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# THE FACE IN THE LOOKING-GLASS

**Missionary Stories**

# THE FACE IN THE LOOKING-GLASS

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A missionary sat one hot summer afternoon beneath the verandah of the mission-house, reading, when, suddenly looking up, she was startled to find herself being intently regarded by a pair of eager eyes, belonging, it seemed to her at first, to some sort of monkey or other animal. But it was no monkey; for the owner of the eager eyes began in an equally eager voice, and in broken English, "*Lady, tell poor ... girl about the good God, of whom you've come over the great sea to teach,*" and the face was upturned to the missionary with a wistful, yearning look.

The lady looked curiously at the strange figure before her. Well might she have taken

the girl to be an animal rather than a human being. Imagine, if you can, a little squat figure, with filthy rags of clothing hanging to it, face and hands encrusted with dirt, and the unkempt, matted hair hanging down all round so thickly as to really give one the idea of a wild creature of the woods.

And yet within the dark heart of this heathen child was a deep longing, so real and so earnest that she had overcome fear and timidity, and had come from her unclean dwelling to know more from the lips of the missionaries of the Lord and Saviour of whom she had heard rumors from those who had come under their teaching.

*"Do tell poor heathen about the great God,"* she said again; for the missionary had sat without making reply to her first appeal. She

had been thinking how and what she should answer.

At length she said, "*Come to me tomorrow at this time, and you shall know what you wish.*" The child looked her thanks, and then, like a veritable thing of the woods, bounded away, and was quickly out of sight. The missionary sat there lost in thought, and soon from her heart came the cry, "*O God, give me the soul of this poor heathen; teach me what I shall say to her, help me that I may reach her understanding.*"

Next day the missionary awaited within the house the coming of the heathen child. At length she saw the little form slowly and timidly approaching, and could see that the child was surprised and disappointed at not seeing her beneath the verandah. She sent

the native servant forth to meet the child, who told her that her mistress was within and awaited her there. The little form drew near to the house and entered, following the servant. The missionary called the child to join her in an upper room, and she quickly ascended the stairs to the place whence the voice proceeded.

On her way she had to pass through a room in which hung a large mirror. The lady suddenly heard a loud piercing scream, and the girl rushed breathless into her presence, nearly fainting with terror, and at length gasping, *"Why didn't you tell me?"* as she pointed to the stairs up which she had just come. Then slowly she explained, when the missionary had soothed away her fear, how that she had seen in the room below, as she passed through, a terrible-looking wild

beast, which approached her and seemed ready to spring upon her. *"But there's no wild beast there,"* said the lady. *"You surely are mistaken."* *"No, no,"* pleaded the girl, *"don't go,"* as the missionary descended the stairs to ascertain the cause of the child's terror; but, finding she still went down, the child, for very fear of being left alone, followed her.

*"Where?"* said the missionary, on reaching the room, and looking round. *"Where is that which so affrighted you?"* *"There, there,"* said the girl, pointing to the mirror, wherein were reflected her own face and form. *"But that's yourself there,"* said she, *"and not a wild animal at all."* *"Me?"* was the surprised answer. *"Yes, that's your own face there."*

The child wonderingly drew near and gazed at her form in the glass, and when the truth dawned upon her, said slowly, "*Dirty! horrible! ugly!*" and then, turning to the missionary, "*I'd like to be clean, lady.*"

When, soon afterwards, trim and clean, with the long-unkempt hair nicely braided up, and in place of the rags of clothing, a pretty dress that the mission people had given her, the girl again stood before the mirror, she drew herself up, and with pleased beaming face kept repeating, "*Clean now, pretty now, neat now!*" "*Yes,*" said the lady, who was an amused spectator of it all, "*but only outside.*" Then, drawing the child gently towards her, she told her, with love in her tones, of the spiritual deformity and defilement, to all of which the child listened with earnest attention. When the missionary had ceased

speaking, the girl, with tears in her eyes, said the old words, *"I'd like to be clean, lady."* A few days had passed, and the girl had had many long and happy talks with the missionary, when one afternoon she cautiously, almost with awe in her face, crept up the staircase once again, and stood in front of the glass which had before been such a source of terror. The missionary, with joy and thankfulness to God in her heart, for the wondrous way in which He had brought this little one to Himself, watched. Looking at her face and figure, now so bright and clean, she repeated: *"Clean, pretty, neat;"* and then, whilst heaven itself seemed to be reflected in the sweet face, *"and cleansed inside too!"*

My little tale is told. Have you caught its meaning? Have you seen yourselves in God's



looking-glass - His Word? Have you been troubled and made wretched by the sight? Can you say today with the heathen child, *"I've been cleansed"*? If not, come at once, and let your prayer be *"Lord, show me myself."* When that is answered, as it soon will be, let this prayer go up to Him, *"Lord, show me thyself,"* and the look of faith at Him shall save you.



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