

THE TEXT UPON THE WALL.

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(Concluded from our last.)

Some days after this, Mistress Ella marches into the room. Father is out for his afternoon's round, and really she is glad to be alone with his books. She has been most cruelly used. Brothers, sisters, have leagued against her, and have treated her most unjustly, most unkindly. Her time, however, will come, she will pay them out; she had come even now, flushed with anger, to tell a little of their going on. She knew quite enough to bring them into trouble. If they were so unkind to her, she could make them repent it. They would find themselves in the wrong box when father came in.

Thus, and with many like thoughts, consoling her perturbed spirit, she plumped down on that study chair. Having selected a book from the well-filled shelves, she tried to read. In vain: the angry spirit was too rampant, and resentment kept the cheeks flushed, and thirst for revenge dried up the soul. Ah, why then, silly maid, why, if you wanted to nurse the thirst till the time came for slaking it, why have sat down just opposite that importunate question. When injured, wronged, insulted beyond conception, "What would Jesus do?"

At arm's length she held it for a long while; but before her father's return, Miss Ella was back with the offenders, so kind, gentle, good-natured, and they made signs (to which she turned a blind eye) of astonishment each to the other. For what could be done when that persisting man would call up such words as—"I say unto you, that ye resist not evil, but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also;" "Pray for them which spitefully use you, and persecute you;" and, nailed upon the cruel cross, after every refinement of insult and petty malignity conceivable, that sublime petition: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!"

Now, here are given but few instances of the remarkable effect of this illumination, almost ridiculed at first, but that forced its deep meaning with silent eloquence upon hearts dull or unwilling. I might add many more and yet leave many untold, and even unknown.

As thus:—A curate, whose hap it was to light upon it, just after a stirring appeal for more workers in the mission harvest, was sent far away across the seas by that simple question, and lived and died a martyr in those distant lands. A merchant, aggrieved with some matter of church order, which he had never taken the trouble to understand, and red hot to worry the poor rector, not only left him in peace, after waiting for him half an hour in that same study, but let go, next day an opportunity of putting something into his pocket in a business transaction with another merchant. Of no use arguing, again and again, "What matter if he doesn't know this or that particular which has come to my knowledge? What concern is it of mine that, for certain, he would never close the transaction if he had that information? Everyone must take care of number one." "What would Jesus do?" "It is all a matter of mere business, and every one takes such advantages as a matter of course." "What would Jesus do?" "Well, there would be a stop to all traffic and speculation, and we might as well shut up shop at once if we are to be so over-scrupulous." "What would—?" "Well I shan't stay here any longer. I'll go home and think it over. I won't wait for the rector. I dare say he's got enough to bother him, and after all perhaps he's right."

So the poor man fairly bolted. But the work of the simple text was done.

The rector's wife was obliged, on at least one occasion, to acknowledge a power in the illuminated question.

Thus it fell: she had been wounded deeply, and cruelly hurt by the unfaithfulness, by the falling away of a friend, a dear and trusted friend. Her faith in friendship, in human nature, was shaken. "Whom have I in Heaven but Thee?" she murmured, but she murmured it almost bitterly, fiercely. She held a crushed letter in her hand, as, sick at heart and tossed in mind, she sought the secure retirement of her husband's study. A passionate apology, a piteous plea for forgiveness and for restoration of the old dear relations, a acknowledgment of the fault, no excuses urged, only an appeal to mercy. "Never, Never, NEVER! Never again!" (What a sad word!) "I can forgive, but as for forgetting—No, I have been bitterly deceived; my faith has been shipwrecked; I may and do forgive; but I can never feel the same again!"

It was a verdict delivered in keen anguish, followed by a passionate flood of tears. And through the mist of these it was, that, the paroxysm over, the swimming eyes rested upon the question, "What would Jesus do?" It was some time before the aptness of the interrogation trickled into consciousness. But, in time, and by degrees, like opening flower after opening flower, when the winter is passing, text followed text, with its gentle advice, with its silent eloquent persuasion. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins." "A broken and a contrite heart, Thou wilt not despise." And, above all, a scene beside the Lake of Galilee.

A traitor friend; one so full, once, not long ago, of eager earnest profession. "Though all men should forsake Thee:"—and "If I should die with Thee:"—and "I will lay down my life for Thy sake!"

And so soon, so soon after. "But he began to curse and to swear, saying, I know not this Man of whom ye speak!"

Then a look: and then the overbrimming repentant flood.

A look: was it of repudiation? was the old love for ever gone? at least the old trust for ever removed? Were the gates of the old dear relations shut in his face with a clang? Then a vision rose before the injured friend's mind.

A sea, pale and leaden-hued in the early misty morning. Weary fishers in boats near the shore, having toiled all the night and taken nothing. A form, hardly seen through the haze, upon the shore, yet whose air carried authority, and whose words were those of command. Obedience to the command so authoritatively issued:—wonder, amazement following—then from the loved Disciple the announcement, tremulous with suppressed awe and joy— "It is the Lord!"

Who would might wait the boat's slow progress, the penitent friend was in the sea, wading towards the LORD. An eager, wishful greeting; but we hear of no reply. A silent meal, reverence, and gladness, and wonder, brimming their hearts; but an anxious yearning fear in Peter's. But the repast is concluded, and O, the thrill! "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?"

"More than these?" O, sad allusion to those old confident professions! And carest thou for Me?" The poor heart sinks at the colder word. The trembling lips murmur, the heart's subdued vehemence being permitted to burst their flood gates; "Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee!" "He saith unto him, feed my lambs."

Confidence, supply, in part restored, yet Peter stands in doubt. Again the question, again the colder word; again the eager reply, repudiating such an altered relation; again the sacred charge.

Once more the question. Ah, the sinking heart? What doubt of his truth is surely shown in this repetition! And three times:—Ah, that thrice denial cannot, can never be forgotten; the bitter past never condoned! A knell of never, never, NEVER!—No wonder that Peter was grieved, because he said unto him the third time, "Lovest thou

me?" Aye, even although the Master adopted at last the Disciple's tenderer and warmer word, so the grieved heart let loose its passionate appeal:—"Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee!"

Then the dear charge again; then the announcement that the old impetuous promise should be at last fulfilled, and that the Disciple should indeed die for the loved Master:—then the entire restoration of confidence in the repetition anew of the first words of calling, "Follow me!"

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Tears still: but not so bitter now. And the letter written that afternoon was folded to the wistful heart next morning with glad delight and appeased yearning.

Then the rector himself, again, inclined, because weary, night after night to omit or to hurry thus or that part of his meditations, devotions, prayers, suddenly remembered, looking at the quiet question, how "Jesus" (after a weary day) "continued all night in prayer to God." So he fanned up and revived his dying fires.

Ronald, the eldest son of the house, hesitating upon the brink of deciding to join in, at least, a dangerous, if not an un-innocent amusement, strongly pulled this way and that by passion and principle, sauntered into the study, and finding (however reluctantly) this sign-post marking the King's highway, was at last constrained to follow its direction. The wisdom of his decision came over him when he prayed the Father, "Lead us not into temptation." This petition, I say, became his life the better, and went home to his heart as he had said it that evening, when the merry party was assembled without him. And he regretted not his self-denial, for the warmth of the approbation of Jesus was sunny at his heart.

And for one more instance, in which a lonely half hour in the study more than supplied the want of the advice and counsel which the rector would have gladly given had he been within. It was the case of a grievous fall, terrible in its unexpectedness, in its heavy guilt, in the tragical consequences which followed.

What should the amazed and shocked friend—relation—do? How meet the fallen? Rather, how avoid him? Should he be altogether cut, or just a cold acquaintance be allowed to take the place of that old kindness and intimacy of relation and friendship? When would the rector come?

Well, meanwhile (the legend silently said on the wall) consider quietly my question—"What would Jesus do?"

It came like a burst of sweet bells, the abundant answer: "Neither do I condemn thee; go and sin no more." "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." "When he was yet a great way off his Father saw Him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him."

So neither did this visitor await the rector's return.

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My string of instances must be trusted to explain themselves. Only let it be remarked in conclusion,—how many a sorrow would be alleviated, how many a friend gained, how many an enemy reconciled, how many a pitfall avoided, how many a perplexity resolved, how many a Gordian knot untied, by the simple reference of all actions and hesitations to this standard—

"WHAT WOULD JESUS DO?"

The deviser of liberal things will find means of affecting them, which to the indolent appear incredible, to the covetous, impossible.

Children's Department.

THE LITTLE CONQUEROR.

'Twas midnight; not a sound was heard Within the—"Papa won't 'ou 'ook An' see my pooty 'ittle house? I wis' 'ou wouldn't wead 'ou book—"

Within the palace, where the King Upon his couch in anguish lay—"Papa, papa, I wis' 'ou'd tum An' have a little tonty play—"

No gentle hand was there to bring The cooling draught, or bathe his brow; His courtiers and his pages gone—"Tum, papa, tum; I want 'ou now—"

Down goes the book with needless force, And with expression far from mild, With sullen air and clouded brow, I seat myself beside the child.

Her little trusting eyes of blue With mute surprise gaze in my face, As if, in its expression stern, Reproof and censure she could trace.

Anon her little bosom heaves, Her rosy lips began to curl; And with a quivering chin she sobs, "Papa don't 'uv his 'ittle dirl."

King, palace, book— all are forgot, My arms are round my darling throne, The thundercloud has burst, and lo! Tears fall and mingle with her own.

WHAT JOHNNY FOUND.

"MOTHER," said a little lad of some eight years of age, as he gathered together his school books, "do you think I'll be able to have some new boots and a warm coat this winter?"

"I can't tell, child," his mother replied, with a sigh. "There's no chance of it as yet, anyhow. It's all I can do to find food and firing this bitter weather."

Little Johnny gave an inquiring glance at his feet, as if asking the old boots which covered them how much longer they would consent to hold together. As he wound his old threadbare comforter round his neck, he said plaintively, "It's all waitin' and waitin', ain't it, mother? and I can't earn nothin' for ever so many years. Now, if I was only in luck like Stevey Dobbs, to find a crown piece!"

"You never forget Stevey's find," said his mother, with a faint smile on her careworn face. "But, Johnny, if Stevey had been my boy I should like to have seen him try to find the owner of that five shillings, instead of going and spending it, and asking no questions."

"But, mother, he found it!" said Johnny, with wide open eyes, "and finding's keepin' always!"

"Oh, no, 'tisn't, my lad," his mother replied. "That's a dishonest saying, that's what that is. If you find anything, you're right to seek the owner, and not to keep it, mind that, Johnny. If you ever kep' anything you found I'd call you a little thief, and that's what I hope my boy 'll never be."

As Johnny trudged along to school he kept pondering on his mother's words, and thinking how strange and nasty it was to be obliged to be so particular. But he came to the conclusion that what she said must be right, for the little fellow was intelligent enough to know that his mother was a good woman, and that she never told even a little story. Johnny had often noticed grown up people tell little stories, and he very quickly drew a comparison between them and his own mother.

"I never found nothin', and don't suppose I ever shall, so it don't matter after all," was the conclusion Johnny arrived at.

Weeks passed away, and the winter was very cold; still Johnny's old boots were doing duty. They had been patch-