



Starting on a journey.

though both children would laugh with equal glee as they rushed by a farm-house or hamlet, yet every now and then the little girl on her mother's lap would hide her face on her shoulder, and when she looked up again her smile would be shining through something very like tears, and the farther they proceeded on their journey the oftener came the wet eyes, accompanied now and then by a half-choked sob, and at last turning from the window and her sister's glee, she buried her face altogether, and did not look up again, while her mother stroked her head, from which the hat had fallen, lovingly, as if she were still a baby. "Is she tired or unwell?" said the lady, softly, as after a little time the hushed breathing showed she was asleep.

"No, miss, she ain't to say unwell, she's a real strong girl for her age, but, poor dear, she was a-thinking what's a-coming; look here!" And she gently raised the edge of the little frock, and showed a poor helpless little foot, bound and bandaged into an unsightly shape.

"She hurt it a good while ago," said the mother, simply, as she drew down the dress again, "and none of our folk seem to know what's best for it, and a lady has given me a paper to go to the Children's Hospital in B., and see if they can't do it good. It don't hurt her much to speak of now, but she is dreadful feared of them doctors pulling it about." And then as the other child clapped her hands and shouted with delight as a luggage train thundered past, the poor woman gave a sad half smile, and said, "Lor, miss,

don't it make a difference what the end of the journey is going to be?"

They were almost at the station where the lady had to alight, and she had to leave them after only a few words of loving comfort to the frightened child and her mother; but as she went on her way the woman's words went with her, and brought to her mind many a thought.

"Don't it make a difference what the end of the journey is going to be?" Indeed it does. A school boy with hard tasks awaiting him, knows how different the same journey will be when his face is turned homewards. And if this is true of our little journeyings from place to place, it is doubly so in regard to the one great journey which every one *must* take.

Yes, it makes all the difference whether the end of our life's journey is to be God, or—what? Whether at that end to which we must one day come, there will be a Father's greeting, an Elder Brother's love, a home in the Father's house; or black darkness and the awful loneliness of a lost soul.

It makes all the difference now; people cannot travel without sometimes thinking of the end, though now and then their journey leads them through such pleasant places and green pastures, that they would willingly stay for ever; but *here* we have no continuing city, and the end must come; and the end which will be the continuing part of the journey, and therefore the important part, is oftenest forgotten, while the way-side gleams are much thought of, and often fancied to be its one purpose.

Yes, it makes a difference now, a wonderful difference! Those who know what it is to look forward with infinite joy and gladness to the life with God, to the time when they shall stand before the Son of man, the thought of that end to the journey never saddens them. No, indeed; they can enjoy the beauties of the way too, only sometimes they seem very small compared with the glory of the end which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, but which they know God has prepared for them.

Do you know what it is to be able to look forward like that? Or is the end clouded in thick darkness for you—doubt, terror, and dread?

It need not be. Jesus lived and died that it need not be, that the end may be a bright one for you.

What do you fear? Punishment? "The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." Jesus has borne the punishment, and it is only those who will persist in bearing their own who have any cause to dread that.

Oh, if I could tell you what the love of Jesus is! That He *wants* you to live with Him; is not willing that any should perish; is ready to receive any one, however many sins they have, if they will only come to Him. Go to Him. He, the Lord Jesus, who is God Himself, will welcome you now, will in no wise cast you out, and "safe in the arms of Jesus," you are safe for ever; safe now, safe at the end, safe for all eternity.