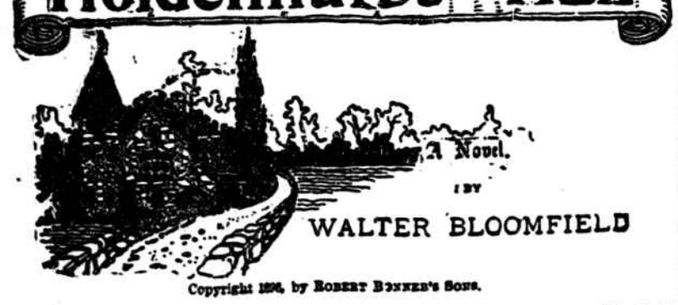
Holdenhurst Hall



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CHAPTER I.

THE BROTHERS.

"Well, if I had determined to go to perdition I would not elect to travel via the workhouse."

I had been closely observing my uncle for more than two hours, and diligently noting his words and gestures, when his utterance of this remarkable sentence confirmed the dislike of him which I had conceived at our first meeting. With only a brief and narrow experience of men and manners, the words impressed me as harsh, not to say brutal, for a rich man to address to an only brother whom he had not seen for twenty years, and who was comparatively poor.

"I have made no such determination," said my father. "As for the workhouse, my income is still some 700 pounds a year more than nothing, and I don't anticipate becoming a burden to anybody, not even"—turning his face toward me and smiling—"my own son."

"Seven hundred pounds!" exclaimed my uncle Sam, contemptuously, "seven hundred pounds! And what will that pitiful sum do toward maintaining a gentleman for twelve months? Why, there are four of the men in my pay who each earn $1500 more than your entire income! But how's this? Holdenhurst used not to be such a beggarly property, or my memory is worse than I thought it was."

While my father is occupied with the melancholy recital of the causes, natural and political, of the enormous depreciation of agricultural values in England—which in ten years had reduced his income by rather more than half—I will furnish the reader with a brief history of the men thus engaged.

When little more than ten years old my father, Robert Truman, had succeeded to an estate of 2000 acres, consisting of two entire parishes, Holdenhurst Major and Holdenhurst Minor, situate a few miles from Bury St. Edmund's, in Suffolk. On his coming of age Robert Truman found himself the possessor of a rent roll of £1500, a lump sum of about £12,000, which had accumulated during his minority, and a large nondescript manor house of which no archaeologist could determine the date or order, it had been so much altered and added to at various periods. The estate, which had formed part of the immense possessions of the rich abbots of Bury, was, upon the dissolution of the abbey there, settled by Henry VIII. in perpetuity upon the first member of my family of whom there exists any record.

With but one relation in the world—his brother Samuel, two years his junior—undoubtedly my father entered upon the business of life under conditions more prosperous than attend the vast majority of mankind. But that balance which men adjust where fortune has shown more favor to one than to another, themselves making the tale of human happiness and misery nearly the same in all cases, was soon made apparent by the two brothers. The affections of these young men centred upon one girl. Samuel was the favored lover. But women had few rights and many wrongs in agricultural East Anglia in 18——, and so the beauty of Holdenhurst became the wife of Robert Truman; her father, a small farmer ambitious of forming a family connection with the "Squire," having so commanded her.

Before the marriage my uncle Sam left England for America with the expressed intention of never again visiting his native land. In less than a year my father had lost by death the wife he had thus acquired; a loss which, though it deeply affected him, was patiently borne for the sake of the infant boy who was at once the cause of his sorrow and his hope.

In American Samuel Truman had entered in commercial speculations and flourished exceedingly. On the death of my mother he had written to my father a few lines expressing his sympathy—his first communication with his brother after his departure from England. After that his letters had been brief and infrequent, but reports reached Holdenhurst from time to time of his extraordinary success in trading, of his ever-increasing wealth and influence, of his shrewdness, his penetration, his singleness of purpose. Through all the days of my boyhood I remember no variation in the accounts of the steady and continued decline in value of my father's property, and of the rapid increase of my uncle's wealth. Neither of these circumstances, however, interested me until, in my nineteenth year—the week before this history opens—my father received a letter from his brother in New York stating that he had been married for three years to an American lady, and that he and his wife intended to visit Holdenhurst, and might be expected to arrive in about ten days.

It was almost immediately after the arrival of my uncle at Holdenhurst, thus intimated, that the conversation with which this chapter opens took place. Uncle Sam did not, however, bring his wife with him as he had intended, but left that lady in London in a furnished house which he had hired at Kensington, she being prostrated by the voyage from America.

"Well," said uncle Sam, when my father had finished speaking, "I guess your oration would be worth a cool million to the Republican party. You must visit the States and tell the Americans from a hundred platforms all you have just told me. You must come at the opening of the Presidential campaign."

My father shook his head. "I am no traveler," he said, "or I should have ventured beyond Europe nineteen years ago," again turning toward me and assuming the kindly expression which was never absent from his features when he regarded his son. "The affairs of my own country engage very little of my attention, and as for the United——"

"Well, well," interrupted uncle Sam, "we won't discuss that matter further at present. What is the sum total of the two mortgages you have on this place?"

"Three thousand five hundred pounds."

"Let me have the papers," said uncle Sam, stretching his hand out as though he expected that his brother had them ready in his pocket, "and I will wipe them both out to-morrow."

"You are very kind," answered my father, somewhat embarrassed. "Ernest, go to my black cabinet and fetch an oblong packet. You will find it in the top drawer, tied with red tape."

With a greatly improved opinion of my uncle I hastened upon my errand, and in a minute or so my father was handing his brother the papers for which he had asked.

"It's a smart lad," remarked my uncle, fixing his steel gray eyes upon me so penetratively that I felt rather uncomfortable; "what are you going to do with him?"

"Do with him?" echoed my father; "I don't understand."

"Well, do you propose that he should spend his life in this place watching the crops fail, or selling them for less than the cost of production when they succeed; or is he to be a man whose presence is felt in the world?"

"I have not yet seriously considered Ernest's future," answered my father gravely.

"Then let me help you do so another time," said uncle Sam. "I'll return to town by the first train in the morning, and having paid off these mortgages will be back again some time in the evening, bringing Mrs. Truman with me, if she is well enough to come. By-the-by, I suppose this packet contains all the documents necessary in closing the mortgages. Do Saul and Isaacs hold any of the old deeds?"

"All the necessary papers are there," said my father. "The money was advanced simply on my note of hand. The old grants of the abbey lands in Latin and Norman French are still in the two old oak chests where they have always been."

"I would like to see them," said my uncle; "they must be very interesting."

"You shall. Ernest shall get them out for you to look at by the time you return."

CHAPTER II.

THE OAK CHESTS.

Accustomed from my infancy to wander unrestrained through the gloomy rooms and corridors of Holdenhurst Hall, I had flattered myself that I was familiar with every nook and corner of the old mansion.

But my mind was considerably exercised in the endeavor to determine the whereabouts of the two oak chests to which my father had referred in his conversation with uncle Sam. I did not remember having ever seen any such chests, and could think of no place from garret to basement which I considered likely to contain them.

These thoughts—much confused with idle speculation concerning my uncle whose acquaintance I had just made, of my aunt whom I had not yet seen, and of various ideas started by the conversation of the two brothers—kept me awake until long after I had retired to bed.

I tossed about restlessly and punched my pillows, but could not sleep. When I lay on my left side, all that my uncle said recurred to me vividly, and I hated him for his cool cynicism and the sense of power which had now and again been apparent through the calmness of his manner, but, turning upon my right, his generous gift impressed me as really magnificent, and I could not but feel grateful to him for relieving my father of what I knew had occasioned him some anxiety. My uncle's wish, too, for a voice in determining my future course in life interested me greatly and opened interminable trains of thought. At last I lost consciousness, but did not sleep soundly nor for long.

When I rose it wanted some minutes to 6 o'clock. A brilliant streak of sunshine lay across the dark oak floor of my room, and through the casement could be discerned a clear blue sky such as is seldom seen in England in the month of March.

Brimful of health and animal spirits, notwithstanding the little sleep I had had, I sprung from my bed, and, having hurriedly dressed, sought my father.

Somehow, in an ill-defined way, I was conscious of the opening of a new era in my life. Whether it was what had transpired between my father and uncle on the previous night, or the joyousness of the opening day, which was of a sort that seemed to confirm the death of winter and herald approaching summer, or both, I know not, but it seemed to me that I had bidden adieu to boyhood and had become a man.

My father had risen a full hour before me, and was pacing the outer path of our old garden, with his hands clasped behind him—his usual contemplative attitude.

"Why," said he, after I had acquainted him with my difficulty, "'tis only yesterday that I noticed you sitting upon one of the chests, reading. They stand in the library, one beneath each window, where they have stood for the last 300 years or more. It was your grandmother, I think, who worked cushions and valances for them, and so converted them into strange looking but comfortable settees."

Alas, I was ashamed to think how many of my boyish hours I had spent lying upon one or other of these chests aimlessly reading romances and poetry when I had been supposed to be studying more useful but less congenial matter!

As soon as we had breakfasted my father began to search for the keys of the chests, for he had but a vague idea as to where they might be found. While he was employed rummaging old bureaus and cabinets, I removed the coverings from the chests, marveling greatly that they should have so long escaped my notice. To do this, and to clear the table ready to receive the documents, did not [illegible] me many minutes, and I was in [illegible]lent to obtain the keys.

But the keys could not be f[illegible]d. I assisted my father in the search for them, and together we turned over as many knick-knacks—quaint jewelry, miniatures, pocketbooks, tokens, old coins, packets of love letters tied with faded silk and dated early in the last century, metal purses, scent bottles, etc.—as would have stocked a first-class curiosity shop. But that which we sought we could not find.

It was now past noon, and my uncle and aunt were expected to arrive at 4 o'clock. Though we had been searching for several hours we had not yet examined the contents of half the cabinets and closets which abounded in our old manor house, many of which had not been opened within the memory of our oldest servant. My father would have given up the search but for my advice to him to continue it. Wisely or unwisely, my father seldom or never refused to comply with any wish that I expressed, and he saw that I was interested in the odds and ends accumulated by our family.

After another two hours of searching my father found the keys of the chests, tied together and labeled, in the place where he had first looked for them. With a peculiar facial expression, in which it was difficult to determine whether fatigue, annoyance or triumph predominated, he tossed them to me, and remarking that he had had as much of this affair as he cared for in one day, left me to do as I pleased.

Having hurriedly deposited the few things before me in the places where they had been found, I hastened to the library and proceeded to open the nearest chest. The key entered the lock as easily as might be wished, but was turned with difficulty, and made a harsh, grating sound. I had no sooner raised the lid than the air became so charged with minute fungi that I voluntarily stepped back and opened a window.

The chest was quite filled with parchment or vellum documents, some rolled and others flat, and to nearly all of them were attached large pendulous seals. I did not pause to examine them, but transferred them all to the table, and opened the second chest, wherein I discovered nearly as many documents as in the first, all of similar character. But there was also a thick folio volume, filled with close, neat writing, every letter of which appeared to be formed with great care and accuracy. About two-thirds of the book was English and the remainder strange characters, which I had little doubt were Oriental, though I was not scholar enough to determine the language to which they belonged. This book, and a copper box, about eighteen inches by twelve, and five inches deep, were all I found besides the documents. The box, which was locked, was much discolored; but I could discern writing upon the lid such as may be produced by nitrate of silver upon copper. All I could decipher at a hasty glance was "Roger Trueman," written in characters rather larger than the others. Trueman being a very old form of our family name, and the box exceedingly heavy for its size, I at once conceived the hope that it contained something of special value. As I could find no key to the box, I set it aside with the folio volume, resolving to carefully examine both at my leisure.

At this moment a servant entered the room and informed me that my uncle and aunt had arrived. Dinner had been ordered to be served as soon as possible, and there barely remained sufficient time for me to prepare for it.

Quite tired of my day's work, the intelligence was not unwelcome. Taking with me the folio volume and the copper box, I locked the library door and put the key in my pocket, leaving all the old documents on the table within. I then sought my bedroom, where, having safely bestowed the book and box, I made what I then thought was an elaborate toilette such as befitted my introduction to my American kinswoman.

To be continued.

Trapping a Professor by Wire.

Among some intensely amusing college scrapes told by "A Graduate," in the Ladies' Home Journal, is the story of a certain professor, not much liked by his pupils, who was to be married. The lady lived in Cleveland. And the students that loved (?) him were not, of course, invited. But they determined that in some way he should hear from them. And he did. On the day appointed the professor took the train at 10 a. m., due to arrive at Cleveland at 12.30 p. m. About eleven o'clock Jim Townsend rushed to the telegraph office and sent off this dispatch:

"Chief of Police, Cleveland, Ohio. Man coming on train No. 6, tall, well dressed, frock coat, silk hat, side whiskers. Escaped lunatic. Hold! Shrewd, therefore beware! Strange case. Will say name Finalli. Mistake. Thinks he is professor in a college. Delusion. Escort to home of friends at No. — Euclid avenue."

This message reached its destination long before train No. 6 reached Cleveland, so that when Professor Finalli alighted it was to walk straight into the custody of three detectives. They would listen to no words of reason, but escorted him out to the house on Euclid avenue, the home of his intended bride.

The world's record sugar plantation contains 13,000 acres, has thirty miles of railway and employs 1500 people.

POST MORTEM PROOFREADING.

Always Easy to See Errors After They Are Irremediable.

When I was reading proof on the old National Republican, says a writer in the Washington Trade Unionist, I had a post mortem assistant located in New York, but I never knew who he was. He took the paper and read proof carefully on it for several days, forwarding the result to the business office.

After he had sent several papers containing the results of his labors he put in an application for the job, but he didn't get it. His ignorance of local geography and affairs caused him to make some very amusing corrections, but I'm not denying that he found quite a number of legitimate errors, as and one can in any daily newspaper.

Of course, I was prejudiced in the matter, and my judgment was not as cool and impartial as would have been that of an uninterested party, but I thought that was a pretty mean way to try to get a fellow's situation away from him. I have known that method of procedure to be attempted several times, but I have never known it to succeed.

It is always easy to see errors after they are irremediable, but it takes the eye of an eagle, the watchfulness of a ferret and the alertness of a pointer to run them to earth while they are legitimate prey.

I remember the remarks of my old boss, when I was running the inking machine on the lightning hand press, with which he rushed off the edition of 248 copies, during the first year of my apprenticeship.

If he stopped for a few minutes to jolly a visitor or to hunt around his bench for a quid of tobacco that was being worked overtime, my eyes were going over the paper, and generally I had an error to show him. He would unlock the form and correct it, giving me baleful looks in which the malevolence was at least an inch thick. Finally, one day he burst out:

"You dodgasted brat, if you ever find another error in this paper after I have locked it up I'll fire you on the spot!"

That cured me of post mortem proof reading, and I have stayed cured.

WORDS OF WISDOM.

To be light-hearted is often to be simply light-headed.

There are criminals that can be classified, but there are no criminal classes.

Sincerity often consists in frankness in stating opinions which are not worth stating.

Life is a succession of choices. One cannot often have this and that, but this or that.

If we cannot make ourselves happy we can make others happy, and they in turn can create happiness for us.

He that cannot forgive others breaks the bridge over which he himself must pass, for every man has need to be forgiven.

Our duty to God is cheerfully acknowledged, but toward our neighbor we rarely realize we have any special obligation.

It is so easy and pleasant to discover sins lurking in the pursuits for which you are not inclined. Many of us possess wonderful powers of perception in that direction.

A flatterer is said to be a beast that biteth smiling. But it is hard to know them from friends, they are so obsequious and full of protestations, for as a wolf resembles a dog so doth a flatterer a friend.

It has been said that bright thoughts do not occur to ignorant people, neither can they, for there is nothing within to suggest them. The daily, ordinary level determines the height to which we can rise on rare occasions.

When we see leaves drop from their trees in the beginning of autumn, such, we think, is the friendship of the world. While the sap of maintenance lasts, friends swarm in abundance, but in the winter of need they leave us naked. He is a happy man that hath a true friend at his need, but he is more truly happy that hath no need of his friends.

Discipline in the Haitian Army.

The first and last time I saw President Sam he was reviewing the army at one of the periodical Sunday parades. I never saw such a human bird of paradise. The black faces and the most various and gaudy uniforms that the wit of man ever devised made an extraordinary spectacle. In one place a private soldier had fallen out of the ranks, apparently to speak to his sweetheart, who was standing at an open door. An officer ordered him to return. The man refused. Another officer arrived to reinforce the authority of the first officer. The two officers tried to haul the man away. He clung to the doorpost, and a tug-of-war followed, while the laughing women of the house thronged the doorway and encouraged the gallant private. Then the officers took to belaboring the man with sheathed swords. At last he surrendered and went back to the ranks. The incident was "closed," and I was told that nothing more would be heard of it. Meanwhile, Sam sat on a fat white pony under the shade of a tree, unmoved and unembarrassed.—Correspondence of the Manchester Guardian.

Wilhelmina's Wealth.

The Queen of Holland is among the richest of royal personages. Part of her enormous fortune belongs to the crown, while the rest is her private property. The royal estates in Holland and the East (which include the Dutch East Indies) are also of great value. On her marriage with Prince Henry the young Queen set aside twenty millions of marks, the arrangement being that the interest, which is nearly £30,000 a year, will be at his own disposal, while the capital is ultimately to pass to the youngest children of the marriage. If there are no children, Prince Henry is to have absolute power of disposing by will of five millions of marks, while the remainder will eventually revert to the Queen's estate.—Tit-Bits.

Cab Calls.

There are now being constructed in front of New York theatres automatic cab calls, numbers in electric lights being shown. A similar device has been designed to show the names of stations on railroad trains.

THE GREAT DESTROYER

SOME STARTLING FACTS ABOUT THE VICE OF INTEMPERANCE.

Twenty-five Per Cent. of the Inmates of a French Hospital, Observed During Fifteen Years, Inherited Vitiated Constitutions From Alcoholic Parents.

A French physician has announced a startling discovery. As the result of fifteen years' study in hospitals and prisons he publishes his conclusion that twenty-five per cent. of the hospital patients inherited vitiated constitutions from alcoholic parents, and that sixty-five per cent. of the criminals received the germ of their criminal instinct before birth. He also says that no habitual drunkard can have sound children, and that out of several thousand drunkards' children examined not one exception was found. This is an awful indictment and makes the drunkard a double criminal. Note the sweeping statement: No habitual drunkard can have sound children. And in the examination of several thousand drunkards' children not one exception was found. The drinking father who is rearing a family of children and imagines that he is doing harm to himself only should take to heart very seriously this tremendous and awful fact based on universal observation and experience and on the latest discovery of science. The deadly poison which gradually but none the less surely permeates the entire system of the drunkard is, by inheritance, transmitted to his sons and daughters who in turn hand down to the next generation and to the next the diseased brain and body of their drunken father. Who shall say what will be the progeny of the drunkard? If he have brought children into the world he is guilty of a triple crime: He has robbed the world of a good example and of his own life's usefulness, and second, he has deprived his family of that care and protection and helpfulness which even nature teaches him as his duty, and third, he goes into eternity leaving as his legacy to humanity children of a diseased brain and moral nature, and a possible drunkard, with all the evils that accompany such a life, for every child of which he is the father. It is an awful thought and carries with it the responsibility which if fully realized would crush out a human life, the thought of bequeathing to the world young men and women with the germ of a criminal instinct born into them. How shall they rid themselves of this soul-damning inheritance which has come to them without choice? And on whom rests the awful responsibility and on whom shall fall the righteous and crushing judgment for transmitting to an innocent offspring the possibility and the probability of disease and drunkenness and debauchery and crime? And these are the sons to whom clean fathers and mothers are to give their daughters in marriage, and yet liquor men wonder why their business is so strenuously opposed.

We are told sometimes that in the good old days when strong drink flowed freely, when it was kept in the farmer's and in the mechanic's cellar, when in the harvest field it was drunk as freely as water, that in these olden times there was less drunkenness than there is to-day with all the restrictions which legislation has thrown around the traffic. But let such remember that this present generation is but reaping the harvest of that awful and that reckless sowing? Shall there be another generation like it? Does the drunkard realize the hell of agony he is preparing for his innocent, helpless children by indulging his appetite for strong drink? The late Joseph Cook, the great Boston lecturer, in one of his lectures on the evils of alcohol on the brain, said, "The house founded by Daniel Webster has become extinct. He himself was a moderate drinker. His son was a drunkard, and with his grandson the love of drink was an insanity, and he fell before he had passed his thirtieth year. I know a superb preacher, who always kept wine on his table, and justified its use. His son went to an insane asylum. The diseased blood corpuscles were transmitted from father to son." These words of warning from the great Boston preacher and lecturer should strike the souls of moderate-drinking fathers like a thunder clap and awaken their deadened conscience. It is the moderate drinker that furnishes the recruits for the army of drunkards. If every drunkard in the United States were to die to-day, in less than ten years there would be as many drunkards as there are now. Where do they come from? Not from the total abstainer. Where then? From the ranks of the moderate drinker. Of one million moderate drinkers to-day, more than 900,000 will be in drunkard's graves in less than twenty years, and some will go by way of the prison and the scaffold. In the face of these incontrovertible facts, and in the light of universal observation and the sad and sorrowful experience of all who have indulged the appetite for strong drink, what shall we say of the father who continues his course of madness and folly and heedlessly places the wine and the beer bottle on the dining-room table to tempt his children? It is nothing short of mogalomania.—Brethren Evangelist.

How It Works.

A mechanic who had been in the habit of dropping into a beer saloon twice a day, and spending five cents each time for a glass of beer, was captivated one day by a new thought. "I am poor," he said to himself; "my family needs every cent I can earn; it is growing more and more expensive every year; soon I shall want to educate my children. Ten cents a day for beer! Let me see; that is sixty cents a week. That is $31.50 cents a year. And it does me no good; it may do me harm. Let me see"—and here he took a piece of chalk and solved the problem on a board. "I can buy two barrels of flour, 100 pounds of sugar, five pounds of tea and six bushels of potatoes for that sum." Pausing for a moment, as if to allow the grand idea to take full possession of himself, he then exclaimed, "I will never waste another cent." He never has, and he is to-day a prosperous man.—Golden Censer.

A Novel Campaign.

The French Anti-Alcohol Society, in pursuance of its campaign against strong drink, is displaying on walls and other suitable places in Paris small bills, on which are printed short sentences calculated to give pause to bibulous persons, such as the following: "Alcohol nowadays is responsible for more ravages than pestilence, famine or war.—Gladstone." "Alcohol is no more a digestive than an appetizer. In whatever shape it presents itself it is a poison.—Fransisque Sarcey." "Do you know what that man is drinking from the glass which shakes in his trembling hand? He is drinking the tears and the blood and the life of his wife and children.—Lamonnais." "Alcohol gives neither health nor strength nor warmth nor happiness. It does nothing but harm. —Tolstoi."—Alliance News, London, Eng.

Enforcing the Law.

In New Hampshire the prohibition law is being enforced. It had been practically nullified by what is known as the "Healy System," which provided for a system of fines to be placed upon liquor dealers, thus shielding them from anything but a high license. Last fall Judge Peaslee, in his famous decision, made it the duty of the Chief of Police to see that the law was carried out. In case of his failure the County Solicitor is responsible and must see after the Chief of Police. As a result prohibition is now enforced in New Hampshire as never before.

German Army Under Fire.

The German military authorities are endeavoring to stop the excessive drinking of intoxicating liquors in the army. The sale of brandy has been prohibited in all the canteens in Lorain and Hesse-Nassau. In the thirty soldiers' homes and similar institutions for sailors no alcoholic drinks are served.

Work of Alcoholism.

In a recent treatise on alcoholism by Trull, it is stated that in England seventy-five per cent. of all cases of pauperism are due to drink, and in Germany ninety per cent. In Germany drink leads to 1000 cases of suicide a year and supplies the insane asylum with 3000 victims.

THE SABBATH SCHOOL

INTERNATIONAL LESSON COMMENTS FOR JUNE 29.

Review of the Twelve Lessons For the Second Quarter, Acts xv., 5-21.—Golden Text, Luke ii., 32 — Summary For Scholars' Use.

Introduction.—We have seen during the past quarter the great interest the early church took in foreign missionary work; in fact, the whole church might be called a missionary church, organized for the purpose of operating along missionary lines. To carry the gospel to the "regions beyond" seemed to be the great ambition of the apostles and their followers. Only as the missionary spirit is kept alive will the church be saved from stagnation and de[illegible]h.

Lesson 1. Topic: Jesus appearing to Saul. Place: In and near Damascus. Saul persecutes the disciples; receives a commission from the high priest; goes to Damascus to arrest the Christians; when near Damascus is struck down to the earth by supernatural power; hears a voice from heaven; is assisted to Damascus; is blind three days, during which time he fasted; is visited by Ananias; scales fall from his eyes; he receives the Holy Spirit and is baptized; preaches immediately.

II. Topic: Peter working miracles. Places: Lydda, Joppa, Sharon. Peter goes down to Lydda; heals Eneas of the palsy; many turned to the Lord. Dorcas, a woman highly respected, was sick at Joppa; they sent for Peter, but before he arrived Dorcas died; many widows were weeping; Peter put them all forth, kneeled down and prayed, commanded her to arise, and presented her alive.

III. Topic: Christ the Saviour of all men. Places: Joppa. Caesarea. Peter is called to go to Caesarea to the home of Cornelius a Gentile, where a company of friends had gathered; Peter preaches to them; tells them that God is no respecter of persons, but will accept the one who fears Him; preaches Jesus to them; speaks of the death and resurrection of Christ; tells them that whosever believeth in His name shall receive remission of sins; while Peter spake the Spirit fell on all that heard these words.

IV. Topic: Peter's vision. Place: Jerusalem. Peter goes to Jerusalem; is accused of eating with men uncircumcised; he rehearses the circumstances of his going to Caesarea; tells of his vision; a great sheet was let down before him on which were all manner of beasts, creeping things and fowls; he was to kill and eat; he objected; this was done three times, and all were taken up to heaven; three men immediately called for him; the Spirit bade him go with them; he went and God poured out His Spirit on the Gentiles as a result.

V. Topic: The enlargement of the church. Places: Phenice. Cyprus. Antioch. Cyrene. Tarsus. Jerusalem. The persecution that came scattered the disciples and they went as far as Phenice, Cyprus and Antioch, preaching the word; many believed; Barnabas was sent to Antioch; Barnabas needed assistance and went to Tarsus seeking Saul; Saul returned with him and during a whole year they taught much people in Antioch; Agabus predicts a drouth in Judea; Barnabas and Saul sent to Jerusalem with a relief fund.

VI. Topic: Peter's deliverance. Place: Jerusalem. Great persecution in Jerusalem; Herod kills James and arrests Peter; prayer is made for him by the church without ceasing; the night before he is to be brought forth to his death the angel of the Lord delivers him; Peter goes to the house of Mary and tells of his deliverance; he conceals himself.

VII. Topic: Early experiences of the first missionaries. Places: Antioch. Seleucia. Salamis. Paphos. Barnabas and Saul were chosen to go as missionaries; they went to Seleucia and Cyprus; preached the gospel in Salamis; at Paphos the Holy Spirit came upon Saul and he denounced Elymas the false prophet severely; Elymas was struck blind.

VIII. Topic: The preaching of the missionaries and its effects. Places: Antioch in Pisidia. Iconium. The apostles journey to Antioch in Pisidia; Paul preaches in the synagogue; many follow Paul and Barnabas; on the next Sabbath day nearly the whole city come together to hear the apostles; the Jews were filled with envy; the apostles turned to the Gentiles; the Gentiles were glad; persecution against the apostles was great; they came to Iconium.

IX. Topic: Christian fortitude. Places: Lystra. Derbe. Iconium. Antioch. The missionaries compelled to flee for their lives; went to Lystra; Paul healed a cripple; the people thought Paul and Barnabas were gods; Jews stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing him to be dead; he departed with Barnabas to Derbe, after which they returned to Lystra.

X. Topic: The Mosaic law. Places: Antioch. Jerusalem. After returning from their first missionary journey Paul and Barnabas abode in Antioch a long time. There was great contention over the question of circumcision. After much discussion it was decided that the Gentiles need not be circumcised according to the law of Moses. The Gentiles were asked (1) to abstain from meats offered to idols, (2) from blood, (3) from things strangled, (4) from fornication. Formalism is as insistent in the church to-day as ever. Many still insist on meats, drinks, or other matters equally unimportant. O that the leaders of the church might be sufficiently spiritual to resist its encroachments and that the people might have enough humility to follow their admonitions.

XI. Topic: Incidents in Paul's second missionary journey. Places: Asia Minor, Philippi. Paul and Barnabas separate; Paul takes Silas and went north through Asia Minor; they visit Phrygia and come to Troas; are joined by Timothy and Luke; in a vision Paul is told to go to Macedonia; they reach Philippi, and on the Sabbath day go to the place of prayer and speak to the women who are there; Lydia is converted.

XII. Topic: Purity of life. Place: Paul wrote from Corinth. Christians pay their debts except the debt of love which is a perpetual obligation. The one who loves his neighbor as himself will not trespass in any way. "Temperance is moderation" in the use of things lawful and total abstinence from things harmful. In some things "one man's meat may be another man's poison," but he who loves his neighbor as himself will abstain even from his "meat" if he sees that his partaking will lead his neighbor to indulge to his injury. Rom. 14: 21; 1 Cor. 8: 13. The same principle applied will lead every Christian to do all he can to remove temptation from his brother's way.

President's Flag Established.

The President's flag has been arbitrarily established by the Navy Department. Congress has never legislated on it. While the President's flag is a 100-years' old institution, the first regulations prescribing it were issued by Gideon Welles, Secretary of the Navy, April 18, 1867. With the consent of the President the design is now a pure white eagle, its feathers heavily outlined with black, the constellation in white, with the rays in heavy stitching of yellow, on a blue ground. This flag is of bunting, fourteen by ten and a half feet, for outdoor use, and of heavy taffeta silk, gold thread and embroidery for indoor decoration.

1000-Year-Old Gold Mine.

Governor Martini reports to the Italian Government the discovery near Asmara, in Eritrea, of a gold mine which evidently was worked by the natives over a thousand years ago. There are seven long galleries and other workings, together with tools, etc. All of these will be of the greatest interest to antiquarians. As there appears to be plenty of gold left, the Governor proposes to resume the long-suspended work.

Bicycle Manufacturing Industry.

The Census Bureau has issued a report containing statistics regarding the manufacture of bicycles in the United States, which shows that in 1900 there were 312 establishments, with a capital of $29,183,659, as compared with twenty-seven establishments, with a capital of $2,058,072 in 1890. The value of products for 1900 was $31,915,998.

GOD'S MESSAGE TO MAN

PREGNANT THOUGHTS FROM THE WORLD'S GREATEST PROPHETS.

Poem: A Colloquy—Extracting the Sweets—Every Christian in Duty Bound to Be an Optimist of a Discriminating, Sober Type.

Thus spake my head:
I know I am—I know not whence I came;
I know I was—or else I could not be;
I know some Creature did my fashion frame—
Who? What? How?—Ay, there lies the mystery.

I know that I may pass away some day;
But whether there be life beyond the tomb,
I do not know, and therefore cannot say—
I only walk where reason lights the gloom.

So spake my head; I thought me wondrous wise.
I thought me wondrous wise, and thought so till
My poor heart did in rank rebellion rise,
And tenderly subdued my stubborn will.

Thus spake my heart:
I know I am—I know from whence I came;
I know I was—or else I could not be;
I know some being did my fashion frame—
Who? Faith, says God, and there's no mystery.

I know that I must pass away some day;
Death's surely an appointment from above,
And opes the gate that leads the starlit way
To everlasting light and life and love.

So spake my heart; I thought me wondrous wise.
I thought me wondrous wise, and thought so till
My head did free itself from reason's guise,
And eager grasped the faith that calms me still.

—Silas Xavier Floyd, in the New York Independent.

Life is Bitter Sweet.

Life is bitter-sweet. It is neither all bitter nor all sweet. It is a blend of many flavors, an interweaving of many strands. It requires the cultivated taste to detect the fine flavors, it takes the educated eye to discern the lovelier tints. Christianity develops this sense of the beautiful, this instinct for what is admirable and noble. Plato, that high-minded Greek, had of old some inkling of this, as expressed in his famous formula of "the true, the beautiful and the good," but it was left to Christianity clearly and fully to reveal the wisdom and wealth of a life devoted to "whatsoever things are true, honest, just, pure, lovely and of good report."

It is perfectly true that there is the bitter in life, and a great deal of it, too. This bitter element in existence is the streak of sin which has passed into the mass of human nature. Sin is gall and wormwood, wherever it comes. She can never be sweetened. It is a subacid, it is always vinegarish, always an acidulater. Yet it is not well to enlarge too much either in thought or speech on the bitter and tart elements of life, but to dwell more upon the sweetening and sanctifying forces that are at work upon it. The sweets are there if we can only extract them, there is honey in the comb if we can only get hold of the comb, it is the province of the Gospel to tell us how to get the sweets out, that is by putting the sweets in. We obtain from the world largely what we bring to it. If our hearts are full of the ennobling grace of God we find that in a spiritual sense everything we touch turns to gold. A positive spiritual force is needed to replace the bitter elements that now are so plentiful in human speech and society. Says Professor Drummond in his booklet, "The Greatest Thing in the World," "Souls are made sweet not by taking the acid fluids out, but by putting something in—a great love, a new Spirit, the Spirit of Christ." This has been the great work of Christianity in the world, to sweeten souls, and so to sweeten society. Tertullian records that anciently, among the heathen, professors of Christianity were called not "Christians," but "Chrestiani," from "Chresto," a word signifying sweetness and benignity of disposition. Certainly a Christian should always be easily identified as such by his or her kindliness of disposition and lovableness of character—by thorough good nature, in the deeper and most spiritual sense.

There is music latent in the social system that spreads out around us, only in order to bring that music out we must understand the art and practice of spiritual harmonization. George W. Cable tells of a young man who went to a musician and said: "Tell me how to play the sonata of Beethoven in that true spirit." "What do you play now?" asked the musician. "Nothing," was the reply. "My friend," said the master artist, "how shall I tell you how to play Beethoven when it is not your habit to play anything at all? To know how to play Beethoven you must first know how to play." In order to appreciate and to develop the soul of harmony that lies back of the whir and whirl of this rushing modern life, we must first know how to play with a deft mortal touch and a spiritual sympathy which amounts to a genius for impression and expression.

Every Christian is in duty bound to be an optimist of a discrminating, sober type, searching out the lines of life and of light wherever they may be found criss-crossing in the network of earthly existence. Galileo, if we may believe a picture in the Cologne Museum, worked out his astronomical problems by the aid of a single ray of light that was shining into his cell. Bunyan, languishing for twelve years in prison, during which time he was cut off from the active labors of the Gospel ministry, meanwhile sang his song of the Pilgrim's Progress which has since been echoing the world over. If we cannot work for God in the light we can work in the dark, and like Paul in the dungeon at Philippi sing amid the shadows.—The Rev. Charles Dwight, in New York Observer

A Strong and Simple Faith.

Mr. Moody once said: "When I was a boy, in the spring of the year, when the snow had melted away on the New England hills where I lived, I used to take a certain kind of glass and hold it up to the warm rays of the sun. These would strike on it, and I would set the woods on fire.

"Faith is the glass that brings the fire of God out of heaven. It was faith that drew the fire down on Carmel and burned up Elijah's offering. We have the same God to-day and the same faith. Some people seem to think that faith is getting old, and that the Bible is wearing out. But the Lord will revive His work now, and we shall be able to set the world on fire if each believer has a strong and simple faith."

The Drawing Power.

Christ is not only the drawing power to draw souls up into heaven, but if held up in the pulpit will draw men into the church here on earth. The church that is filled because of the preached word will be still filled when others are empty.—The Rev. L. M. Zimmerman, Baltimore, Md.

Competitive System.

The competitive system is against good government, against Christianity, against morality and well-being, against the church of Jesus Christ. The church ought to lead the crusade against it.—The Rev. A. C. Bane, San Francisco, Cal.

Largest Crab on Record.

The gigantic Japanese crab, which the American Museum of Natural History at New York City has just acquired, is the largest specimen of the crab family known. It is a type of the spider crab found in Japanese waters, and measures twelve feet. Its body is as large as a dinner plate.

Chicago's Population Claim.

The City Directory of Chicago for 1902 shows a population of 2,149,000. According to the national census of 1900 the number was only 1,698,575, but Chicagoans believe the census takers missed ten or twenty per cent.