

The old lady sniffed disdainfully. 'That's as much sense as a man has,' she said. 'For my part I don't care how she looks as long as she looks after the work as well as ever. Any fool will do to hang fine clothes on, but it ain't everybody that can keep house like Lydia.' Other changes began to manifest themselves about this time. Tim Clement not only completed the destruction of the bush of balm, but gradually laid waste the entire garden in his perambulations to and fro in the hope of a word with Lydia. Old man Millett bought a new horse and buggy. The hired man's face wore a vague expression of loss as he looked on, and his enthusiasm for hoeing the garden languished perceptibly.

But it was the new minister who occasioned the greatest disquiet in the minds of interested onlookers. He had seen Lydia first on the very Sunday after her drive with Cyrus. She wore the light-blue skirt-waist suit, without an ornament or a frill of any kind, and her serene, strong face was uplifted with a look of such complete unconsciousness of self that it differentiated her sharply from the blushing and rustling girls of her Sunday-school class with whom she was seated.

The minister called on Mrs. Strong a day or two later, and after that he was a constant visitor, though it was not Mrs. Strong to whom he seemed disposed to devote himself. Lydia was one of his best Sunday-school workers, and there was much to discuss in that connection. It appeared, also, that they had other tastes in common. Lydia had always been a bookworm, and she had a clear, vigorous way of setting forth her thoughts. Cyrus, whose money-making life had left him no time even for thinking of such things, often listened in real amazement as he sat by in silence. It was easy to see that the minister, who had plenty of brains of his own, found her talk interesting and inspiring. He entered with spirit into whatever subject was in hand. Cyrus wondered sometimes at the odd lonesome feeling that made him get up and slip out of the lighted parlor, from which he never seemed to be missed.

The spring passed into summer, and the minister's visits grew nearer together. He had begun lending Lydia his books, which made occasion for extra walks back and forth. Cyrus took to absenting himself altogether from the parlor of an evening, and going off for long, solitary strolls along the river. He felt as if he were in the way.

He found his mother wiping away tears with her knitting work, one evening, when he came into the kitchen. The voices of Lydia and the minister rose and fell harmoniously in the parlor, where the lamps were just lighted. The kitchen was still in the twilight.

'Why, mother, what's the trouble?' asked Cyrus anxiously.

The knitting needles began to click viciously in the shadow.

'Not a thing!' retorted the old lady, sharply. 'I reckon I can make my own soap if I be eighty-two—but Lyddy's like my own girl, an' it'll be sore work to lose her. I mistrust she's too good for him, minister of no minister—an' it's a judgment on you, Cyrus, for your fool work about beaus. Go an' sit outdoors if you don't like the kitchen; there ain't any room in the parlor to-night for the likes of you.'

Cyrus tried to laugh as he strolled out again. Peterson Corner was getting tame, he told himself. He should have to think about getting back; he thought somehow pierced him with a disagreeable thrill as he walked thoughtfully down toward the river path.

It was a half-hour later when he came back through the orchard to his favorite seat under the white lilac. He sat down, but half started up again at something he had not noticed before. Lydia was standing by the gate, with the minister holding her hands fast as he said some word so low that he had to bend his head close to hers. Cyrus could not hear what they were saying, but their attitude told its own story, and he sank back on the seat, afraid to betray himself by a movement.

He knew now what had given him such an odd feeling of homesickness all these weeks; it was home he wanted, a home such as Lydia could make with the help of all his useless money—a place here in the only spot that could ever seem like home to him. It would be the old life of his boyhood idealized and made beautiful—that was what Cyrus felt, though what he said to himself was—

'She's got a way round the house different from anything they have in Seattle, and you can't find any such doughnuts as she makes west of the Mississippi.'

Ah, but he had lost her, and there was nothing left for him but the great West and the whirl of money-making.

A skirt brushed against him and Lydia's voice said—

'You here, Cyrus? You'd better come right in, the dew's real heavy.'

'I don't want to come in,' returned Cyrus testily. 'I'm goin' away to-morrow, an' I'm sayin' good-bye to things.'

'Going away?' echoed Lydia. 'Why, everybody's going away. Here's the minister gone.'

Cyrus looked up so sharply that she started a little, but she went on serenely. 'He's had a call to Vermont, an' they're lucky to get him, though, he did seem real sorry to go.'

Cyrus was holding her wrists by this time, as if he were suddenly afraid she would fly.

'You refused him?' he said—trying to see her face in the shadow.

There was no answer, and he pulled her nearer to him. He felt her hand tremble a little, and his spirits rose suddenly, though he still looked sulky.

'Lyddy,' he said, 'if you don't want Tim Clement or old man Millett or Jim Wilkins, maybe you'd take me.'

Lydia, having tried in vain to free her hands, was gazing severely at the dusky river bank where the fire-flies sparkled.

'I can't tell till I'm asked,' she said primly. Exchange.

Catholic Orphanages and Industrial Schools

In a parliamentary paper just issued it is stated there were seven Government industrial schools in existence in 1905, and the numbers of inmates on their books at the end of the year were as follows:—Auckland (Mount Albert), 131; Boys' Training Farm, Wera-roa (new school), 111; Receiving Home, Wellington, 235; Receiving Home, Christchurch, 245; Burnham, 232; Te Oranga Home, 59; Caversham, 404; total, 1402. Those belonging to private (Catholic) industrial schools were distributed as follows: St. Mary's, Auckland, 141; St. Joseph's, Wellington, 58; St. Mary's, Nelson, 282; St. Vincent de Paul's, Dunedin, 52; total, 533.

The following are the reports of the various medical officers on the Catholic schools:—

St. Joseph's Girls' School, Wellington, was examined on April 20 of this year by Dr. Mackin, who says: 'I found the inmates happy, cheerful, and in the best of health. The dormitories, class, dining, and work rooms were scrupulously clean and well ventilated, and the sanitary arrangements in first-class order. During the year I made a thorough examination of the institution monthly. There were no cases of severe illness until November, 1905, when two inmates contracted influenza, and this was followed by pneumonia. One of them was sent to the Hospital, and died at that institution on the 30th November, 1905. I must again thank Sister Ambrose for her untiring zeal in looking after the health of the children, and trust she will remain with them for many years.'

Regarding St. Mary's School, Stoke, Dr. Hudson says: 'The year, medically speaking, has been uneventful. There has been no epidemic disease during the year. The health of the boys has been particularly good. No deaths occurred during the year. Reporting on St. Mary's School, Nelson, Dr. Hudson states:—'During the year there has been no epidemic disease. The health in general of the inmates has been particularly good. Two deaths have occurred in the institution during the year—one Sister, Mary St. Clair, one baby, aged three months and a half, from marasmus.'

In his report on the Boys' School at Takapuna, Auckland, Dr. Gratian Guinness states that this home is well kept, the bedrooms clean and well ventilated; the out-offices are in good condition, and well kept. The children are healthy and well cared for. There has been no case of infectious disease during the last four months.

'Quite recently,' writes Dr. Darby, 'I made a thorough examination of the above institution (St. Mary's Girls' School, Ponsonby). I went through every department most minutely. The sanitary lavatories and water-supply are very good; the dormitories well ventilated, and bedding most comfortable. The food is good and well varied; and cleanliness a speciality throughout the institution. The health of the children has been exceptionally good.'

Dr. O'Neill, in his report on the St. Vincent de Paul Orphanage, South Dunedin, says: 'With the exception of a few minor ailments the health of the inmates has been particularly good, no deaths having occurred and no infectious diseases shown itself during the year. Clean, judiciously fed, and properly clothed, the children are happy and show every sign of the careful attention of the Sisters. The hygienic and sanitary arrangements of the institution are in a very satisfactory condition.'