

speaking like a man, George, who can't see the heart), she didn't seem able to repent. My wife used to come home with the tears running down her cheeks. You see, the poor creature had lived all her life for this world, and it seemed as if she couldn't set to and prepare for another. She was too weak and ill and ignorant in her weakness.

George. She'd put it off too long.

Jem. It looked like it. But all the while the parson wouldn't give up. One day she'd try to pray at his bidding, and the next she'd be cold and dry and only want him gone, and so it went on and on till the last day.

George. Was your Sarah with her then?

Jem. Yes, never left her those last few days. She heard her last words. They haunted my poor girl for months. 'It's come now,' says the poor soul, 'and I'm not ready.'

George. And then she died?

Jem. Shut her eyes with a little gasp, and was gone.

George. Well, that don't seem to encourage leaving repentance to one's death-bed.

Jem. No. The parson looked very sad when he spoke to me about it.

George. He'd a poor hope of her?

Jem. No, he didn't say that. But he was like my Sarah. Those words, *I'm not ready*, haunted him. Yet he took comfort that they sounded humble. Perhaps the door would not be shut on even such feeble repentance—

we can't tell, and we may hope. Sarah said she wished all careless folk, who put off repentance to a death-bed, could have heard the poor thing's hollow voice making that sad speech. 'It's come now, and I'm not ready.'

George. Were her children by?

Jem. No. Ran like rats from a fall'ng house, left her all alone till—

George. Ah, I remember, till the breath was out of her body, and then came back and robbed the corpse!

Jem. Yes, took the few pounds from under her pillow she'd scratched so painfully together for her funeral. The parish buried her at last.

George. Poor soul, poor soul! Jem, you've made me feel quite low.

Jem. I don't wonder. It's a miserable thought, having all to do at the last. Don't it seem almost like madness? Quite a decent man will spend a lot of time and thought preparing his worldly affairs for death, putting into a club, insuring his life, and so forth, but he thinks five minutes at the very end will do for his soul.

George. It's because he doesn't see that the use of life is to fit one for death.

Jem. Live well if you want to die well.

George. I've a lot of things in my mind about this subject, Jem, but my time's up. I must be off. You'll let me have my talk out another time.

Jem. Certainly. Good night, George.

Our Father.

MEN are told that God stands to them in the light of a Father. Yet they do not say, 'My Father loves me, so there must be a blessing in the troubles which He sends me.'

Rather they begin to judge Him, their Maker as well as their Father, grumbling and complaining at His ordering of their lives.

What should we think of the little child who sulked and cried, 'My father is no loving father; he holds my hand when I

want to run about; he struck me with the rod the day I played by the river, and when I was ill and my head ached he gave me bitter medicine instead of the sugar I asked for.'

Surely someone would reply, 'You foolish child, your father holds your hand to keep you from falling and wounding yourself. He let you feel the rod that you might never again be tempted to play by the deep dangerous river, and he gave you a bitter drink to cure your pain. It is to him you