

THE SIGNALMAN'S FLAG.

BANG went the signals. Brightly blazed the fire. Round went the flag. Puff, puff, went the engine as she came cautiously on.

It was cold work enough, and our friend, Will Single, well wrapped up though he was, and with his feet almost touching the fire, could scarcely keep himself warm. More than once he thought of his own cosy kitchen, and rosy-checked little ones, and bonny wife, and wished himself there. Who would care to be exposed to a black London fog on an open railway line?

But then the thought rushed into his mind, "But for my signals, my blazing fire, and my waving flag, there would be an accident. I am here to save lives, and who wouldn't give up home comforts to save precious lives?" And so the warmth of his heart more than made up for the dismal cold and the danger.

As the trains rushed by, shaking his very coat and beard with the wind they raised, almost an exultant feeling rose in his heart, while more than once or twice he actually found himself saying aloud, "Another train safe. Thank God."

It made no matter to him that he knew none of the passengers. If they were not his friends and relatives, they belonged to somebody, and were enshrined in somebody's heart. They were somebody's fathers and mothers; sons and daughters, sisters and brothers, husbands and wives.

By-and-by the fog cleared away, and Will Single's duty was done; so rolling up his flag, and kicking asunder the embers, he made his way homeward with a heart all the more glad and thankful that he had stuck so well to his post.

It is perhaps just as well now to explain that Will Single had more posts than one to stick to, and that he was as faithful to every other as to this. He was a tract distributor, a Sunday-school teacher, and now and again a mission-room speaker. A Christian man himself, he wanted to extend the good news of salvation to every home and heart within his reach, and he spared not himself in his efforts to do so.

Now it happened that the very next Sunday he was to speak at the mission-room, and had been for some days vainly seeking a subject for his address.

"I've got it," he exclaimed, as he was wending his way homeward after the fog. "I've got it. The very thing. I'll talk to 'em about the fog."

Sunday night came, and with it a capital audience and Will Single's address on the fog, which I will now proceed to relate.

"Friends, we've had some bad fogs here in London lately, and I thought as that I couldn't do better than say a word or two about 'em.

"Very bad things are fogs, and a lot of harm they do in one way or another. There's few things that do more harm in London than fogs. You know folks, and I know folks, as have been killed by 'em.

"But this isn't the only sort of fog there's in the world. There's a spiritual fog in the world as well. And if you ask me which I think to be the worse, I tell you the spiritual is lots worse.

"Did you ever think of what a thick fog there is in people's heads about the things of eternity? Why, there's hundreds and thousands around us who not only don't know nothing about God and Jesus, but they seem not to know what sin is; they call themselves good people, when they're as bad as bad can be. And when you tell 'em what sin is, they shake their heads, and say they ain't so very bad after all. Ah! the devil has created a great black fog in their brains, so that they shan't understand. He don't want 'em to understand, my friends. He knows his business would be all done for if the fog was cleared away. And so he goes and does all he can to puzzle and muddle poor sinners' understandings, and make them think they're all that's good and proper.

"And did you ever think that just as accidents take place in a fog, so they do in a spiritual fog as well? You know, my friends, there's a sort of death that coroners' juries don't sit on—the death of the soul—the worst of all deaths that man or woman can die. Why, an accident on the rail isn't nothing to it. Just think if anybody in this room were to be called away into eternity to-night! Just think of what would happen if he wasn't prepared to meet his God! Why, he'd be lost for ever, he would. He would be sent away to live with the devil and his angels. And why? Because he'd got a fog in his brains, and a fog in his heart. Why, if it hadn't been for the fog he would have seen where he was going, wouldn't he? and perhaps stopped short in time, like the fellow as found out he was driving over the precipice, and pulled up just in time to save his life. Oh, there's a deal of mischief done in a fog!

"Now, you know, my friends, I'm a chap as has to see that accidents don't happen on the railroad, and I've got to give warning, and light up, and let off fog signals, and all that. And isn't that just what I'm going to do to-night? Haven't I come here to let off signals, and wake you up from your sleep? 'Awake, thou that sleepest.' Yes, that's what I've got to say. And very glad shall I be if I can only wake a few of you up, and show you where you are, and where you are going.

"Yes, and I've come, too, to drive away the fog with the fire of God's Word. 'Is not My Word a fire?' saith the Lord. A fire's a good thing on a cold foggy night, friends, as I've found it often. But the fire of God's Word will warm up your soul, which is ever so much better. Fogs can't stand before fire, friends. Fogs can't put the fire out neither. There's nothing like a good fire on a foggy night. And this is why I've come here to light up to-night, friends.

"But this ain't all. I've got a glorious flag to wave, a blood-red flag it is, and what do you think that flag is? Why, it's the flag of salvation, to be sure. And what does that flag say? 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.' That's what is written on it, friends.

"By-and-by the fog will clear off, and if we are only on the right track, we shall come to a world where there's nothing but sunshine, thank the Lord.