

that to make sure of the appointment, I was to be at Portsmouth on a certain day, to wait her calling there for final orders, when she would take me on board.

I was not long reaching home that afternoon, to report what I called my good fortune, and to make preparations for my departure.

My parents were pleased too, though my dear mother shed a few tears at the thought of parting again, so that I almost reproached myself for being so elated at what gave her some pain. And yet, it was not that I wished to be separated from my mother or father; we understood each other there, I think: and that was a comfort.

For a day or two, I was busy in making preparations for the voyage, and packing up; and then the last evening came.

"George," said my father to me, as we sat round the fire—my father and mother, sister Lucy and brother Charles, and myself—it was getting late; but it was my last evening at home, and none of us seemed to like to break up the small party—"George," said my father, "it would be an unspeakable happiness to us all, if we could feel assured that you, my dear boy, had given your heart to the Saviour. We could part with you then, not without regret, but without the weight of anxiety your mother and I now feel."

I do not remember what reply I made to this. I fear it was something light and evasive, to the effect that I could not make myself better than I was; for my father looked gravely concerned and distressed, and my mother wept silently. I was sorry for this, for I really loved them both; but I was vexed, too, that the last evening should be made gloomy.

"What can I say, mother?" I asked somewhat impatiently; "you would not have me be a hypocrite, and pretend to what I don't feel, would you?"

"No, George, no," she answered; "anything rather than that: but, George, you know the guilt and danger of rejecting the Saviour; and that he is ready and waiting to be yours, and to make you his; why do you keep back from giving your heart to him?"

Much more passed than I can or need set down. On my part, I was putting off with promises that I would think more about religion than I had lately done, and with hopes that some day I should be all that they wished. On theirs, it was urging me not to delay, while in health and safety, seeking my soul's salvation.

At last my father said, "We cannot do what we would for you, George; but we *can* pray for you."