

to. That was me. I was the curse of her life, sir. I'm a slaughterman by trade; but half my time I used to be too lazy to work at it, and I used to make this poor little bundle o' bones work for me at the washtub, or at scrubbing, or at claring—anything. What did I care, so long as I could wait on her for a shilling when she came home at night, to find me in beer and 'bacca? And I didn't let her off at that. I used to fist her. It is to the glory of the Lord that I confess to it. He can wash white as snow the heart of such a wretch as I used to be; and I confess, sir, that I used to fist her often. I fisted her wuss than ever when I found out that she used to come on the quiet to the Hall here. I was that mad jealous of her doing it that I used to feel like killing her sometimes. It used to seem to me that she did it on purpose, to show me up and make me feel ashamed of myself. It didn't seem half so bad to do as I was doing when she fired up at me, and swore back when I swore at her, and sometimes caught up something and fetched me a clout with it when I came home drunk and began fisting her. But when she began to go to the Hall, sir, she took a turn—a turn that raised the devil in me that strong that it was a wonder I did not murder her. No matter how I fisted her, she took it meek, and wiped the blood off her mouth, and said: 'May the Lord forgive you, as I do, Jack.' I used to be furious then, and go at her and fist her till she hadn't got any voice left to crow over me. But next morning, sir, she'd be bright and cheerful, and, if I said anything taunting, she'd make answer: 'I can wait, Jack. It is not you and me that is rustling (wrestling), lad. It is the devil in you fighting against the Lord in me. The victory may be far off; but I can wait, for it is certain.' Praise be to His glorious name, sir, the victory was not far off. It was nigher than she thought. It come sudden, sir, as I'd fell a beast with the axe. I'd been fisting her cruel, for I was malicious drunk that night, till I thought I had done for her quite. She lay on the floor so still, with the blood a trickling from her forehead, and I was growing frightened and sober, when she comes to her senses and pulls herself up on to her knees by catching hold of the bedstead, and sez she: 'Oh! Lord, don't be too hard on my poor husband. Take pity on him, for my sake, and loosen the hold the devil has on him.' And as I sat there on the

chair, sir, staggered and wandering, she managed to get up, and she put her arms around my neck, and sez she: 'Oh! dear Jack, I may be dying. I think I am. Let me hear you say 'Oh! God, forgive me!' and I shall die happy.' But I didn't say it. I couldn't. I was so took aback and 'mazed that I was dumb. I was dumb all through the night, sir, and she never let me go; and it wasn't till morning's light that I found a voice to say what she asked me hours before. There's the story from first to last, sir, and that's how I came to join the Salvationists, and the reason why I mean, with my wife's help, to stick to them while I've got living strength. I don't know who you are, sir, or your meaning for getting me into talk; but I'll make bold to ask you one question, now I'm done: 'D'ye blame me for sticking to 'em?'

Under the circumstances, there was, of course, but one answer to the question, and I gave it unhesitatingly.

MR. PROCTOR, the astronomer, has been playing the alarmist. He argues for the identity of one of the comets of 1880 with that of the great comet of 1843, and that again with the comet of 1668, which by its near approach to the sun was retarded by that luminary's corona, and had its period of return shortened from 175 years to about 35. He argues that at its next return it will fall into the sun. This may cause such a blaze in the solar furnace that our earth may be dried if not burnt up thereby. There is this consolation, however, for those that may hope to live till that day: the identity is not proved, being only more probable than Anglo-Saxon identity with the lost ten tribes, besides which astronomers have estimated as of very little mass the body of comets; and allowing a very liberal estimate, the falling of such a cometary mass into the sun would simply bring back the fuel supply to what it had been some twenty-four hours before. In other words, the mass of the sun, as compared with the mass of the comet, is so great that it would affect its temperature little more than a house cistern of water would the flow of the Clyde. At least such is the opinion of some astronomers who have as great opportunity of knowing as Mr. Proctor. Nevertheless, the end will come for us soon; therefore, what the hand findeth to do, let it hasten diligently.