety and salvation to your personal care it was the only thing for you to do. Oh, Virginia, to think that we have all these years enjoyed our beautiful home and all these luxuries selfishly, forgetful of the multitude like this woman! Surely Jesus in our places would do what you have done."

And so Rollin comforted Virginia and consoled with her that evening, and of all the wonderful changes that Virginia was henceforth to know on account of her great pledge nothing affected her so powerfully as the thought of Rollin's change in life. Truly, this man in Christ was a new creature. Old things were passed away. Behold, all things in him had become new!

Dr. West came that evening at Virginia's summons and did everything necessary for the outcast. She had drunk herself almost into delirium. The best that could be done for her now were quiet nursing and careful watching and personal love. So in a beautiful room, with a picture of Christ walking by the sea hanging on the wall, where her bewildered eyes caught daily something more of its hidden meaning, Loreen lay, tossed she hardly knew how into this haven, and Virginia crept nearer the Master than she had ever been as her heart went out toward this wreck which had thus been flung torn and beaten at her feet.

Meanwhile the Rectangle waited the issue of the election with more than usual interest, and Gray and his wife wept over the pitiable creatures who, after a struggle with surroundings that daily tempted them, too often wearied of the struggle, and, like Loreen, threw up their arms and went whirling into the boiling abyss of their previous condition.

The after meeting at the First church was now regularly established. Henry Maxwell went into the lecture room on the Sunday succeeding the week of the primary and was greeted with an enthusiasm that made him tremble at first for its reality. He noted again the absence of Jasper Chase, but all the others were present, and they seemed drawn very close together by a bond of common fellowship that demanded and enjoyed mutual confidence. It was the general feeling that the spirit of Jesus was a spirit of very open, frank confession of experience. It seemed the most natural thing in the world for Edward Norman to be telling all the rest of the company about the details of his newspaper.

"The fact is, I have lost a good deal of money during the last three weeks. I cannot tell how much. I am losing a great many subscribers every day."

"What do the subscribers give as their reason for dropping the paper?" asked Henry Maxwell. All the rest were listening eagerly.

"There are a good many different reasons. Some say they want a paper that prints all the news, meaning by that the crime details, sensations like prizefights, scandals and horrors of 'arious kinds. Others object to the discontinuance of the Sunday edition. I have lost hundreds of subscribers by that action, although I have made satisfactory arrangements with many of the old subscribers by giving even more in the extra Saturday edition than they formerly had in the Sunday issue. My greatest loss has come from a falling off in advertisements and from the attitude I have felt obliged to take on political questions. This last action has really cost me more than any other. The bulk of my subscribers are intensely partisan. I may as well tell you all frankly that if I continue to pursue the plan which I honestly believe Jesus would

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"I had had my days of not feeling well and my monthly suffering, and a good deal of backache, but I thought all women had these things and did not complain."

"I had doctored for some time, but no medicine seemed to help me, and my physician thought it best for me to go to the hospital for local treatment. I had read and heard so much of your

Vegetable Compound that I made up my mind to try it. I was troubled with falling of the womb, had sharp pains in ovaries, leucorrhoea and painful menses. I was so weak and dizzy that I would often have severe fainting spells. I took in all several bottles of Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound and Blood Purifier and used the Sanative Wash, and am now in good health. I wish others to know of the wonderful good it has done me, and have many friends taking it now. Will always give your medicine the highest praise."

MRS. A. TOLLE, 1946 Hilston St., Philadelphia, Pa., writes:

"DEAR MRS. PINKHAM—I was very thin and my friends thought I was in consumption. Had continual headaches, backache and falling of womb, and my eyes were affected. Every one noticed how poorly I looked and I was advised to take Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound. One bottle relieved me, and after taking eight bottles am now a healthy woman; have gained in weight 95 pounds to 140 pounds, and everyone asks what makes me so stout."

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in the matter of political issues and their treatment from a nonpartisan and moral standpoint. The News will not be able to pay its operating expenses unless one factor in Raymond can be depended on."

He paused a moment, and the room was very quiet. Virginia seemed specially interested. Her face glowed with interest. It was like the interest of a person who had been thinking hard of the same thing Norman went on now to mention.

"That one factor is the Christian element in Raymond. Say The News has lost heavily from the dropping off of people who do not care for a Christian daily and from others who simply look upon a newspaper as a purveyor of all sorts of material to amuse and interest them, are there enough genuine Christian people in Raymond who will rally to the support of a paper such as Jesus would probably edit, or are the habits of the people so firmly established in their demands for the regular type of journalism that they will not take a paper unless it is stripped largely of the Christian and moral purpose? I may also say in this following gathering that, owing to recent complications in my business affairs outside of my paper, I have been obliged to lose a large part of my fortune. I have had to apply the same rule of Jesus' probable conduct to certain transactions with other men who did not apply it to their conduct, and the result has been the loss of a great deal of money."

"As I understand the promise we made, we were not to ask any questions about 'Will it pay?' but all our action was to be based on the one question, 'What would Jesus do?' Acting on that rule of conduct, I have been obliged to lose nearly all the money I have accumulated in my paper. It is not necessary for me to go into details. There is no question with me now, after the three weeks' experience I have had, that a great many men would lose vast sums of money under the present system of business if this rule of Jesus were honestly obeyed. I mention my loss here because I have the fullest faith in the final success of a daily paper conducted on the lines I have recently laid down, and I had planned to put into it my entire fortune in order to win final success. As it is now, unless, as I said, the Christian people of Raymond, the church members and professing disciples, will support the paper with subscriptions and advertisements, I cannot continue its publication on the present basis."

Virginia asked a question. She had followed Mr. Norman's confession with the most intense eagerness.

"Do you mean that a Christian daily ought to be endowed with a large sum, like a Christian college, in order to make it pay?"

"That is exactly what I mean. I have laid out plans for putting into The News such a variety of material, in such a strong and truly interesting way, that it would more than make up for whatever was absent from its columns in the way of un-Christian matter, but my plans called for a very large outlay of money. I am very confident that a Christian daily such as Jesus would approve, containing only what he would print, can be made to succeed financially if it is planned to the right lines, but it will take a large sum of money to work out the plans."

"How much do you think?" asked Virginia quietly.

Edward Norman looked at her keenly, and his face flushed a moment as an idea of Virginia's purpose crossed his mind. He had known her when she was a little girl in the Sunday school, and he had been on intimate relations in business with her father.

TO BE CONTINUED.

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