

SO MANY CALLS;

OR,

A MOST USEFUL STORY

FOR THE HOLDERS OF

Missionary Boxes and Collecting Cards.

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"Work while it is Day."

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LONDON:

J. GROOM, 66, PATERNOSTER ROW;  
AND 185, BROAD STREET, BIRMINGHAM:

AND SOLD BY ALL BOOKSELLERS.



## SO MANY CALLS.

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It was a brisk, clear evening in the latter part of December, when Mr. A—— returned from his counting-house to the comforts of a bright coal fire, and warm arm-chair, in his parlour at home. He changed his heavy boots for slippers, drew around him the folds of his evening gown, and then, lounging back in the chair, looked up to the ceiling and about with an air of satisfaction. Still there was a cloud on his brow: what could be the matter with Mr. A——? To tell the truth, he had that afternoon, in his counting-room, received the agent of one of the principal religious charities of the day, and had been warmly urged to double his last year's subscription; and the urging had

been pressed by statements and arguments to which he did not know well how to reply. "People think," soliloquized he to himself, "that I am made of money, I believe. This is the fourth object this year for which I have been requested to double my subscription; and this year has been one of heavy family expenses, building and fitting up this house, carpets, curtains—no end to the new things to be bought. I do not see, really, how I am to give a penny more in charity. Then, there are the bills for the boys and girls: they all say they must have twice as much now as before we came to this house:—wonder if I did right in building it?" And Mr. A—— glanced unceasingly up and down the ceiling, and around on the costly furniture, and looked into the fire in silence. He was tired, harassed, and sleepy; his head began to swim, and his eyes closed. He

was asleep. In his sleep he thought he heard a tap at the door ; and there stood a plain, poor-looking man, who, in a voice singularly low and sweet, asked for a few moments' conversation with him. Mr. A—— asked him into the parlour, and drew him a chair near the fire. The stranger looked attentively around, and then turning to Mr. A——, presented him with a paper. “It is your last year's subscription to missions,” said he, “you know all the wants of that cause which can be told you ; I came to see if you had any thing more to add to it.”

This was said in the same low and quiet voice as before ; but for some reason, unaccountable to himself, Mr. A—— was more embarrassed by the plain, poor, unpretending man, than he had been in the presence of any one before. He was for some moments silent before he could reply at



all, and then in a hurried and embarrassed manner he began the same excuses which had appeared so satisfactory to him the afternoon before—the hardness of the times, the difficulty of collecting money, family expenses, &c.

The stranger quietly surveyed the spacious apartment, with its many elegancies and luxuries, and, without any comment, took from the merchant the paper he had given, but immediately presented him with another.

“This is your subscription to the Tract Society: have you anything to add to it? You know how much it has been doing, and how much more it now desires to do, if Christians would only furnish means. Do you not feel called upon to add something to it?”

Mr. A—— was very uneasy under this appeal; but there was something in the still, mild manner of the

stranger that restrained him ; but he answered, that though he regretted it exceedingly, his circumstances were such that he could not this year conveniently add to any of his charities.

The stranger received back the paper without any reply, but immediately presented in its place the subscription to the Bible Society ; and in a few clear and forcible words reminded him of its well-known claims, and again requested him to add something to his donation.

Mr. A—— became impatient.

“ Have I not said,” he replied, “ that I can do nothing more for any charity than I did last year ? There seems to be no end to the calls these days. At first there were only three or four objects presented, and the sums required moderate : now the objects increase every day, and call upon us for money ; and all, after we have given once, want us to double, and

treble, and quadruple our subscriptions. There is no end to the thing. We may as well stop in one place as another."

The stranger took back the paper, rose, and fixing his eye on his companion, said, in a voice that thrilled to his soul,—

"One year ago, to-night, you thought that your daughter was dying; you could not rest for agony: upon whom did you call that night?"

The merchant started, and looked up: there seemed a change to have passed over the whole form of his visitor, whose eye was fixed on him with a calm, intense, penetrating expression that subdued him; he drew back, covered his face, and made no reply.

"Five years ago," said the stranger, "when you lay at the brink of the grave, and thought that if you died then you would leave a family unpro-



vided for, do you remember how you prayed? Who saved you then?"

The stranger paused for an answer, but there was a dead silence. The merchant only bent forward as one entirely overcome, and rested his head on the seat before him.

The stranger drew yet nearer, and said, in a still lower and more impressive tone, "Do you remember, fifteen years since, that time when you felt yourself so lost, so helpless, so hopeless; when you spent day and night in prayer; when you thought you would give the world for one hour's assurance that your sins were forgiven you? Who listened to you then?"

"It was my God and Saviour," said the merchant, with a sudden burst of remorseful feeling: "Oh yes, it was He!"

"And has He ever complained of being called on too often?" inquired

the stranger, in a voice of reproachful sweetness. "Say," added he, "are you willing to begin this night and ask no more of Him, if He from this night will ask no more from you?"

"O never, never, never!" said the merchant, throwing himself at his feet; but, as he spake these words, the figure seemed to vanish, and he awoke with his whole soul stirred within.

"O God and Saviour! what have I been doing!" he exclaimed. "Take all—take every thing! What is all that I have, to what thou hast done for me?"



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## CHRISTIAN DEVOTEDNESS.

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Who doubting asks, What shall I give?  
And what shall I withhold?  
Whose heart can be, when Christ demands,  
So thankless and so cold?

Oh think of all his love to thee!  
Think what thy ransom cost!  
The blood of God's dear Son above,  
Avail'd to save the lost.

Think of the blessings He has bought,  
The debt thou couldst not pay,  
And of the place prepared for thee,  
In realms of endless day.

And wilt thou, then, withhold from Him  
Aught that His grace bestows?  
No! let us give our all to Him,  
Whose love no limit knows.

And what a privilege to feel  
That we are wholly His,  
With all we have, with all we are!  
Oh! this indeed is bliss.

Come let us, then, without reserve,  
Devote ourselves to God;  
He will accept the sacrifice,  
Cleansed in a Saviour's blood.