

GOOD AND BAD LUCK.

THEY MAY BE DETERMINED BY THE LAW OF PROBABILITIES.

A GREAT deal of sophistry has been wasted in vain attempts to prove that there is no such thing as luck, good or bad; that nothing happens by chance, all results coming from some definite cause. Even though the latter sentiment could be proved or should be admitted, it would not preclude the existence of luck to the individual.

That which occurs, favourable or unfavourable to him, from any cause beyond his control, is good luck or bad luck so far as he is concerned, and there is no doubt that luck plays some part in the history of everyone, but it is of much less importance than the idle or indifferent suppose. The individual may or may not take advantage of the fortuitous circumstances or luck which he meets. That depends on himself, his abilities, his industry, his boldness, his character—a thousand qualities of mind or person. Moreover, as one cannot control luck, the important thing in life is to prepare one's self to meet it and turn it to some account. Those who lay too much stress upon luck seldom deserve good fortune. They are indolent, without enterprise or zeal, and spend their time in complaining of their own hard luck or in envious consideration of the good luck of others.

Lowell in one of his essays says that 'Luck may and often does have some share in ephemeral successes as in a gambler's winnings spent as soon as got, but not in any lasting triumph over time. It is, of course, conceivable that an ephemeral success, arising from luck, might lay the foundation for lasting success due to hard labour and deserving, but the rule is that unearned advantages cannot be held; the winner is not fitted by training and habits to hold fast to that which he has gained. Cobden pictures the subject truly, so far as young men are concerned, when he says that 'Luck is always waiting for something to turn up. Labour, with keen eyes and strong will, will turn up something.' The last sentence is one of great significance to the young.

Much that is called luck is not really such, but follows deserving. Real luck is a mere matter of chance upon which we can no more depend for a living or for advancement than upon the turn of a card. He who would command good fortune must depend upon his own industry and character. He may meet with hard fortune, it is true, but industry, zeal, honesty, will surely lift him out of it in the long run, and, if not, his fortune cannot be altogether bad when he retains to the end his honour and independence. The young may properly recognize that there is such a thing as luck, but they should place no dependence on it, but think only of fitting themselves to make good use of it if it should

come their way. The chances which may come to everyone, and which are wholly beyond one's control, are innumerable, but he who speculates upon them will lose as surely as the gambler, or, when he wins, show a gambler's recklessness in getting rid of his winnings.

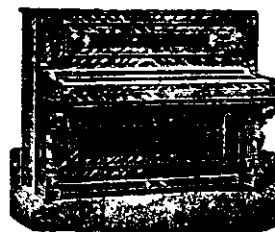
There is a German proverb that 'luck seeks those who flee and flees those who seek it.' The wise man will, therefore, not seek it, but moving through the world as though no such thing as luck existed, will depend upon his own intelligence, his own industry, his own good purposes to command fortune. Thus, self-reliant, he will be ready on the instant to take advantage of any fortuitous circumstances to further his designs, or be equally ready to avoid or overcome the 'hard luck' that would overwhelm one who was not thus fortified.

DE PROFUNDIS.

ONE word to the East from the West,
As a gull flies over the sea;
One word to the woman that I love best,
That shall tell the soul of me.
Weakness and doubt and wrong,
And this was the soul of a man.
Sin, and sorrow, and song,
And hopes that died and began,
For they died and began and died.
As a star flickers out in the night
And shines again—so he tried,
And now light, and darkness, and light.
Then a woman came—a wind that blows
When the weedy boat lies still,
A wind that blows till the dark sea flows,
And the dark sails flap and fill.
Then a woman came—a sun that shines,
When the old world dotes half dead,
A sun that shines, till the gray snows divine,
And the gold flowers riot instead.
She came, this woman—the man knelt down
With his face in her knees and said:
'The grass that was green in youth went brown,
And hopes that were high went dead.
You came and a star shone out of the night
To the shepherd that watched—you came.
And the wind blew out of God's mouth; a light
Made the darkness reel with flame;
And a dove flew out of the glowing air
To a blasted tree; and the dove
Sang, as the wind to the trees that are bare—
Sang love, and hope, and love.'
She came—and together the twain of them trod,
And hand in hand the world was well,
For she was a woman who came from God,
And he was a man from hell.

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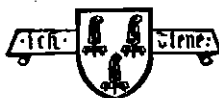
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