

without a stop; if only I had not stopped then to think all might have been well, but "He who hesitates is lost" was not said for nothing. I hesitated, then rushed on again blindly, and was brought to a stop suddenly by coming in violent contact with a lamp-post. I stood vainly trying to pierce that bank of inky blackness. It grew terrible to me. Oh, for a friendly hand that would draw me in anywhere out of that ghastly night! Six struck, seven, eight, I was wandering aimlessly about, chilled, hungry, tired to death, afraid to sit down for a minute, in what seemed to me a network of lamp-posts and railings that led nowhere.

At last, when it seemed quite impossible I should be able to keep on much longer, I came upon what proved to be a stone wall. This cheered me somewhat, and I followed it gently along with my outstretched hand, until, oh! joy, it gave a little to my touch, and I found myself inside a building of some sort. Where was I? While I, so dazed with fatigue and cold, was trying to puzzle it out, I heard a gruff voice say, "Drat that there door." Before I could speak, it had closed with a loud clang, and a key grated in the lock. Then it came to me, I must be in a very old church within call of my Hospital, and I was locked in for the night! If only it had been an ordinary church it would not have been so bad, but here I knew the choir would be locked up and nothing but bare stones left, which would make but a poor place to lie for the night, besides the bitter, bitter cold. I was so weary by then, my only thought was to lie down and forget. Then I began to wonder if I should be missed, and would they look for me; and then I shuddered, for how could anyone be looked for in such dense darkness; then idly I wondered if I should die there, with no one near, and whether it would be hard; and then I remembered it was Christmas night, and they would be singing the carols in the wards before closing for the night, and the past year came back to me—all my work; and then I fell on my knees, and prayed as I never prayed before, that if God would spare me I would devote my whole life to work for Him, and if not,—but then my attention was roused, I heard the wind howling round the building in mad fury, and, yes, it was lighted. My gaze wandered round, when just in front of me rose up a huge moving mass; it came very gradually nearer, and nearer yet; the moments seemed like hours as, fascinated, I gazed upon this thing without a shape—too weak and too terrified to move. I knelt as if petrified, and as the awful thing came rushing right on me, knew no more.

By and by—it might have been minutes or hours—I became conscious of a presence near

me, and a voice softly calling me: "Come"; then more softly, "Come." Standing far back in the distance was a figure I thought I knew. It was too far off to be certain, but I made a furious effort to free myself from some overwhelming weight, which was crushing me down, but of no avail; I could not stir.

Again the voice, pleading in the most heart-broken way, "Come! for the love of the dear Saviour born this day, come!" This time the figure moved nearer, and I saw it was my darling, my friend—my only real girl friend—my bright beautiful Lilian; but, oh! how altered! Her lovely face was pinched and worn, her bonny bright hair streaked with grey, and she only nineteen! What had come over her?

Again I made a desperate effort to free myself, this time with more success. She beckoned me—quicker! quicker!—but in a suppressed way, so different from her usual light-hearted, buoyant way, that a great awe fell on me; and from sheer surprise I stopped my struggling to be free, and simply gazed at her in silence. A look of anguish passed over her face, and she turned as if to leave me; but that broke the spell that bound me, and making one last endeavour I rushed after her into the darkness.

Down the long church we walked, passing through a door, which seemed to open of itself to let us through. Lilian never spoke again. She moved on swiftly and noiselessly—first down the broad streets, then across the river, and gradually into more and more squalid parts. Once or twice I made an effort to gain her attention.

"Tell me where are you taking me!"

I began to be anxious. I was cold, and so intensely tired; but still we went on in a most dreary way, until just as my courage and endurance were coming to an end we stopped in a filthy court, at the most dreary-looking house. The door stood open, and sounds of revelry were wafted out into the street. My guide turned in here, and we mounted a most wretched flight of broken, steep steps, covered with the dirt of ages; morsels of everything that had been taken up or down for years seem to have been dropped to add to the general filthiness of their appearance. Up and up! At last we stopped at a door which stood ajar almost in the roof.

A tiny light was burning, and fearfully I pushed the door a little that I might see without being seen.

I gave a great start and turned to my guide, but she was gone. Was it possible? There on a pallet bed, propped into a sitting position by a broken chair, was a woman. I rubbed my eyes, but it was surely my guide of a few moments

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