

tone. He asked her to read to him. She rose alert, went to the table whereon were scattered various books. His eyes followed her.

"No, child, none of those. On the stand by the window you will see a large book—read to me out of that."

Caroline reached it down with a sort of awe. In that house the Bible was no familiar friend, no well-loved, often-sought adviser and comforter. It was but the text-book of certain formulas and conventional observances—nothing more. All beyond that was vague mystery, unsatisfying, unreal.

There are two classes of humanity whose shortcomings cry loudly for the mercy of God—professing Christians, who evade the putting into practice of their belief, and those, far fewer, far rarer, who, while mysteriously blind to the faith, live the *life* of the followers of Christ.

Mr. Hesketh had been one of these last. His past, blameless before men, had been but lifeless, dry, withered and rotten, as regarded all higher aims and aspirations. Upright, honorable, benevolent, and even capable of acts of self-denial not generally habitual to the practice of many a believer—he was all this, and yet—what a world was wanting! He had, perhaps, felt the want, many a time—what man would not?—but his life had been singularly free from those great crises which come to some of us like electric flashes, revealing at once the nothingness of earth—the might and the glory of Heaven. A great sorrow is sometimes needed to teach a man the whole meaning of his life. Human hearts are touched in divers ways: some, it would seem, are only to be smitten like rock—blasted into fragments—"earth undone," before they can be "God satisfied."

But now—the unrealities of life were fading like shadows from before the old man's eyes, and something lay beyond—something to which he had been blinded before. Yearningly he sought and tried to grasp it. Not Dives praying for a little water to cool the tip of his tongue longed more earnestly than the weak, enfeebled invalid, the sometime indifferent doubter—too indifferent, indeed, to be rightly termed a sceptic—longed now to search into the truth, truth that he had been content to carelessly pass by all his life. For, verily, though men may deliberately live without God, they cannot—cannot prepare to die without Him.

And so it came to pass that Caroline, sitting on her low stool at her uncle's feet with the Great Book spread open on her lap, read therefrom, read words that have been as healing waters of consolation to thousands of torn and bruised hearts—words that have lent strength to the helpless, courage to the weak, patience to the restless and the heart-sick.

After about an hour that her low voice had sounded gently on the