

THE MOCKER.

CHAPTER VIII.—Continued.

Neither brother nor sister moved until the echo of Anne's determinedly departing footsteps died away, and then Ralph turned and faced his sister. Something in her sad, pale face stirred him to a sudden impulse, and he came across to her. Putting his hand on her shoulder, he said, "She's right, Phyl. I'm a damned waster, but if you'll stand by me, I'll take a pull. I've boozed because I liked it, and thought it smart, but last night has put the stopper on. I know I can do without booze, but, Phyl, Billy can't. I must speak, even if I hurt you, dear," as Phyllis moved restlessly. "Look! Give Billy up, Phyl. He is not good enough for you. I would not say it if I was not sure. I've knocked about with him a good deal, and he is one of the best if he keeps off the booze, but, Phyl, the Mocker has got him fast, and will never let go. Give him up, or you will ruin your life."

Phyllis looked up, her eyes full of tears, and shook her head.

"Ralph, I've given my promise. Billy will keep straight for me, I'm sure."

"I know he is mad on you, but, believe me, your influence over him is not as great as the Mocker's, and you will find it out if you marry him. However, you know what you think it right to do, and I must not interfere any more. I just felt I had to warn you. Well, I must be off. Anything you want in town?" he asked as he went to the door.

"No, thanks. I'm going to meet mother, and can get all I want then," she answered, following him into the hall.

She went with him to the front door, and drearily watched him down the drive. As she turned indoors again, a strange depression settled on her—a strong premonition of coming evil, which, strive as she might, she could not succeed in throwing off.

CHAPTER IX.

True to her word, the Waddler arrived at lunch time with Joan and John Chilton seated beside her in the car. She lifted Joan carefully out and carried her into the warm, cheerful dining-room, where Phyllis and Mrs Moore were awaiting them. Anne placed her burden down upon the cushioned window-seat in the warm sunshine. She then took off the children's hats and coats, saying:

"There now, nippers, I have done my duty by you. It's great to see you home again, Mother Moore. I'll be ready for lunch in two hits," and she vanished bathroom-wards.

Phyllis sat down by Joan and took her hand, while, with her other arm, she drew John close to her. Both children started to talk at once, expressing their pleasure at having Phyllis all to themselves for a few hours. Joan, however, soon became listless, and seemed heavy and drowsy. At intervals she was shaken with a harsh, tearing cough, and when they sat down to

lunch, she took a mouthful or two of food, and then pushed her plate away.

"Oh! come on, Joan! Eat up, chicken!" Anne urged her.

"Joan t'ant, nurse, fank you. Make Joan sick. Want a d'ink of water, p'ease."

"Poor Joan was sick at breakfast this morning," said John, in his sedate way.

Anne looked grave, but merely said, "Never mind, John. Eat your lunch. Joan will soon be better."

Immediately after lunch, Anne beckoned Mrs Moore into the hall by a slight, backward nod of her head.

"Now, mother," she said quickly, "I don't want to frighten you, but you must watch wee Joan carefully, and don't take her out of the warm room."

"What about her afternoon nap?" inquired Mrs Moore. "Would it be alright to put her in Phyl's room if I have a fire lit there and warm the air thoroughly first? No need to alarm Phyl unnecessarily, and I can just say the room was chilly."

"Alright," answered the Waddler, taking up her gloves and bag. "If you think she is getting any worse, ring the doctor at once, and he can get her idiot of a mother if he thinks it necessary."

Anne departed for her afternoon's work, and Mrs Moore gave orders straight away for a fire to be lighted in her daughter's bedroom. Returning to the dining-room, she found Phyllis and her two small guests deeply engrossed in a game of "ludo."

Presently Mrs Moore suggested to Phyllis that she should take Joan up for her sleep, explaining that she had had the room warmed. "She will be better for forty winks, Phyl," she finished. "She looks very weary."

So Phyllis picked Joan up in her arms and carried her upstairs to the bedroom. Tucking her comfortably up on the small bed, which was always ready in her room for Joan's visits, Phyllis said "Now, have a good sleep, dear, and the Phillimore will come and dress you, and we will have a good game before tea-time."

(To be Continued.)

PIONEER PARTY.

DUNEDIN CENTRAL BRANCH.

A Pioneer Party was arranged by the Dunedin Central Branch of the W.C.T.U., with two objects in view: to raise funds for the Forward Movement, and to do honour to our pioneers.

This was a most successful and happy meeting. The Mayor and Mayoress were present, the Mayor giving a most encouraging speech, and the Mayoress a song. Our President opened the meeting with a short address.

A very enjoyable programme of music and recitation was given, and very much appreciated.

The Mayoress, President, and Pioneers were presented with bouquets by the President of the Y's.

Each pioneer was given seven minutes to give a speech, and, needless to say, they made good use of their short time. In vivid manner they took us back to the very early days of the W.C.T.U., and gave a very clear idea of the hard work in the strenuous times of these early days, making some of us feel rather ashamed of our lack of enthusiasm in these more prosaic days. The oldest member, who joined with the very first, gave a most interesting and vigorous speech, in spite of her 80 odd years.

One pioneer was unable to attend through sickness, and sent her son to represent her. One could not but admire him as he gave his speech, received his mother's bouquet, and sat with the pioneers.

Supper was served, and a most successful and happy meeting was brought to a close by the singing of the Temperance Doxology. The room was beautifully decorated, the White Ribbon bows being much in evidence.

THE POPE AND THE FIGHT AGAINST ALCOHOLISM.

When a group of pilgrims from the German Catholic Abstinence Society, the League of the Cross, arrived in Rome to have an audience of the Pope, they were cordially received. "You are particularly welcome," said the Pope, "because you represent a federation and a work that we consider worthy of all praise. Your work is not only a pious undertaking, but an honourable and sacred combat, a struggle against evil, a fight for God and your fellow-men, for the people and the Church, for the family and the individual. Pursue your noble aim; continue with ever renewed courage this sacred combat. The fruits of the struggle will not be withheld from you, inestimable fruits, a source of happiness for yourselves and your families. The Church rejoices quite especially at your activity for fighting thus against evil. You collaborate in signal fashion with the Apostolate, the true Apostolate of the Church, for you have chosen a sphere in which you may save many souls, and often bodies as well."

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