

THE DAYS OF WESLEY.

VIII.

THANK God we are at home again, which a month since I scarcely expected to be.

At Hackney, on Friday morning, March the 8th, I was startled out of my sleep in the early dusk before dawn by a heaving and a jarring, which made me think, in the confusion of waking, that I was at sea again with father and Hugh, and that the ship had struck against a rock, and was grating over it.

I sprang up instantly, with a vague fear of drowning; but I shall never forget the horror of utter helplessness which followed, when I perceived that it was Aunt Henderson's great crimson-damask four-post bed which was thus tottering—that it was the gigantic polished oak wardrobe whose doors were flying open, and the familiar white jug and basin which were rattling in that unaccountable way against each other.

It flashed on me at once that it was the *earth* that was moving—the solid earth itself heaving like the sea!

My first impulse was to throw myself on my knees by the bedside. Then I committed myself to God, and felt there was something yet that “could *not* be moved.”

Then followed another shock and jarring motion. The fire-irons rattled, the water jug fell and was broken, the wardrobe tottered and strained. And there seemed something more awful in the unwonted noises among these familiar things than there would have been in the roar of a cannonade or any other strange sound.

But besides these noises, and through, and behind, and underneath them, came a low distant rumble like thunder, which yet was not thunder; not above, but beneath, for it seemed quivering through the earth.

I sprang to my feet, and wrapping myself in my great cloak, rushed out to mother's room.

The frightened servants were already gathered on the landing, crying that the end of the world was come, and wringing their