

now and think over all this," then, seeing a look of doubt and fear cross the farmer's face, he added: "Never fear, I am strong now and completely changed." He marched out of the house with a firm and assured step, his head well up and his eye bright with inspiration.

A walk of something less than half-an-hour brought him to the township. As he drew near to the scene of his late debauchery, his step became less and less firm, until at length it fell into the old shuffle, his head drooped, and his eye grew dull and bleared once more. As he approached the hotel his hand moved to his breeches pocket, and he fingered the shilling wrapped up in the note. Evidently he was fighting a battle with himself. He might yet have conquered, but he caught sight of the barman, and a feeling of anger arose within him.

"There is that infernal skunk, Bob," he muttered to himself. "I'd like to watch his face when he sees I have money! I'll just have one glass—no more—and then I'll buy something to make me a little more decent before I see McLeod to-morrow. I'll just spend the odd shilling—not a penny more," and the infatuated fool entered the bar.

Christmas morning arrived, and farmer McLeod waited impatiently for his visitor, but he never came. About noon he could wait no longer, and started for the township. On enquiry he heard that Slippery Sam had entered the hotel bar, drank all his money, and, late at night, was thrust out into the street so raging mad with drink that the constable had to take him in hand, and give him a night's lodging in the lock-up.

When he arrived at the Police Camp, McLeod asked the constable where he was.

"Why, strapped down on a stretcher," was the reply. "Fact is, McLeod, he's got 'em badly this time. I have sent for the doctor, but he lives thirty miles away, and I doubt if he'll be in time. He's booked for kingdom come this trip, I'm afraid."

On entering the lock-up the farmer found the poor tramp, as the constable had said, strapped down to the bedstead. As the mad paroxysm had passed, they removed the straps. The wretched outcast lay exhausted and unconscious, muttering from time to time. Suddenly he sat up, staring before him as if he saw some wondrous sight, and then in a low awestruck voice he spoke in irregular gasps.

"Lord! is it Thou? Thou art kind and pitiful—but, Lord, I am a fearful sinner—not worthy to speak—I have mispent the life Thou gavest me—I have wasted my talents—I have never, in all my life, done one good action." Here he paused as if listening, and like a break of sunshine through thick clouds, a faint, glad smile spread over his face, and his eyes lit up with intense joy.

"Inasmuch as ye did it to one of the least of these My brethren, ye did it unto Me. Lord! Thou art merciful and full of pity—that one action—saving the old man's son—this done to Thee? Lord! Thou has repaid me a thousandfold. T—T—thank and—and worship——." As the last low whisper fell from his lips, he sank back, and, when McLeod laid his head on the pillow, he saw that all sorrow and temptation were over for the poor weak, erring tramp. With streaming eyes the good old farmer turned away, saying softly to himself: "He has now been paid his Last Fee."

