

THE MIND OF MA MAHONEY

BY ALICE MARGARET ASHTON.

Ma Mahoney's mind was on the clock. Eighteen years of unremitting work will train the hands to accomplish the accustomed tasks mechanically, but your mind has to be on the kitchen clock if breakfast is ready in time to get Pa to the six-thirty car and keep the older children's report cards free from tardy marks. Nor can there be any relaxing of vigilance if the children's lunch is spread on the kitchen table when they rush in precisely three minutes after the noon whistle. With such additional duties as washing, ironing, mending and the soothing of childish ills and heart-breaks, how could one's mind find much scope for excursions beyond the tyrannical dictation of the kitchen time-piece?

"Two o'clock," sighed Ma, resignedly laying aside her dish-towel at the vehement behest of her youngest, "and the wash not on the line yet. I wonder why my babies always do their teething in the hottest part of the summer?"

With a practiced hand she picked up walling Baby Benny from his cradle and cuddled him capably against her deep and motherly breast. "There, there, honey, Ma wasn't scolding you. I did hope you'd hold off with that tooth till the weather cooled a bit, but my children are always just that forward and capable!"

Having gained his desire after persistent effort, Benny clung resolutely to his comforting refuge. Through the open window a perfect "drying" day mocked at her tubs of half-washed clothes. And the relentless hands of the clock moved forward.

"My grief, Ma Mahoney, aren't you ready to come with me to that Mother's Meeting?" The sharp voice of Sarah Bordon calling from the little front entry startled the mother from her efforts at pacifying her clinging infant.

"With my clothes still in the tubs?" she answered with her ready smile. "Not but what I'd like to go, Sarah," she added, with a longing note in her voice.

"It's always the same story," disapprovingly complained Sarah with the freedom of a friend. "It would do you good, Mary Mahoney. You just stay home and slave year in and year out."

"But I can't leave a crying baby alone—nor my wash in the tubs. School will be out in another week. Maybe then I can get away," she prophesied hopefully. "Anyway, you come over to-night and tell me everything that's said and done."

Ma's resolute smile lasted until the door had closed behind her neighbor. On her way back to the kitchen she paused to lay the baby, who had dropped asleep in her arms, on the sitting-room lounge away from the heat and light. "I'll never tell why I can't go to those meetings!" she resolved grimly, as she picked up her dish-towel, once more, then forgot everything else in her attempt to finish her work before supper time.

In the sultry dusk of evening Mrs. Mahoney sought the comfort of her back porch when she heard Sarah Bordon's screeching door slam. Pa Mahoney had sauntered down street, the older children had disappeared, their mother had not had time to inquire as to their destination. The two youngsters had been put to bed.

Evidently indignation had not departed from the heart of Sarah Bordon.

"It's a burning shame you couldn't have been there," she began as soon as they were seated. "That talk was just intended for you, Mary Mahoney. I had as much as I could do to come back here and take you—washing, baby and all—to that meeting!"

She said we mustn't tie ourselves down to our kitchen tables, although she believes in good housekeeping all right. She wants us to hold meetings in our own houses, but we were all afraid to invite her. She says we must get together and get acquainted with each other and with our own front rooms! 'You needn't drift whichever way the wind blows,' she said. 'You can control your own life if you really want to do about it right.'

"How does she say we can do it?" Mrs. Mahoney's mind looked back wearily over the day just spent and over a countless procession of similar days. It was clear that she had had very little to say about her own life.

"You just do it with your mind," explained Sarah in an awed tone. "You think out just what you'd like to do and how you'd like to have things. And then you go right on acting as if it was so. And first thing you know things will be coming out that way."

"That sounds like 'made-believe' when we were children," murmured Ma reminiscently. Then indignation overcame her long-suffering soul.

"Maybe that kind of thing will work for that speaker-woman," she exclaimed scornfully. "But what'd she do, I'd like to know, if she hadn't a decent dud to her back and got only a growl when she asked for anything? What'd she do if she couldn't make her children mind, and if she had more work than two women could do and no one willing to help her do a hand's turn? How much do you suppose thinking would help then—tell me that—Sarah Bordon."

"I—I don't know," admitted Sarah faintly, rendered almost speechless by this amazing and unprecedented outburst.

Mrs. Mahoney drew a long breath.

She hadn't meant to tell a living soul! Well, she didn't care—she wouldn't retract one word she had said.

Ma was too weary to lie awake that night with disturbing thoughts either of regret or anticipation. But next morning a strange excitement grew within her. "It's a simple enough thing to try," she decided at last. "All I've got to do now, is to plan out just how I'd like to have things. And I guess I'll not have time to be much disappointed if it don't work out the way I want!"

By mid-afternoon her trial ventures in plans had been completed and the experience had proved exhilarating. Sarah Bordon, called to the dividing fence, had promised to carry a message, the importance of which almost staggered her. "Mary Mahoney, of all in this world," she muttered, as she went back to her own kitchen. "And after what she said last night!"

Mrs. Mahoney looked upon her assembled family that evening and, when the noise at the supper table had somewhat subsided, deliberately and accurately dropped a bomb. Clearly and with a beguiling smile she announced, "I've invited the Mother's Meeting here for Saturday afternoon, Pa."

The two "middle" boys paused in their struggle for food to gaze, popped at their unfamiliar and serenely smiling mother. Pretty Molly Ma, Ma, how could you, the way the house looks!"

Ma Mahoney, slower of perception than his offspring, dropped his knife, while a stern frown darkened his countenance. He was emphatic in denouncing the gadding ways of women, was Jim Mahoney. Could it be that Ma, most sensible and docile of creatures, would dare to defy his authority?

Like a born diplomat Ma hastened to present her evidence. "The speaker wanted a place to hold her meeting in our neighborhood. It is a fine attention to pay our community, but the women seemed so shy to invite her. Said I to myself: 'If some of the established families in our street don't take up such things folks are naturally going to think us a poor locality. They won't want to be moving their families in here. We own our place, which no many folks do in the street, and it's to our own advantage to be public spirited.'

The threatening frown on Jim Mahoney's face gradually relaxed during this astonishing recital. "That's so, I guess," he admitted, feeling as if some one had unexpectedly patted him on the back.

"But the house, Ma," protested Molly, who prided herself that she could see farther into most things than either of her parents.

"We'll have everything spic and span and it will look well enough," assured her mother cheerfully. "No one expects fine furniture in a house full of growing children."

"That's so," agreed Pa with increased geniality. "You can trust Ma's judgment, Molly."

"What shall you wear?" Molly inquired a bit superciliously. Pa did not often take sides with Ma against this pretty daughter, and the present exception was unique.

"The hostess isn't supposed to dress like the others. I have a light calico wrapper that hasn't been washed many times, and with my nice white apron I will be all right."

"Will they eat?" questioned the "middle" boys in chorus.

"Just a cup of tea and a bit of bread and butter to make it seem so nice. Sarah Bordon will be proud to loan me the cups and plates to her new china."

Ma Mahoney opened his lips, but closed them again without words having come to his assistance.

"The others were all afraid to invite her." Once launched, Ma seemed to delight in dilating upon the subject. "And I know it is hard for some of them, too," she added generously. "Sarah has a fine parlor and her new dishes, but she hasn't a grown-up daughter who knows how things ought to be, to help her."

This time pretty Molly experienced, in company with her sire, a sensation of being patted upon her straight young back and the sensation was deeply gratifying. "You leave fixing the house for Saturday morning and I'll help, Ma," she volunteered with a new respectful willingness in her voice.

"You may make the tea and the sandwiches," agreed her mother with a proud smile, "and serve them when the time comes."

Friday passed as if on wings of magic, and though Mary Mahoney still raced with the clock, it was a jubilant warfare. "It's working," she whispered over and over, "just as certain as fate, it's working. Whoever would have believed it? And just to think of all the years I've lost!"

Instead of appearing at supper-time in answer to a call of hunger, Molly came directly home from school to make a critical survey of the field of action, and while they laid their plans she helped prepare the evening meal.

Pa was late to supper, coming in sheepishly with a box under his arm. "Guess you don't need to borrow dishes from the neighbors," he announced, recklessly clearing a space beside Ma's plate to set the box.

Supper was suspended while an excited group watched breathlessly as

Ma untied the wrappings. Carefully lifting out one of the enclosed cups she held it up for general admiration—delicate decorations of pink and green with touches of gold met their rapt gaze. "Never," she exclaimed, with tears of happiness in her eyes, "never did I expect to own such beautiful cups as these."

"I'll get you the rest of the set when I can," Pa said gruffly. "I'm a little short of money this week. Molly, you wash one of them cups and saucers for your Ma to drink her tea out of!" And handing it as if it were a high explosive, Molly eagerly complied.

Through the sultry heat of Saturday morning Molly and her mother worked happily. The house did look festive indeed with its unwonted order and its jars of pretty flowers. Only from the safe precincts of the kitchen doorway were the children allowed to view its splendors.

The beautiful new china cups and plates were arranged on a spotless cloth on the table. The bread was delicately sliced for the sandwiches. Molly had even laid out on her mother's bed upstairs the fresh "wrapper" and the white apron.

Ma, flushed face and hair in curls, papers, was marshaling the young ones round the dinner-table when her husband entered. Again beneath his arm was to be seen a large and suggestive package. He placed the box in his wife's hands.

Beneath the cover was a layer of snowy paper through which something blue and white shimmered softly. "You used to wear one like that," Pa managed to say awkwardly as she lifted out such a dress as she certainly had not possessed in the memory of her astonished and admiring children.

"It's true," she exclaimed in an awed whisper, "as true as fate itself!"

"What's true?" questioned Pa, who was looking for more of a demonstration.

"Why," said Ma, coming to herself, "that I have the kindest husband and the best children in all the world!"

At the appointed hour for the meeting the women poured in. If the speaker for the afternoon had lacked inspiration, she certainly could have found it in the radiant face of Mary Mahoney.

Pretty Molly, demurely serving the tea and sandwiches, filled her mother's heart with pride. The children hovering in the background were orderly and clean to an unheard-of degree. Benny Boy was conspicuous by his silence.

"It has done me good to be here," declared the pretty speaker, as she held Ma's hand in parting. "It is the mothers like you who work with their heads and hearts and hands who are doing the real things, Mrs. Mahoney."

"But I couldn't have done it if they hadn't all helped," remonstrated Ma, thinking only of her initial flight into the realms of social eminence. "Molly took care of Benny Boy and made the tea, spread the sandwiches and dusted. And all the children have been so good. I really haven't had anything to do except enjoy myself!"

The speaker smiled on Molly who came and gave the lady her hand with pretty timidity and stood in the little front porch with Ma, while the guests passed down the street.

Pa came in from the back yard where he had spent the afternoon playing with Benny Boy and surreptitiously listening to the talk through the open windows. "You keep on your toes, Ma, and we'll go down to the park to-night and listen to the band play," he suggested rather shyly for a man given to the arbitrary ruling of his household. "Molly will get supper and look after the young ones to-night, I guess."

"Sure, I will," agreed Molly. "You go on up and get Pa's other clothes ready."

In her room upstairs Mary Mahoney listened to the labored preparations for supper going on below. Eight separate times before had she remained in this room listening to the household machinery which always creaked audibly without her supervising guidance. But this time she was not helpless and weary with a warm new little bundle of humanity pressed to her heart. This time she was standing before her mirror, well, radiant, her hair waved back becomingly, the blue dress shining below her blue eyes. And she and Pa were going out together.

"Only to think," murmured Ma Mahoney with a sort of reverent wonder, "that I've brought all this about just with my mind! And it's been that easy! There'll be no telling," she added, with a deep content, "what all my family may accomplish now I'm putting my mind to it!"

A High Yielding Variety of Winter Wheat.

The O.A.C. No. 104 variety of winter wheat has surpassed all other varieties in average yield of grain per acre during the past few years in the experiments at Guelph and in the co-operative experiments throughout Ontario. In each of six out of seven years it yielded better than the Dawson's Golden Chaff in the experiments conducted at the homes of the farmers. In 1923 of the seventy-nine varieties, selections and crosses grown in the experimental plots at the College the six highest yielders were new varieties originated at the College by cross-fertilization.

The O.A.C. No. 104 variety is a cross between the Dawson's Golden Chaff and the Bugarian. It is a white wheat with a white chaff and beard-less head and is a vigorous grower. In comparison with the Dawson's Golden Chaff it has been even more hardy, less susceptible to smut, and almost as stiff in the straw. It has been injured by the hessian fly to a less extent than the average of forty varieties under test during the last four years.

This new hybrid wheat will be sent to Ontario farmers, free of cost, in pound lots to those who wish to conduct tests with three varieties of winter wheat this autumn and who apply to the Field Husbandry Dept., O.A.C., Guelph, Ont., for seed for this purpose.

The Sunday School

SEPTEMBER

Jesus Heals a Nobleman's Son. John 4: 46-54. Golden Text.—I am the way, and the truth, and the life.—John 14: 6.

I. FAITH IN JESUS, 46-50.

II. THE POWER OF FAITH, 51-54.

INTRODUCTION.—Jesus has now come from Judea by way of Samaria to Galilee. He is in his own country, but Galilee is not his own country; there he must not expect any great success. While he is at Cana, however, there occurs an incident which becomes the occasion for an act of divine healing. We have not hitherto, in our course of studies, come face to face with this aspect of Jesus' ministry. We have seen him offering new spiritual life to men, redeeming sinful souls to God, procuring one access to the Father for Jews and Samaritans. Now we see Jesus as the healer, both of body and of spirit. A court official of Herod Antipas, whose son is dangerously ill at Capernaum, arrives at Cana with the urgent request that Jesus will come at once to Capernaum. Jesus moved by the intensity of the father's appeal, and by the evidence of his faith, answers that his boy will live.

I. FAITH IN JESUS, 46-50.

Vs. 46, 47. The official who here comes to Jesus is in the service of Herod Antipas, tetrarch of Galilee. Antipas had his seat of government at Tiberias, on the Lake of Galilee, and he would have in his employment a considerable number of administrative officers, of whom the present "nobleman" is one. Whatever was thought of Jesus at Antipas' court, this particular courtier is led to seek the Messiah and to believe in his home. His boy is at the point of death in Capernaum.

Vs. 48. Before acceding to his request, Jesus reminds the officer that the Galilean public is always demanding "signs and wonders" as the condition of faith. They will not accept a Messiah who does not perform miraculous deeds. They will not believe in God except when they see extraordinary manifestations. This is in accordance with the whole Jewish belief that God is outward, and that he is outwardly revealed. It would appear, therefore, that our Lord saw in the healing of the sick, a possible hindrance to his spiritual work, and that he only healed as necessity arose. He was led to lead men to see that God inwardly and spiritually revealed. In the wilderness, he had renounced the desire to make his own consciousness of divine sonship dependent on outward or miraculous chances, and hence he seeks to create in the hearts of men everywhere the same spiritual conceptions of God.

Vs. 49. In the present case, however, Jesus is faced not by a demand for "signs," but by a father's agony, and he consents to the request. There is in such a case no shadow of doubt that his Father wills the result, and Jesus says to the officer, "Go, your son lives." It is not even necessary for Jesus to go in person to the house.

II. THE POWER OF FAITH, 51-54.

Vs. 51-53. The event proves as Jesus had said. The nobleman is met on his way by servants who report the joyful tidings that the boy has passed the crisis, and is recovering. On enquiring when the change set in, he finds that it occurred at one o'clock (the seventh hour, reckoned from 6 a.m. of the previous day, the time when Jesus had said, "Your son lives," and he and his family become convinced believers in Jesus.

What appears as another tradition of the same incident is given in Matt. 8: 5-13 and Luke 7: 1-10. But in Matthew and Luke, the man is said to be a military officer, and he does not belong to the Jewish people. All the more remarkable is his faith which evokes from Jesus the surpassing tribute, "Solemnly I say to you, I have not found even in Israel so great a faith as this." We may profitably add to our study of the present incident the lessons which may be drawn from these other accounts. They show us what a great value Jesus placed on faith. Jesus wished men to see God aright, and to believe in his perfectly holy and loving will. He wished them to believe that all things are possible for God, and that no limits can be set to the power of believing prayer when men are asking not for "signs," but for grace and help, in time of need.

Equally necessary is it to remember that Jesus was conscious of being himself the special agent of God's redeeming power in Israel and among mankind. He is conscious of his divine call as the Son of God, and in the strength of that calling, and in the knowledge of his own perfect guidance by the will of God, he realizes that whatever he wills for man's good, the Father will assuredly fulfill. In a previous lesson we read that he said to his disciples, "You shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man." This means that Jesus, as the Messiah, will be found to be the means by which God's unseen agencies of grace and healing come into communication with human life. By him our prayers ascending to the Father, and through him there descended to us in peace, light, healing and power. He is, as we read, in another place, "The way, the truth, and the life."

DISEASE AND EVIL SPIRITS.

In the religion of the prophets there was no room for evil spirits. God filled for them the whole field of vision. But the people retained a superstitious regard for demons and spirits. People dreaded malignant spirits and sought to placate them by gifts, Lev. 17: 7; Deut. 32: 17. These frequented waste places, but they were never far away. They lived in the air and in the wilderness; they tortured man and beast, infested by demons, like the world of the Dutch missionaries entered in the East Indies (Warnock's Living Forces of the Gospel). Spirits acted singly, but they were also organized in a great invisible kingdom of evil forces, with Satan at their head. Hence to cast out a demon was more than deliverance for the victim; it was a blow

World's Biggest

The largest shoe exhibition is being held in London. The exhibition was opened yesterday by the Mayor of London. The exhibition is being held in the Royal Albert Hall, and will run until the 15th of September. The exhibition is being held in the Royal Albert Hall, and will run until the 15th of September.

Redtime DIONIES

FRIEND DANDELION TELLS THE TIME.

I was in the meadow yesterday, Where the birds and the bees were all at play; I lay on the grass to look at the sky And I counted the cloud-ships floating by.

It was lovely: I'd stay there for all ways and all And pay no attention should anyone call.

Still, I thought, I'd better be sure— Tick! Tock! And there close by was the Child's Clock— Dear old Friend-Dandelion, go to seed; Who dares to call it a troublesome weed?

I plucked the beautiful, silver daisy "Now tell me, old dear, when it's time enough! Should I start for home?" I blow the seed for k.

One! Two! And three! 'Tis the children's joke! They all flew away and I plucked and plucked. A fairy speaking with low, sweet word.

"She's calling, calling you, calling you, dear, In the sweetest music you ever will hear! When the Mothers call it is high time to fly. For a mother's love is so deep and so high. So wide and so wonderful, beautiful and sweet— When her voice says 'Come Y and wings on your feet.'

So I ran and I ran, and I flew, away, As the fairy advised: 'Wouldn't you wouldn't you?'

—Bessie Benbow.

"Farm products cost more than they used to." "Yes," replied the farmer. "When a farmer is supposed to show the botanical name of what he's raising and the entomological name of the insect that eats it, an' the pharmaceutical name of the chemical that will kill it, somebody's got to pay."

RED TIME DIONIES

Only by the strict quarantine regulations communicable diseases can be kept at a minimum. The minimum of health care should be prosecuted. The vast majority of the people who are ill, are ill because of lack of care. The Health Department is now enforcing the law, but a few persons, such as every district who realize the importance of preventive or quarantine or curative or health care.

Just recently I saw a mother who was ill. Her daughter had a fever. He was not kept her isolated. He had passed a long time with her. She had somebody else and she could get it from her. A fine attitude, you know that such can you wonder at results obtained on the health authority.

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