

MANY ARE CALLED,

FEW CHOSEN.

Acts xiii. 38, 39.



LONDON.

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(TWO DOORS FROM CHEAPSIDE.)

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WHEN the cry from India in 1857, obliged our authorities to raise and send out large forces, for the relief of England's suffering ones there, it reached a small town in the West of Ireland, and three young men came forward to join the lists. Matthew, Edmund, and James had received a good plain education, but were widely different in character and disposition. On their march up country, James and Matthew were left sick in hospital at ———, and it was there I became acquainted with them. James very readily told me their story, asking for news of the beleaguered garrisons. I then proposed reading a few verses from my Bible. 'I might, if I liked, he didn't care ; he never thought of such things as the

soul and death, now he had got his head, and free from home influences.' I repeated some suitable verses to him, urging upon him the reason of our being placed in this world, namely, to grow like Jesus, and to glorify Him in the world; and the great motive-principle—redeeming love; but all in vain. Then turning to death and eternity, I strove to make him feel the awful consequences of scorning that Saviour here, who will be our Judge hereafter. He would hear no more; so I turned to Matthew, who agreed in the reasonableness of my wishes, and quietly allowed me to read and speak with him. For some days I continued to see these men. James's heart was hardened, quite deaf to the calls of grace: when I entered the ward, he generally left it to avoid hearing that truth which he hated. Matthew seemed indifferent: as it pleased me to read and speak, he listened, but he gave no evidence of loving the Lord.

James was soon well, and on the Monday morning, left hospital. I saw him in the verandah just before he left, when he said, "You see, I was right; I told you I

was young and hearty; that I had nothing to do with these things—death and eternity, yet—there's time enough. I'll be up and have a hand in wiping off some of them black niggers yet." I was much grieved, and I trust faithfully tried to win him, even then, to Jesus. "You know," I said, "that hymn, James—

'No present health can health insure,
For yet an hour to come;
No medicine, though it oft can cure,
Can *always* baulk the tomb!'"

He turned away. Reader, when I next heard of James, *he was dead!* And yet but a few short hours had intervened; he had gone to the bazaar, and "indulged" with some comrades; walking back to the barracks, God's judgment fell upon him—he fell down senseless, and was borne back to that bed he had left but an hour before. He lived there but to open his eyes, and calling Matthew, said, "I find her words true, *too late*—I am lost!" Awful end of an unprepared sinner!

Fearful was it to stand by that charpoy,

whence a few hours previous an unprepared spirit had left its clay to meet its offended God. Many trembled that day, for death seemed so near.

TOO LATE! Should any soldier, still hardened against his God, read this, let me implore you, my friend, not to let the word of warning sound unheeded. Thank God, it is not *yet* too late for *you*. You may yet have God for your Saviour, friend; but remember, an hour hence, it may be '*too late*.' May the Spirit grant that these words may pierce the heart of each reader, and may he lead each to turn to his God now, in the day of salvation.

Matthew had seen all, had heard that fearful "too late;" he trembled, and begging me to write and inform Edmund of the dreadful event, dictated a message to him himself, to beg that he would think on the things of Jesus. The reader may believe how fervently I prayed as I wrote, that He whose message to a sinner it was, would bless it, and make it pierce the soldier's heart. Matthew lingered on about three weeks in great suffering, able to think and

speak but little. I never could feel satisfied as to his state of heart ; that will be revealed to us in the great day of disclosure.

Not long after this, a soldier called on me one evening, stating that a young comrade (Edmund by name,) had just come into hospital, and begged I would go to see him as soon as I could. "He's been wounded in several places up at Cawnpore, and is very weak ; the fever is strong upon him ; he may recover, the doctor says, but I don't much think he will ; for he seems altogether too heaven-like to stay with such as us. He says such beautiful things, and rests so happy like in all his pains." I sent some flowers and books by the soldier. On my entering the ward next morning, Edmund raised himself on his charpoy, and the colour mantled his face, as with tears coursing down his cheeks, he said, "My prayer is heard—I have longed to know you. I was as hard as any other sinner till your letter came. It just made me cry down-right, and I'm not ashamed of saying it to you. I'd been taught the duty of religion, but, *to be given a Friend, only to be asked to love Him*

—to be promised joy and peace here, and heaven afterwards, it seemed too big a gift to be true. One of the men who had a Bible lent it me, and then, as you bid, I searched to see if your letter was true. I read all those verses you marked, and it *was* true, every word of it. Then I thought I had done wickedness so long, I couldna be loved by the Lord; but it said, Jesus died for sinners, and as I wanted now from that time to love Him, *I believed I was forgiven*. And I've been so happy since. I just wanted to see you to tell you I loved Him, that I have minded your word, and now I've seen your face, I shall know you when you come to heaven! And now will you come to me every day, and read to me of His love? for I'm getting too weak to hold the book, and you know I must learn more of Him before I see Him. I have been trying to copy Him, ever since I first loved Him, but I've been so much in the front; now I think I've got this while given me, *just to do nothing but look up at Him*, and try to get more of Him put into me. Will you help me?"

Sweet hours were those I spent by Edmund as he neared Jordan; his spirit glowed with praise and love. "You remember," he said one morning, "you gave as a watchword to some Highlanders, 'The love of Christ constraineth us;' they gave it to me, and I have held it always since. I can't tell what that love is yet—I can't rightly hold it in my heart, it seems too great for me: but I'm going to see Jesus, then I'll learn a little more of it, but still I shall never know it all."

One Sunday afternoon I went to his bedside. "I'm nearing the haven," he said; "read me about the voyage," I turned to Psalm cvii. verses 21 to 31. "Yes," said Edmund, slowly speaking as to himself, "*So He bringeth—so—through sin, temptation, sorrow, danger—so He has brought me—He, my only friend,—yes—my desired haven. I have longed for it; I have kept my eye on it; now I'm almost there, in the calm. I shall do well in the swelling of Jordan, for Jesus holds me; I am His, and He will be with me, and make the storm a calm.*"

The shadows of evening were falling,

when I went to take my last look at him ; he was quite exhausted, panting life away. It was very painful to see human nature thus battling hard. His illness had been short, and his features were not worn, nor his form shrunk ; his skin was beautifully white and transparent, and his eyes shone with brightness that told me he was passing away to glory.

As usual, he welcomed me with a smile : “ You are just going to join with some of the family on earth in singing the praises of our King in His sanctuary. I am just going to sing them with part of the family in heaven. My Sabbath began on earth, it will end above. If yours should be a long and stormy voyage, it may cheer you often to look back, and remember you led me to my despised Bible and Saviour.” He repeated the following hymn, which I had sent him in Matthew’s letter, a great favourite with him.

SAVIOUR ! thy love alone can fill
And satisfy the human heart ;
Can turn to good each seeming ill,
And peace impart.

BUT FEW CHOSEN.

Then deign to make thyself to me,
While here a sojourner I roam,
A living bright reality—

My rest, my home !

More present to faith's inward sight
Than earthly objects to my eye ;
My hourly well-spring of delight,
Which ne'er runs dry.

If of some cherished good bereft,
Too fondly prized, hard to resign,
Still, let me feel enough is left,
If thou art mine.

In sorrow, be thy love my balm,
A panacea, sure to heal ;
In joy, to sanctify, and calm,
That love reveal !

More intimately be Thou nigh,
Than e'en the dearest earthly friend ;
Bound by that strong mysterious tie
Death cannot rend.

Let all around me clearly trace,
A growing likeness, Lord, to thee ;
A trophy of transforming grace,
Oh, let me be !

I repeated the three first verses of 1 John iii. His eyes grew fixed, and memory seemed failing. Once again, I pressed his cold hand, and said, "Edmund, are you happy?" A joyful smile and gleam of intelligence lighted up the face of the dying man. "*Oh, so happy; so Jesus has brought me to my desired —.*" He could not utter more, his sentence was finished, when an hour after the happy spirit entered its heavenly home.

"Triumphant in his closing eye
The hope of glory shone."

And then the spirit gently passed away into the rest that remaineth.

Reader! may this brief record of three youths, reared in the same town, and sent forth into the world together, with like duties, privileges, and temptations, read a never-to-be-forgotten lesson to your heart.

I have traced these lines with fervent prayer that they may be a saving call to some soul, and I believe that they will. (1 John v. 14, 15.) The remembrance of the last days of these lads is still so vividly be-

fore me, and so overpowering in its reality, that I cannot give words to what I feel for you. *I believe that my Master will make the simple record touch some cold heart ; and if it should be the means of helping any to value and love Edmund's Saviour more, it will have done its work.*

One word only to the *soldiers* who may read my narrative.

Dear soldiers ! I know your difficulties ; continually amongst those who hate the truth, with often no quiet corner to yourselves. Jesus knows them too. But, oh ! you dare not say, a soldier cannot be a Christian ! Some of the most beautiful, Christ-like characters the world has known have been found in England's army. I have often prayed as I stood by the bed of a dying soldier—

“ May such grace on me be shed,
To make my end like thine.”

Turn you to your Bibles, and see in what endearing characters Jesus is presented as your friend. He only wants you to feel yourselves helpless sinners, to be sorry for

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ungrateful conduct towards Him, and with sincerity to choose Him to be your Master. Soldier friends, turn not away! O that you would believe, and come homewards now! Remember, Jesus has died for you; you have only to believe this, and to love Him. As soon as you do this, obedience will naturally follow. O say not, there is time enough yet. We know not when our Lord shall come in all His glory, to judge the dead and living. It may be this day, this night. Will you not come to Him now as your Saviour-friend, before you *must* see Him as your Judge?

My words are feeble, but I am praying for you, dear soldiers. Prayer, you know, “moves the hand that moves the world,” and I cannot help humbly believing, some of you will have cause to thank God for this solemn illustration of the truth, that “**MANY ARE CALLED, BUT FEW CHOSEN.**”