

to turn back—men who did not wish to be recognised, or to come too near to those who might remember a claim upon their persons.

Nicholas had but little difficulty in making change, as nearly every man and woman had brought only the dime that would secure admittance ; so that the hall filled rapidly, and Tim, with his one hand, had all he could do to pass out the huge ticket, whose possession gave admission. Before the hour for the beginning of the exercises arrived, the last loaf of the five hundred had been passed out, the box-office was closed, and the remainder of the still-coming crowd was turned back, because there was no more room.

Within there was a scene of confusion, such as the worst theatres have rarely witnessed. Some of the more reckless had broken their loaves, and were throwing them at each other. It was a remarkable-looking crowd. Pale women sat holding their loaves in their laps, as if they were afraid their treasures would be snatched away. There was a great rustling of paper, there was merry chaffing on every hand, there was impatient stamping of feet, and the little knot of philanthropists behind the wing of the stage, who from sundry peep-holes could see everything, were in a fever of excitement.

One among them was pale and uneasy. The success of the evening depended upon him, and, bold as he was, confident as he was in his own resources, he was humble and fearful. At last, when the clamour was at its height, Mr. Jonas Cavendish stepped out upon the stage, and advanced to a little desk near the footlights.

Twenty men recognised him in an instant.

"O Jonas! Jonas!" went up from all parts of the hall.

"Who made your boots?"

"Where did you get your pretty coat?"

"Who suffered for the bread?"

"Where did you sleep last night?"

Cavendish stood and received these blows in silence. At last he saw a brutal fellow rise in the middle of the hall, and lift his loaf of bread to hurl it toward the stage, himself being the special target. He raised his hand deprecatingly, and some neighbour pulled the ruffian back into his seat.

"Boys," said Cavendish, "do you believe in fair play?"

"Yes!" "yes!" "yes!" from all parts of the hall.

"Have you had anything but fair play here to-night, so far?"

"No, no, it's all right."

"Very well; you will have nothing but fair play for the rest of the evening. And now, will you hear what I have to say?"

"Yes, yes! go on! go on!"