

# Northern Messenger

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## The Time of Need.

(J. Scott James, in 'Friendly Greetings.')

John Macdonald was returning one December night from a pleasant gathering of friends. The moon was pouring its light into the somewhat murky atmosphere of a London square, and though it did not extinguish the light of the lamps, it made them less necessary than usual.

Though not very late, the streets were almost deserted, and as he turned out of the square he heard a door open, and looking, saw a young lady emerge. She had a shawl thrown over her head and held together underneath her chin, and her dress gathered up in her other hand as though she were about to run. As he came up, she paused, and then, as if under a sudden impulse, said, 'Please, will you help me? Will you fetch Dr. Crozier?'

There was an unmistakable tone of trouble in the sweet, clear voice that spoke to him, that appealed irresistibly to the young man. 'Certainly I will!' he answered. 'Where does he live?'

'Dr. Crozier lives in the next street,' she said. 'My father is ill, and I am alone in the house. I was going to run myself when I saw you. Please forgive me!'

'I am very glad to help you,' he said, raising his hat, 'and will bring him at once.' Then, turning back, he said, 'But what name shall I give?'

'Morecambe,' she answered gratefully, as she ran up the steps again.

There was a slight flutter of heart as John Macdonald went to discharge his errand. I suppose it was scarcely possible to be otherwise with a young fellow at the susceptible age of one-and-twenty. He arrived at the doctor's house just as he was getting out of his carriage.

Hearing himself asked for, the doctor turned round and said, somewhat brusquely, 'I hope you don't want me to go out to-night again!'

'I am afraid that is just what I do want,' answered Macdonald.

'I'll go nowhere till I've had something to eat,' gruffly responded the doctor.

'Well, I'd better give my message, at all events,' said Macdonald. 'Mr. Morecambe is taken ill and wants your help.'

'Eh! what? Morecambe?' exclaimed the doctor; 'well, that's serious! I'll be round as soon as I can. I must have a mouthful first. Won't stand many more of them, I'm afraid.'

Macdonald rose to go.

'If you are going back,' cried the doctor, 'don't you alarm that young girl. She has enough to bear without.'

'I'll take care,' he answered, as he left the place.

'I suppose I ought to call and leave word,' he said to himself, as he went back; but it was with a certain amount of shyness that he did so. 'Is there anything more I can do for you?' he asked, as he stood in the hall with Miss Morecambe, having delivered his message, 'although a stranger, I shall be only too glad.'

'No. nothing!' she replied, with a plea-

sant smile. 'I cannot tell you how grateful I am. The doctor will relieve him when he comes. It was unfortunate I should be left alone.'

Just as he was leaving, the doctor came up. 'You're not going!' he exclaimed. 'Better not just now, till I see; I may want you. Now, my dear, take me upstairs.'

She opened the door of a room for Macdonald to enter, and with a blush led the doctor upstairs. Presently she returned. 'You must excuse us—,' she began.

'Pray do not mention it,' he interrupted. 'I shall be glad if I can be of any use. Pray, how is your father?'

'Worse, I am afraid,' she said, the tears

'Yes, I think he might. You know, suffering makes us feel the need of God. We want help then, and comfort.'

'I think that is true,' she said, raising her eyes to his; 'I have wanted help so much. But God has seemed such a long way off.'

'It sometimes seems so until we know Jesus Christ,' he answered. 'You see, it is our Saviour to whom we are to go, and he brings us to the Father, and teaches us to love him.'

'I do not quite understand,' she said.

'Perhaps not,' he replied. 'And yet if you go to him, and trust him, you will find he does help you.'



PLEASE, WILL YOU HELP ME?

starting into her eyes. 'He will be taken off in one of these attacks, I fear.'

'Let us hope not. God is very good, he may spare him to you.'

She looked up as if surprised to hear a young man speak so. 'Do you believe in God?' she inquired.

'I do indeed!' he answered. 'Don't you?'

'I can hardly tell you,' she answered; 'I do in a vague kind of way. I think my feeling has more of fear in it than anything else.'

'Ah! you must get rid of that,' he answered, 'God is our Father, full of tender love to all his children.'

'If that were true, would he let my father suffer as he does?'

'But how am I to go?' she asked.

'Pray to him. Raise your heart reverently, and look up. He will hear you and save you.'

'But I am not fit to go,' she said, impulsively. 'I have lived without him all these years, and shall I go now because I am in trouble? It seems mean.'

'But if he loves you, and is grieved because you stay away, is it not meaner still to keep back?'

'I believe it is,' she answered. 'And you think he will hear me if I pray?'

'I am sure he will.'

'Then I will try,' she said, looking up more brightly. 'It does seem strange that