

liated. What right had that old man to thank God for bread and water, when he had never thanked him for all his great possessions?

The woods closed in on him again, he left the stone-breaker behind, and his face soon assumed its usual self-satisfied expression. But during that morning's ride, again and again returned to him the picture he had seen in the green hollow, of the man who had thanked God for bread and water, and the thought of his own great riches did not give him quite as usual satisfaction. Had those riches ever made him as happy as that old man looked to be over his poor meal? He was obliged to confess to himself that they had not, and it was to him a sad confession. His pride was sorely touched, and his heart disquieted, and the farther he rode, the more grew a sense of discomfort, and discontent, that was strangely new to him.

Presently the bright sun became overcast, great clouds gathered, and the woods looked dark and gloomy. Dandy walked along troubled by nervous fears and fancies, but over the squire came an influence he knew not how to account for. A strange sinking was at his heart, and an impression of coming calamity. Then a voice struck his inward ear, a voice not of this world, one of those voices God sends sometimes to be heard for our good and guidance, and the words it uttered were terrible to him. That voice spoke to him clearly and distinctly, "This night the richest man in the parish will die." Strange and fearful were these words; he did not look round to know whence they proceeded, he knew it was an inward and spiritual voice that spoke, and he believed what it said. With a shudder he remembered the parable of the rich man in the Gospel, to whom had come the same terrible warning—"This night thy soul shall be required of thee;" and saw himself already, like him, carried away to another world, but not by angels into Abraham's bosom. That "the richest man in the parish" meant himself, he could not doubt, to whom else could the words apply? And he must die—leave all his great estates, his magnificent house, his fair gardens, wife, children, friends, all: die, and go to an unknown world he had seldom troubled himself to think about; and that he had not expected to see for many years to come—a world he had sometimes flattered himself never existed, but which now seemed only too real, and very much too near. Die? The word was very terrible to him. He was rich now. After death he should be poor indeed; for he had laid up no possessions for that world, but such as would drag him downwards, and be bitterness instead of joy to him.

"What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? and what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" were words that haunted him now,

and a cold perspiration covered him from head to foot. He felt that he had been an unwise merchant, that had exchanged his soul for very little. Unable at length to bear his own reflections, he galloped home.

There he arrived in a state of great agitation, and alarmed his wife and family by sending at once for a physician. To all inquiries he gave the answer that he was about to die, and must prepare for it. In vain they tried to persuade him that his health was as good as ever, that he was only the subject of a nervous fancy. The physician arrived, and laughed at his fears, but he neither heeded ridicule or entreaties. Death was not a thing to be laughed at or entreated away, and to death he was doomed. What did it signify what the world said about it? he must make ready for it. His solicitor was called in, and his worldly affairs settled. Wife and children were all provided for, houses and lands were portioned out to his beloved ones, then he had nothing to do but prepare himself for the great change; that, however, he found impossible. In great perturbation of mind he awaited the coming of his great enemy, death. When night drew on, his fears increased; every time the great hall clock sounded the hour, he shuddered, not knowing if he might ever hear it again. The physician and lawyer remained with him at his request, but they could not bring calm to his agitated mind. They could only listen to what he said, as to the ravings of a madman, for mad they judged him to be. Hour after hour went by, and the richest man in the parish, lying in his splendid bed, expecting death every moment, found how poor he was become, and of how little real use all his vast possessions were to him now. Midnight passed away, early morning came, faint light dawned upon the hills, and birds awoke themselves in their nests, and twittered out their satisfaction at the approach of their great friend, the sun. A faint colour came into the sky, and with it colour once more stole back into the cheeks of the squire. Colour came into his cheeks, and hope into his heart. Death had not arrived as he feared, he was still one of the living. The night was passed, the morning was come, and the prophecy of the mysterious voice was not accomplished. His family gathered about him, and with smiles congratulated him, advising him to take his rest now the danger was past. But how could he rest after such a night, such an upturning of all the cherished thoughts and aims of his life, such a revelation of the poverty of riches? He chose rather to walk abroad, and with thoughtful face and slow steps proceeded toward the village. There he heard that death had indeed been during the night a visitor in one house, but that, instead of appearing in his own grand mansion, he had entered the poorest cottage in the place, and released the soul of the old stone-breaker. With a still more thoughtful face