

Choice Literature.

Still and Deep.

BY F. M. F. SKENE, AUTHOR OF "TRIED," "ONE LIFE ONLY," ETC.

CHAPTER LI.

Mary de L'Isle was too experienced a nurse not to see at once that the first thing to be done for the unhappy Laura Brant, was to loosen her physical discomfort, before she made any attempt to quiet her mind.

"Oh, Mary!" sighed the invalid, who had watched all her gentle movements with tearful eyes; "it is like a breath of sweet air from heaven to have you moving round me; you look so fresh and pure, and snow-white as an angel, in the midst of all the wickedness and misery this wretched room contains."

"To Bertrand Lisle!" said Mary, very softly, and averting her eyes from Laura's face, over which her words brought an angry flush for a moment; but it soon faded, and Lurline gave a weary sigh.

"I might have guessed it," she said; "but how does that make you a countess?" "Bertrand has succeeded to the title and estates of his family, by the death of his uncle."

"I never knew that he had any prospects of that kind," said Laura.

"He did not know it himself," replied Mary; "he was not aware of the existence of the chateau or the property till he visited his uncle last autumn, and soon after he came into possession."

"Then he is wealthy now, I suppose, and a peer of France?"

"Yes," said Mary, simply; "but, dear Laura, do not let us speak of such matters now, when you are so ill."

"Oh, the irony of fate!" exclaimed Laura, flinging up her arms with a gesture of despair; "and this was really the position I abandoned when I discarded Bertrand Lisle because he had become a poor soldier! I gave up the rich Comte de L'Isle to end my days as a beggar in a garret!" She flung herself round, buried her face in the pillow, and groaned aloud.

"Dear Laura!" said Mary, earnestly, "if you are indeed so ill that you think your life is drawing to a close, you have no need surely to trouble yourself about earthly riches and honours; they are at all times utterly valueless compared with that peace in immortality, which alone can avail any one of us at the last."

"Yes, you are right," she answered, turning slowly round; "if that awful hateful mystery of death is coming upon me—from which I would fly to the ends of the earth if I could—nothing matters much in my past life, except my wickedness. But where am I to find peace, or hope, or pity in that other world which they say is the presence of God? Mary, I see many frightful visions in my feverish nights—serpents crawling about me, and demons mocking me, but the most hideous sight of all is the spectacle of my own soul. I do not suppose you have the remotest idea how bad I have been!"

"We all need to repent, Laura."

"Repent! I do not know if I do, rightly; I repent of everything which has brought me to such a pass as this, but I cannot tell if it is repentance which will avail in the sight of God. How can I suppose the all-pure God will ever look on me with pardon or compassion, when I do not believe that you would sit there beside me, Mary, if you knew what my sins have been, even only against yourself!"

"It could not make the smallest difference to me, Laura; it is all past and forgotten; do not let us speak of it."

"But do you know that I parted you and Bertrand by a systematic course of falsehood, in order to win him to myself?" said Laura, with a bitterness against herself which caused her to use her natural frankness of speech for the purpose of self-accusation.

"God brought us back to each other," said Mary, gently; "so you need think of it no more."

"I doubt if Bertrand would be as forgiving as you are, Mary. He must hate and despise me, and so must poor John Pemberton."

For a moment Mary started, to hear the dead spoken of thus, and then remembered that Lurline could not possibly know of the catastrophe which had put an end to that noble life during the siege of Paris; she determined to say nothing on the subject at that time, when Laura was so much excited, in the hope that when she did tell her all the history of John's blessed passage to his rest, it might help to draw this wayward spirit nearer to the Saviour whom he had loved so well.

"They do despise me! they do despise me! I see you cannot deny it, Mary," said Laura, excitedly, mistaking altogether the reason of her friend's silence, "and they are right. I behaved shamefully to them both. I deceived them, for I cared nothing

for either of them; I never loved but one truly, years ago, and he would have nothing to say to me. I was utterly false to John and Bertrand, when I pretended they had won my affection, and I betrayed them without a pang—first one, and then the other, when it suited my purpose. I see all the hatefulness of my conduct now as well as they can, but you can tell them that they have my revenge, Mary. Here I am, in this wretched hole, dying—dying! going before the awful judgment-seat of God; and I am terrified, I am appalled! What hope have I? I am lost! Yes, I am hopelessly lost! and her voice rose to a shriek, as she tossed her arms about, and gazed wildly upward.

Mary took hold of her hands, drawing them firmly down into the soft steady grasp of her own, and looking at the feverish violently-agitated woman with a calm and decision which had an instantaneous effect, she said distinctly, "Laura, you must compose yourself, that we may talk quietly over your position and prospects. Will you listen to me calmly?"

"I will do whatever you like," said Laura, wearily. "I can lie as long as you are beside me; the sight of your peaceful face makes me feel safe."

"Then let me tell you, first, that I think you are mistaking in supposing yourself to be dying. I have had a great deal of experience of illness and death lately, and I feel convinced you have, at present at least, no fatal symptoms."

"I am sure I feel ill enough to be dying, Mary," said Lurline, pushing back the hair from her forehead; "I am so weak, and I am always light-headed at night, and every day I hear that dreadful old woman who waits on me say to the men who want to turn me out, 'Wait a little longer, and she is sure to die!'"

"Poor dear!" said Mary, compassionately, "it has been miserable for you to be left to such a nurse, but no doubt she said it because she wanted to continue in charge of you, so as to get the payment. We shall take you out of her hands now, you may be sure; and I still think, though you have a great deal of fever, and are very much exhausted, that you are in no especial danger. With care and good nursing, I believe you will soon recover."

"I don't think I wish it, Mary," said Laura, with tears rolling down her cheeks. "I am afraid to die—horribly afraid—because of my wickedness, but I am almost as much afraid of coming back to a hopeless poverty-stricken miserable life. What have I to live for now?"

"Your child, Laura! Surely you have not forgotten it!" said Mary.

"Poor little helpless mite! I think it would be happier for it to die too, than to live to have me for its mother!"

"Not if you fit yourself, as you may, to bring it up worthily; and there is your husband, Lurline," she added, in a low voice.

Laura turned her head away. "I do not love him; I never did!"

"Still, it is your duty to be with him; and if you try to please him, affection may grow up between you."

"I do not believe he would have me with him now; he wanted me to come too, when he escaped that night, and I was so enraged because he had reduced me to poverty that I refused. Then he said his failure was chiefly my fault, and we parted in anger. I do not know where he is now."

"Did he not give you any address to which you could write?"

"Yes, he did, a place in New York; but it is no use, Mary, I am not good like you; I cannot bear the thought of a life of privation and wretchedness. I think death would be happiest for me, if only I am not punished hereafter. I am so tired of suffering!" And she flung herself back in the bed, and closed her eyes.

Mary rose, and knelt down by her side, stroking her cheek with her soft hand.

"Laura, dear, you are completely worn-out now, and you must not talk any more; you need some strengthening food more than anything else at this moment, and I will see that you have that immediately, but I want you just to grant me one request. Will you let me take care of you now, and manage everything for you, as I think best, at least while you are so weak? I feel sure I can make you willing to live again, when you are better, and away from this place. May I do what I like with you, Lurline?"

"Oh yes, dear sweet little Mary," she said, bonding forward to kiss her; "you are the only friend, the only hope I have in the world; how can I thank you enough, if you will indeed be burdened with the care of such a one as I am?"

"That is well!" said Mary, brightly; "then, dear, I shall go at once to make some arrangements for you, and you shall soon be very differently placed."

"But you will not stay long away from me, will you? I feel as if I could not let you go." And Laura held her tight with her burning hands.

"Only a very little while; do not be afraid; and I shall send back Justine, my maid, to you, almost immediately, with some fruit and nourishing food, and she shall stay with you till I come again."

"Oh then, I can bear it," said Lurline. "If I am not left alone any more with that cruel old woman!" and she relaxed her hold. Mary stooped to kiss her, and then quietly left the room.

(To be Continued.)

VERY timely are these hints from Mr. Spurgeon:—"The first thing after conversion to Christ is confession to Christ, and the next is instruction in Christ. I fear that too many professed converts heap over these hedges, and endeavor to become teachers at once. They call themselves disciples, and repudiate all discipline. They say they are soldiers of the cross; but they can neither march in line nor keep step, neither will they submit themselves to order. They appear to think that the moment they are born they are fathers; the instant they are enlisted they are officers. Now, conversion is the beginning of the spiritual life, and not the climax of it. It makes a man a disciple, and the main thing a disciple has to do is to learn. After he has learned, he will be able to teach others also; but not till then."

Sense in Shoes.

Everybody has heard the old story of how Canova chose five hundred beautiful women from whom to model his Venus, and among them all could not find a decent set of toes. If he lived now-a-days, what luck would he have under the dainty little laced boots, with their high heels? As for these adult women, however, if they chose to both torture and disfigure themselves, we have neither advice nor sympathy to offer, but the condition of the feet of the children is really too serious a matter to be passed by in silence. As soon as the helpless baby can put its foot to the ground, and before it can complain in words, shoes are put on it, by which the width of the toes is contracted fully half an inch, and usually a stiff counter is ordered in the heel with some vague idea of "strengthening the ankle." From that time, no matter how watchful or sensible its parents may be in other regards, this instrument of torture always constitutes a part of its dress; the toes are forced into a narrower space year by year, "to give good shape to the foot," until they overlap and knot, and knob themselves over with incipient corns and bunions; then the heel is lifted from the ground by artificial means—thus the action of the calf-muscle is hindered and the elastic cartilage of the whole foot stiffened at their earliest tender period of growth. The results are a total lack of elasticity in the step and carriage (American women are noted for their mincing, cramped walk, and a foot inevitably distorted and diseased). We need not go to the statues of ancient Greece to find of what beauty the foot is susceptible when left to its natural development; our own Indian can show us. We have seen the foot of an old chief, who had tramped over the mountains for sixty years, which for delicacy of outline and elasticity could shame that of the fairest belle. Southern children are more fortunate in this matter than those in the North, as it is customary even in the wealthiest classes to allow their feet to remain bare until the age of six. Mothers in the North are not wholly to blame, however, as the climate requires that the feet shall be covered, and it is well nigh impossible, even in New York, to find shoes properly made for children unless a last is especially ordered for the foot. As a new last would be required every month or two, very few parents are able to give the watchfulness and money required. If shoes of the proper shape were insisted upon by the customers, the dealers would speedily furnish them. Nothing is more prompt than the reply of trade to any hint of a new want of fashion. A shoemaker in one of the inland cities made a fortune by advertising shoes of the shape of a child's foot. He counted on the intelligence and good sense of the mothers, and was not disappointed. If the mothers who read this would insist upon such work from their shoemakers, their children would arise upon well-shaped, healthy feet, to call them blessed. —Scribner's Monthly.

Temperance Workers.

The Christian Work urges to faithfulness and persistency in temperance work, saying:—

This evil of intemperance is so deeply rooted in the social habits and customs of the people, that nothing short of a grand moral revolution is adequate to eradicate this diabolical evil. So the more formidable the opposition to temperance, the greater the need for open, incessant warfare against intemperance. The power of intemperance demands an unwavering fidelity and honest devotion to the cause of temperance. In the temperance army there must be no deserters or stragglers, but every man must be at his post of duty. There is service to be performed by every man, woman and child enlisted in the temperance work. There must be no shirking of duty, no apathy or indifference in the temperance ranks. The grand principle that we as friends of temperance endeavor to firmly establish, we'll never die. It only remains to us to be firm and steadfast in their advocacy, to triumph in the end. The obligation rests upon every temperance man and woman to do all in their power to promote the cause of temperance, and this obligation cannot be shirked. O, that we could impress upon the mind of every temperance advocate the absolute need for faithfulness in duty and persistency in effort. We fear there are those who have joined the temperance forces and have been stumbling-blocks in the way of others. Such persons have not been earnest, active laborers in the grand and glorious work that is to ameliorate the condition of mankind. What we need in the temperance work is a unity of effort as well as a unity of purpose. So great a work as this demands a full consecration to its service. Shame on that one who will not defend his cause among enemies. One must talk and act for temperance not only among those that are "of the household of faith," but among those who are its bitterest enemies. Whenever an opportunity is presented or the occasion requires, let the friend of temperance advocate his or her cause. Always uphold and defend the great truths of temperance. Surely there is incentive enough to move every temperance man to continual labor for the cause which he has espoused. The reward is glorious enough. What then is necessary, in order to have every one who is committed to temperance firm in their devotion? Surely there is a need for work. If temperance is to reign in every household, and the victory is to be won, every man must stand up for temperance in the true nobility of his manhood, and all must be faithful to the end.

ONE of Mr. Moody's sermons has been read in Arabia in the Arabic language, and the natives were surprised that the author of so plain a discourse should have attracted so much attention in Europe and America. Dr. March says the Arabs "have an idea that a sermon must be in the highest possible Arabic, and the less common people can understand of it the more learned the preacher, and the more eloquent his discourse."

Astor and Stewart: Their Use of Wealth.

The record of American munificence during the last half century, like that of the British, is a splendid one. But it is noteworthy that the splendour of that record owes almost nothing to America's two great millionaires recently deceased. The United States have had and still have many rich men—many princely merchants, many wealthy manufacturers, house and ship owners, many railway and mining magnates. But we believe that W. B. Astor and A. T. Stewart were the richest of all the men that up to the present moment have won wealth in America. They were both very remarkable men, and were the possessors of millions upon millions worth of property real and personal. They both in their different lines were good business men, clear-headed, far-sighted, familiar with details, closely observant and vigilant. They both furnished employment on a considerable scale to people in New York and elsewhere. Astor, as he added lot to lot and house to house, provided work for a small army of diggers, masons, plasterers, carpenters, painters, plumbers, etc., and so to some extent was a public benefactor. For it must be admitted that men who find, honest, healthful and remunerative work for many people, whatever their immediate motive or ultimate aim, serve their country well and benefit their kind. In a still larger degree in this direction, Stewart merited well of his fellow men. He was more enterprising and circulated his money more briskly than Astor, in the furtherance of schemes which, if not always highly productive in a money point of view, put well-earned bread in a great many people's mouths. Besides, in the conduct of his own proper business as a dry goods merchant, Stewart provided a large number of persons with desirable positions. Then, Stewart housed in the finest private mansion on the Continent, lived in a style fitting his vast wealth, and in that way sent many thousand dollars a year through wholesome trade channels; while Astor lived in very economical fashion.

Both these men contributed on occasion to the support of various good causes, and, no doubt, both were found more or less accessible to people in need of private charity.

Astor, however, never had the reputation of having a sympathetic nature or that of being a generous giver. He was thought to be somewhat hard, close and narrow. And he did nothing in the final disposal of his property to rectify that opinion. With Stewart, however, the case was different. He was held to be a man of quick and wide sympathies, and open handed. And it was expected that his ultimate position as a philanthropist would be an exalted one. At times, there was much talk of the grand schemes of benevolence on which he was meditating; and it was believed that a large proportion of his property was to be devoted to the maintenance of certain projected charitable establishments.

But when the end came, his will was found to contain nothing to justify the indulgence of such a belief. He had thought much, and had talked largely of plans and purposes for the benefit of the destitute and afflicted, but had settled nothing. It is true, that in leaving the bulk of his vast wealth to his childless widow, he expressed his confidence that she would after his death carry into effect his charitable projects. She may do so. Time will show. But if she does, general expectation will be greatly surprised. She is under no legal obligation to spend a cent of the enormous amount devised to her and her heirs for ever in any charitable work whatsoever.

This being the situation in a philanthropic point of view, with regard to the disposal of their wealth by the dead millionaires, one can not but reflect upon the grand results that might have been attained by a judicious improvement by them of their magnificent opportunities for benefitting their fellow-men. A thousand worthy causes languish for want of support. A thousand fields of effort invite the entrance of the enlightened philanthropist. There are secrets of untold value to be wrung from the keeping of Nature by the hand of Science; and a large amount might well and profitably have been devoted by these men to scientific investigation in Nature's domain. Invention needs stimulating. Ignorance invites attack. Indigent genius needs training. Art in a hundred forms requires development. Human nature is afflicted with illis innumerable. Some of these, in many cases, might have been remedied and still more mitigated. There were hospitals that needed founding—some for the sick of this disease, and some for that; and asylums for destitute infancy, desolate old age, and poor wretches that seem forsaken of both God and man. There were parks and fountains and libraries, seats of learning, and other objects innumerable, some of which might well have been remembered in the rich men's wills.

We conclude with the reflection that, while the attainment of great wealth is of necessity the possibility of the few, the entirely worthy use of such wealth seems the privilege of still fewer.—St. John's Daily News.

It is no little mercy to see a hell deserved, and a heaven given.

The Sabbath ought to be the sweetest day of all the seven; yet with most, alas! it is the very dullest.—Amos viii. 5; Isa. lviii. 13.

PROFESSOR PHILIPS protests in the Congregationalist, against the clamor for short sermons:—"No intelligent preacher ever did, or ever will, discuss the standard doctrines of our faith in sermons of half-hour's length. Doctrinal preaching must become obsolete, is now obsolete, under the imperious demand of the popular taste for brevity. The surest way to make such preaching inanimate is to crowd its massive theme into thirty minutes. I once heard, in the city of Boston, a discourse on the nature, the necessity, the grounds, the extent and the moral influences of the Atonement, all within thirty-five minutes. It was drier than the chips of the ark."

Scientific and Useful.

USEFUL HINT.

To keep a tin tea-kettle bright, rub it every day with newspaper. It will keep it very bright, without any washing. To keep copper or tin tanks in their original brightness, rub every day with dry newspaper.

CALVES' OR PIGS' FEET BLANC MANGE.

Boil one set of feet in four or five quarts of water without salt. When reduced to one quart, strain; add one quart of milk, using any flavor that is agreeable. Then boil the whole fifteen minutes, strain and pour into moulds.

DELICIOUS WINE SAUCE.

Two cups white sugar, a piece of butter the size of an egg, one egg well beaten, one teaspoonful corn starch or flour, beat all well, now add a teaspoonful of boiling water, put it in a saucepan on the fire till it thickens like cream—do not let it boil.

WINDOW BOXES.

Window boxes, in small gardens, supply the place of a hot-bed or cold-frame. Seeds sown in boxes of earth 3 in. deep, and set in a warm kitchen window, the plants properly watered and thinned, and if need be, transplanted to other boxes of earth, will give an abundance of early to-mato and other plants.

STEWED CELERY.

Trim and cut to the same length a number of heads of celery; split them in two lengthwise; tie them in bundles with a thread, and parboil them for ten minutes in salted water; drain them and arrange in a saucepan over slices of bacon, with a bundle of sweet herbs, a couple of onions, pepper and salt to taste, and a blade of mace; add enough stock just to cover the contents, and set the saucepan to simmer gently till the celery is quite tender. Having removed the string, dispose the celery neatly on a dish; take some of the stock in which it has been stewed, remove all fat from it, add a small piece of fresh butter, pour it over the celery and serve.

TIDIERS.

An "Improved Tidy Fastener" has been invented, which will be of value to every lady who has been annoyed in seeing the tidies torn or twisted from her chairs or sofas by the careless members of the household. The little device consists of a spiral spring of fine pointed wire, attached by one end to a velvet tuft or button. The fastener is used by simply piercing with its pointed end the tidy, when one or two turns of the button sends the spiral into the soft upholstery of the chair or other article of furniture upon which the tidy may be placed. It thus serves the double purpose of securing the tidy in place and of additionally ornamenting the furniture to which it is attached.

TRESPASS BY ANIMALS.

The law of trespass is very stringent. It applies both to man and beast. If my horse puts its head over or through a fence and bites my neighbour's horse I am liable for any damage done. So, if my neighbour's dog gets into my yard and worries my poultry, he is liable. In one case some of the learned judges seem at first to have been somewhat startled by this doctrine; but on looking into their books they found it to be part and parcel of the common law of England, and to be well established, "that the owner of an animal is responsible, if the animal does that which is done by the owner himself, would have been a trespass, apart from any question of negligence."—Land and Water.

CLOVER AN ACCUMULATOR OF NITROGEN.

Dr. Voelcker, by a series of the most exhaustive analyses of soils and plants, has discovered and established the fact that an immense amount of nitrogenous food accumulates in the soil during the growth of clover, especially in the surface soil, amounting, including that in the clover roots and tops, to three and a half tons of nitrogen per acre, equal to four tons and a third of ammonia. If this be a fact, the wonderful effects of clover, vetch, and similar plants on the soil ceases to be mysterious, and the farmer need no longer buy ammonia in his commercial fertilizers, but only add to the soil the lime and other ash elements required, which can be cheaply furnished in available forms.

SPIRITS OF AMMONIA.

There is no telling what a thing will do till you try it. I know ammonia, diluted in water, could restore rusty silks and clean coat collars, but when I got a green spot on the carpet, I tried half a dozen other things before I thought of that, and that is just what did the work effectually. I put a teaspoonful into about a teacupful of hot water, took a cloth and wet the spot thoroughly, just rubbing it slightly, and the ugly spot was gone. It is splendid for cleaning your silver; it makes things as bright as new without any expenditure of strength; is best for looking-glasses and windows it is best of all; and one day when I was tired and my dish cloths looked rather gray, I turned a few drops of ammonia into the water and rubbed them out, and I found it acted like a charm, and I shall be sure to do so again some day. I suppose housewives have a perfect right to experiment and see what results they can produce; and if they are not on as large a scale as the farmers try, they are just as important to us, and they make our work light and brighter too. Now, I do not believe in luxuriating in a good thing all alone, and I hope all the housekeepers will send and get a ten-cent bottle of spirits of ammonia and commence a series of chemical experiments and see what they can accomplish with it. Take the boys' jackets, the girls' dresses, and when you have cleaned everything else, put a few drops in some soft water and wash the little folks' heads, and report progress.—Farmers' Wife in Country Gentleman.

When all that is worldly turns to dross around us, books only retain their steady value. When friends grow cold, and the converse of the intimates languishes into rapid civility and commonplace, these only continue the unaltered countenance of better days, and cheer us with that true friendship which never deceives hope or deserted sorrow.—Washington Irving.