

Holdenhurst Hall



WALTER BLOOMFIELD

CHAPTER XVI.

KEIT UNCLE SAM.

"Truly, the ways of the parent are peculiar! If you wanted your son knocked on the head, were there not enough people in London able and willing to execute your commission, but you must needs send for him to this place? Come, tell me how it all happened."

Thus spake the cheery voice of uncle Sam as he entered our drawing room the next morning after the events narrated in the last chapter. Though still depressed in spirit (now chiefly because of the horrible suspicion which I knew my father entertained), I was fairly well in health, and was dressed to receive our visitor. My father's melancholy was more apparent than mine, and his serious demeanor contrasted strangely with the buoyant gaiety of his brother.

"Ernest had an awkward fall on the stone floor of the crypt late on Monday night or on Tuesday morning, and lay there unconscious for some time before he was discovered. That is all," answered my father, "but he is nearly, if not quite, well now."

"On the floor of the crypt?" echoed uncle Sam, in a tone of surprise. "What was he doing in the crypt at that unearthly hour? No, no; I beg your pardon. Don't tell me, I don't want to know—I remember my own little escapades when I was about his age. Really, the faculty of blushing in a young man will deceive even the old and experienced more effectively than the most skillful lying. So, Ernest, you young dog, you are no better than other people, eh? But enough of this. How are Knight and Faulkner getting on with the renovations? I hope they are pushing the work vigorously. I would like to see the place completed and decent before I return to New York. I gave them carte blanche to do everything necessary to be done, and particularly insisted on despatch."

My father looked intensely grim as he listened to this speech, and some moments elapsed before he spoke. As for myself, it was a considerable time before I could resolve my uncle's words; and desiring not to commit myself, I remained silent.

"Your judgment or motive is not so good as it might be in this case, Sam. My boy has discovered perfectly reliable evidence that a quarter of a million Venetian sequins were concealed by old Roger Trueman in the Abbot's Cell here, and wishing to pleasantly surprise me decided to withhold his information until he had verified it. This is why he visited the place on Monday night, when he found the place and tea chest as indicated by Roger Trueman himself; but with this difference, that all the chests had been opened, and every sequin stolen."

"Stolen!" exclaimed uncle Sam; "how do you know that? And if so, how can you tell whether they were stolen a year or a century ago?"

"Very easily. By merely examining the cell and the chests, and considering the attendant circumstances, anyone endowed with common sense is bound to conclude that the robbery was committed as recently as four or five days ago."

"Positively you astound me. Have you examined your servants and Knight and Faulkner's men?"

My father shrugged his shoulders and smiled grimly. "There would be no use in that," he said grimly.

"I think there would be very great use in it, and that it ought to have been done before. Really, you astound me. Tell me the whole of the circumstances as briefly and clearly as you can. At present, I am not at all satisfied with the matter."

"And I still less so. Ernest, tell your uncle all you know about it," and with these words my father rose from the couch on which we were all three sitting and walked through the open window to the veranda.

With a fluttering heart I began my task, describing the manner in which I had found and appropriated Roger Trueman's Record (which I read to him in full, having provided myself with the volume for that purpose), and with my subsequent proceedings. My uncle listened with deep attention, only occasionally diverting his eyes from me to look at his brother, who was restlessly pacing up and down the veranda. In this way an hour or more passed, and I had completed my story.

"Thank you," said uncle Sam, and pressed his hand upon his forehead, a habit of his when thinking. After a few moments he started to his feet and walked to the window, I following him. "Robert," he cried, "come here; I have something to say to you." My father re-entered the room.

"Your son has read that Record to me and explained how he found it, and what he has done and experienced in respect of it. I am not convinced that the sequins have been recently stolen or that they have been stolen at all, though I perceive nothing improbable in either theory. Things quite as strange happen every day. But I have this to say to you. You have expressed yourself at least twice this morning in a manner I am not disposed to tolerate from any man, even my own brother. You have plainly insinuated, here in the presence of your son, that I pretended not to know the business which called him to the crypt on Monday night, and that because of some motive—I think that was your word—of my own; and further, that I have better reason to be satisfied with this matter than you have. If by the latter you mean that a man who has not lost a quarter of a million sequins has better reason for satisfaction than one who has, I am content the remark should pass. But the first observation of which I complain admits of no

sophistry. The only motive that could animate me in feigning ignorance of your son's business in the crypt would be to conceal that I was concerned in some way in the stealing of those sequins. And besides, I do not like your manner towards me. All my successes have been due to a good memory and the power to read the thoughts and moods of men, and the instincts which have earned me all I have would scarcely fail me in dealing with a man of your mental calibre. No; you must take my hand and assure me of your belief that I have never done you or your son the slightest wrong, and in particular that you are satisfied I know nothing about the treasure you have failed to find further than what you and your son have told me. Do that, and I am still your friend and brother, and will aid you with all the means in my power to solve this mystery. Decline my terms, and I will do my best to forget your existence."

Quite calmly but with terrible distinctness did uncle Sam thus challenge his brother. He had drawn himself up to his full height, and his head was set back a little further than was customary with him, yet one might reasonably have supposed as he stood waiting for a reply that he was engaged in nothing of particular import. Indeed, the expression of his face was not unlike that which he bore when uttering one of his cynical dogmas of which he had such a plentiful store, and he actually smiled as he listened to my father's reply—words which snapped my most cherished hope like a thread and plunged me to the lowest depth of despair I had as yet sunk to.

"Indeed I will do no such thing. Unasked and from my heart I assure you that the good will I have ever borne towards you survives this affair, serious as it is; but I cannot and will not comply with the terms you dictate, come what may. Surely you might have known that anything here was yours for the asking—that I would have given you anything I had, so long as I retained a small competency for my son hereafter."

Uncle Sam remained motionless and silent for a full minute or more after my father had finished speaking; then, drawing a deep breath, he rested his hands on a table, leaned forward, and fixing his gaze upon his brother, addressed him with intense earnestness.

"My curse upon you for an unthinking and cowardly wretch! This is the second great injustice I have suffered at your hands. May that moment be my last when I put myself in a position for you to mete out such treatment for a third time! Twenty years ago, by grace of a miscalculating, self-seeking blind, you married the girl whose love I had won—who had solemnly pledged herself to me. Yes, you married her knowing that I was her choice, and that her father compelled her to become your wife on account of your broad acres. I complained not then to you, but went forth into the world trusting not vainly to Nemesis to avenge the wrong I had sustained. The sweetheart of my boyhood was not your wife for long; and as for your Suffolk acres, what of them now? They will scarce support the slave who plows them. Yes, Nemesis avenged your first injustice to me, and she will avenge your second. I had outlived almost the memory of that great wrong, and returned to you after twenty years, rich and influential, prepared to benefit you and your son in any way I could, and now, forsooth, in a half-hearted, cowardly manner, and without any sort of evidence, you accuse me of having robbed you of a quarter of a million of sequins! In the powers that be, I swear I never saw a sequin in my life, that I am not even sure I am correct in thinking it is a gold coin worth nine shillings and fourpence of British money; but my supposition being correct, can you think I would make myself a thief for five hundred and sixty thousand dollars—I who on many occasions have profited more in one deal, and made eight times as much out of the Wabash plot alone. No, I am not a thief; or if I was, I should not come to Suffolk to practice my profession. It is possible you may live to be convinced of the cruel blunder you have made; but I care not how that may be, for you are already dead to me. Good-bye, Ernest, my boy. I am sorry for you. It is a hard fate to be the son of such a man, but you are not without hope. The son of a wise man is generally a fool, so by natural balance you should be wise, for you are certainly the son of a fool!"

He turned to go, but I clutched his arm and prevented him, crying out despairingly—

"O father, father, what have you done? Unsay your words, and believe with me that uncle Sam has done us much kindness and no wrong."

My passionate plea received no answer. Uncle Sam gently disengaged himself from my grasp and moved towards the door. "If at any time you should need a friend," he said, addressing me, "I hope you will think of your uncle. Stay; I had almost forgotten to give you this," and taking a letter from his pocket he tossed it to me; but I was too dazed to catch it, and it fell on the carpet. Then, waving his hand in token of farewell, he hastily quitted the room and was gone.

I looked at my father. He was sitting on a low seat, his elbows resting on his knees, and his head buried in his hands. I spoke to him—I forgot what it was that I said—but he took no notice of me, when through the open window I saw uncle Sam passing out of our gate. As soon as he was off our premises he stood still and looked intently at Holdenhurst

Hall for a little while, then turned abruptly and walked at a great rate down the road which led towards Bury St. Edmund's.

This spectacle, in itself pathetic, and symbolizing as it did, the collapse of my fervent hope, enraged me. Being weak from loss of blood and other consequences of my recent accident, I think my reason must have succumbed beneath my accumulated load of disappointments and anxieties, for in a sudden burst of artificial strength I rushed at my father, laid my hands upon his shoulders, and forced him into an upright position, while I screamed out—

"It is false! It is false! I will go to my uncle and beg him to pardon you." My father started to his feet, and grasping me by the wrists, held me at arms' length. "I would to Heaven it were false," he exclaimed, "but it is true—too true. Shall I show you the proofs?"

"You cannot," I shouted; "you have no proofs."

Then for the first and last time in his life did my father burst out in anger against me. "Is everybody in conspiracy to madden me?" he asked excitedly. "I tell you, your uncle has stolen those sequins, and that recent so, or complained to anyone, if he had not sought to extort a contrary declaration from me. Do you think I would denounce my own brother on doubtful or slender evidence? If you can think so badly of me, where then shall I turn for sympathy in my trouble? Must I publish what I would fain conceal in order to induce you to believe your own father? Look at that," and he took from his pocket a large thin gold coin and placed it in my hand; "that is one of the sequins you went into the crypt to fetch—one of the two hundred and fifty thousand sequins you ought to have found there. Where the others are I don't know; but what I do know is that your uncle found means to convey them away from here about a week ago. I will tell you the details, if you want to know them, when you come to your senses and remember that I am your father."

I sat down on a couch and burst into an agony of tears. In a moment my father was at my side, holding my hands in his, and earnestly endeavoring to comfort me. Presently I grew calmer and got up—that unnatural and piteous product of adverse circumstances, a youth without hope.

The kindness of my father was such as none but the parent of an only child can understand. In endeavoring to alleviate my distress he appeared to forget his own. "This is a great misfortune," he said, "the greatest which has befallen me since your dear mother died; but we must try to forget it. I care nothing for the loss of the money—I would it had been stolen in the rear or that the Turks had it—but I deplore my brother's conduct, more especially as he has won our good will, and I had hoped and believed that good would come of it."

After a space my father resumed: "When you feel disposed to bear the story I will relate all the circumstances of your uncle's recent—" he paused, as if unable to find the precise word he wanted—"act, or Adams shall, if he recovers sufficiently to do so; he was an eye-witness of the—the act. But I have grave fears the old man will die, and even Dr. Thurlow admits such an event is not improbable; he is an old man, and these troubles are more than he can bear. It pained him keenly to show what he did against my brother, for he was much attached to Sam as a boy, and often inquired of him after he had gone away to America."

"I don't want to know any more about it now, and perhaps I never shall," I replied, as I rose from the couch, picked up my letter, and read it. It was from Constance Marsh and ran as follows:

No. —, De Vere Gardens, Kensington, W., April 22, 18—.

Dear Mr. Trueman—Many thanks for your kind letter. Pray accept my apology for having allowed it to remain unanswered for two days; but news of your having met with an accident followed so closely upon your departure that I have been in doubt whether to write or not, for letters are troublesome things to any one who is ill. I am so glad to learn from your father's telegrams that your accident was only slight, and shall be pleased to see you back in London again—for, of course, you will return with your uncle.

To be continued.

Have a Home of Your Own.

They are a wise young man and woman who start out in their married life in a home of their own in some place where they will have green grass about their house even if it is only a few feet. It makes no difference how humble or modest the house may be. The smallest box of a house with a plot of green is a temple of common-sense compared to the finest "flat" or "boarding-house" in the city. If there is anything appropriate in this life it is that young people shall live somewhere where each day they can see their own unfolding lives reflected in the unfolding works of Nature. There is no beginning, in the home sense, to a young married life so true, so lasting and so satisfactory as that. No life in a city is comparable to that which is lived in a small house with green things growing over and around it, where God's pure sunshine bathes and sweetens every side of the house during the day, and where the surest, life-giving odors that God gives to His children; the odors of soil and growing things; are blown into the house while we sleep.—Edward Bok, in the Ladies' Home Journal.

Falconry Renewed.

Our craze for novelty has caused us to revert to the antique, says M. A. P. of London. Falconry has been taken up by several distinguished ladies. Owing to its cost, it will never become a common amusement. A good and perfectly trained hawk cannot now be obtained under \$500, and a falconer's wages are from \$500 to \$750. The Duchess of Marlborough is interested in falconry; and one of the advantages of this picturesque sport is that it can be followed, in some form or another, all the year around.

NEW IDEAS IN TOILETTES

New York City. — Rough-finished cloths are used for promenade costumes this season, and are very appropriate for cold weather. A smart black

is arranged in an underlying pleat at each side of the closing. These pleats are flatly pressed and present a perfectly plain appearance.

The skirt is sheath fitting from waist to knee. The flounces are narrow in front and graduate in depth toward the back. They are of circular shaping and flare stylishly at the lower edge, where the hems are finished with machine stitching.

To make the waist in the medium size will require one and three-quarter yards of forty-four-inch material, with one-half yard of all-over lace and three-quarter yards of velvet.

To make the skirt in the medium size will require seven yards of forty-four-inch material.

Fluffy and Straight Hair.

To make the hair simply fluffy without curling it, moisten it with a preparation of alcohol or rectified spirits of wine, two ounces; cologne, one ounce; bicarbonate of soda, one-half ounce and rose-water, four ounces.

For the maid whose hair will curl, and she don't want it to, there is a remedy, fortunately. It calls for two ounces of bay rum, one-half ounce of sweet oil and a few drops of essence of violet. Put this on the hair and brush thoroughly.

The Melon Sleeve.

The latest sleeve is shaped exactly like a watermelon, although in certain poses it looks like an egg, since it is pointed at one end. It is made out of a melon-shaped piece of material, which is gathered at the elbow and fastened to an elbow sleeve. At the wrist it is laid in little side pleats and fastened to a deep cuff of lace. The sleeve is called the "Newport."

Becoming to Youthful Wearers.

Effective combinations of black and white are seen in children's garments as well as those intended for grown folks this season, and it must be admitted that they are very becoming to youthful wearers.



LADIES' OUTDOOR COSTUME.

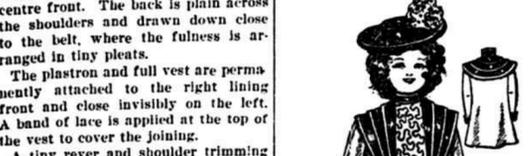
The coat shown here is made of white satin-faced cloth with black satin trimmings. The front shield is braided in black ribbons. It is narrow at the neck, broadens considerably toward the lower edge and is completed with a black collar, both closing at the centre back.

The coat is shaped with shoulder and underarm seams, its well on the shoulders and flares in box effect at the lower edge, falling in soft graceful folds. Triple shoulder capes of black satin are edged with bands of white. They give a becoming breadth to the figure.

The neck is fastened invisibly from the neck to the point of the capes. Below that the closing is made with black satin buttons and buttonholes worked in the edges of the fronts.

The sleeves are regulation coat sleeves, shaped with upper and under portions. They have slight fullness on the shoulders and are finished with flaring cuffs of satin.

To make the coat for a child of two



COAT FOR A CHILD.

years will require three yards of twenty-two-inch material, with one yard of velvet trimming.

A SERMON FOR SUNDAY

AN ELOQUENT DISCOURSE ENTITLED "A NARROW ESCAPE."

Wonderful indeed is the Plan of Salvation For the Sinner, Yet Exceedingly Simple—To Have Christ Save Us We Must Believe in Him.

NEW YORK CITY.—The following readable and helpful sermon is by the Rev. Dr. J. Wilbur Chapman, one of the most popular pulpit orators of New York. It is entitled "A Narrow Escape," and was preached from the text, "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" Hebrews 3.

The wonder of wonders in this world is the plan of salvation for the sinner through Jesus Christ. It is so wonderful that the man with the greatest mind the world has ever known has never yet been able to think his way through it, and at the same time it is so simple that the smallest child in your home can appreciate enough of it to be saved.

The first chapter of Hebrews presents to us the dignity of Christ. He is at the right hand of God; He is better than the angels; when the elements have melted with a fervent heat, He still exists; when the heavens have been rolled together as a scroll, He shall still be the very power of God. With such a description as this in the first chapter we come naturally to the first part of the second chapter. Therefore we ought to give the most earnest heed to the things which we have heard lest at any time they should let us slip.

A Cunard steamer was making her way across the Atlantic Ocean when the passengers were startled with a cry of "man overboard." Immediately every one was with excitement. One man sprang to the edge of the vessel and shouted, "I will give a thousand pounds to any one who will save the man that is sinking, for he is my brother." Every sailor was ready to throw himself into the sea if only he could win the reward and save the man. The captain manned the lifeboat, and soon a cheer went up because they had laid hands upon the sinking one. The lifeboat fastened across the deck, and the signal was given to lift him up. Just as they were reaching out their hands to make his salvation sure the ropes slipped, and falling he struck his head upon the lifeboat, and he was dead.

The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews must have had some such picture as this in his mind when he said, "We ought to give the more earnest heed lest at any time we should let them slip." We know of people coming nearer to the kingdom of God than that, just one step and they would have been saved, but they slipped away, and then gave up hope.

There are three words which we must remember would centre, Great, Escape and Neglect.

It is a great salvation because it discloses to us a great Saviour, shows us how we may be saved from great sin, and also reveals how we may be restored to great happiness and peace.

First, it is great in its author. The name of an author will frequently sell a book, and the name of the author of the plan of salvation ought to commend it to every man. If He who created the world is a Christian, and taking out his Bible he asked her if she could receive God's promise in John 5: 24. Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word and believeth on him that sent me, shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life. She told him she could. The next night he found them in the same place and was curious to know if she were in it. He went to her and said, "I have the girl of the night before saying, 'I say, lassie, do just as I did, grasp a promise and hold on to it, and He will save you.' And this is true for us all."

Again, if God is the author, His is the only way of salvation. Men decide to come to God by the way of reformation, or by the power of resolution, but this profits nothing, for reformation may touch the present, and may possibly avail for the future, but it cannot touch the past. If a man is in your debt, and he has decided never to go into debt again, you may tell him that he is making a fine resolution, but you will not tell him that his good resolution pays action of the past. The wonderful thing about the plan of salvation is that it provides an atonement touching the sins of the present, makes provision for the future, and blotting out the transgressions of the past. It is greater than the law. The law said, "God has always been sprinkled with blood. Study the Old Testament and you will find this is true. But when the sin of men became so great that the blood of bulls and goats would not suffice for their sins, God sent His Son, according to the Scriptures."

It was my privilege some time ago to preach to the convicts in the State Penitentiary of Tennessee. I said to them, "Give you the secret of getting almost any amount of money, and their faces instantly were a study, for the most of them were in prison for trying to get money in their own way. But this is the secret. Take down upon it the amount of money you want, the length of time you want it, sign your name to it and carry it to the bank. But this will profit you nothing, because you have not the secret of getting money. Study the Bible, and you will find that God has always been sprinkled with blood. Study the Old Testament and you will find this is true. But when the sin of men became so great that the blood of bulls and goats would not suffice for their sins, God sent His Son, according to the Scriptures."

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east from the west. Then I turned to this old professor and asked him if he could tell me how far that was. He instinctively reached for his pencil and his note book, then suddenly burst into tears, saying, "It can't be measured. For if you put your stake here with the east before you and the west behind you, you can go around the world and come back again to the stake, and the east is still before you and the west behind you." "Thank God," said he, "that is where my sins have gone." It has become somewhat unpopular in these days to preach concerning the lost world, but I think the Bible states, "I have an argument with you," said a man who had listened to the minister preaching. "What is it?" said the minister. "I do not believe in the resurrection of the dead." "Oh," said the minister, "you have an argument with God, not with myself." And since it is true, therefore, that God speaks continually and warmly constantly, it is not right that I should present the claims of the great salvation.

It is possible for one to so constantly neglect God's appeals that after a while his heart will become like a stone. It is said that the little birds that build their nests in the Trinity steeple scarcely lift their heads when the chimes ring out, because they have become so accustomed to the ringing of the bells. An one may become so accustomed to Christ's appeals that he will not hear their perfect indifference. I am on the river in a boat and the rapids are before me. I need only neglect the oars to be lost. I am in a burning building, and in order that I may be lost I need only neglect to get out. Finally it is only necessary that I should neglect Him who died that I might live.

In the city of Minneapolis I stood some years ago looking at the ruins of the Minnesota building, and heard the story of those men who perished because they were on the upper floor gathering together important papers and waited too long to come down by the fire escape. But at last they started, nine of them. The last man could not hold on to the hot iron of the fire escape, and in falling struck those beneath him, and the nine perished, all because they neglected.

How shall we escape? This is the important question, and the answer is written in large letters throughout God's word. First, stop trying to be a Christian and trust Him who promises to save you.

When Mr. Moody was going through an after meeting in Scotland he saw two girls crying. Stopping to assist them, he asked them if they were Christians and if they were taking out their Bibles he asked her if she could receive God's promise in John 5: 24. Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word and believeth on him that sent me, shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life. She told him she could. The next night he found them in the same place and was curious to know if she were in it. He went to her and said, "I have the girl of the night before saying, 'I say, lassie, do just as I did, grasp a promise and hold on to it, and He will save you.' And this is true for us all."

Again, if God is the author, His is the only way of salvation. Men decide to come to God by the way of reformation, or by the power of resolution, but this profits nothing, for reformation may touch the present, and may possibly avail for the future, but it cannot touch the past. If a man is in your debt, and he has decided never to go into debt again, you may tell him that he is making a fine resolution, but you will not tell him that his good resolution pays action of the past. The wonderful thing about the plan of salvation is that it provides an atonement touching the sins of the present, makes provision for the future, and blotting out the transgressions of the past. It is greater than the law. The law said, "God has always been sprinkled with blood. Study the Old Testament and you will find this is true. But when the sin of men became so great that the blood of bulls and goats would not suffice for their sins, God sent His Son, according to the Scriptures."

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