

now ; not for the world would I cause you trouble, Esther." With an imperious jecture Esther made answer, "to leave the house would be the worst thing you could do for us both ; you are my guest until your brother comes for you." No more sweet intercourse could the friends enjoy, and both felt it deeply, although pride kept Esther from showing her feelings.

Morning came, and with it the brother of Leona. The tall, handsome Greek was somewhat surprised at the constrained manner of the girls, and especially at the haughty carriage of Esther, although he was prepared for something of the kind, as he knew and shared his sister's secret. The farewells were spoken coldly by Esther, sadly by Leona, who, with her brothers, leave Capernaum, and in due time arrive at their home in Rome.

Six months pass quickly. Creon and Aspasia, the parents of Leona, open their doors to the Christians of all nationalities, and Leona has found another friend upon whom to lavish the love of her warm heart—Valeria, a noble Roman girl—who comes to the secret meetings with her mother, Racilia, and Aunt Clelia; the latter are earnest Christians, but Valeria has not yet fully decided for herself. She had studied much more than the women of her time were wont to do, and after seeking the inmost truths of all known religions and turning away dissatisfied from all, she was now reading and hearing all she could about the Christian religion. Will she find in it what satisfies the heart? If so a brave and fearless soul will be added to the Church.

Leona never ceased to grieve for her Jewish friend, and she was truly surprised one day, when a servant brought her a letter from Capernaum. Hastily breaking the seal, she is soon lost in the contents. Let us look over her shoulder as she reads :

"My dearest, truest friend,—I could not blame you if you refused to read this letter after my treatment of you,

but I know you better than to think so of you. I found the little scroll you left so secretly in my room, and I did read and compare, and—*I, too, am a Christian.* The proofs of the Messiahship are beyond dispute. Oh, I long to talk with you, but I must hasten. Indeed, I write to beg a kindness at your hands. My father disowns me if I persist in what he calls the new false religion. I have nowhere to go. May I come to you. ESTHER."

Need we say that swift messengers soon reunited the friends? yea, in a stronger union than they had ever known before.

Six weeks Esther stays in the home of her friend, learning daily more of the religion of Christ, seeing how it has transformed her friend and her people, looking with wonder at Leona's brother, Phillip, a man of hasty passionate temper, who would never take a word from another. Now it seemed as if he had truly given control of himself to an unseen Friend, who enabled him to do all things through the power of His presence.

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It is the hour of evening meeting. The people are reverently listening to a venerable minister who has "been with Jesus," and whose words are as the water of life to thirsty souls. But the meeting is rudely broken up by the entrance of Roman soldiers. Part make a hasty escape, but many are arrested and lodged in prison, Esther and Leona among the number.

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Midnight in the city of Rome. In a loathsome prison sit two young girls clasped in each other's arms. "Esther, do you fear the morrow?" "Nay, my more than sister. I know of a truth now that Jesus is the Christ. I have known more real happiness during this, my last night on earth, than I ever experienced before. Did He not say, 'I will be with you even unto the end,' and His Word is truth. Oh, what joy can be felt in a prison cell!" "Yes,"