

THE FAITHFUL HELPER.

"I have read somewhere that in one of our English prisons there was an underground cell which was used as a place of punishment. Away from the rest of the prison, its utter loneliness and the awful darkness of the place made it greatly dreaded. Among the prisoners there was a man of refinement and nervous temperament, much unlike those about him, to whom the horror of this penalty was a fright that haunted him day and night. At length there was some alleged offence against the prison discipline, for which he was sentenced to four and twenty hours in this dungeon. He was led by the wardens to the place; the door was opened, and he had to go down the stairs into its depths. The door was shut. The steps of wardens died in the distance; the outermost door was heard as its slamming echoed in the hollow places. Then all was still—a stillness that oppressed with terror, amid the darkness that could be felt. Nervous and full of imagination, the man sank down paralyzed with fear. Strange and hideous shapes came out of the gloom and pointed at him. His brain throbbed as with fever, and mocking voices seemed to come from all sides. He felt that the terror must drive him mad. Then suddenly there came the sound of footsteps overhead, and in a quiet tone the Chaplain called him by name. Oh, never was any music so sweet!

"God bless you," gasped the poor fellow, "Are you there?"

"Yes," said the chaplain, "and I am not going to stir from here until you come out."

"What, sir?" he cried, fearing that he must have mistaken the words.

"I am not going away so long as you are there," the chaplain repeated. "I heard you were here, and I knew what agony it would be to you, so I came as soon as I could, and here I am going to stay."

The poor man could not thank him enough.

"God bless you," he cried. "Why, I don't mind it a bit now, with you there like that."

The terror was gone. The very darkness was powerless to hurt while his friend was so near; unseen, but just above.

Every now and then upon the silence came the clear voice, "Are you all right?"

"God bless you, sir; I am all right now," replied the poor fellow, his voice almost choked with his gratitude and gladness.

And, so beside us ever, He standeth, our almighty and most loving Lord, our strength and solace! The darkness loses its terror, the fear is gone, the loneliness of life is over, for that blessed presence is a spell that destroys the power of all things to hurt us. He

bendeth and whispereth to the heart, "Lo I, am with you always!" And we, what else can we do but look up and cry exultingly. "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me?"—*Mark Guy Pearse.*

A DARK STORY FROM CHINA.

One Ho, a wealthy merchant in that city, had two sons, the eldest of whom was a dissipated youth, who consorted with thieves and gamblers, and was driven away from home after wasting his share of the patrimony. He was reduced to beggary, and was in the habit of soliciting alms from his father's servants at the back door of his residence. The second son, however, had an excellent character. At last the eldest, with a band of companions, broke into his father's house and stole the money chest. A few weeks later, the son's participation in the robbery having been discovered by his father, the latter sent a trusty servant to him to say that if he would promise to lead a better life in the future he would be forgiven, and might return home, where after a time he would be married to a young girl of respectable family. The servant saw the young man, who was again reduced to penury after spending his share of the robbery, and advised him that now or never was the time to reform and better himself. The son agreed to the terms, and accompanied the servant home, where he was received with every appearance of joy by his parents, and a banquet was prepared to celebrate the reconciliation. But the dish set before him was poisoned with arsenic, and during the night he died in great agony. Nothing has been, or will be done to call the father guilty of the crime to account, as it seems that in Chinese law the son is regarded as part of the father, and the latter can do as he likes with his sons. Had the latter killed his father, whether by accident or design, he would be sentenced to the "slow process," or slicing to death.

"Truly, at the day of judgment we shall not be examined as to what we have read, but what we have done; not how well we have spoken, but how religiously we have lived."

"Follow thou me: I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life.' Without the Way, there is no going; without the Truth, there is no knowing; without the Life, there is no living. I am the Way, which thou oughtest to follow; the Truth, which thou oughtest to trust; the Life, which thou oughtest to hope."