

the remotest ages and countries. There is one circumstance, especially, which renders this art infinitely valuable to man; because the records of our eternal salvation have been put, by the direction of Almighty God, into writing. Had it not been for this, there could have been no Bible, nor could we have been directed to those Scriptures which are able to make us wise unto salvation. Let us praise God for this inestimable gift, and labour to profit by so great a blessing.

THE LAST BELL.

"Procrastination is the thief of time."

It was a beautiful morning in the month of May, 1825, I was sitting by the side of Helen Harris, the only girl I ever loved, and, I believe, the only girl that ever loved me: any how, she was the only one that ever told me so. We were sitting in the piazza of her father's house, about a quarter of a mile from the landing place, waiting for the bell of the steamboat to warn me of the moment that was to part "my love and me." It came to pass in the course of my history, that in order to accumulate a little of this world's "gear," that I might be the better prepared to encounter the demands of matrimony, I was destined to cross the blue Chesapeake, and seek in the metropolitan city the wherewithal so much desired. How many awains have been compelled, like me, to leave the home and the girl they love, to wander in search of gold! And—and good gracious!—how many have been disappointed! Most of them, perhaps; for though they may have obtained the gold, like me, may be, they did not get as much as they wanted. But to the piazza.

adwell, we were sitting in the piazza, of our way be supposed, were talking waiting for the separation. We were that ever saluted our welcome sound steamboat bell. It is known, the who know any thing of steamboat that their bells give two warnings to those who have engaged for a voyage—the second is a signal for starting.—You may rely on it we talked fast; we thought fast, and abbreviated our words into such ragged sentences that no body but ourselves could understand them. The first bell rang! the sound rolled over Mr. Harris's corn-field and water-melon patch to the piazza, like the knell of hope, and I sprang upon my feet and trembled like an aspen. "O George, wait till the last bell rings," said Helen, as the "big tears came over her eyes of blue" "Do no such thing," answered the hoarse voice of Mr. Harris, as he rose

like a spectre from the cellar, where he had been packing away cider. "Do no such thing," he repeated; "and George," he continued, "carry this advice with you to the grave, and it may be of service to you, 'never wait for the last bell!'" I was off like a chased deer—the last bell rung as I approached the steamboat, and I had scarcely time to get on board before she was pushed from the wharf. On my passage I had time for reflection, and after a few flutterings at my heart, occasioned by the separation from its idol, I composed myself to cool reasoning, and the conclusion of the whole matter was that it was dangerous to wait for the last bell. My career in the search of pelf has in a degree become successful; but I verily believe, had not the old farmer told me "never to wait for the last bell" that I should now have been as poor as I was the morning the farewell shivered from my lips upon the heart of my lovely Helen.

I came to the big city, took lodgings at a hotel, and any person who has lived at a hotel but for a single day can rehearse the dangers of waiting for the last bell. I did it once—it was the day I entered—and I lost my dinner. I have always been ready for the dinner bell since then, and the first stroke has found me at the table. I mingled with mankind, and I saw thousands who were waiting for the last bell. In business they were slow, and bargains slipped by them. In the payment of their liabilities they were backward, and their credit suffered.

For six months I was a clerk; it was a short apprenticeship, but my never waiting for the last bell—that is to say, my doing every thing I had to do in the right time—won a place for me in the affections of my employer, which induced him to offer me a partnership. I accepted, and in every instance when the bell rung it found me ready. I have been in business and married nine years, and I have yet not caught napping when the bell

Now I will say a few words to just beg leave to say a thing of waiting. To men about this When I arrived at Baltimore, I waited on some gentlemen to whom I had introductory letters, and they recommended me for a situation. One was soon offered, which I was told had been refused by four young men, to whom it had been offered before I came to the city. The salary was low, but, said I, "They are waiting for the last bell," and I do not slow in accepting it; and glad I am of it, for it was the making of me.

Shortly after I became a partner in my present business, our custom having increased considerably, we advertised for an additional clerk; the salary at the beginning was the same that I had received; many called who were out of employment, but they seemed as if they had rather wait for another bell and refused—I know them all, and the young gentleman who accepted is worth four times as much as any of them—Haste for the first bell, accept the first offer, and keep it until you can get a better:—remember the common adage "half a loaf is better than none"—and be assured that if you are worthy, be your first offer what it may, if it be respectable, it will lead you onward—upward.

I once knew a young man of first rate business abilities, but he formed the disgusting habit of stopping at the tavern wherever he could make the opportunity: here he always waited for the last bell, reluctant to leave while he could spare a moment: he is now an habitual drunkard, and if he is not careful, the last bell of life will find him in a bad condition—it will be hard for him to bid a long farewell to his last glass. Life is short—hours fly with wind's rapidity—and he who habitually puts off until the last bell, the affairs which claim his immediate attention, will come out, according to Farmer Harris's prediction, "at the little end of the horn."

Shakspeare says, "There is a tide in the affairs of men, which, if taken at the flood, leads on to fortune." My young friend, he who waits for the last bell can never take this tide at the flood; the man only who is watching to embrace the first opportunity can have the least hope of success.

Young ladies I have a word for you. In the street I live in, there is a lady who has been seven years in choosing her partner for life. She is handsome, and pretty well off, and she had several respectable offers, but she was waiting for the last bell; and she is likely to remain to the last a belle, for she is turned of thirty, she will agree to take the first proposal that is made her; but perhaps it is too late, and she must bide her blessedness forever.

Now I beseech you my dear young friends, all of you who may read this little sketch, put not off for to-morrow what you can do to-day; this is the true meaning of the injunction which has been of so much service to me.—Whenever you feel a disposition to postpone any thing, no matter how trifling, remember the words of Farmer Harris, "Never wait for the last bell."