CAVESSON AND THE CENTIPEDE

PART III.

CAVESSON'S SUCCESS

By GUY BOOTHBY.

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It is just possible that you may remember the attempts made by Inspector Cavesson of the Queensland mounted police to effect the capture of the Centipede, the notorious bushranger, who, for a longer time than Cavesson ever likes to think of now, has kept the pastoral districts, within a radius of 300 miles of the township of Mulga Flat, in a state of continual terror. One of the metropolitan papers, not inaptly, spoke of him as a criminal will-o'-the-wisp, and the term describes him as well, if not much better, than I can possibly hope to do. As a matter of fact, he was here to-day and gone to-morrow! sticking up a station on the eastern side of Mulga Flat one day and plundering a bank 100 miles distant the next. Try how Cavesson would, he could not lay his hands upon him, and when on several occasions he thought he had really got hold of him, the rascal, by some ingenious means of his own devising, managed to slip through his fingers and be off about his evil business once more. Meanwhile, as I have already told you, parliament made nasty remarks, the commissioner of police officially reprimanded him, a special magistrate was sent up to take charge of the district, while several of the papers went so far as to affirm that he was not only in league with the enemy, but that his failures to effect his capture were only the natural results of the bribes he had received. As may be supposed, between one and the other, Cavesson's life was made about as miserable as a man's could well be. At last, as has been already narrated, he had the good fortune to secure the capture of the Centipede's lieutenant. Now the man contrived to escape, assisted by his notorious employer, a perusal of the story, entitled "Cavesson's Blunder," will reveal. It is sufficient for the present that, when the news reached the public ears, the inspector's position became even more unbearable than it had been before. Madly in love with Minnie Walkett as he was, he had to remember her father's own words, which were to the effect that, unless he could come to him and say that he had captured the Centipede, he should not dream of giving him his daughter's hand in marriage. But how on earth was that capture to be effected? He had tried every conceivable plan, but without success. He had schemed and plotted in vain. Not only his own good name depended upon his bringing the outlaw to book, but, puzzle his brains as he would, he could not see how it was to be accomplished.

"I've got £350 standing to my credit at the bank," he said to himself, as he paced up and down his office one hot summer's morning, "and, by Jove, I'd willingly plank it down if I could lay my hand upon the rascal in return. What have I done that fate should saddle me with such a load?"

He went to the window and looked out upon the street. It was by no means a cheerful prospect that he saw there. The heat was terrific, and the road was inches deep in dust. The iron roofs of the houses opposite reflected the glare, and when a scorching blast drove down the street it was like a sand storm in the great Sahara.

"And to think that if I could only capture this fellow I could be out of this forever," he said, glaring at a small dog who was scratching himself against the veranda post outside. Then the sound of wheels attracted his attention, and a moment later the mail coach, a cumbrous, unwieldy affair, covered with dust and drawn by five panting horses, appeared in sight, passed the police office and rolled slowly on down the street toward the principal hotel. Cavesson touched the bell upon his desk.

"The coach has just passed," he said to the sergeant, who appeared in answer to his summons. "Go down to the postoffice and bring me the letters as quickly as possible."

Then, when the man had vanished once more, he sat down at his desk and amused himself spearing his blotting pad with his pen.

"More wiggings from the commissioner, I suppose," he said, gloomily. "More letters from kind friends, inclosing cuttings from the metropolitan papers, each of which will refer to what they call my 'gross neglect of duty, my inability to capture the Centipede,' and will insinuate that I am 'taking bribes to allow him to remain at large.' Oh, it's a beautiful, beautiful world, and if it weren't for Minnie, by Jove! I could almost wish myself out of it."

A quarter of an hour later the sergeant returned with his superior's letters, which he placed upon the table. Cavesson glanced at the various missives, and then selected one, the envelope of which was adrdessed in a lady's handwriting. The contents must have been distinctly pleasing, for he read the letter several times before he placed it in his pocket.

"God bless her," he said, and added a moment later, with equal sincerity, "and confound the Centipede."

After that he turned his attention to the remainder of his correspondence.

Selecting a long, official-looking envelope, bearing the letters O. H. M. S. upon its face, he opened it. If the expression upon his face might be taken as any criterion, it was by no manner of means as pleasant as the last. It ran as follows:

Sir—I am directed by the commissioner of police to inform you that, in consequence of your continual failure to effect the arrest of the notorious criminal known as the Centipede, who for so long a time has been troubling your district, it has been decided to transfer you from your post at Mulga Flat to another station. Inspector Dickson will relieve you on the 13th of this present month, when you are directed to hand over to him the men in your charge, and to report yourself at this office as promptly as possible. I have the honor to be your obedient servant,

—J. Whittaker-Bell,
Secretary of the Commissioner.

Cavesson groaned aloud.

"This is the end of everything," he said to himself. "I'm proven incompetent, and Dickson is sent up to relieve me."

He brought his fist down with such a bang upon the table that the ink pot jumped into the air and came within an ace of overturning. It would have been a bad day for the Centipede if he had stood before the irate officer at that moment. After awhile he picked up the letter and read it again.

"Dickson will be here on the 13th," he said to himself. "If that is so, I have still five days' grace allowed me. Five days in which to win Minnie, five days in which to show them that I am not as incompetent as they suppose me. But there, what can I do in such a short time? If only that brute would give me one clew as to his whereabouts I might accomplish something. But, as it is, I might as well stretch out my hand and try to touch the moon as hope for such a bit of luck. I'm a miserable beggar if ever there was one in this world."

That afternoon he informed Mr. Hablett, the magistrate in charge of the district, that he was to be superseded, and could see that the latter was by no means displeased at the turn affairs had taken. Ever since his own misadventure with the Centipede the other had cherished a dislike to Cavesson; and, though he did not say so, he had the satisfaction of knowing that it was in a great measure due to his communication to headquarters that the inspecor was being recalled.

For the next three days Cavesson galloped about his district like a madman, making inquiries in every possible direction, and sparing neither himself nor his men in his endeavors to bring his enemy to book before the new inspector should arrive. He was no more successful, however, than before, and when on the Wednesday night he retired to rest it was with the feeling that, so far as the Centipede was concerned, his doom was sealed. According to custom he slept with his window open. In Mulga Flat burglars were unknown luxuries, and, indeed, if there had been a stray gentleman of the craft in the district, the bedroom of the inspector of police would scarcely have been the crib he would have been likely to crack. Nevertheless, Cavesson's bedroom was visited that night by a stranger from the outside world, but who that stranger was and how he got in without rousing the inhabitant has never yet been discovered. When the owner of the room went to his dressing table next morning he was surprised to find a grimy letter addressed to himself standing against his looking glass. The writing was quite unknown to him, and the spelling of his name betrayed the fact that, whatever else might be, spelling was evidently not the author's strongest point.

"How the deuce did it get here?" Cavesson asked himself as he picked it up. "It wasn't there, I'll swear, when I went to bed last night, and surely no one would have had the cheek to enter my room while I was asleep."

And yet the fact remained that the letter had reached him, and that it was intended for himself. He accordingly opened it, and scanned the contents with a considerable amount of curiosity. It was short, but, as it transpired, very much to the point.

"If Inspekter Cavesin," it ran, "wants to catch the Sentipeed, he'd better take a friend's advise and be at the 'Jolly Bushmen' grog shanty on the Yarrawatta Crossing, on Thursday night, when the man he wants so bad will be there disgised as a preest. You'd best catch him then, as he's cleering out of the Country, and you won't get another chanst."

Cavesson put the letter down and donned his considering cap.

"Is it genuine, or is it only a hoax to lure me off in another direction in order that he shall work one of his villainies in the neighborhood while I am absent?"

He scarcely knew what to think, or what action to take. The writing was plainly disguised, the paper told him nothing. He finished dressing and sat down to breakfast with the weight of this new complication lying heavily upon his mind. If it were not a hoax, how gladly would he embrace the opportunity it offered him of getting even with his foe; if it were, and he should act upon it, and anything ill should result, then he would vacate his position and take his departure for the south in one last furious storm of ridicule and abuse. It was by no means a pleasant position for a sensitive man to find himself placed in, and Cavesson grew almost dizzy as he thought of it. After breakfast he discussed the matter with his faithful adherent Burke; the magistrate he resolved to leave out of his calculations altogether. And, as the sequel proved, it was just as well that he did so.

"Well, sir," said Burke, when he had heard everything, "if you'll excuse me, it seems to me to be, in a manenr of speaking, like our last chance. The Centipede, as we all know, has got enemies as well as friends in the district, and it's as likely as not that one of them has turned rusty. Why not give it a trial, sir? You can leave me here with three of the men, and you may be quite sure that I will keep my eyes open, if only for your sake. It's a black shame, sir, that you should be recalled because you can't manage to catch the chap. The devil himself couldn't do it, so I'm thinking. Fix yourself up a bit different, sir; like a workingman, so to speak, and go to the grog shanty. If a priest turns up, arrest him. It's just possible you may turn the tables on your enemies after all."

"By Jove! I've a good mind to take your advice and to risk it, Burke," said Cavesson. "Things couldn't be much worse with me than they are at present; while it is just possible that one of the Centipede's enemies may be giving him away after all."

In this fashion it was settled, and for the remainder of the morning Cavesson busied himself preparing for the adventure that lay before him.

Shortly after midday, had there been any one there to see it, a most unusual sight might have been witnessed on the road that led from Mulga Flat across the plains to the crossing on the Yarrawatta river. A gigantic table-topped wagon, such as is used by carriers for conveying goods from civilization out to the far west, might have been observed slowly crawling along the road. It was loaded with bales of wool, but instead of being conducted only by the carrier and his mate, it was accompanied by four stalwart men, who, though dressed after the fashion of ordinary bushmen, in reality comprised the inspector of police and three of his most trustworthy subordinates. Hour after hour the wagon crawled on its way, and at least half a dozen times in every sixty minutes Cavesson, and the hands on the top of the load, called down maledictions on the bullocks for their slow traveling.

Comparatively short though the distance was, night had fallen before they reached their destination and were able to call a halt by one of the large water holes that were all that remained of what in winter was a river of more than a quarter of a mile wide. Once in camp, the work of unyoking commenced, and after this had been satisfactorily accomplished and the animals had been conducted to the water and good grass, it was time to think about carrying out the plot they had arranged. A fire was accordingly lighted and the cooking of the evening meal commenced. In the meantime a space had been cleared among the wool bales, and in this a bed was arranged, upon which one of the troopers, a somewhat cadaverous fellow rejoicing in the name of Brown, was to act the part of an invalid. Then the evening meal was eaten, and after that Cavesson called his men together.

"Now, lads," he began, "I want to say a few words to you. As you are aware, this morning I received some information that may possibly enable us to get hold of the man who has outwitted us for so long. I believe you are as anxious to bring him to book as I myself, and if you play your parts well to-night, as I feel sure you will do, I see no reason why the escape should not take place. In a quarter of an hour the carrier and I will set off for the grog shanty. You, Brown, will go to bed on the load, while the rest of you will take up your stations among the bushes close at hand. When we are ready to capture the prisoner, you will take your signal from me as I direct. If he escapes it will not be our fault."

"You can trust to us, sir," said one of the men; and the others echoed his remark.

Everything having been arranged, Cavesson and the teamster set off for the grog shanty, which was situated something like a quarter of a mile further down the river bank. It was a place that possessed a far from good reputation, and on more occasions than one Cavesson had had the best of reasons for suspecting that the proprietor had given the information to the bushrangers which had enabled them to escape from the trap that he had set for them. On reaching the house the two men entered the bar. The teamster, according to the arrangement previously agreed upon, called for drinks, and the landlord, who was behind the bar, served them. One of the daughters of the house, who was wiping glasses at the further end of the room, looked up as they entered, and Cavesson could have sworn that he detected an anxious look upon her face as she took stock of them.

"If the Centipede is here, I should not be surprised to find that she is the woman who has given him away," he said to himself.

The landlord and the teamster, as Cavesson was well aware, were old friends. For this reason, when the latter stated that he had a dying man out at his camp, the other's suspicions were not aroused.

"Surely you remember him," said the teamster. "Jim Heggarty, him as used to be on the Boulia road before he came south."

"In course I remember him," the landlord replied. "Poor Jim, and he is real bad, is he?"

"Bad? Why, he's as close to death as ever he'll be in this world," the carrier answered. "He's moanin' and groanin' out there as if he'd never know no comfort again, which it's my belief he won't. When he was up and about he never believed in nothink, didn't give a cuss for anything, alive or dead, he used to say. But now he's down it's all the other way. He can't rest noways, because he laughed at religion, he says, and mother church, and suchlike."

Cavesson noticed that the woman behind the bar gave a sudden start on hearing this. Next moment, however, his attention was attracted by the sound of horses' hoofs outside the house. Presently the door at the further end of the bar, which led out into the stockyard, opened, and a Roman Catholic priest entered the room. Although dusty and travel-stained, he was neat and natty, and seemed to be on the best possible terms, not only with himself, but also with the world in general.

"Good evening, landlord," he said, approaching the counter. "I presume you can give me a room to-night?"

"With pleasure, your reverence," the landlord replied. Have you ridden far to-day?"

"Only from Durnford station," the other answered. "You may doubtless have heard that the eldest daughter was married yesterday to young Mr. McPherson of Cootnambrilla. I went out to perform the ceremony."

Cavesson looked at the man and took particular notice of the dark, restless eyes and clear-cut features, also of the small scar on the left side of the mouth. He was the Centipede without a doubt. After a nobbler of brandy and a few more unimportant remarks, the priest ordered his supper to be prepared for him, and then made as if he would leave the room. The teamster, however, in the meantime, had said something in an undertone to the landlord, who, in reply, somewhat unwillingly addressed the clergyman.

"This man, your reverence," he said in an apologetic tone, "asks me to inform you that one of his mates lies dying out in camp yonder, and wants to know if you would have any objection to going out to see him. He says he don't think the poor chap will live till morning."

The priest looked intently at the carrier, and then from him at the landlord. Cavesson could see that he was placed in an awkward position. By all the rules of his cloth it would never have done for him to have declined to go, and yet, remembering who he was, and how necessary it was for him to be close, he had no desire to run the risks of being drawn into a trap.

"Do you know this man?" he inquired of the landlord.

"Know him?" returned the landlord with a laugh. "Lor' bless you, I've known him for years."

"You are quite sure that I can trust myself with him?"

This was a speech, as Cavesson could see, that was possessed of a double meaning.

"I'll pledge my word on it," answered the landlord, who, as may be supposed, had no notion of the teamster's connection with Cavesson and the police.

"Very well, then, I'll go," the other replied. "While I am absent let my supper be prepared, and see that it is ready for me by the time I return. Now, my friend, lead the way, and if the comforts of the church can help to assuage the spiritual sorrows of your unhappy friend, you may rest assured that they shall be given in the most fit and proper manner."

They left the house together, and Cavesson, who had at that moment been lolling up against the counter, prepared to follow them. As he did so the girl behind the bar allowed a glass to fall from her hand.

"What did you do that for, you hussy?" asked her father angrily. "It ain't like you to go chuching the crockery about. Go and get his reverence's supper, and look sharp about it. Do you hear me?"

Ten minutes later the strangely assorted trio reached the rendezvous, where the grey outline of the wagon could be plainly distinguished, thrown into relilef as it was by the leaping flames of the camp fire. If the priest had any suspicions left, this familiar sight must have tended to relieve him of them, for he approached the wagon with all his old confidence.

"Where is the invalid?" he inquired, as he passed the fire.

"Upon the loading," the carrier replied. "How is it with you now, Jim?"

"Bad, bad, mortal bad," the sick man replied in a husky voice. "Are you going to let me die like a dog, without the blessing of the holy church?"

"No, no, my friend," said the supposed priest. "It is fortunate for you that I am here to minister to your requirements."

"If your reverence would be pleased to mount the wagon," said the carrier, "you'd be able to see him for yourself. Here, you, Dick, hand us the steps, and look sharp about it."

Thus abjured, Cavesson produced the ladder, and propped it against the tailboard of the wagon. A moment later the priest had mounted and was on top of the load. Kneeling beside the supposed sick man, he inquired the nature of his ailments. At the same moment a woman's shriek rang out on the still night air, and the innkeeper's daughter was to be seen hastening towards the camp.

"What's that?" cried the priest, leaping to his feet.

"It means that so far as you are concerned the game is up," answered Cavesson coolly, producing a revolver from his pocket. "Put your hands above your head, Centipede, or you're a dead man."

"My dear fellow, there's not the least necessity for that," returned the Centipede, with a gentle little laugh that was more an expression of amusement than of anything else. "So you're really Cavesson, are you? Well, it seems as if you've scored after all, does it not? I did not expect to be caught in this simple fashion, and just as I was leaving the country, too." Then he added, looking round him at the others: "I suppose it would be no use of my attempting to make a fight for it?"

"Not in the least," Cavesson replied. and as he spoke he blew his whistle, and the troopers, who had hitherto lain hidden among the brushwood, rose and approached the wagon.

"Just put the handcuffs on him to make sure, Brown," said Cavesson, and in reply to the order the invalid rose from his couch and produced a pair of manacles, with which he encircled the Centipede's wrists.

"Fancy my having allowed myself to be caught in this ridiculously simple fashion," said the Centipede, as he descended the ladder and stood before the fire. "After this you'll be the hero of the hour, Cavesson!"

"It's about time I had a little success," answered the other grimly. And then, to make assurance doubly sure, he ordered that one of the handcuffs should be made fast to his own left wrist. That done, he dispatched two of his men to requisition horses from the innkeeper, being desirous of returning to the township and setting his prisoner under lock and key with as little delay as possible.

"It is all my own fault," said the Centipede, as they stood together before the fire, awaiting the arrival of the transport service. "If I had not played fast and loose with that girl, who, by the way, has cleared out, I should not be in the predicament I am now. I suppose she gave me away?"

"You don't expect me to commit myself, I hope?" answered Cavesson. "It is sufficient for my purpose that I have got you."

"You're quite right," the Centipede replied, without the least sign of illhumor. "It would not be businesslike to say where one derives one's information."

Half an hour later they were on their way back to the township, and for the first time in many weeks Cavesson was able to look upon himself in the light of a really happy man. Inasmuch as he had effected the capture of the Centipede, nothing could deprive him of the right to say that he had complied with his future father-in-law's stipulation. Moreover, he had vindicated his honor, and shown his detractors that he was far from being the fool they had not only supposed, but declared him to be.

Something under three hours after leaving the crossing, and just as the police station clock was striking 12, they rode into the township. Not a soul was about, and, in consequence, he was able to stow his prisoner carefully away in one of the cells without any one but Burke and his troopers being the wiser that the notorious Centipede was in the town.

It was a happy man who retired to rest that morning.

Next morning he was aroused from sleep by the sergeant who invaded his sleeping apartment with the information that the new inspector had arrived, and that, after calling at the police station, he had gone on to pay his respects to the magistrate.

"The deuce he has!" said Cavesson, twirling his mustache. "He knows nothing about the Centipede, I suppose?"

"No more than any one else, sir," said Burke. "There's not a soul in the township dreams he's here. I've taken good care of that."

"All right," answered Cavesson. "Now I will dress, and when I've done that I'll go along to Hablett's house and drop a shell into their camp."

On reaching the magistrate's house he found the new inspector and his host at breakfast. They were more than a little surprised to see him.

"How do, Dickson?" said Cavesson coolly, after he had saluted his superior. "Had a pleasant journey up from Brisbane?"

"So-so," said Dickson. "It's too hot for traveling. Any news of the Centipede?"

"I fancy we should have heard something about it before this if there had been," put in Hablett vindictively. "When Cavesson catches him I shall expect to hear the church bell going, to let us know there's something important on hand."

Cavesson bit his lip, but managed, with an effort, to keep his timber. Pretending to ignore the question, he asked Dickson when it would be convenient for him to inspect the station and to take over command, according to the tenor of the commissioner's letter.

"I am prepared to start as soon as possible," the latter replied. "The sooner the better."

"Will half an hour's time suit you?" asked Cavesson.

"Admirably," returned the other.

Thereupon Cavesson bade them goodby and left the house. At the time arranged Dickson and the magistrate arrived at the police station. They inspected the charge room, the various offices, the inspector's quarters, and the stables and the harness room, and at last found themselves at the cells.

"What charges have you?" inquired Hablett.

"In No. 1 a case of petty larceny," said Cavesson. "In No. 2 a drunken shearer. No. 3, however, is more interesting."

As he spoke he signed to the sergeant to unlock the door.

"Who is the prisoner?" Dickson inquired.

"The Centipede," Cavesson answered simply, and the surprise and chagrin he saw on the faces of the two men was sufficient recompense for him for all he had suffered at their hands.

Two hours later the notorious criminal, who had kept the district in such a state of terror for so long a time past, was brought before the magistrate and remanded, in order that further evidence against him might be obtained. Three days later he was committed for trial, and was ordered to be taken to Marywonga to stand his trial at the next assizes. Much to Cavesson's delight, a letter from headquarters instructed his successor to attend to the matter of transportation.

"Take my advice, Dickson," Cavesson said, when they discussed the matter, "and have him handcuffed to your wrist night and day. I know the gentleman with whom we have to deal, and if you give him half a chance he'll be off and away, and you'll never set eyes on him again."

"I'll take good care that he doesn't do that," answered Dickson, haughtily. "If he can get away from me he's a cleverer man than I take him for."

"I am only giving you fair warning," said Cavesson, with a shrug of his shoulders.

"Thanks," answered Dickson laconically. "When I want your advice I'll ask you for it."

Next day the party started for Marywonga, and Cavesson, who had no further reason for remaining in Mulga Flat, decided to accompany them for the first 100 miles of their journey. Then he was to branch off to the south, and eventually catch the train for Brisbane. At the last moment the police magistrate, to avoid having to accomplish the journey alone later on, also made up his mind to accompany the party, and when the sun rose next morning they set off, the prisoner riding a quiet horse, and having his right wrist handcuffed to Dickson's left. For several reasons it was far from being a jovial party, and Cavesson was not sorry when the time arrived for him to say farewall to it. Then he bade Dickson and the magistrate goodby, and afterward turned to the Centipede, who was matching him with his usual quiet smile upon his face.

"Goodby, my friend," he said; "we shall not see each other again until we meet in court. You have caused me a great deal of trouble and anxiety, but, clever as you were, I think you must confess I beat you in the end."

"You wouldn't have beaten me then," answered the Centipede, "had it not been for a woman's treachery. However, I bear you no malice. Will you shake hands?"

"Of course I will," said Cavesson, and he did so, while Hablett and Dickson exchanged glances of disapproval.

Then, bidding the party goodby, he rode off down a side track.

Three days later he arrived at Brisbane, called upon the commissioner, obtained a fortnight's leave of absence and was on the mail train on his way south in order to remind Mr. Walkett of the promise he had given him.

"Well, well," said the old gentleman, when they had discussed the matter, "as Minnie loves you, and I told you that I would consider the matter when you had caught the Centipede, there is nothing for it but for me to surrender."

He was as good as his word, and that very day the engagement was announced. Next morning, however, a surprise was in store for them.

"God bless my soul alive!" cried the millionaire, bustling out, newspaper in hand, into the veranda, where the happy couple were seated together; "just listen to this."

So saying, he unfolded the paper, and commenced to read.

" 'As our readers will doubtless remember, the capture of the redoubtable bushranger, Centipede, who for the past fourteen months has been defying law and order in southwestern Queensland, was effected by Police Inspector Cavesson, on the 12th, on the Yarrawatta river. In due course the magistrate at Mulga Flat committed him for trial at the next criminal sessions, to be held in the town of Marywonga, some 200 miles distant. In order to make sure of his due arrival, the prisoner was personally conducted on the journey by Police Inspector Dickson, an officer of high repute, who was therefore answerable for his safe custody and delivery. The magistrate who had committed him, the inspector who effected his capture, and four troopers constituted the remainder of the escort. In due course Inspector Cavesson, who had received orders to report himself at headquarters as soon as possible, said farewell to them and turned south. All went well with the remainder of the party until they were within fifty miles of their destination. When they camped beside a creek and retired to rest in the customary fashion, the prisoner was sleeping between the police magistrate and Inspector Dickson, to whose wrist he was, as usual, securely handcuffed. Judge, therefore, of the surprise of the party when they woke next morning at finding the magistrate and inspector manacled together and the prisoner gone. Both gentlemen, and also the troopers, declare most positively that they did not notice him moving about during the night, and are at a complete loss to understand how he managed to outwit them as he did. As soon as the fact was discovered, a thorough search was made of the neighborhood, but entirely without success. For the time being, the Centipede has vanished as completely as he has so often done before. Needless to say, the result of this curious business is being anxiously awaited in southern Queensland.' "

* * * * *

Three months after the appearance of the above paragraph, Cavesson, who, acting in accordance with his future father-in-law's express wishes, had sent in his resignation to the office of police inspector, in order to become a pastoralist and a husband, was married to Miss Walkett in the cathedral. It was a grand affair, and many important people were present—including myself, of course. When the ceremony was at an end we returned to Mr. Walkett's residence for the reception.

"By the way, Cavesson," said the commissioner of police, buttonholing the bridegroom after the cutting of the cake, "this packet reached me this morning with an anonymous letter, asking me to convey it personally to you on your wedding day, and stating that it was a little present from a well-wisher who was not conversant with your address.

"I wonder what on earth it can be?" said Cavesson, and forthwith broke the seals and unwrapped the paper that enclosed it.

A small cardboard box next came into view, on opening which a magnificent gold watch with an equally costly chain was discovered.

"What a strange thing," he said; "who on earth can it be from?"

"Is there no inscription that will throw light upon it?" inquired his wife.

He turned it over and examined the back.

"Yes, there is," he answered, and read the following:

" 'From the Centipede to Inspector Cavesson, with all good wishes for his future.' "

"THE MOST SUCCESSFUL STORY WE HAVE PUT OUT THIS SEASON"

Is the way the S. S. McClure Company describe the Serial Story,

My Lady of Orange,

By H. C. BAILEY.

which will commence in this paper next week. The scene is Holland and the time is that of the war with spain. William of Nassau, the defender of the liberty of the people of the low countries along the Zuyder Zee, and Alva, the cruel and bloody leader of Spain's forces, are among the characters of this remarkably strong story.

Sabbath-School Lesson.

FOR MARCH 24, 1901

Jesus Crucified and Buried—Luke XXIII. 35-53.

BY JOHN R. WHITNEY.

Copyright, 1901.

Golden Text.—Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures.—I. Cor., xv., 3.

The most important facts of human history are the creation, the redemption and the judgment. At the creation man's relation to his maker began. At the judgment they will be forever and irrevocably settled. How they will be settled will depend upon his relation to the redemption. Redemption is thus the pivot of destiny.

Its visible manifestation began with the incarnation and ended with the crucifixion. The resurrection and the ascension added nothing whatever to its completeness. They only testified, the one that it was wrought out by one capable of meeting all of its demands and acceptable to God; and the other, that its benefits were forever secured to the penitent and believing sinner. The visible plan of redemption, thus extended through about thirty-three years of time, or during the existence of a whole generation of men.

When the incarnation took place—although it was at midnight—yet the place was filled with light, "and the glory of the Lord shone round." Then angels from heaven declared to men upon earth, "Unto you is born this day a Savior, which is Christ the Lord." (Luke ii., 9-11.) When the crucifixion took place—although it was midday—the place was wrapped in gross darkness, and "the earth did quake, and the rocks rent, and the graves were opened." (Matt.) Then, there was no voice from heaven, but those who crucified him cried out with awe, "Truly this man was the Son of God." (Mark.) It is this completion of redemption in the crucifixion which demands our attention now.

When Pilate finally consented that Jesus should be crucified he delivered him into the hands of four soldiers (John xix., 23) who were to be his executioners. They at once led him "into the common hall" (Matt xxvii., 27), "the hall called Pretorium (Mark xv., 16), and gathered around him the whole band with which they were connected. Knowing that he had been condemned on the charge of claiming to be "the King of the Jews," it afforded them supreme delight, as Roman soldiers, to crown him with thorns, to clothe him with purple, to seat him on an imaginary throne with a reed for a scepter, and then to mock and jeer at all such pretensions.

When satisfied with their sport they prepared to lead him out to the place of execution. "There were also two others, malefactors, led with him to be put to death." (Luke xxiii., 32.)

When they reached the place of execution, before proceeding to their task the soldiers offered to the condemned, as was customary, a drink of wine medicated with some powerful opiate. It is called, in Mark, "Wine mingled with myrrh," and in Matthew, "Vinegar mingled with gall." It was provided by merciful and wealthy women, at their own expense, and given not as a token of sympathy, but as an act of humanity, to allay in some measure sensibility to suffering. Of this the two thieves drank, but Jesus would not. All of the sensibilities of his flesh were to be unblunted and all of his faculties unclouded.

When this had been done, the beams of each cross were securely nailed together. Then the three victims were nearly stripped, laid each upon his own as it lay upon the ground, and made fast. Usually this was done by nails driven through the hands and feet, but sometimes by a lashing of cords. In this case, nails were used. Each cross was then "lifted up" with its quivering burden and let fall into a hole prepared for it in the ground. There it was firmly secured, at such a depth as to leave its victim within easy reach of every passer by. A lingering, painful death by starvation, or exhaustion, usually followed.

In this case, however, "because it was the preparation—that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the Sabbath day (for that Sabbath day was a high day)—the Jews, therefore, besought Pilate that their legs might be broken and that they might be taken away." (John, xix., 31.) This was a common way of hastening death, and Pilate granted the request. So before night the soldiers appointed to this duty proceeded to fulfill it, but when they came to Jesus—finding "that he was dead already—they brake not his legs, but one of the soldiers, with a spear, pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water." Thus unwittingly they literally fulfilled the Scriptures, "A bone of him shall not be broken" (Ex., xii., 46; Psa., xxxiv., 20), and "They shall look on him whom they pierced." (Zech., xii., 10; John, xix., 35-37.)

When Jesus was "lifted up" upon the cross it was "the third hour" (Mark, xv., 25), or, as we would say, 9 o'clock in the morning. At that hour the priests in the temple were engaged in offering up the daily morning sacrifice. When he said, "Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit," and gave up the ghost" (Luke, xxiii., 46), it was "about the ninth hour" (Matt., xxvii., 46), or 3 o'clock in our afternoon—the hour when the daily evening sacrifice was offered.

During these six hours he spoke seven times in the hearing of the people. Soon after he was "lifted up," and whilst the chief priests and scribes and elders, with "they that passed by railed on him" (Mark) they heard his voice in prayer. But it was not for himself. It was for them. "Father," he prayed, "forgive them, for they know not what they do." (Luke xxiii., 34.)

Soon after his eye fell upon a little group of his dearest friends "standing by." (John xix., 25, 27.) In this group were his mother and his beloved disciple John. They would soon be left disconsolate and alone. Turning first to his mother, he said, "Woman, behold thy son"; and then to his disciple, "Behold, thy mother."

This prayer for his enemies and this affectionate care for his friends, evidently made a great impression upon one of the "malefactors" at his side, and no wonder, for such words had never before been heard from any cross. He probably knew simply that his companion in suffering had been condemned on the charge of being a king. But such words, uttered in such tones as he had heard, were not the words of an earthly king. He was sure of that. So, whilst his fellow "malefactor," thinking only of his pain, and not of his sins, in anger "railed" on Jesus, he, wuth a true repentance and confession of his sins, and with a feeble and ignorant, but sincere faith in the power of the great king at his side, turned to Jesus and said, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom."

"Verily I say unto thee," was the immediate answer to his prayer, "to-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." (Luke xxiii., 39-44.)

It was now near noon. For about three hours, the agony of the cross had been endured. But "when the sixth hour was come" a great change came over the scene. Then all of the reviling ceased, and a mysterious awe rested upon all of the people. For then "there was darkness over the whole land" (Mark), and men went groping about the city as if it were midnight. It continued for three hours. And not only was the light of the sun hidden from the earth, but the conscious sense of God's presence was withdrawn from his son. For, as the sinner's substitute, he must bear the full penalty of sin and enter even into the experience of those to whom death is all darkness and God is afar off. For nearly three hours this terrible darkness of soul continued. But at about the ninth hour, Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabacthani? that is to say, My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matt. xxvii., 46.) It was the bitter cry of a soul before God loaded with guilt.

Not many minutes, probably, after the utterance of this agonizing cry, Jesus' voice was again heard. But it was not as addressed to God in prayer, nor to men, in loving care or gracious acceptance, or even as a cry of despair because of desertion, but it was the expression of his own unutterable longing. "Knowing that all things were now accomplished," he said, "I thirst." (John xix., 28-29.) Surely it was not merely of physical thirst that he spoke, for that was quickly and in a measure relieved by a little vinegar. It was, it is said, "that the Scripture might be fulfilled." He thirsted for souls, that the words of the prophet might be realized: "He shall see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied." (Isaiah liii., 11.)

Having thus expressed this deep longing of his heart, Jesus again spoke, but it was only to declare that his work was completed. "It is finished," he said. (John xix., 30.) The types had all been met, the prophecies had been fulfilled, the law satisfied, redemption's work was done. Jesus so declared it with his dying breath. No righteousness of man can make it more complete, no sin of man can put him beyond its reach.

Then, "again with a loud voice" (Matt. xxvii., 50), a voice unimpaired by the six hours of agony, and with none of the feebleness of imminent death, but in full strength, and perfect peace, "he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit; and, having said this he gave up the ghost." (Luke xxiii., 46.)

The "malefactors" at his side lingered on in agony until their legs were broken, but not he. When the evening sacrifice was laid upon the altar in the temple, he lay down his life as a sacrifice on the cross. No man took it from him, but he laid it down of himself. (John x., 18.) Then, in the temple, the veil between the holy place and the Most Holy "was rent from the top to the bottom" (Matt.), so that men could do that which had never been done before—pass freely from one to the other. Then, on the cross, a "living way" was opened for every penitent and believing sinner of every age, time and condition, to "enter into the holiest, by the blood of Jesus." (Hebrews x., 19, 20.)

So Jesus died. When Pilate was assured that he was actually dead, he gave permission to Joseph of Arimathea to take his body down from the cross. Then, with the loving care of himself and Nicodemus, it was prepared for its burial. It was laid in "a new sepulchre wherein was never man laid." (John xix., 41.) The mouth of the sepulchre was closed by "a great stone" (Matt.), and the stone was sealed with the seal of Rome. (Matt.) There was no doubt whatever, in the mind of friend or foe, that Jesus of Nazareth had both died and been buried.

And now, in view of all this, it may be asked, as it often has been asked, What was it that gave such importance to the crucifixion? Was it the intensity of shame, sorrow and suffering that Jesus there endured? Reverently, I venture to answer, No. In these things, those at his side suffered, according to their nature, quite as much as he, but it was no offset to their own sins, or to those of any one else. In fact, suffering never atones for sin, although it is a common thing to think that it does, and we often hear, when one has passed away, after a long and painful illness, that the suffering endured in the dying had surely compensated for all the sins committed in the living, and had secured an eternal rest in peace. Suffering is the result of sin, but it is never an atonement for it. And the constant disposition among all people has been, as they become enlightenment, to remove the element of suffering as much as possible in the enforcement of the law, especially in connection with the death penalty.

For the extreme penalty of the law, whether it be human or divine law, is death, and not suffering. If Jesus, therefore, had died in Bethany, in the midst of friends, and surrounded by every comfort, he would in truth have paid the full penalty of the law. But when he became man's substitute, it was "that he, by the grace of God, should taste death for every man" (Heb. ii, 9), and "every man" does not die amid friends and with soothing attentions. To satisfy "the grace of God, therefore, as well as meet the demands of the law, He must die a death with all the accompaniments of such suffering, shame and sorrow as might come to any man in any age or condition; that no man in all the world, however guilty and degraded, however tortured and reviled, might be able to say he did not die for me.

Thus, by his death, "the Son of Man," "The Last Adam," as the sinner's substitute, paid the full penalty of the broken law of God, as by his life he had met all of its demands for righteousness. His death thus completed his work of redemption.

Bryn Mawr, Pa.

A little girl who had been tearing her doll to pieces during the week attended Sunday school on the following Sabbath and was asked what Adam was made of. "Dust," she replied. "And what was Eve made of?" "Sawdust," promptly answered the little miss.

A CRY FOR HELP.

Result of a Prompt Reply.—Two Letters from Mrs. Watson, Published by Special Permission.—For Women's Eyes Only.

March 15, 1899.

To MRS. PINKHAM, LYNN, MASS.:

"DEAR MADAM:—I am suffering from inflammation of the ovaries and womb, and have been for eighteen months. I have a continual pain and soreness in my back and side. I am only free from pain when lying down, or sitting in an easy chair. When I stand I suffer with severe pain in my side and back. I believe my troubles were caused by over work and lifting some years ago.

"Life is a drag to me, and I sometimes feel like giving up ever being a well woman; have become careless and unconcerned about everything. I am in bed now. I have had several doctors, but they did me but little good.

"Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound has been recommended to me by a friend, and I have made up my mind to give it a fair trial.

"I write this letter with the hope of hearing from you in regard to my case."—MRS. S. J. WATSON, Hampton, Va.

November 27, 1899.

"DEAR MRS. PINKHAM:—I feel it my duty to acknowledge to you the benefit that your advice and Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound have done for me.

"I had been suffering with female troubles for some time, could walk but a short distance, had terrible bearing down pains in lower part of my bowels, backache, and pain in ovary. I used your medicine for four months and was so much better that I could walk three times the distance that I could before.

"I am to-day in better health than I have been for more than two years, and I know it is all due to Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound.

"I recommend your advice and medicine to all women who suffer."—MRS. S. J. WATSON, Hampton, Va.

This is positive proof that Mrs. Pinkham is more competent to advise sick women than any other person. Write her. It costs you nothing.

$5000 REWARD.—We have deposited with the National City Bank of Lynn, $5000, which will be paid to any person who can find that the above testimonial letters are not genuine, or were published before obtaining the writer's special permission. LYDIA E. PINKHAM MEDICINE CO.

Good Minnesota Patent Flour, $1.75 per 98-lb. Sack. First Patent best quality Minnesota Flour, $1.85 per 98-lb. sack. Good Canned Corn, 7c per can; good Canned Tomatoes, 8c per can; 10 lbs. Fine Old Rio Coffee, 97c. or 5 lbs. for 50c. A good old crop roasted Rio, 10 lbs., $1.15, or 5 lbs. for 60c. A good Old Crop Santos Coffee, roasted, 10 lbs. for $1.15, or 5 lbs. for 60c. A fine old crop Golden Rio, roasted, 15c lb., or 7 lbs. for $1.00. A fine Java and Mocha flavor blended Coffee, 19c lb., or 6 lbs. for $1.00. The best Java and Mocha flavor, roasted coffee, the 40c grade, 25c lb., or 4 lbs. for 97c. CARPETS—Over fifteen carloads of carpets at half the price your dealer pays for them. Carpets for 10 cents that others ask 25 or 30 cents for. Carpets for 25 cents per yard that others ask from 50 to 60 cents for. FINE OLD RIO COFFEE, 10 lbs. for 97c. Include some in your next order. Send for Drug Catalogue and save money. We are offering FINE TOP BUGGIES, PHAETONS, FINE SURREYS, ROAD CARTS, ROAD WAGONS, etc., at 40 per cent less than they retail for. Our Special Vehicle and Harness Catalogue contains the latest and best goods for 1900. Send your name at once and we will send it free. Note our prices on flour. We are selling best Minnesota flour at $1.85 sack. Order all you will need for several months. T. M. ROBERTS SUPPLY HOUSE, 717-19-21 Nicollet Avenue, MINNEAPOLIS, MINN.

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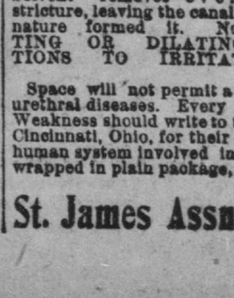
Why the Frightful Tension of Stricture Is Dissolved Like Snow Beneath the Sun—IN FIFTEEN DAYS.

Why Weak Men Are Restored by the Magic St. James Treatment Applied Locally and Directly to the Affected Parts.



We answer the questions briefly. If you cut an artery in your arm you do not take internal medicine to stop the flow of blood. YOU USE LOCAL APPLICATIONS. Similarly when the urethral ducts become weakened and relaxed it is ridiculous to take internal treatment, which must pass through the stomach and urine before it reaches the seat of disease. The seminal ducts project into the urethral canal through the Prostate Gland, and are easily reached by LOCAL TREATMENT.

Dr. Carter's "Gran-Solvent" soluble Bougies will dissolve, digest and forever remove

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In 15 days, without pain, injury or inconvenience. The bougies are inserted at night and act while you sleep. "Gran-Solvent" removes every symtom of stricture, leaving the canal as healthy as when nature formed it. No BRUTAL CUTTING OR DILATING. NO INJECTIONS TO IRRITATE THE MEMBRANE. NO INTERNAL DRUGGING TO RUIN THE STOMACH. The St. James treatment is local, direct and positive.

The St. James treatment is prepared in the form of crayons, very narrow, smooth, flexible and wholly soluble, which are inserted into the water passage at night, where they dissolve and deposit the medication in its full strength upon the Prostate Gland, contracting and strengthening the ducts and FOREVER STOPPING DRAINS AND EMISSIONS, and curing while the patient sleeps.

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Varicocele is an accumulation of sluggish blood in the veins of the scrotum, due solely to imperfect circulation, and has its origin in a diseased and torpid Prostate Gland. Operations in this disease are only temporary, and no mechanical device yet discovered has cured a single case. Gran-Solvent heals the Prostate and restores healthy circulation. Varicocele disappears and the sluggish accumulation is replaced by pure, healthy red blood.

Thousands of men strictured, weak, wasting and despondent were cured and restored by the St. James method last year. A vast army of men in whom the light of life has penetrated the frightful nightmare of stricture and seminal decay.

Space will not permit a complete description of the incomparable St. James Treatment in urethral diseases. Every sufferer from Stricture and its offspring, Prostatitis and Seminal Weakness should write to the St. James Association, 88 St. James Building, Cincinnati, Ohio, for their wonderful illustrated work showing the parts of the human system involved in urethral ailments, which they will send securely wrapped in plain package, prepaid .... **FREE**

St. James Assn., 88 St. James Block, Cincinnati, Ohio.