

"The little girls are in my Sunday-school class. They have just come here and they don't know anyone. Their mother is a dressmaker, and they are all alone. She works hard, hard, all day long, because they told me she did; and they never see her only when she comes from the horrid shop, when she is very tired. They are very poor now, but once they were not. Their father was killed and they lost all their money, and—here the sobs broke out afresh—"to-day I was coming home from school, and I saw their mother crossing the street with a big bundle, and all at once a rig came whirling around the corner and knocked her down and hurt her so that they took her to the hospital, and I don't know what I would do if I was left alone like that."

Mrs. James, very much interested, said: "Haven't they friends, Lottie?"

"You see, they just came, and they live in such a lonely place and keep by themselves, and I know they don't know anyone scarcely—but me," she added, with a catch in her breath, "and what can I do?"

"Where is your mother, my dear? Why haven't you told her?"

"She's away, I don't know where she is, and I want—to do something—so much—quick." And Mrs. James, who was a very energetic little woman, took Lottie forthwith down the same garden walk she had walked up so short a time before, and into her carriage, which was soon in a very different part of the city, standing before a great red brick building, named 'Hospital.'

Lottie remained in the carriage until Mrs. James, who had made inquiries, came out with a sad, quiet, resolute face, which plainly told that she was forming a plan for not only one, but two 'of those little ones.'

The mother was very ill, and it would be long before she could go back to the poor little home. She was incapable of giving information about any arrangement for her children, and Mrs. James drove back to Lottie's home, endeavoring to think of some plan for them.

When within sight of the house, they were glad to see Lottie's mother sitting outside on the pleasant veranda, which was prettily covered with lace vine and other greenery. Mrs. James was soon seated beside her talking with her very earnestly, so earnestly that Lottie grew weary and ran about more like her own gay self in the garden, while the long, slanting sunbeams fell more and more slanting, until Mrs. James arose, saying: "Well, Sarah, I believe as you do in practical Christian work; and we who have homes should share them. The shadow and loss that fell upon me (for of this the two women had been talking, and we cannot sympathize so well as when out of some kindred experience in our own past. It had so happened that, long ago, Mrs. James had lost a dear little daughter) and upon my home, causes me to be particularly tender towards children, especially those who must bear sorrow, loneliness and care so early." And Mrs. James entered her carriage and was soon on her way to the street and number that Lottie had given her.

That night two little girls, instead of sobbing themselves to sleep on a foundling's home pillow with no tender heart and no loving mother-hand near to sooth them into forgetfulness, were gently tucked into bed and kissed by Mrs. James in her own home.

The convalescing mother, as the weeks passed on, feeling the healing balm of a quiet mind, grew steadily better, and who could measure her gratitude to the kind friend, who had read and pondered over and

put into effect the words, 'I was a stranger and ye took me in?' Let us think daily of the thought so beautifully expressed by Alice Cary.

'And O my heart, my heart!
Be careful to go strewing in and out
Thy way with good deeds, lest it come
about
That when thou shalt depart,
No low lamenting tongue be found to say,
The world is poorer since thou went'st away!
Thou shouldst not idly beat,
While beauty draweth good men's thoughts
to prayer
Even as the bird's wing draweth out the
air.
But make so fair and sweet
Thy house of clay, some dust shall spread
about
When death unlocks the door and lets thee
out.'

Only One Step.

(Christine C. Smith, in New York
'Observer'.)

Ada Meredith was walking slowly along the city street, busy with troubling thoughts, when a cheery 'good morning' brought her to the knowledge that her Sunday-school teacher was at her side.

"Oh, Miss Goodsell, I'm so glad you've got home. I have been wanting to see you for the last fortnight."

"It is pleasant to know I was missed," returned the elder woman, smiling. "Anything special that you want to see me about?"

"Yes," said the girl; "I am worried almost to death." There was a quiver in the voice, but she went on, "I want a good talk with you. You always know how to straighten out things."

"Come right home with me," said Miss Goodsell, sympathetically, and soon the two turned out of the bustling street into a quiet, elm-shaded avenue. They stopped at the door of a stately, old-fashioned house, and were let in by a servant.

"Now," said the teacher, settling herself comfortably opposite her friend, "what is the trouble?"

"It is the everlasting question of dollars and cents," replied the girl, impatiently. "It must be lovely to have a home like this, without a care of how the money is coming. But I did not come here to envy you," she added, with a laugh. "I am willing to work if I only knew what to do. You see, it is just this way; since father died there isn't much surplus money. With mother's embroidery we can barely scrub along—that's all. Well, I don't know whether I ought to keep on at the High school, it is my last year, you know, or go into Mr. Carpenter's store. Nellie Upham is to be married in October, and Mr. Carpenter says I can have her place if I want it. Of course the pay isn't large, but it would help a little. Then on the other hand, if I keep on at this school I shall stand a better chance to get a position as teacher, and so earn more in the long run. And what to do I don't know. Of course, I would rather go to school, but I don't mean to let my inclination influence me. If only the Lord would tell me what to do, I would do it, whether I wanted to or not; I would, truly, Miss Goodsell. I've thought and thought, and prayed and prayed, and I can't see my way any clearer now than I could at the start. And so I've come to you, though I suppose I ought not to bother you with my troubles."

"My dear, it does not bother me, and I am glad you have come. Must you decide at once?"

Oh, no; school does not begin for two months, and Nellie will stay at Mr. Carpenter's till the first of October. He said I need not hurry, but take my time and think it over."

"Then if I were you I would not try to reach any decision at present, and when the time comes, God may make the way perfectly clear."

"Oh, but, Miss Goodsell—"

The elder lady smiled. "Your trouble is the trouble of most of us, we forget that we have to take but one step at a time. There is usually enough light for that; but instead of taking only that one, in the light that God gives us, we look ahead and, because we cannot see to take ten or perhaps a hundred steps at once, we say that God leaves us in the dark. Take your one step, Ada, and I feel sure that God will always show you where that step shall be taken. For instance, do you know what you ought to do to-day, now?"

"I ought to be home this minute helping mother get dinner," said Ada, with a little smile.

"Then, go, dear, though that sounds impolite, and come to me again when there is nothing that needs you."

"Well," said the girl, with a long breath of relief, "I will try not to worry, but—"

"Don't let there be any buts, just trust God with the whole thing. Do each hour, each moment, what seems best to be done then, and leave all else with Him."

Ada smiled brightly. "I believe I can," she said. "Only one step. I'll remember."

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