

of college songs and gay choruses. Lois enjoyed it at first. After a time a feeling of dissatisfaction crept into her heart. She was on the outside; the gayety and fun were complete without her.

The music was occasionally hushed for merry conversation. It was at one of these times that the name of Ruth Bates was mentioned.

'I invited her here this evening, and she seemed so pleased,' warm-hearted Linda said. 'Her cold was so bad, though, that Mrs. Tripp thought it best for her not to come. Ruth is a dear little thing, but so timid. You must cultivate her, girls.'

Faye's lip curled. 'A girl who runs errands and dusts to help pay her tuition! I don't admire your taste.'

Faye was a leader among the girls, and it was a minute before Lois spoke.

'That ought not to make any difference, but Ruth is so strange and awkward. Did I tell you about the day I found her dusting Mrs. Tripp's office? She reminded me of a comic valentine.'

Laying her banjo on the floor, Faye reached for a cushion embroidered in a design of silver-green hop vines and leaves. This she placed behind her head as she said:

'Tell us all about it, dear. I am sure you can tell a good story, even with Ruth Bates as heroine.'

Lois made a good story out of what was in reality a very small matter. Ruth was sensitive regarding her work, and had been much disturbed when Lois found her arrayed in big apron and dusting cap. To the question as to the matron's whereabouts, Ruth had given a confused and amusing reply. At the same time, she had knocked a tray of pens and pencils from the desk. Fortunately, nothing was broken, but, in her excitement, the girl had continued to look for Mrs. Tripp's gold pen and to exclaim, 'Where can it be?' when she was holding it in her left hand.

The girls laughed. Their merriment was not so much because of the incident as because of Lois's dramatic presentation of it, her gestures, and imitations of the looks and acts of the embarrassed Ruth.

'I am glad she did not come to-night,' Faye declared. 'There are too many valuable things lying round. I've noticed that persons of that class are more likely to lose gold pens than steel ones.'

Isabelle turned a little sharply upon her friend. 'Don't say that. It sounds as if you thought Ruth was—well, not honest.'

'I have not thought anything about it.'

Isabelle opened her lips for an angry retort. Then she closed them, remembering that she was the other's guest. The little clock struck ten, and Isabelle sprang up.

'We promised Mrs. Tripp we would not stay late. Come on, Lois. Girls, we have had a jolly time.'

One morning a week later, Lois was returning from doing some errands in the town. Doctor Taylor, the superintendent of the school, overtook her on the bridge that spanned the river. He accommodated his pace to hers.

'Is it not a beautiful morning?' she asked. 'Just six days, and then—home.'

He smiled at the delight expressed in her voice. They stopped and stood looking up the river. The air was cold, and the bare earth was frozen. The edges of

the swiftly-flowing stream were bordered with ice that glittered in the sunlight, but the current still moved rapidly, crossing suburban streets and a stretch of level fields which were shut in by a range of low hills.

Lois glanced up at her companion's face and was surprised to see that it had grown hard and cold.

'What is it, Doctor Taylor?'

'Miss Wheeler, when I was returning from town last night, at ten o'clock, I found one of our girl students here upon this bridge. It was as much her unnatural manner as the fact that her presence was in defiance of the rules of the school that led me to address her. Thank God that I did so! She is no older than you are, Miss Wheeler, and is motherless. A terrible accusation had been brought against her. She was frightened, and confessed that she had come to the bridge, intending to throw herself into the river.'

'Doctor Taylor!' In her excitement, Lois caught the arm of the superintendent. 'One of our girls! It does not seem possible!'

He looked keenly at her. Had he been mistaken in trusting this girl? He would see.

'The girl was Ruth Bates. Faye DeVerge has lost an opal ring and accused Ruth, who, in the illness of the chambermaid, had dusted Miss DeVerge's room, of stealing the same. In the interview between the two girls, Miss DeVerge declared you knew that Ruth was a thief.'

'I Why, I—'

Lois stopped. She remembered the conversation of a week before. She had never said or thought that Ruth was a thief, but she had magnified beyond belief the thing she had told.

The girl grew faint. 'The white light of truth.' Her pastor's words seemed sounding in her ears.

Then she forgot self in trying to put herself in Ruth's place. Terrified and threatened with arrest, with no mother arms for a refuge, that timid girl had so far lost control of herself as to think of taking her own God-given life. Lois shuddered as she heard the rushing of the cold water below her.

'Don't tell me any more!' she interrupted Doctor Taylor to cry. 'Let me think.'

Doctor Taylor held his peace. He understood that the slender girl at his side was waging the battle of her life.

Lois was fighting that worst of all foes—self. She won. It was a pale, shame-stricken face that was lifted to Doctor Taylor, but it was a determined one.

'You say Faye and Ruth were to meet you at your office. Let us go to them at once. Please be patient, Doctor Taylor. I am to blame, and I will tell the whole story, but I cannot tell it twice.'

One more searching look, and Doctor Taylor knew he had not trusted Lois in vain.

Ten minutes later, Ruth and Faye entered the superintendent's office. The face of the former was swollen with crying. Faye looked in bewilderment from one to the other. When Doctor Taylor spoke of her loss, she colored.

'Oh, I found the ring last night. You see, I had locked it in my dressing case and forgotten it.'

Ruth gave a faint scream. 'You found it, and you did not tell me!'

'Tell you! Why, of course, you know you did not take it.'

Before Doctor Taylor could speak, Lois had turned to Ruth.

'You poor child! You can never forgive me, for I am to blame.'

She told the entire story, sparing herself nothing. Even Faye's indifference vanished when she learned how her accusation had frightened Ruth.

Lois's repentance was sincere. She insisted on confessing before the school, but as no one knew of the circumstance, Doctor Taylor would not allow her to do so. Again and again Ruth assured Lois of her forgiveness.

'I have had my lesson.' Lois's lips quivered. 'Never again will I exaggerate!'

She kept her word. The minute when she learned what her habit had cost another girl had shown Lois what the white light of truth meant.

Ruth and Lois became fast friends. Lois helped the other to rise above her sensitiveness, and the worker grew light-hearted and happy.

At the beginning of the next school year, Lois once more made her farewell round of family calls. That time she found Cousin Julia in her own neat kitchen, busy with her fall preserving.

'Do you know, Lois,' Mrs. Lane began, all the time stirring a kettleful of grape marmalade, 'I'm not so set against girls going away to school as I was. They have done you good over there to Glasner. I'm not a bit worried now 'bout your making a big story out of a little one. I've come to see that a Wheeler can always be trusted.'

'Thank you, Cousin Julia. I have learned the difference between truth and exaggeration.'

### Too Late.

A young fellow once left home for Bombay, and spent a frivolous, careless life. Hard times overtook him, and he wrote home for a remittance. At last a letter came, but he found no enclosure in it, and so would not trouble to read it, but cast it petulantly aside. Time wore on and he was laid low by malarial fever, and he asked a comrade to find and read to him the neglected letter, as he was too weak to do so himself. The letter ran thus:—The father was longing for him to come home, as he had bought him a business; and if he would present himself at a certain bank in Bombay the necessary passage money would be provided. It was now too late—he was dying. I imagine his vexation, his disappointment, his grief.

And so many treat their Heavenly Father's loving letter, the Bible, and the opportunity of entering upon a new and better life which is held out to them in Christ, until it is too late.—The Rev. F. Binns Sidney.

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