

"Good heavens!" she exclaimed. "You mean that the enemy could set this Hellite going, to devastate our land and murder every man, woman and child in a single night?"

"That is practically so," said Mr Rotensen coolly. "If once Hellite is set going nothing can stop it—nothing can protect from it. As I have said, it is the Last Weapon."

"Then of course we dare not let it go to the enemy!" admitted the Duchess. "Why, it might mean—well, anything!"

"Exactly, madam," said Mr Rotensen.

"Of course," said the Ruler, arguing furiously with himself, "it would certainly be safer for us to secure the monopoly of such a force, because we could always be trusted to use it with discretion."

"An excellent argument, Ruler," struck in John Dissart. "Possessed of this power at our back, we could speak with authority as to peace and friendship between nations! If all the world realised that we and our friend Neutralia possessed the Last Weapon—the greatest force known under Heaven—we should rule the world according to the great ideals bestowed upon us by the Almighty."

"Yet there remains a greater force than Hellite, and you know it!" whispered the Child to the Ruler, as he moved in front of him and looked up into his eyes.

The Ruler turned deadly pale, and grasped the sides of his chair.

"Why, Child?" he breathed, somehow aware that the Vision was to himself alone.

"Why hast thou cast away the Master's sword and taken up the weapons of Fear?" demanded the Child with flashing eyes.

"Who art thou?" pleaded the Ruler.

"I am a messenger from thy Master, sent to tear aside the delusions of the Prince of Fear. Look up, and see the end to which thou art leading the flock of God!"

The Ruler tried to open his lips, but he was dumb in the presence of the Child.

"Is it not written, 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit, said the Lord?' Where hast thou mislaid the sword of the spirit, that thou darest to raise the lightning shafts forged by the Prince of Darkness, that you mayest fling them at the brothers and sisters of

the Christ God, Whom thou callest the enemy?"

Again the Ruler sat tongue-tied.

"The sheep verily perish, because their shepherds have fled. Hast thou no faith to break the power of the enemy, as He broke it? By Love alone shall Peace rule the world, for Love is the Last Weapon! Yet thou fleest from its use, as from some traitorous plague. Hellite or Love—which wilt thou offer to thy people?"

The Ruler staggered up from his chair and fell upon his knees.

"My dear Ruler, you are ill?" exclaimed Sir Joshua. "Allow me—"

"Thank you! Thank you!" He put his hand to his head. "Yes—I fear I must have had a slight turn. If you would be good enough to call a taxi—"

The taxi was called, and the Ruler left the Conference.

"I fear we may have trouble in that quarter," said Sir Joshua as he returned from seeing the Ruler off.

"I think not," said John Dissart. "The Great Church has never gone against the State in any national matter, and she will see at once that any disloyalty to the use of this world-force would be treachery of the deepest dye."

"And you really think that if we took up Hellite, we could get this war ended in a month, and settle down again to peace and prosperity?" asked the Duchess.

"There is no reason whatever against it," said Mr Rotensen, with a polite bow.

"The great thing," said Sir Joshua, "for us to do now, is to keep the secret absolutely, and yet at the same time to accustom the people's minds to the idea that some greater force is needed than we possess at present. We can all help in our own way."

"Yes, yes." The murmur of agreement was general.

(To be Continued.)

The palm for brevity should be awarded to a marine who testified about the explosion of a gun on a war vessel. The marine testified at a hearing after he had passed some months in the hospital being patched up after the accident. "Please give your version of the explosion," he was asked. "Well," he replied, "I was standing beside the gun, there was an awful racket, and the doctor said, 'Sit up and take this.'"

N.Z. W.C.T.U.

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