

[Prayers that Worked]

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Housewife.

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PRAYERS THAT WORKED Original Names Changed Names

Mrs. T. C. Ingle Mrs. Dorothy Walters C9 N.C. Box 1-

PRAYERS THAT WORKED

Mrs. Dorothy Walters insists that her paternal grandfather came to this country "from Palestine in Egypt." Her complexion and hair are dark, but she looks neither Jewish nor Egyptian. She is 45 years old, but seems younger, and is a substantial, capable type, neat in dress, reserved and quiet in manner. In spite of many hardships, she is in good health, and her gray eyes are bright.

Born on a farm, she spent her early years in the country. Her mother died when Dorothy was two years old, and she did not get beyond the third grade in school. The family moved

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to town when she was about 12, and she became a housemaid, working for several prominent families. At 17 she married Henry Walters.

“After I was married,” she said, “I worked at anything I could get to do. My husband didn't have a regular trade, or business, and couldn't keep any job long, on account of his drinking. It was up to me to support us, because most of what little money he made went for likker. I took in washing and ironing, and did sewing. I worked day and night.”

“Why didn't you leave him - divorce him?” I asked.

“They tried to get me to,” she replied, “but I don't believe in that. I married him because I loved him, and I was bound to stick to him. Besides, I thought I could get him to quit drinking and join the church.”

But the drinking went on, and Henry spent many nights in jail. He engaged in many fights and drunken brawls. He was sent to the chain gang many times, and worked on many of the county roads. He was a good-for-nothing sponger. And babies were coming to Dorothy at more or less regular intervals. In her 28 years of married life she has had 10 children, all still living. She was strong, though, and childbirth bothered her but little. Only her youngest child, now five, gave her any trouble. By dint of hard work, she was able to keep her children in school. She received no charity. She urged her husband to give up his evil ways, but he only cursed her.

Dorothy is a church member, and after many years she had an idea; she would try something new on her husband! She asked her fellow members to help, and about once each week, when Henry was at home (usually drunk, or perhaps just getting over a spree), Dorothy and several others would hold a prayer meeting in the Walters home, and her domestic difficulties, as well as her husband's misdeeds, were laid before the Lord with much Methodist fervor. Henry raged and cursed, but the meetings continued, and quite suddenly and unexpectedly he capitulated! He went to church, joined, reformed, and has not taken a drink since. In fact, he went from one extreme to the other: he is now

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perpetually drunk on religion. He is looked upon as a religious fanatic by those who know him.

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His spectacular conversion took place about eight years ago, after 20 years of drunken misbehavior. "He was saved," said Mrs. Walters, simply. "My married life before that was so miserable I hate to think of it."

Henry got a job, kept it, and learned tree surgery. He began to help support his family. Later, when he was laid off because his employer's business had declined, he set up for himself, practicing tree surgery and landscape gardening. He carries his religion into his business.

A friend of the family said, "His work is quite often influenced by fits of temperament. If he does not like a prospective customer, or does not approve of his religion, morals, or conduct, Walters will not spray his trees, nor trim his shrubbery. He talks of nothing but religion, and reads nothing but the Bible. He's a bore when he gets / started on theology, but at least he doesn't get drunk now, and he makes an effort to support his family."

He has a helper - a necessity because, drunk, he once fell from a moving truck and permanently injured one arm. He gets little business in the winter, but in the spring and summer he does fairly well. Next to religion, he is most interested in trees and shrubs, and their care and culture.

For two years now, the Walters have lived in the village of Crafton, near the county seat. Their pleasant, wide-piazzaed home is bordered by neatly clipped evergreens from which a well-sodded and terraced strip of lawn leads to the paved road.

Across the road an apple orchard fills the hollow, beyond which rise the roofs of the village. In the distance, beautifully blue, stretches a range of mountains. After the crowded, noisy quarters the family occupied in the city, Mrs, Walters loves her present location.

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“It’s so nice and quiet here,” she said, “and there are no drunken neighbors like we had in town.”

The white, story-and-a-half cottage is sparingly furnished. The living room, which serves also as the younger children’s bedroom and playroom, is heated by a stove. There are two iron beds, bright green, neatly made up, and covered with red-and-white counterpanes. Purple and green predominate in the large-flowered wallpaper, and the room is clean. The children, returned from school, spread out their toys around the stove, but at a word from their mother will gather them up, put them into a large basket, and place the basket carefully in its accustomed corner. The youngsters are a healthy-looking lot, apple-cheeked and brown-eyed. They are spontaneous, but well-mannered, and are comfortably and appropriately dressed.

Of the six children now at home, one has graduated from high school, and helps her mother with the housework and the care of the younger children, who attend the public school. The family seems to have little social life, and no recreational outlet other than that afforded by the school and by the “socials” and entertainments given by the neighboring church, which they attend regularly. Mrs. Walters finds time to cultivate a garden, and she cans the family’s winter supply of fruit and vegetables. She crochets purses and knits shopping bags that she sells at a profit of 95¢ each. The bedspreads that she knits bring a larger return.

The three oldest daughters, all of whom graduated from high school, are employed and live in the city. Each contributes to the support of the family, inasmuch as the earnings of Mr. and Mrs. Walters are not adequate. Claire, the oldest, is a slight, pale girl of 26, with large brown eyes and gentle manners. She dresses neatly and becomingly and has considerable poise. She is employed at an exclusive dress shop.

“Claire was very ambitious,” said her mother, “and when she finished high school she wanted to work her way through college, but she gave up her plans in order to help

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support the family. Six years ago she went to work at the Kroft 5 and 10¢ store in town. She was in the crockery department in the basement. The girls had to stay, by shifts, long after the store closed; sometimes until 10 or 11 o'clock at night. They had to clean up, and arrange the stock for the next day. At first she made \$11 a week, but later her pay was / raised to \$13. Each year she got a vacation of two weeks with pay, and a bonus at Christmas. She liked the work all right, but it made her kinda nervous."

As long as it was necessary, Claire, living at home, used her entire wage for family purposes, but now, with her sisters contributing, she is able to save a little, although she has to board in the city in order to be near her work. Since leaving the Kroft store she has been a saleswoman in one of the old-established 6 shops catering to the highest class patronage. Her pay is higher, the work lighter, hours shorter, and working conditions better.

The second daughter, Maria, has a position as nurse for the three-year-old child of a wealthy and socially prominent family in a fashionable suburb. She is paid \$9 a week, and lives on the premises. She finds her working hours long, and she gets a little lonely, but she has an afternoon off once a week, and always visits her family on this occasion.

Mildred, the third daughter, is also a nursemaid in a well-to-do family, and gets the same pay as Maria. She is 20, but looks 14 or 15. "Her charges adore her," Mrs. Walters declared, "and the people are grand to her. They treat her as one of the family, and are always giving her presents." She, too, visits her family whenever possible.

The older of the two boys is serving a term on the chain gang. He is now nearly 19. Having dropped out of school in the 10th grade, much to his mother's regret, he went to work in a curio shop. When he had saved a little money, he bought a second-hand automobile. One Saturday he took two boys of his own age for a "joy ride." They were all drinking. During the afternoon they collided with two other automobiles, each time quickly leaving the scene of the accident. In due course, they were apprehended by the police. Young Walters was

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charged with drunkenness, drunken driving, reckless driving, and *hit-and-run” driving, as well as driving without a license. It seems that he had been arrested for drunkenness before, and was therefore not 7 unknown to the police.

“The judge,” said his mother, “gave him two years' hard labor on the roads, because the boy was driving without a license. That seems a hard sentence, seeing as how nobody was hurt. I did the best I could, but the judge said he hoped the sentence would teach Son a lesson. I hope it does, but just think of him being thrown with criminals and convicts for two years!”

Joe, the younger boy, is 10 years old.