



*Now her step seemed feebler.*

boys laughing and jeering, I longed to offer you shelter, for somehow the thought of my teacher came across me; and yet when you came in and offered a tract, I durst not speak, for fear you should see how guilty I was. So I always set Nanny to be spokeswoman; but oh, how it has made me remember the lessons I learned so long ago at my Sunday-school! Sometimes when you talked I would sit with my eyes shut to listen."

"I always thought you were asleep."

"Oh no, I was not, ma'am; but I could think I saw the very room, and the form, and my own teacher's face; and when you repeated the very same texts, and the very same hymns—oh, ma'am, I used to lie awake all night to recollect what I was taught in my early days."

"But how is it you never talked to me yourself?"

"Because, ma'am, I felt so like a little child. I wanted to hear it all over again, to make sure I remembered it rightly, and I hoped you would one day ask me about my soul. Now for many weeks I determined to speak to you, but my heart failed. I thought you would think it so strange."

"I am sorry I did not take an earlier opportunity of inviting your confidence, but my own youth rather hindered me."

"Ah, ma'am, I fancied you might feel modest like, even to a poor old body like me; yet now, ma'am, I want to make quite sure that Jesus will receive me after all my long neglect of Him."

"Oh, surely you know His own words are, 'Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out.' Have you a Bible?"

"Yes, ma'am; those good young ladies gave my mother one, and I have it now; but I cannot read it much, for my eyes are dim with age."

I read to the poor old woman, and retired, feeling deeply interested in her case. Many subsequent visits followed, but her increasing deafness precluded any very systematic instruction. Nor was it needed, for the lessons she had received in her childhood were faithfully retained in memory's storehouse, and came back one by one under the Holy Spirit's influence to enlighten the dark mind, and to produce faith in Christ's all-atoning sacrifice as the refuge for the lost.

A few hours before her death I paid my last visit. This was the first case of adult conversion which I had ever watched, and I felt an intense anxiety respecting the safety of the departing spirit. While waiting I opened my Bible and read and prayed in silence. At length a cough disturbed the slumber of the dying. Her daughter offered her some alleviating beverage and smoothed her humble pillow, when her eye rested on me, and a faint smile lighted up her countenance.

"Are you happy at this solemn hour?" I inquired.

"Very, ma'am—very happy!" was her ready reply.

"Will you let me ask you a few questions, if your strength will permit?"

"Oh yes," she answered; "I can speak without hurting me now."

"Do you think your present suffering is any reason why you should reach heaven?"

"Oh no—no!"

"Do you think your sorrow for past sin deserves God's mercy?"

"Oh no; I deserve nothing but wrath!"

"Do you think that if you were to live all your long life over again, and keep all God's commandments, you could earn eternal life?"

"Dear me! no, ma'am; all our righteousness is but filthy rags."

"On what, then, do you rest the hopes which make you so happy now?"

"Only on Jesus Christ, who came into the world and died on the cross to save sinners."

"And do you find that hope sufficient to quiet every fear?"

"Indeed it is, ma'am; I want no other comfort. My teacher's prayers are answered now. The word of God she taught me I feel is true. I shall soon see her, and I shall soon see the blessed Saviour. Thank you too, ma'am, for bringing my early lessons to mind."

The slumber of exhaustion now came on. As I looked and realised the change awaiting the passing spirit, the comfortless chamber seemed the very gate of heaven; and its narrow limits seemed to include a bright squadron of angels waiting to convey the departing soul into Abraham's bosom. With a word of consolation to the sorrowing daughter, I left the house, and the next day learned that my poor friend had breathed her last without awaking from the sleep which had followed our solemn conversation.

I shall never forget that hallowed interview! I shall never despair of the Sabbath-scholar. Sunday-school teachers, sow your seed; "for in due time ye shall reap, if ye faint not."