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HOW THEY ENTERED CANAAN
(A Collection of Holiness Experience Accounts)
Compiled by Duane V. Maxey

Vol. I -- Named Accounts

VERGE CARNEY

The parents [of Nazarene minister Florence Walling] on her mother's side were religious people of the intermittent variety. They believed in genuine conversions, but did not accept the doctrine of Holiness; therefore, lived up and down lives, religiously. Her mother's father was a circuit rider, away from home much of the time. He was held in great respect among the people. His home was better than average; their farm, the type an industrious Dutch family would naturally have.

On the father's side, the grandparents were good moral people. Never religious, but very proud of their good name; and were also held in respect in the community. This group, however, always felt themselves to be slightly superior to all others, and seldom found anyone whom they considered worthy to have married into their family. So, when their son Jonathan, married; even though the reputation was of good degree, the parents did not appreciate the daughter-in-law. All branches of the two families lived on hill-side farms in the same region, the farthest being not more than five miles away.

In a sense, then, the home was divided from the beginning. The mother prayed through in every revival; enjoyed salvation for a season each time; then would become inconsistent in daily living, until she would finally stop professing at all until the next revival.

The father was a man of good moral standing, but entirely uninterested in religion. Into this home came twelve children who lived. Of these, Florence was the second child and oldest girl.

Mr. Carney was of Irish extraction. He was an easy-going sort of man until aroused -- then would fight his weight in wild cats. It was the code of that country to fight over problems, so at one time or another, Florence's father had "whipped" practically every man in that country-side. Mrs. Carney, when low in her religious experience, had a fighting disposition, too. Florence remembers one outstanding fracas.

She was very small, and doesn't know what the argument was over, but one day Grandfather Carney, two sons and two daughters came to the house. When the group arrived, the young people took the initiative. They said harsh things to Florence's mother and father. Mrs. Carney wouldn't take it. She flew into the group and "whipped" them all, one by one -- except the father-in-law. Mrs. Carney mauled each one thoroughly, until each managed to get up and get out.

Some time passed by. Mrs. Carney prayed through again, and was living near the Lord once more, when two lady preachers came into the community, preaching holiness as a second definite work of grace. They held their meeting in the school house, and many of the Carneys attended. Mrs. Carney came to the conclusion, after a few services, if she could give up her snuff, she would be as good as the lady preachers. For days she tried it, but the appetite was too strong. By and by, the burden for a clean heart, and for deliverance from that terrible temper became more than she could bear. She went to the revival meeting one night alone. Florence and her father were at home alone. Suddenly, Mr. Carney woke Florence up saying, "Florence, -- wake up! Just listen to your mammy comin' roun' that mountain!"

In stentorian tones they could hear her saying "GLORY TO GOD!"

For miles they could hear her. Nobody in the valley doubted that something had happened to Virge! She had been sanctified wholly; and it worked! It worked so well that Mr. Carney began to take notice.

A strong character at any time, Virge was now literally aflame. She went to church somewhere every night of the world. If there was no service in the school house, she would promote a cottage prayer-meeting. Having a family of twelve children, and absolutely no income except what they could dig out of that worn-out hill-side, there just weren't enough clothes for all to have what they needed. When winter came, Virge had only an old three-quarter length red sweater to wear. That was nothing to her. She merely wore more clothes, and in zero weather went to her prayermeetings just the same. Walking five miles was nothing either. She usually took Florence with her.

Her life bore fruit at home, too; and it wasn't long until her husband knew that this was the religion that he wanted. As long as she was up and down, he had not been interested. Now, she had something that was real. He wanted it. He obtained it.

Meantime, persecution was increasing in the community. People were taking sides for and against Holiness. Grandfather Carney, the same two sons and daughters who had come once before, came again. This time the grandfather took the lead. His poor old proud heart was torn to desperation. As he entered the house, he began cursing. He cursed his son, but more, he cursed his daughter-in-law. He had never liked her, but now he hated her. He held her responsible for this religious disgrace that had involved the Carney name.

"You've gone and joined this low-down, Holy Roller outfit, and disgraced us all for life! You've dragged my son into this outfit. You've disgraced the name of Carney, I tell you. I hate you!!!"

Florence's father, the one so ready to fight in days gone by, sat with tears streaming down his face, and said not a word. Virge, who, only a few months ago, had knocked down and whaled this same group, now only said, "God, have mercy on him; he knows not what he does."

This only added fuel to the fire. The poor old man cursed again and again. At last, picking up the poker, said, "you've disgraced my family, I tell you. I've a good mind to knock you in the head!"

He took a step toward Virge, waving the poker menacingly, his face livid with anger; and poor little Florence wondered what might happen next. Somewhere in the upheaval, Virge suddenly realized that Holiness was working; that her temper was gone. Such a sudden wave of glory swept her soul, that without thinking, she threw up her hand and shouted, "Glory to God!"

It was like a red flag in front of a bull. The enraged father-in-law was so possessed with wrath that in terrible mockery, he threw up his hand and shouted, "Glory to God!"

Florence paused to comment, "God does not reap over night. Thirty-five years have passed since that day. The branch of the older members of the Carney family that has brought honor to that proud name, is the family so terribly abused that day. The children of the family who chose Holiness are largely well educated. Three are high school teachers. One is head chemist in a large industry. One girl is wife of a leading dentist. All are highly respected citizens, and some are active Christians.

When the day of final reckoning came for the paternal grandfather, his family asked if he wanted some one to pray with him. He could scarcely speak, so they suggested names. This one? that one? -- He shook his head. He tried to form a word. They listened closely. ".... Virge . . ." he whispered.

Source: "O Happy Day" by Florence Walling

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THE END