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John Martin's Last Day.

Teach me to live that I may dread
The grave as little as my bed.

IT was four o'clock on a summer's morning, rather before John Martin's usual time of waking; but he was awake now, and sitting up in bed, with a strange look of anxiety on his face.

He wasn't a fanciful man, yet what had waked him up so suddenly seemed to have been a voice—a voice in a dream perhaps, but still a voice which must be listened to. It had only said three words, but those three had thrilled through the strong man and drawn him into a sitting posture on the bed. '*Your last day!*' Those were the words. Clear and silvery they sounded. There was no condemnation in them. It was as if they had fallen from the lips of some strong, wise angel; and John Martin could not but heed them.

Was it, indeed, to be his last day? He was quite well, quite as usual; but God did call folks suddenly out of the world, he knew. What should he do? He was not by any means what is called a bad man, hardly a careless one; but, oh! he felt strangely unfit to stand in a few short hours before God—to go into His presence.

Should he wake Sarah and tell her what he had heard, and ask her to pray for him? She was better than he. He turned softly,

for fear of waking the baby, and put a hand out to rouse his wife, but something stopped the action. She was sleeping so quietly after long watching, and carrying about of the infant in the earlier part of the night. Her cheek was as white as the pillow. It would be a shame to disturb her.

'And she'll wake to trouble enough by-and-by, if I do go,' thought John. 'God help her and our little ones.'

So saying, he slipped out of bed and on to his knees; surely this last day must all be spent in prayer.

And he did pray, as men do when a fearful gulf opens before them and they feel that their feet are close on the brink.

What he said I can't tell you. I think his words were few; but I know his heart prayed; and then it came to him as he knelt that he had something else to do besides pray.

'Forgive Jem! of course I must: "Father, forgive them"—the Lord forgave His murderers His last day. Jem only threw a few ugly words at me, and I've kept at enmity with him all these months—my own brother. I'll make shift to write a few words to put in the post.'

So John hurried on his clothes and crept