

"Oh! It's muslin or something for some society. Say, Neil!" she asked, turning to the sales-woman by her side, "Who's the lady Alec's to ask for with them muslin?"

"Mrs. Dale," answered the girl. "Bless me, Mary MacGregor," she added, as Alec turned away with his big bundle, "that child won't be here long to run errands for anybody—he looks like a breath of air would blow him away."

Alec wrapped his thin, old coat round him, and started down the busy street on his "special delivery." Groups of merry children passed him, and he gazed wonderingly in their happy faces. Long ago he remembered a Christmas; but it was very long ago when they lived in a little white house in the country, and father worked in the great mill, long before the day when the men carried father home dead from the mill. Then the little white house had been let to others, and he and his mother and Nellie had come to live in two rooms down a little street in this big city. Oh! it was very long ago! Alec almost wondered at himself for remembering it at all, when father had laughed to see the roses in his cheeks after a scamper in the snow with Nellie. Very white roses they were now, for he and Nellie had no time for play. Mother worked all day long at endless button-holes, and Nellie "tended baby" for a woman just below them in their street.

Yes, that "Merry Christmas" of his was very far away: So he thought as he hurried on down to the side gate of the South Street Church.

In the ladies' parlor of the church, a group of well-dressed ladies and young girls were gathered. The meeting had not commenced, and they were sitting waiting, and talking together in a sociable manner. The president of the society, Mrs. Dale, sat by a table covered with books and papers, talking in a low voice to a young girl standing beside her, whose sweet face looked troubled and hesitating.

"I have never prayed before any one, Mrs. Dale," she was saying in a low voice, "How can I before all these?"

"You talk to Jesus surely, Helen, every day, and it is to Him only you are to speak now, not to these people."

"I know—but"

"Well, dear, I will not urge it, but surely a 'King's daughter' ought not to hesitate in coming to the King."

"I am not afraid, Mrs. Dale: I will try to feel proud that I have the right. Yes, I will do what you ask me."

It was a meeting of the Foreign Missionary Society of the South Street Church. Mrs. Dale was just reading aloud some verses out of the Bible when there came a timid rap at the door, and the lady nearest it opened it to admit Alec with his bundle. Mrs. Dale motioned him to a chair to wait until she was at liberty to attend to him, and the meeting went on. Alec gazed around him wonderingly. The warm room, the crimson carpets, the stained-glass windows, and the general air of peacefulness sent a thrill of comfort through the tired little heart. Why did all these ladies stop, just in the midst of the gay Christmas-life, to come together in this little room? Hark! the grey-haired lady with the sweet voice, was asking some one to pray! It was that pretty young lady in the sealskin jacket. Alec hoped she would pray a long time, it was so nice to be able to sit still awhile, instead of running all the afternoon in the busy store.

"Dear Lord," the young girl began, "Jesus died on the Cross to save us all, and yet there are people in heathen lands who know nothing of Thee. They are dying every day and do not know the way to get to Thy beautiful heaven. Help us to send them the true way. Everyone can help—" here the young voice faltered and almost broke, but after a moment's pause it went on clear and

sweet; "So make us willing to help, for Jesus' sake. Amen."

Then Mrs. Dale called Alec to her, received his bundle and dismissed him. Out of the warm, bright room he went again, into the crowded street, but through his head rang over and over again the words of the prayer—"They do not know the way to Thy beautiful heaven," and "Everyone can help." Could he? But how? At night when he knelt down to pray, after he had said "Our Father," he added, "and oh! teach these people how to get to heaven!"

The days went on, and one day little Alec's white face was missing from the store. "At the hospital," was the answer to the few questions about his absence, and then another call-boy took his place.

Young Dr. Marshall was one of the new resident physicians at the Children's Hospital. He had just been graduated with honors from the medical college, and while waiting to settle permanently, had accepted a position for a year's practice in the children's wards.

There was something in Alec's little white face, as he lay on the hospital bed, that instinctively drew the young Doctor to him. What it was he could hardly tell, for the child talked but little, and lay there day after day, without a murmur or complaint, always meeting the kind nurse's inquiries in the morning, as to how he felt with a little smile and a "Better, thank you: I'm only tired now."

True it was, though, that on his way through the wards, the Doctor often paused for a few extra words with the sweet face that brightened so at his coming.

One day Dr. Marshall came to the ward with a great handful of rare flowers, and he went from one bed to another, leaving a bright blossom behind him.

Alec seemed asleep when he stood by his bed at first, so the Doctor bent over him, and softly laid by his hand, a great white lily with strange pink stamens. The blue eyes opened then, and a thin little hand stretched out for it.

"That, Alec," said Dr. Marshall, "came from over the sea. The lady that gave it to me brought home the seeds. Isn't it beautiful?"

A wistful look stole over Alec's face, and the Doctor caught the words he murmured to himself: "So beautiful! and they don't know nothing about heaven—"

The Doctor, watching wonderingly, saw a shadow steal over the white face.

"What is it, dear?" he asked, drawing a chair beside the bed; "Is it a new pain?"

"Oh! no," said Alec, with a little sob, "but I did so want to help—"

Little by little the story came out, of Helen Morris's prayer, and how it had rung in his ears ever since that day, and how he had hoped "to help" in some way.

"She said everyone could help, and I did try, but there didn't seem to be any way, and now maybe I'm going to heaven myself, and I haven't told one yet—"

Very tenderly the strong young man bent above the child.

"Little Alec," he said softly, "If Jesus wants you for Himself, He will send some one to fill your place."

Such a gleam of brightness as came over the tired little face.

"Will He? oh! will He, Doctor? Could you go?"

"Could he go?" As Helen's prayer had rung in Alec's ears, so this question rang in the young Doctor's heart. Why not? There were many already in the home-land able to heal and cure, and here he stood, a Christian, armed and ready for grand work in a distant land. Was