

'Why, John, you are late,' said Sarah. 'Sit ye down; I'll make you a drop of fresh tea, and then you must give yourself a bit of a wash and put on your Sunday clothes. Why, you've never gone and forgot that baby's to be christened to-night, after the eight o'clock service!' He had forgotten it though; that Voice had put most things out of his head.

'There's a bit of something extra for supper,' continued Sarah, 'so you can ask a friend if you like.'

'No, no, we'll have just the children, all of 'em, no one else,' said John, putting his arms out almost mechanically for his sleeping youngest-born. As John carried his baby to church, he prayed that she might grow up a good little lass, and that the God who cares for orphans would care for her.

He was feeling rather low now. It was hard to part with Sarah and the children, and how had he spent this last day on earth? It puzzled him to think that it had been much like any other day.

'Only I have kept the Lord in mind, and prayed Him to show me what best to do,' he said to himself.

After supper, and the putting to bed of the children—in which John assisted, somewhat to Minnie's surprise—Sarah and he had a quiet hour, and John told her all about the Voice and his strange day of work and thought.

'John dear,' said Sarah, 'I don't take it your way.'

'Don't say it don't mean nothing,' said John, almost sternly. He was rather worn out, poor fellow, with his thoughts; and the time was so short, there was no time for disbelief.

'I'm sure the dream means a deal,' said Sarah, solemnly; 'dreams are sent, we know, to teach us. But it mayn't mean, John dear, that your last day is to come to-night. The Voice didn't say that. I'm sure I hope God 'll leave you a long while yet.'

And the poor soul fell a-sobbing on his shoulder.

Perhaps John shed a tear too, for his human love for wife and children tugged sorely at his heart.

'I think the Voice meant to warn us both,' said Sarah. 'Look you, John, it's past ten; let us say a prayer together, and then we'll go to bed, and in the morning I advise you to go to Mr. Blair, as is so kind, and get the explanation from him.'

With the awe of the Voice and the closing day upon him, John went up to the little bedroom. Minnie was awake, excited with the late sitting up.

'I can't go to sleep, daddy; may I say my verse again?'

'Yes,' said John mechanically.

So the little thing sat up in bed, put her hands together, and repeated:—

Now I lay me down to sleep,
I give my soul to Christ to keep;
Sleep I now, or wake I never,
I give my soul to Christ for ever.

And so the day had gone by, and John had not been called.

He took Sarah's advice next morning, and went to Mr. Blair, telling him all the circumstances of the Voice and its effects.

'I tried to live right, sir, all the day, but I'm afraid I didn't manage it properly, things turned out just like other days.'

'Well, it's God's world we live in, my man, we can't change that. We've got to rule our hearts, not the world. God has set you plans, tasks: your work to do, your wife to tend, your children to bring up, your neighbours to help. Doing all that, forgiving a brother his trespasses, and humbly craving pardon for past sins, I don't see what better preparation you could make for death.'

'Why, sir,' said John, surprised, 'I might live that way every day.'

'And so you ought to do,' said Mr. Blair. 'And for this purpose I conceive the Voice was sent to you.'

Redeem thy misspent moments past,
And live each day as if thy last.

'I'll try and do it, sir,' said John, humbly; 'I think I see it now. The Voice was sent to rouse me to serve God better. I'm thankful for it, and I'm thankful to God that he's leaving me a bit longer to Sarah and the children.'