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It is a complete specific against "Root."

A Short Story.

Months' Effort to Be Independent.

FOUNDED ON FACT.

By Flossie Mennardie.

It was a cottage on a quiet street in the city of Gale; upon the piazza two girls sat in close conversation. One held in her hand a popular Lady's Book.

"Here is the reply to your question," said she, reading these words: "Your handwriting indicates sufficient enterprise to justify you in taking the step you contemplate." She smiled, and asked: "Isn't it encouraging?"

"Yes," assented her companion, a pretty blue-eyed girl to whom the above paragraph had been addressed by the editor of the magazine. "What answer has she given you?"

"Listen attentively," said the sallow-faced reader in a solemn voice:

"Your indifference to recognized standard of spelling indicates a too sanguine temperament; also, your misplaced capitals are conspicuous. You need training. See in another list of studies recommended to 'Student.'"

She was not a striking girl in any respect except her mouth, which was uncommon. The corners frequently twitched; and were usually upward turned, indicating a sunny disposition. "I say, Ethel," she laughed, "let's answer this advertisement." She drew a paper from her pocket and pointed to the following:

"Young ladies of fair education can find employment at No. 125 Yates Square."

"Shall we apply?"

"Yes," responded Ethel with some hesitancy. "Are you going to adopt a course of study, Lottie?" She continued with a partial smile.

"No," snapped Lottie. "I didn't study at school and I'm sure I'll not want to do so now."

These girls were friends; and their parents, having become much reduced in circumstances, they proposed to look after their own maintenance.

Early the next day they called at 125 Yates Square. It proved to be a publishing establishment. They were admitted to the presence of a curly-headed, bustling man, who eyed them cautiously.

"Well, Miss," he began, turning to Ethel, "have you ever tried the book-agent's work?"

"No, sir," gasped Ethel, her heart sinking at the idea.

Lottie, notwithstanding her usual sangfroid, shoved her chair further in the corner, and appeared disconcerted.

"We wish," continued he, "two or three thoroughly reliable lady-agents. We have a lady with us

who began as an agent, and rose to a higher position, and is now identified with the house." He gazed fixedly at Ethel's fair face; and, although he did not discern any traces of the business-woman, seemed pleased with her application. He turned to Lottie, but his eye lost its pleasant light as he viewed the pale, homely countenance.

"Have you ever tried this work?" The gray eyes fastened themselves on his plump cheeks.

"Have you?" was the unexpected reply, given in all earnestness.

The man opened his eyes with astonishment and displeasure.

"That isn't a question in point. I wish to know if you have any experience in the line of the book-agent?" He spoke impatiently.

"I used to meet an indomitable book agent at our door, and listened by the hour to his marvelous tales of the books he handled. He died last year of throat-disease." Her eyes drooped, and she sighed.

"Then you wouldn't care to risk your life in this enterprise," He wheeled his chair and faced Ethel. "We have a lady who gives instructions to agents. Should you like to see her?"

Ethel dreaded the arduous labors of a book-agent; but her very straightened circumstances drove her to answer in the affirmative.

He rang a bell; and soon a rosy-faced little woman half trotted into the room. He pointed to Ethel, and, bowing, she seated herself in front of her pupil. She began her instruction:

"You must say of this work, which is a Roman Catholic book, that it is in so great demand as to have passed already through forty editions. The principal reason of its wonderful success is that mothers wish to have books of the kind—simple and clear on doctrinal points—in their homes, so that they themselves can properly instruct their children in the doctrines of the Catholic Church. They can thus settle and ground them in the most holy faith; and also enable them to successfully meet any attack upon their religion. Again, many may by this means be brought—through these children—to the 'True Church.'"

Moreover it is a very interesting work, handsomely bound, and will make an important addition to the library." She paused. Ethel again gasped. The "boss" glanced stealthily at the young girl and a faint smile lurked in his eye.

The lady-instructor gave Lottie a questioning look.

"I couldn't sell a Catholic book, my pa is a Presbyterian," was her ready remark.

"To-morrow, then, you will come," said the manager, rising and bowing them out. Ethel, to whom he addressed himself, inclined her head as the door closed upon them.

"How I love God's sunshine and blue sky!" cried Lottie, sniffing the air as she hurried along the street. "See what I did while that woman was making an agent of you." She held a small slip of newspaper for Ethel's inspection. It was an advertisement for a teacher. "I'm going to answer it. I was on the *qui vive* whilst in that den and spied the paper from which I tore this. I had a presentiment before leaving home that I wouldn't obtain work this morning. I opened my Bible and the first words that my eye caught were these: 'Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken and the other left.' I was on the alert for a new

hope."

"But, Lottie, you won't like teaching; it is so exacting," said Ethel.

"I'll try it, anyway; 'twill be good training."

* * *

In a few days the reply to Lottie's application came. It was favorable, and urged her to come without delay.

"You teach, Lottie! When have you ever looked into a book?" asked Mr. Wood, her father, upon being informed of her project.

"I can make believe I'm wise, Josh Billings, I think, says the best substitute for learning is silence."

"They may not allow you to hold your tongue," was the sage reply.

All night, before she was to leave Gale, she lay awake, her eyes fastened on the moon-bathed window at the foot of her couch. Her thoughts were busy with the new place to which she was going. *Jane Eyre* was her favorite novel. She thought of Jane as a teacher. Would her experience be anything similar? O, if she should meet a Sir Edward! Of course she was not to be a governess; she was to take charge of a school, and board in the family of a Mr. A. C. Able, who had a wife and ten children; but perhaps she might meet with an individual who would bring some variety into the even tenor of her way. She started on her journey next morning. She was to be met at the station by a private conveyance, and driven some eight miles into the country. As the car swept through green pastures and beside still waters Lottie's heart was full of fancies. She wondered who would meet her at the depot. She hoped it would be a fine gentleman—a bachelor—and not a family-man. Now if only a dark eyed, wealthy planter! And, O, if he would only come in a buggy with a span of dashing ponies! To be sure Sir Edward Rochester did not go to fetch Jane, but then he was not at home, and it was best that he should have met her accidentally. Anyway, she expected her here to meet her. What should she say to him? He would first address her thus:

"Miss Wood, I presume," with an elegant bow. "I am Mr. Ramsay, and my buggy awaits you. With your permission I shall be most happy to drive you to Mr. Able's. My boy will look after your trunks."

"Trunks? She came to an embarrassed little pause. Alas! she only had *one* trunk. Well, *one* trunk was decent. Then she pictured the smile she would bestow upon him—what a pity she had pale eyes! And, then, no stranger ever was struck with her; even the publisher had evidently taken a dislike to her, whilst Ethel's pretty face pleased him. "This may be the turning point in my life," she whispered. "I shall say to him: Certainly, Mr. Ramsay."

A fat, red-faced, slouchy man, talking most boisterously, came toward her. She had not observed that the train had stopped. "You're the teacher?" he inquired of a mute-looking lady sitting in front of Lottie. The lady showed symptoms of fainting, and murmured: "No!"

"Ah; beg pardon; but she *must* be abroad, said he laughing heartily, and scanning the passengers. Lottie instinctively drew her veil down, and shrunk nearer the window. Was that loud-talking, lobster-faced creature

her Sir Edward? She rose slowly; her face, as she threw back her veil, rivalled in color the red rose in her hat. "I'm the—the teacher," she answered glancing confusedly about her.

"You! Law me, you're so leetle! But I reckon you've a big brain. Come on, please, the mules is scared of the cars."

As they passed to the platform he said:

"I'm Able, the one you're to board with. Got a trunk?"

She mechanically handed him her check. Soon he rejoined her.

"Pears to me you'd better rub that smoot off' of your nose—ha! ha!" Lottie blushed; but gladly applied her handkerchief to her nose. She thus stole an opportunity to smile at the realization of her dream.

She was placed in a spring-wagon drawn by two bony mules that required constant "whipping up." Mr. Able was talkative. He discussed the different farms and houses along their route. Presently he asked:

"Do yer believe in 'lottery in marriage?"

"I've never thought much about marriage," was Lottie's short answer.

He gave her a side-long glance. "Not like other girls, then, it's their nature to think about the boys. My Betsy married me when she was sixteen, and she'd bin engaged once afore that. Have you ever bin engaged, or may be you air now—eh?"

Lottie moved uneasily, and snapped:

"No I'm not and, never expect to be!"

He whistled sharply, and laid the whip to the beasts.

"Poor chance for the fellers in this country!" he cried; then continued:

"There's our doctor coming. He's a widower, has money, an' is hunting a mate." He looked stealthily at the girl. A light crept into her eyes. The doctor drew near in a fine buggy, drawn by a coal black horse. He paused beside Mr. Able's wagon.

"Good evening, Mr. Able, how is Mattie?" he inquired, looking at Lottie.

"Better—better. Here's the teacher, Miss Wood—glad to be the one ter introduce ye." He rubbed his hands complaisantly, and laughed. Lottie forgave her escort's rudeness, for she was prepossessed with the doctor's appearance, which was very genteel. After a few casual remarks they separated.

"A fine feller that; but, of course, he's no attraction for you, as yer don't think of marryin'." "Git up here!" he lashed the mules vigorously.

"I don't think of marrying as other girls do, because I'm plain, and men don't care for ugly women."

"That's a mistake!" exclaimed the sturdy farmer, cracking his whip. "My Betsy was thought ugly by all her friends, but I never thought so. The man that's to love ye don't think of yer as others do."

A great burden seemed removed from Lottie's heart. Why was it she felt so kindly towards the unsophisticated farmer? By the time she reached her destination she was in the best of humor, and she and Mr. Able were firm friends. And so friendly did she feel toward "Betsy" that when she met that thrifty little body she impressed a kiss upon her lips, much to Betsy's surprise, and her husband's delight.

Lottie was conducted to her chamber, which was small but

tidy and comfortable. That night her dreams were filled with the "doctor." She dreamed that the climate was too severe for her, and that the mountain breezes gave her sore throat, of course the physician had to be summoned; and, under his skillful treatment and tender care, she soon recovered. Her dream was disturbed by the thumping of children's bands on the door. She gave them entrance. They stood about the room gazing curiously at her, as if she had escaped from Barnum's Museum. She felt amazed, for she was not fond of children, and did not feel like entertaining them.

"Is yer gwine ter teach ter-day?" asked a precious little girl.

"No, I'm gwine ter rest ter-day," replied Lottie.

"What ter 't'er twisted the child, twisting her upon around her own tail?"

"Cence," said the teacher-elect. "You hain't putty, now, so you haint!" she said, now twisting her neck, and drawing her head up with the air of one who had made a sagacious observation.

"You hain't, nuther," was Lottie's acrimonious reply.

"Is—is—is!" squealed the brat, fleeing to tell her ma.

"Hideous urchin!" muttered Lottie, beginning to loosen her hair.

"She hain't now, no sich! You're a dreat monkey, now!" pouted a small boy, who overheard her.

"You're a dreat rat, now," said Lottie, suppressing a smile.

"Let's tell pa, Henry," suggested another boy; and off trotted the bevy en route to "tell pa." Lottie slammed the door as the last one fluttered its soiled frock-tail out. "I wish those little wretches were at the bottom of the Red Sea!" she hissed.

She emerged from her room neatly attired and smiling cordially. Betsy met her rather shyly; she was timid, and the children's description of the "dreadful teacher" had unnerved her. Lottie's cordial manner, however, soon dispelled all fears and the day began auspiciously. Mr. Able was in one of his jovial humors at the breakfast-table. He rubbed his hands together above the large dish of fried chicken, and exclaimed:

"Well, Miss Lottie, you rest ter-day—ain't it?"

"I believe that is the programme," was her answer.

"Thomas Berry told me to say ter yer that the commissioner won't git out ter examine ye before the first of next week."

"Lottie started violently, and her appetite suddenly deserted her and she asked in a chilled voice:

"Am I to be examined?"

Mr. Able now exhibited surprise.

"Yes, certainly. Dind't the chairman of the board of trustees—Thomas Berry—sign the advertisement for a teacher? You knew it was a public school; and the teachers allers hes ter be examined."

Lottie was still silent. Examined? What did she know?

"Upon what branches am I to be examined?"

"On Geogify, grammer, spellin' an' 'rithmetic," said he, counting them on his fingers.

"An' 'history," meekly put in Betsy.

"Yes, but that's easier than 'tothers."

The young girl forced down a few mouthfuls. A great weight had fallen upon her and she was crushed.

The next morning she went to

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