

The clergyman's face assumed almost an angelic expression as he prelied:

"True, you are not a Freemason. True, you are not a Christian. You have in many ways shown yourself to be my enemy. But *I am both a Mason and a Christian*. As such, I am bound by the strongest of bonds, by the most benevolent of motives, by all the commands, and hopes, and promises of Christianity and Masonry, which rests on the broad basis of religion itself, to aid suffering humanity, wherever and wherever I may find it. Never shall it be said of me, an ambassador of Christ, that mine enemy ever hungered, and I gave him no meat—thirsted, and I gave him no drink—was sick or in prison, and I visited him not."

"It is false," said the miser, raising himself up with a degree of strength, the effect of passion and excitement, and resting his sallow, wretched face upon his hand. "It is all as false as the father of lies. Christianity and Masonry teach no such disinterested principles of benevolence. You are influenced by mercenary motives in coming here. You would influence me to give to Julia, your wife, a portion of my estate, but I tell you plainly, that my will is made. I shall leave my possessions to one who has never disgraced herself by marrying a beggar and a Freemason, as she has done."

The clergyman stood meekly until the miser had completely exhausted his physical strength, by the vehemence of his passion, and was compelled, through weakness, to sink down again upon his pillow. "You can will your fortune to the wind, uncle," he said at length, mildly, "if you choose to do so—Julia and I are very happy without any portion of it. I did not come here after your gold—I seek not yours, but you. You are the one I am anxious to save. You misunderstand my motives. You misconstrue the spirit of the doctrine I profess and teach. May the Holy spirit heal you of your infirmities, and enlighten your soul! I shall not suffer myself to be driven from any post of plain and positive duty, by the vituperations and anger of him whom I would aid. So take my medicines and make yourself easy in regard to the motives by which I am actuated in thus seeking you. They are such as my God will approve, and that is enough."

The miser was not only exhausted by the effort he had made, but was awed into silence by the coolness and dignity of the one thus addressing him. He swallowed the medicine soon afterwards administered to him, without uttering a word, and quietly suffered himself to be moved and treated as the clergyman saw proper.

The Mason and Minister did not watch alone. A sweet pale face came at times, and looked with the pitying eye of an angel upon the wretched sufferer. A soft and gentle hand smoothed his pillow. A light footfall could be heard on the taperlit apartment at midnight, stealing around the room. And his chamber put on an appearance of tidiness and comfort, under the ministrations of the clergyman's wife, such as it had never worn before. In his heart of hearts Uncle Peter, at times, blessed her, but he was too ill to manifest any pleasure in her company, any gladness at her presence.

The violence of his disease at length abated. It had yielded to the skillful treatment of his self-constituted nurse and physicians. He was able to get up and go out again into the broad sunshine, and into the haunts of traffic and trade.

To the clergyman and his wife he was civil, and at times almost