

# Fact and Fancy for Women.

BY ELLA HIGGINSON.

## THE LUXURY OF WOE.

O, you who dare to morn where all may weep,  
Who have the luxury of grief expressed;  
Pity the fate of her whose aching breast  
Holds sorrow locked within eternally;  
Whose eyes may never weep, whose lips must be  
Forever dumb, or glad with laughter, lest  
By one chance sigh her secret may be guessed;  
Who grows to hear no music in the sea,  
To find no beauty in the violet,  
No perfume in the rose, no message sweet  
In every flower that blossoms, pale and wet;  
Who often dares not let her sad eyes meet  
Another's, lest quick tears should leap and flow.  
O, you who have sweet tears—pity dumb woe.

Are you unhappy? Are you in sorrow? Are you burdened with care, and discouraged? Then, let me tell you how to find comfort and help; and it is not to be a sermon, either.

Once I was in sorrow—a sorrow which no one understood, and of which I was too proud to speak. But the burden grew so heavy that I felt I must have help or I could not bear it. I turned first to my friends. I asked them what they would do if they were in trouble; how they would bear it; where they would look for help.

They looked at me in amazement; they replied vaguely. One said she didn't know; another said there was no use crying over spilled milk—whatever she meant by that; another said she would wait till she was in trouble, and would then tell me; another laughed outright. Finally, one said, doubtfully: "Why, I suppose I would go to church, and try to find help there."

So, I went to church—or, rather—I went to many churches. But one preacher shouted and thundered and gesticulated till I could not hear his words for disgust; another, sleek and well-trimmed, faultless in attire, manner and voice, talked cold, hard, common sense to me—a sermon-lecture, he called it, I think, and it bristled with "isms" and "ologies" until I grew faint trying to make out his meaning; another was so flowery of language that he seemed to have no real thought. So I gave up all hope of finding help in the churches.

Then I bethought me of Mr. Talmage, and my heart leaped with hope. One of the greatest preachers of the day—ah! I would surely get help from him!

So, not being able to hear him, I procured one of his sermons. At first I was quite carried away—in the first reading, I mean. His sentences seemed so short, so quick, so convincing; his words seemed to fairly flow. I was carried along rapidly with him; my heart beat hurriedly, and my breath came quickly, under the influence of his eloquence.

But when I had finished—in! there was my cross pressing upon me harder, heavier, more crushing, than ever before. I re-read it. He used fine language; his sentences were smooth, easy; his similes and metaphors beautiful. He spoke of the banks of happiness; searching, I found only the husks of comfort in his sermon—the real kernel was not there. In one place he said: "Let Christ Jesus take full possession of your soul. He will be your friend. He will be your comforter. He will be your defender. His word is peace. His look is love. His hand is help. His touch is life. His smile is heaven. O, come, then, in flocks and groups. Come like the south wind over banks of myrrh. Come like the morning light tripping over

mountains. He sweetens the cup. He extracts the thorn. He wipes the tear. He hushes the tempest"—and so on, and so on.

Beautiful? Yes; but mere words, mere husks! There was no help in them for a doubting heart. It was all said in such a "Come-I-want-to-convert-you-but-be-quick-about-it" way; as I read it over and over again, it gave me the impression that it had been turned out by machinery. I was appalled. I had found only what is called eloquence where I wanted to find help.

Faint and hopeless, I turned away. Mechanically, I picked up a book, and turning the leaves in a careless way, I came upon Longfellow's beautiful, simple poem, "The Bridge." I had read it often, when I was happy, and had found nothing in it. But now, through blinding tears, I read the tender, simple words—none could be simpler—

"How often, O how often,  
I had wished that the ebbing tide  
Would bear me away on its bosom,  
O'er the ocean wild and wide!  
For my heart was hot and restless,  
And my life was full of care,  
And the burden laid upon me  
Seemed greater than I could bear."

Some one else had known care. Some one else had borne a burden that had crushed him beneath its weight. Our own gentle Longfellow had suffered as I was suffering. Listen—

"But now it has fallen from me—  
It lies buried in the sea;  
And only the sorrow of others  
Throws its shadow over me."

He had faithfully borne his burden. He had hoped, and trusted, and waited, and it had "fallen from him." After all these years he was telling me—*me*—that he, too, had suffered, and that he had found peace,

"And I think how many thousands  
Of care-encumbered men,  
Each bearing his burden of sorrow,  
Had crossed the bridge since then."

Then, there were thousands of sorrows, thousands of "care-encumbered" souls! And I had been thinking only of my own!

I have come to know that sorrows may, in time, be lived down; that troubles may be overcome; that the heaviest burdens may be borne. And I tell you the secret is to think less of yours if, and more of others. When you suffer, remember—do not ever forget—the thousands who are also suffering. Remember, too, that it is sweeter, holier, to forgive than to be forgiven; when you forgive, you are putting away self entirely—and that is noble.

Believe, also, in God and in prayer; for, without them, woman is like a rose without fragrance, or like a sea-gull's feather on the ocean, that drifts wherever the winds and waves carry it and has no haven in view.

"As long as the heart has passions,  
As long as life has woes;  
The moon and its broken reflections,  
And its shadows shall appear,  
As the symbol of love in heaven,  
And its wavering image here."

Are you a working girl? Then be proud of it; and no matter what your work may be, make it worthy of you. If you