

He turned and looked at his little companions. They did not shed a tear, but huddled close together white with fear, their wide eyes fixed steadfastly on him with a pitiful, appealing sort of confidence that touched his warm feelings to the quick. "Upon my word, you are plucky little fellows!" he exclaimed.

"Please," said George, who was trembling from head to foot, and trying to smile at the same time, "please, are you a clergyman?"

"No; I am a doctor. Why do you ask?"

"Oh!" in a hopeless tone, "I thought if you were, you could have prayed to God for us, you know; but if you are a doctor it's of no use."

"So you think all medical men are heathens!" Dr. Dane said half sadly. "I can and will pray for us all, George." And he offered a simple, earnest prayer for deliverance that helped the two brothers to be brave for the worse moments that were coming.

"Perhaps burning won't hurt much," John said presently. "The martyrs quite liked it, didn't they sir? Poor Bob won't get his letter, though, will he George?"

"You shan't have an opportunity for impromptu martyrdom if I can prevent it, lads! Look here! I am going to climb out of the window and try to reach the engine-driver, or one of the unoccupied carriages. We will fight for our lives to the last inch. You will be left by yourselves. Mind you keep close to the window and get all the air you can. And never lose your trust in God, whatever happens. If I don't come back—tell Aunt Jessie—no matter, however. Better not, perhaps. I shall come back, please God; and the fire will not have gained much before then."

How anxiously the brothers did watch as he slowly got through the window, and began that awful journey! They eagerly watched the long red beard, which waved so in the breeze, and the tall, thin form, with the tightly-compressed lips and cool, daring demeanour; and then, unable to bear it any longer, little George covered his face with his hands, and, for the first time, burst into bitter tears.

A hospital ward, filled with beds, and in them lying patient-faced sufferers. Over one of them bends Aunt Jessie, gazing, with her bright eyes dimmed till she can scarcely see, though she clears them hurriedly again and again, on the bronzed, bearded face that rests on the pillow. He does not suffer acutely, the doctor and nurses assure her, as they read the sharp outlines of a life story beside that dying bed. Life had separated these two friends—death had brought them together.

Presently he opens his eyes and meets hers, that overflow with tenderness. "If I had only stayed in that other carriage until the train stopped," he murmurs. "The little fellows, I fancied they would be frightened and want me back. And one false step—there, tell them not to cry behind you, Jessie, like that."

Not your fault, boys; mine—always mine. Darling, all I have ever done has been a mistake."

"I never thought so, Walter; and if it is so, heaven can make it all right now. You have saved my dear little nephews. But, oh, at what a cost!" her poor heart whispers; and her hot tears fall on the sick man's brow.

"We have been true to each other all these years, haven't we?" continued the dying man. "May He who is the Truth unite us some day where there shall be no parting—no pain—"

The faint voice breaks off suddenly. The grasp relaxes. Yet Aunt Jessie and the angels smile. She has had her message after all.

FULL, YET ROOM ENOUGH.

"Mamma," said six-year old Fred, "I can't love God and you both, so I'll choose you."

"Why, my child! what do you mean by saying that you cannot love both?"

"'Cause that's what the Sunday-school lesson says; it says that I must love God with all my heart, and there isn't but one 'all' to it, so if I love him with all, there won't be one bit left for you."

Mamma laughed, and only asked Fred to come with her. Going to the cellar, she quietly asked him to help her fill a large pan with potatoes.

"There," said he, pulling on the last big fellow, "it's full."

"Full, yet there is room," answered mother, as she next took a bag of beans and commenced to shake them into the big crevices between the potatoes. She poured and shook until a quart or more had disappeared, and the pan was specked with white.

"Neither is it full yet," she said; and taking up a shovel of sand she scattered that over the pan, and it, too, disappeared, and another after it.

"Not full yet," she said again, as she took up a cup and began pouring water on the pan, and she poured and poured until several quarts were gone.

"Now, you see how a thing can be full, and yet hold more—of something else. So your heart may be full of the love of God, and plenty of room left for me, and papa, and sister, and play, and books."

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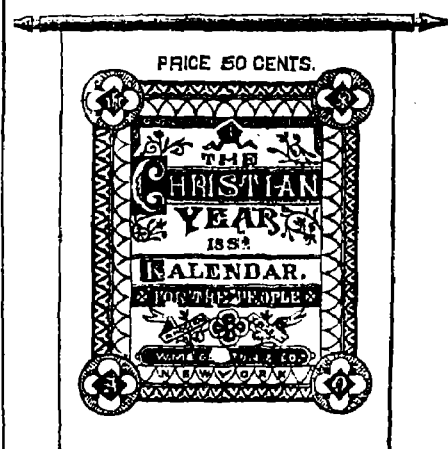
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