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Face the Other Way.

In one of the great battles of the American Civil war, defeat was turned into victory by the conduct and courage of one man. As General Sheridan rode out of Winchester on the morning of that memorable day, all unconscious of the danger that threatened his army, he met crowds of his men flying from the foe. With an escort of twenty men he pushed to the front. He rode hot-haste, swinging his



hat, and shouting as he passed, 'Face the other way, boys! face the other way!'

The scattered soldiers recognized their general, and took up the cry, 'Face the other way!' They fell into their ranks and followed him to the front; and under his leadership the fugitives of the morning were conquerors before night. That battle ended the campaign in the Shenandoah Valley.

'Face the other way!' This is what Christ, the great Captain, would have thousands of us do. 'Oh, my wasted years!' cried a dying man once in his agony. Perhaps some of us have to look back upon a wasted life. All the past is lost. Up to this moment our time has been wasted, our talents misspent, and our work remains undone. The path we have been following is the path of inclination and disobedience. It is one that runs downhill, and runs straight to hell.

'Face the other way!' Yes, thank God, it is possible to do it. St. Paul did it in one moment. Thousands have done it as completely and almost as suddenly. True, it needs divine grace to change a life, but that grace is yours, if you seek for it. For this end Christ was manifested, to destroy the works of the devil. No case is too hard for him. Only cry to him. He will forgive all the past. He will turn you right round. He will set you on the road to glory. He will give you the Holy Spirit to teach and guide you all the way.

But there is much you can do. Do that. You can sit down and question your heart, and find out the truth. If you are on the way to hell, it is better to know it, and to resolve by God's grace before it is too late to enter without delay on the way to heaven.

Hitherto you have been interested in bad

things. You can try to take an interest in things that are good and holy. You can fill your mind with God's blessed Word, making it your counsellor and guide. It will teach you what you may be and do, what you may yet enjoy and suffer for his blessed Name's sake. You can seek to be like Christ, in all things, and, like him, to go about doing good.

A poor man in Norway one December carried the box of a man who was selling Bibles on his horse a whole day among the mountains for nothing. 'I can do nothing for the work but this,' he said; 'but I can do this.' Resolve that all your life shall be devoted to Christ's service without any reserve.

'Face the other way!' Set your face toward God and Christ and the New Jerusalem, and then you will not have any sudden change to make when death is seen approaching. The path you are in is the very path that ends in glory.

The story of Judas is one we often ought to study. He seemed at first exactly like the other apostles, yet how different! Religion to him was a matter of money. He followed Christ as long as he thought it would be profitable to do so. If he could make more by betraying Christ, he was ready to sell him to his foes.

Such selfish thoughts make the heart good soil for the tempter to sow his seed in. Judas listens to the overtures of Christ's foes; and at last, without waiting for the evil to seek him, he actually goes and seeks the evil. 'What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you?' He who began by following the Holy One of God is seen by-and-by watching for an opportunity to sell him, and he ends by betraying the Son of Man with a kiss.

We shudder at the thought of treating Christ as Judas did; and yet it may be that our case is not so different from his. If we are dallying with evil, if we are listening to the voice of the tempter, if we are allowing any besetting sin to lead us its own way, our end, unless God in mercy opens our eyes in time, may be that of the false disciples.—'Friendly Greetings.'

'Bond or Free?'

(Ellen Thorneycroft Fowler, in the 'Friendly Visitor'.)

'Well, Squire, I'm sorry that you can't see the matter as I do,' said old Rutherford with a sigh.

'Nevertheless I can't, Rutherford, and that is the long and short of it. Religion may do very well for you who are getting old and no longer want to enjoy yourself, but it would be too much of a tie for me.'

'It's a pity, sir, for with you and wealth on your side you might do a sight of good if you only had got religion as well.'

The handsome young Squire laughed. 'You see, I like having my own way too much for the claims and restrictions of godliness to have any charms for me. I prefer freedom to bondage any day.'

'But you see, sir, there is the bondage of sin and the liberty of sin, and there is the bondage of religion and the glorious liberty of the sons of God; so that there are both bond

and free which ever way you turn, and the great thing is to secure the best sort of bondage and best liberty. There is a slavery that is better than freedom.'

'I doubt it, my good friend, I doubt it; and, at any rate, the freedom is more in my line.'

'It's a pity, sir, a great pity.'

But the skeptical young landowner enjoyed an argument with his old tenant, who had been a brave soldier not so very long ago, so he declined to let the subject drop.

'I should have thought,' he remarked, 'that a man like you, Rutherford, who has known the horrors of a siege and had but narrowly escaped the cruel fate of a prisoner in war, would not have talked such nonsense as that any sort of slavery is better than freedom.'

'It is because I know what I have spoken,' replied the old man. 'Twice in my life have I been besieged. The first was like the siege of sin, and I escaped from it; the second was like the siege of religion, and if ever I escape from that, may the Lord help me!'

'Tell me about your two sieges, my good Rutherford. But I'll be bound liberty was better than either of them.'

'I don't think so, sir; but I'll describe them, and you can judge for yourself.'

'Fire away; I'm all attention,' said the young Squire, lighting a cigar and sitting down beside the old soldier on the trunk of a fallen tree.

'Well, sir, the first siege was many years ago, when there was some fighting in South Africa. We were shut up in a town surrounded by Boers, and the food and drink were scant enough, I can tell you. It was decided that some one should endeavor to escape from the town to carry certain despatches to the English army. It was a desperate attempt, and whoever made it carried his life in his hand. I volunteered to go, because I had neither kith nor kin, so that if those vigilant Boers potted me, no one but myself would be the wiser or the worse. So I managed to escape from the besieged town; and though the enemy fired on me pretty freely at first, I soon succeeded in eluding their notice, and got outside of the range of their rifles without so much as a scratch. Then I enjoyed what you would call glorious liberty. I was free to do what I liked—free to be shot like a dog by any stray Boer who might catch sight of me; free to fall a prey to any wild beast prowling about, free to the burning sun and the biting wind and the blinding rain; free to the inroads of hunger and thirst—so free that if any of these threatened dangers came upon me and slew me, no human being would shed a tear, or feel the world one whit the emptier because I had left it. At first I confess that I relished the change from the misery of a siege to such unfettered freedom; but after a time this unchecked liberty grew terrible to me. It was the life of a wild animal, not the life of a man, and sometimes—when the overpowering infinite star-filled space above me struck terror into my soul, and the moonlit desert seemed to be haunted by grey and ghostly presences whose grisly embraces threatened to hold me fast—I grew very homesick for the prison I had so joyfully escaped from, and almost regretted the day that I had come into the wilderness to die alone.

'At last, after many days of danger and