

this last time and invoke the benediction of God which is eternal upon the life of every man and woman here to-night."

"But," faltered Elder Brooks, starting up, his voice trembling, "that was our great mistake, our great sin. You are to be our pastor again!"

The minister shook his head slowly and decisively. The Elder stared in dumb, helpless amazement, while a murmur of dissent rose from the congregation, but quieted before the upraised hand of the minister.

"It seems to me," said Hampstead, speaking in tones of deep conviction and yet with humility, "that God has declared the pulpit of All People's vacant; that both you and I are to be held to answer for our mutual failure by a stern decree of separation. For there is another lesson which has been graven deeply in my life. It is this: No man can go back. No life ever flows up stream. The tomb of yesterday is sealed. The decision of this congregation is irrevocable. Less than a quarter of an hour has passed; but you are not the same, and I am not the same."

In the minister's solemn utterance, the message of the inevitable consequence of what had happened was carried into every consciousness. There was no longer any protest. The congregation bowed, mutely submissive, while John Hampstead pronounced the benediction of St. Jude:

"Now unto him that is able to guard you from stumbling, and to set you before the presence of his glory without blemish in exceeding joy, to the only God our Saviour, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and power before all time, and now, and forever more. Amen."

The meeting was over. But the audience sat uncertainly in the pews, with expectant glances at Elder Burbeck. It seemed as if he should rouse and say something. John, in recognition of the naturalness of this impulse,