

head. Such books as these won't answer in times of illness or deep trouble. We turn from them as instinctively and certainly as we do from noise, glare, and gaiety.

The mountain without was now in the shadow. The early twilight of the December evening had darkened the wintry landscape; but the ruddy glow of the hickory fire revealed how beautiful Lottie's face could be, when composed into womanly truth and thoughtfulness.

"I have never had a serious sorrow or illness, and I wonder what I would do if I had?" she queried, musingly, as these sombre events, which sooner or later must come into every life, rose up before her.

"I know well what you will do when they come, as come they will to us all," said Hemstead, gently. "As surely as you would cling to a strong arm were you sinking in deep waters, just so surely you will turn to the Bible, and to Him who said, 'Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.'"

The truth, if given a hearing, is ever powerful—the truths of our own sad experience—the answering and remedial truth of God. Unexpectedly and unintentionally on her part, both these phases of truth had gained the ear of Lottie Marsden. The sorrowful and suffering days of the future threw back their shadows upon her, and her heart sank at their prospect; and with the certainty of intuition she recognized the answering truth, and felt that she would indeed be glad to cling to One who had the right and power to utter such tender, reassuring words as Hemstead had quoted.

Of all spells, that of truth is the strongest. Under it the impulsive girl buried her face in her hands, and, with a quick sob, cried:

"Oh, that I were better!"

Then springing up, she gave Hemstead a strange, earnest look through her tears, as if she would read his soul. But she saw only honest sympathy.

He was about to speak again, but she abruptly left the room.

CHAPTER VIII.—FINDING ONE'S LEVEL.

Lottie met De Forrest on the stairs, and he was about to apologize for his long sleep, but she rushed by him like a summer gust. A moment later she burst into her room and startled indolent Bel out of her last luxurious doze, by dropping into a chair by the fire and indulging in what girls call a "good cry."

"What is the matter?" asked Bel, anxiously.

Lottie's tears were the only answer.

"What has happened?" cried Bel, rising hastily. "Let me call Auntie or Julian."

"If you call either you are no friend of mine," said Lottie, springing to the door, locking it, and taking the key.

"Why, Lottie, I don't understand—"

"There is no need that you should. Nothing is the matter—only I'm blue—I've been thinking of awful things. I was in one of my moods this afternoon, now I'm in one of my tenses."

"Unusually intense, I should think." I have not seen you so moved since Tom Wellesly threatened to blow out his brains for you."

"He hadn't any to blow out," snapped Lottie, "or he wouldn't have thought of doing it for such a girl as I am."

"Well," sighed Bel, who at times was one of Job's comforters, "I've heard he has never been the same since."

"I hope he has been wiser, then. How can men be such stupid owls as to fall in love with me! Can't they see I'm a wicked little heathen?"

"That is just the kind men like," sneered Bel, misanthropically. "You expect to captivate (and of course you will) this sincere and saintly young minister. He already thinks that you are by far the best of our party, and has some of the first symptoms that your victims usually manifest."

Lottie sprang up, dashed away her tears, and commenced restlessly pacing the room.

"Bother on the men!" she exclaimed. "Why will they be so silly? The world's a perfect jumble, and we are all lunatics and fools, crying for what is not good for us, and turning our backs upon what is. I'm disgusted with everybody, and myself in particular. Now if this great overgrown student makes a fool of himself, like the others, I shall lose faith in mankind, and I know there is nothing to hope from woman-kind."

"I should think you were having a mood and a tense at the same time this evening," said Bel, looking with some surprise at her friend. "What has stirred you up so? Have you and Julian had a quarrel?"

"We shall have plenty more, I foresee," said Lottie, seizing on the suggestion to hide the truth. Bel smiled satirically. All these harsh words were but the harmless lightning of a summer gust that was passing away.

"It's only a lover's tiff," she thought, "and now the billing and cooing are to come."

"Oh, well," said Bel, soothingly, "you and Julian will soon make up, and then you and all the world will change for the better."

"We have made up," said Lottie, faintly, finding like many another sinner in this line, that the first sin requires the second to cover it up.

"Well, well, get over your mood quickly, for the supper bell will ring in a moment, and you are not ready to come down."

What emergency of life can obliterate from the mind of a pretty woman the necessity of a toilet, and to Bel, Lottie seemed to come to her senses at once as she sped to her bureau and commenced brushing her rumpled hair. But the languid maiden was quite startled as Lottie wheeled suddenly upon her, declaring, while she brandished the hairbrush in the most tragic and impressive manner:

"If that Hemstead makes a fool of himself he may, but he shall do it with his eyes open; I will not deceive him any more."

Thus conscience, that had been skirmishing all day, appeared to gain one point of advantage, and Lottie, having made this virtuous resolve, gained in mental serenity, while the mirror that reflected her fair face helped to bring back her complacency.

"Bel," said Lottie, as they were leaving their room, "not a whisper of all this to any one, as you value my friendship."

But before they reached the supper-room, her resolution failed, as is often the case when one acts from impulse rather than principle. She found that she could not so lightly throw away Hemstead's good opinion. She had been admired, loved, and flattered to her heart's content, but the respect, esteem, and trust of a sincere true man formed a new offering, and it was so attractive that she could not bring herself to turn from it at once. Then her strong pride cast its weight into the scale, and she thought:

"He talks to me and treats me as if I were a woman of heart and mind, and I'm going down to show him I'm a wicked fool. I shall not do it, at least not now. Little fear but that the disagreeable truth will come out soon enough."

"But it is wrong to deceive him," whispered conscience. "Suppose it is," answered the wayward girl, "I am all wrong myself and always have been."

"You promised to show him your real self," still urged conscience.

"Well, I will, some other time."

With conscience thwarted and unsatisfied, serenity vanished again, and instead of being reckless and trivial at table, as she intended, she was rather silent, and a trifle sullen, as one often is even when vexed with one's self.

Hemstead was expecting a subdued and thoughtful young lady to appear, whose pensive manner would indicate a nature softened and receptive. While her bearing was not what he anticipated, it was somewhat akin, and showed, he thought, that the truth was not without effect.

De Forrest was still more puzzled; but soon concluded that Lottie was provoked that he had slept so long instead of devoting himself to her. True, she had just come from the parlor, where he found Hemstead standing by the window, looking out into the gloom, but she had found him, no doubt, so heavy and stupid, that she had rushed to her room in a fit of vexation. This theory was entirely reconcilable with his vanity, and therefore conclusive; and he tried to make amends by excessive gallantry, which only annoyed Lottie. This he ascribed to her resentment for his neglect, and only redoubled his unwelcome attentions.

While Hemstead's heart was in a tumult of joy and thankfulness that so early in his acquaintance, and so unexpectedly, he had been able to speak to her as he wished and with such seeming effectiveness, he had the good taste and tact to indicate by no words or sign that anything unusual had occurred between them. He sought to draw the others, and even De Forrest, into general conversation, so that Lottie might be left more to herself.

With a mingled smile and frown, she recognized his purpose, and with a reckless laugh in her own soul, thought:

"He imagines I am near conversion, when I never felt so wicked before in my life."

But catching a glimpse of Bel's surprised face, and seeing that her abstraction was noted by the others, she speedily rallied, and assumed the manner that she had maintained throughout the day.

"It is so delightful to see his large grey eyes turn toward me wistfully and trustingly, that I cannot deceive him yet!" and so conscience was dismissed, as history records was often the case with some honest old counsellor in a foolish and reckless court.

The prospective sleigh-ride and donation party were the prominent themes, and they hastened through the meal that they might start early.

Upon this occasion De Forrest managed to get the seat by Lottie, in his eagerness to make amends, and Hemstead sat opposite with Bel. As far as he could gather in the uncertain moonlight, Hemstead thought that De Forrest's attentions were not particularly welcome, and, though he scarcely knew why, was glad. He would probably explain by saying that De Forrest was not worthy of her.

(To be continued.)

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A CERTAIN sober judgment ought to mark Christians. They should be like the needle in the mariner's compass, not like the pendulum which, within its limited range, is always going from one extreme to another. They should not startle people with paradoxes; nor banish all confidence in them by the wildness with which they unfold their ideas to minds quite unprepared.—*Dr. John Hall.*

BRITISH AND FOREIGN ITEMS.

LONDON spends yearly \$75,000,000 for alcoholic liquors.

THE London "Times" severely criticises Mr. Gladstone's speech in the House of Commons on Tuesday night.

THE Presbyterian churches of Cincinnati are free of debt, all having policies of insurance instead of mortgages.

THE Beaconsfield ministry has been supported in its war policy by the British House of Commons after a great debate. Majority, 101.

DR. HENRY BLODGETT, a missionary in China, estimates the number of deaths by the recent famine in the northern provinces at 10,000,000.

THERE are 13,900 cabmen in London, among whom are ex-lawyers, doctors, and clergymen, and one lord. The cab fares amount to \$20,000,000 yearly.

THE remains of the palace of the West Saxon Kings have been discovered at Wedmore, in which one thousand years ago the peace was signed with the Danes.

THE Russians have decided to leave 50,000 men in Bulgaria and concentrate all troops in excess of that number at Adrianople, until a definite treaty is concluded.

THERE are estimated to be about 400,000 persons connected with the Christian churches in India, China, and Japan, besides 200,000 children receiving a Christian education.

JUDGE SUTHERLAND, of New York city, recently stated that during his long service as a criminal judge, only one Scotchman was brought before him accused of crime, and he was acquitted.

CATTLE from the United States and Canada, imported into England, are now exempt from the clause of the contagious diseases act, requiring all cattle imported to be slaughtered immediately.

THE work of evangelizing the Jews has been very successful in Sweden. The centre of this work is the seaport of Gothenburg, where several thousand Jews met in the Lutheran Church at one service.

THE report of the Investigation Committee on the West England and South Wales District Bank shows that the whole capital and reserve funds have been lost, and there is a further deficiency of \$1,500,000 for which the shareholders are liable.

THE Presbyterian missions in Siam appear to be gaining ground slowly. A second church of eight members has been organized in Bangkok, and another at Bangkokoon, near Petchaburi. The chief obstacle Christianity has to meet in Siam is demonolatry.

THE sad intelligence comes that the stone foundation and pillars of the splendid Cathedral of Cologne, one of the grandest architectural structures, are in such a state of decomposition, that the whole edifice may be expected to tumble down before the end of the present century.

A MISSIONARY in a London public-house was opposed by a sceptic, who, when asked which came first, the egg or the chicken, was unable to reply. One of the customers, however, shouted at the top of his voice, "Why, the chicken to be sure: God made the fowls of the air."

AN incidental proof of the success of the Workingmen's Coffee-rooms in England as antidotes of the drinking-saloon, is furnished in the fact that there has been this year a considerable increase in the imports of such beverages as cocoa, coffee, and tea, and a decrease in intoxicating liquors.

WHILE Mr. Sankey was recently in Zurich and Basle, Switzerland, some of his Gospel Songs were translated into German, and printed in parallel columns with the original, so that while he sang them in English, his audience could unite with him in their own language. The Tower of Babel did not "confound" the language of song.

LADY ROSEBERRY, the wealthy Jewish heiress, whose marriage to an English lord excited much interest, recently sent her annual donation of £20 to the rulers of the synagogue where she had worshipped. Notwithstanding her wealth and position, and connection with the Rothschilds, they returned her the money, with the declaration that they could not receive it from one who had left the faith.

THE winter campaign of the British in Afghanistan has been unexpectedly successful. One point was the possession of Jellalabad, to be accomplished by General Browne, in command of the eastern column of the invading army. General Browne's advance on Jellalabad has commenced, and meets with no opposition. Another point was the possession of the Shatargarden Pass, which was to be effected by General Roberts with the central column. General Roberts telegraphs as follows: "We have finished a reconnaissance to the top of Shatargarden Pass, and returned to Ali Khel without firing a shot. The country is friendly." The third point aimed at was the capture of Kandahar, entrusted to General Biddulph and the western column of the army. He has constructed a road for Khujik pass unopposed.

A ROME correspondent says: "Vesuvius has recently given signs of agitation, and Professor Palmieri, the seer who lives on the mountain and with his sismograph records all its changes, now announces that the lava is visible outside the crater. It is not necessary to announce it, however, for Neapolitans see it themselves running over the side of the old crater in a broad red stream of fire rendered more strangely beautiful by the white snow that lies on either side of it on the cone of the mountain. Many foreigners go from this part of Italy to Naples to see the eruption, which it is prophesied will increase. This would be a great misfortune to the inhabitants of the towns and villas on the sides of the mountains. Notwithstanding the fate of Pompeii and Herculaneum, men plant and build there as they did before the year 69, and wherever the soil is fertile it is cultivated. Streams of burning lava running down from the cone and covering these gardens and vineyards would be a dolorous spectacle which Italians hope not to see."