

the grave as I came by. He ought to know better than to forget past favours.'

'Of course he ought,' answered Arthur. 'I don't understand him; he may not be a downright bad fellow, as you say, but his ingratitude passes my comprehension.'

'And yet, Arthur, that sort of forgetfulness, or ingratitude if you choose to call it so, is a deal commoner than we are apt to think. Look at ourselves; are we grateful in everyday life—we are always receiving favours?'

'Perhaps not; but—Freeman—think of putting on one side and forgetting the last wish of a dying friend—think of—'

Freeman stopped him by laying a firm hand on his arm. 'My dear lad,' he said gently, 'you're on very slippery ground. Excuse me, but I must say a word to you.'

'Go on,' said Arthur, somewhat surprised. 'If you've anything against me, have it out; I hope I can bear a word from a friend.'

'I *am* your friend, you speak truly,' returned Freeman, 'and so I will dare to ask you—Are you not acting to a benefactor in the same way as the man you blame? You are a Christian, Arthur?'

'Of course I am,' the young fellow replied hastily.

'A child of God, heir of Christ's kingdom; He has asked you with dying lips to do a certain thing in remembrance of Him. Have you done it?'

There was utter silence.

Then the elder man continued: 'You accepted His favours, you promised to obey Him; yet before your manhood has reached middle age, you have ceased to remember your Saviour in the way He Himself asked you to do. Are you careless, Arthur, or are you ungrateful?'

It was an uncomfortable question. The young man tried to parry it.

'Ah, you've caught me there,' he tried to say carelessly; 'I know I ought, by rights, to be a communicant. I did receive two or three times after my confirmation, but that was some years back.'

'Yes, like Matthew, you began well. He attended to Mr. Walter's wishes for a few months, and then ceased to observe them.'

'I don't think you can compare the cases,' said Arthur; 'Matthew's charge involved nothing but a little trouble to himself. Now, to be a communicant brings great responsibilities, and I couldn't face them.'

'Why not? Was it too much trouble? Would it cost you more pains and care than you choose to give?'

'No, no,' returned the young fellow somewhat impatiently; 'can't you see, Freeman? I'm not good enough for such holy things. I'm not ungrateful. Don't accuse me of that. I wouldn't lead a sinful life, or neglect Church, or bring shame in any way on the name of a Christian. I keep myself respectable, aye, and religious too, no one can say I don't.'

'I believe you, Arthur; but still are you not in just the same case as Cherry? He is steady and honourable, and does not disgrace the name or inheritance of his benefactor, though he does neglect his dying command.'

'Did I say the cases were the same? My boy, yours is ten thousand times the worst; for your neglected friend is your Saviour, to whom you owe a lifetime of service and gratitude.'

They were close to the town now—no longer alone. There was no necessity for Arthur to answer his friend; but the words sank into his heart, and waited for him again in each waking moment of the night that followed.

(To be continued.)

