

"FOREWARNED, FOREARMED."

There is nothing which has such power over us for evil as an unacknowledged sin; but let the fault be confessed (if only to ourselves), it is already half redressed. When we foolishly close our eyes to an enemy's presence, we are likely to be conquered by him; but when we understand his strength, we will arouse ourselves to our best efforts, and make a strong fight against him.

Several years since, a phrenologist was lecturing in a small town, and among others who came forward to have their heads examined, was a man of venerable appearance, who was well and widely known for the strict uprightness of his life. As the lecturer reached him, and passed his hands over his head, a peculiar expression crossed his face; once or twice he made careful examination, and finally said, with some show of hesitation,

"This man is a born thief!"

At once several men in the audience were on their feet, indignant at this public insult to a tried and trusted man; but he checked their advance with a gesture.

"Friends," he said, with a look full of sadness, "the lecturer has told the truth. From my earliest childhood I have had a propensity to steal. My mother, however, was on the lookout, and when she discovered this, took the wisest course possible with me. She told me it had also been her own inclination, with which she had battled all her life, and begged me never to yield to it. The memory of her tears and prayers during that talk has never left me, and I resolved, there and then, God helping me, that I would never allow that sin to master me! It has been a terrible struggle, which has made me old before my time! Once only did I yield, and then I replaced the article I had stolen that very night, before I could close my eyes in sleep. I think my consciousness of this besetting temptation has made me more careful, even in my smallest dealings. I have been afraid to take least advantage in a bargain, lest it might be a yielding to my terrible propensity, and I can truly say, to-night, that though 'a born thief,' I am still an honest man before my Maker!" and he sat down amid the wondering and respectful silence of his audience.—Sel.

A GUIDING VOICE.

A touching story came to us last winter from Minnesota. A farmer, living on the edge of one of the lakes of that State, started to cross it in a small sail boat one evening after dark.

The wind changed, and a gust overturn the boat when it was in the middle of the lake. The surface of the water was covered with large masses of floating ice.

The farmer was an expert swimmer, and struck out boldly toward that part of the shore where he thought his house stood; but he grew confused in the darkness; and ice formed rapidly over the whole lake.

He was in a small, quickly-narrowing circle, in which he beat about wildly, the chill of death creeping over his body. He gave up at last, and was sinking in the freezing water, when he heard a sound.

It was the voice of his little girl calling him, "Father! Father!"

He listened. The sound of her voice would tell which way home lay. It put fresh life into him. He thought: "If she would only call once more! But she will be frightened at the dark and cold. She will go in and shut the door—"

But just then came the cry, loud and clear: "Father!"

"I turned," said the man afterward, in telling the story, "out in the opposite direction. I had been going away from home. I fought my way; the ice broke before me. I reached the shore at last. But if my dear little girl had not persisted in calling me, though hearing no reply, I should have died there under the ice."

The story of a man's life is like that of a voyage. He sets out happy and eager in the sunshine, to make a passage to his heavenly home, and presently, in the storms and chills of the world, he loses his way and sinks. He is vicious or a drunkard or maddened by money making; he has lost the faith in God, the love for his neighbor, the hearty fellowship which other men have; he has lost the guiding which the conscience gives; he is sinking down to death in freezing depths.

But there is always one spot warm for him while he lives; there is always one voice calling to him, which if he will hear and heed will bring him home. It may be his child; with most men it is the remembrance of their mother. It may be the love of music, or of green, growing things, or a hidden reverence for the long neglected Bible. It is often a single noble, fine trait in himself which gives the lie to his coarser nature.

But whatever it be, when we see the sign of it in any man, however criminal he may have been, we may know that the ice is not yet closed over his soul, that home still waits for him yonder, and that God has sent his messenger to sumn on him to come to it. *Phil. Presbyterian.*