BLACK IS WHITE

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ILLUSTRATIONS By RAY WALTERS

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SYNOPSIS.

—9—

In the New York home of James Brood, his son, Frederic, receives a wireless from him. Frederic tells Lydia Desmond, his fiancee, that the message announces his father's marriage, and orders Mrs. Desmond, the housekeeper and Lydia's mother, to prepare the house for an immediate home-coming. Brood and his bride arrive. She wins Frederic's liking at first meeting. Brood shows dislike and veiled hostility to his son. Lydia and Mrs. Brood met in the jade-room, where Lydia works as Brood's secretary. Mrs. Brood is startled by the appearance of Ranjab, Brood's Hindu servant. She makes changes in the household and gains her husband's consent to send Mrs. Desmond and Lydia away. She fascinates Frederic. She begins to fear Ranjab in his uncanny appearances and disappearances, and Frederic, remembering his father's East Indian stories and firm belief in magic, fears unknown evil. Ranjab performs feats of magic for Dawes and Riggs. Frederic's father, jealous, unjustly orders his son from the dinner table as drunk. Brood tells the story of Ranjab's life to his guests. "He killed a woman" who was unfaithful to him. Yvonne plays with Frederic's infatuation for her. Her husband warns her that the thing must not go on. She tells him that he still loves his dead wife, whom he drove from his home, through her, Yvonne. Yvonne plays with Brood, Frederic and Lydia as with figures on a chess board. Brood, madly jealous, tells Lydia that Frederic is not his son, and that he has brought him up to kill his happiness at the proper time with this knowledge. Frederic takes Lydia home through heavy storm and spends the night at her mother's house. His wavering allegiance to her is strengthened by a day spent with her. Yvonne, over the phone rouses Frederic's infatuation for her again. Lydia goes to beg Brood not to tell Frederic of his unhappy parentage, but is turned from her purpose.

CHAPTER XIII—Continued.

Lydia resolved to take the plunge. Now was the time to speak plainly to this woman of the thing that was hurting her almost beyond the limits of endurance. Her voice was rather high-pitched. She had the fear that she would not be able to control it.

"I should be blind not to have observed the cruel position in which you are placing Frederic. Is it surprising that your husband has eyes as well as I? What must be his thoughts, Mrs. Brood?"

She expected an outburst, a torrent of indignation, an angry storm of words, and was therefore unprepared for the piteous, hunted expression that came swiftly into the lovely eyes, bent so appealingly upon her own, which were cold and accusing. Here was a new phase to this extraordinary creature's character. She was a coward, after all, and Lydia despised a coward. The look of scorn deepened in her eyes, and out from her heart rushed all that was soft and tender in her nature, leaving it barren of all compassion.

"I do not want to hurt Frederic," murmured Yvonne. "I—I am sorry if—"

"You are hurting him dreadfully," said Lydia, suddenly choking up with emotion.

"He is not—not in love with me," declared Yvonne.

"No," said the girl, regaining control of herself, "he is not in love with you. That is the whole trouble. He is in love with me. But—can't you see?"

"You are a wise young woman to know men so well," said the other enigmatically. "I have never believed in St. Anthony."

"Nor I," said Lydia, and was surprised at herself.

"Do you consider me to be a bad woman, Lydia?" Her lips trembled. There was a suspicious quiver to her chin.

"No, I do not," pronounced the girl flatly. "If I could only think that of you it would explain everything and I should know just how to treat you. But I do not think it of you."

With a long, deep sigh, Yvonne crept closer and laid her head against Lydia's shoulder. The girl's body stiffened, her brow grew dark with annoyance.

"I am afraid you do not understand, Mrs. Brood. The fact still remains that you have not considered Frederic's peace of mind."

"Nor yours," murmured the other, abjectly.

"Nor mine," confessed Lydia, after a moment.

"I did not know that you and Frederic were in love with each other until I had been here for some time," Mrs. Brood explained, suddenly fretful.

"What kind of a woman are you?" burst from Lydia's indignant soul. "Have you no conception of the finer, nobler—"

Yvonne deliberately put her hand over the girl's lips, checking the fierce outburst. She smiled rather plaintively as Lydia tried to jerk her head to one side in order to continue her reckless indictment.

"You shall not say it, Lydia. I am not all that you think I am. No, no, a thousand times no. God pity me, I am more accursed than you may think with the finer and nobler instinct. If it were not so, do you think I should be where I am now?—cringing here like a beaten child? No, you cannot understand—you never will understand. I shall say no more. It is ended. I swear on my soul that I did not know you were Frederic's sweetheart. I did not know—"

"But you knew almost immediately after you came here," exclaimed Lydia, harshly. "It is not myself I am thinking of, Mrs. Brood, but of Frederic. Why have you done this abominable thing to him? Why?"

"I—I did not realize what it would mean to him," said the other, desperately. "I—I did not count all the cost. But, dearest Lydia, it will come out all right again, I promise you. I have made a horrible, horrible mistake. I can say no more. Now, let me lie here with my head upon your breast. I want to feel the beating of your pure, honest heart—the heart that I have hurt. I can tell by its throbs whether it will ever soften toward me. Do not say anything now—let us be still."

It would be difficult to describe the feelings of Lydia Desmond as she sat there with the despised though to be adored head pillowed upon her breast, where it now rested in a sort of confident repose, as if there was safety in the very strength of the young girl's disapproval. Yvonne had twisted her lithe body on the chaise longue so that she half-faced Lydia. Her free arm, from which the loose sleeve had fallen, leaving it bare to the shoulder, was about the girl's neck.

For a long time Lydia stared straight before her, seeing nothing, positively dumb with wonder and acknowledging a sense of dismay over her own disposition to submit to this extraordinary situation. She was asking herself why she did not cast the woman away, why she lacked the power to resent by deed as well as by thought. Life—marvelous, adorable life rested there on her breast. This woman had hurt her—had hurt her wantonly—and yet there came stealing over her, subtly, the conviction that she could never hurt her in return. She could never bring herself to the point of hurting this wondrous, living, breathing, throbbing creature who pleaded, not only with her lips and eyes, but with the gentle heart-beats that rose and fell in her throat.

After a long time, in which there was conflict, she suddenly pressed her warm lips to Yvonne's. Then in an abrupt revulsion of feeling her arms fell away from the warm, sweet body and almost roughly she pushed Yvonne away from her.

"I—I didn't mean to do that!" she gasped.

The other smiled, but it was a sad, plaintive effort on her part. "I knew that you would," she repeated.

Lydia sprang to her feet, her face suddenly flaming with embarrassment "I must see Mr. Brood. I stopped in to tell him that—" she began, trying to cover her confusion, but Yvonne interrupted.

"I know that you could not help it, my dear," she said. Then, after a pause: "You will let me know what my husband has to say about it?"

"To—say about it?"

"About your decision to marry Frederic in spite of his objections."

Lydia felt a little shiver race over her as she looked toward the door.

"You will help us?" she said, tremulously, turning to Yvonne. Again she saw the drawn, pained look about the dark eyes and was startled.

"You can do more with him than I," was the response.

CHAPTER XIV.

Sensations.

Lydia stopped for a moment in the hall, after closing the door behind her, to pull herself together for the ordeal that was still to come. She was trembling; a weakness had assailed her. She had left Yvonne's presence in a dazed, unsettled condition of mind. There was a lapse of some kind that she could neither account for nor describe even to herself. The black velvet coat that formed a part of her trig suit, hung limply in her hand, dragging along the floor as she moved with hesitating steps in the direction of James Brood's study. A sickening estimate of her own strength of purpose confronted her. She was suddenly afraid of the man who had always been her friend. Somehow she felt that he would turn upon her and rend her, this man who had always been so gentle and considerate—and who had killed things!

Ranjab appeared at the head of the stairs. She waited for his signal to ascend, somehow feeling that Brood had sent him forth to summon her. Her hand sought the stair rail and gripped it tightly. Her lips parted in a stiff smile. Now she knew that she was turning coward, that she longed to put off the meeting until tomorrow—tomorrow!

The Hindu came down the stairs quickly, noiselessly.

"The master say to come tomorrow, tomorrow as usual," he said, as he paused above her on the steps.

"It—it must be today," she said, doggedly, even as the thrill of relief shot through her.

"Tomorrow," said the man. His eyes were kindly inquiring. "Sahib say you are to rest." There was a pause. "Tomorrow will not be too late."

She started. Had he read the thought that was in her mind?

"Thank you, Ranjab," she said, after a moment of indecision. "I will come tomorrow."

Then she slunk downstairs and out of the house, convinced that she had failed Frederic in his hour of greatest need, that tomorrow would be too late.

* * * * * * *

Frederic did not come in for dinner until after his father and Yvonne had gone from the house. He did not inquire for them, but instructed Jones to say to the old gentlemen that he would be pleased to dine with them if they could allow him the time to "change." He also told Jones to open a single bottle of champagne and to place three glasses.

Later on Frederic made his announcement to the old men. In the fever of an excitement that caused him to forget that Lydia might be entitled to some voice in the matter, he deliberately committed her to the project that had become a fixed thing in his mind the instant he set foot in the house and found it empty—oh, so empty!

Jones' practiced hand shook slightly as he poured the wine. The old men drank rather noisily. They, too, were excited. Mr. Riggs smacked his lips and squinted at the chandelier as if trying to decide upon the vintage, but in reality doing his best to keep from coughing up the wine that had gone the wrong way in a moment of profound paralysis.

"The best news I've heard since Judas died," said Mr. Dawes, manfully "Fill 'em up again, Jones. I want to propose the health of Mrs. Brood."

"The future Mrs. Brood," hissed Mr. Riggs, wheezily, glaring at his comrade. "Ass!"

"I'm not married yet, Mr. Dawes," exclaimed Frederic, grinning.

"Makes no difference," said Mr. Dawes, stoutly. "Far as I'm concerned, you are. We'll be the first to drink to Lydia Brood! The first to call her by that name, gentlemen. God bless her!"

"God bless her!" shouted Mr. Riggs.

"God bless her!" echoed Frederic, and they drained their glasses to Lydia Brood.

"Jones, open another bottle," commanded Mr. Dawes, loftily.

Frederic shook his head and two faces fell. Right bravely, however, the old men maintained a joyous interest in the occasion. The young man turned moody, thoughtful; the unwonted exhilaration died as suddenly as it had come into existence. A shadow crossed his vision and he followed it with his thoughts. A sense of utter loneliness came over him with a swiftness that sickened, nauseated him. The food was flat to his taste; he could not eat. Self-commiseration stifled him. He suddenly realized that he had never been so lonely, so unhappy in all his life as he was at this moment.

His thoughts were of his father. A vast, inexplicable longing possessed his soul—a longing for the affection of this man who was never tender, who stood afar off and was lonely, too. He could not understand this astounding change of feeling. He had never felt just this way before. There had been times—and many—when his heart was sore with longing, but they were of other days, childhood days. Tonight he could not crush out the thought of

Lydia Stopped for a Moment in the Hall.

how ineffably happy, how peaceful life would be if his father were to lay his hands upon his shoulders and say, "My son, I love you—I love you dearly." There would be no more lonely days; all that was bitter in his life would be swept away in the twinkling of an eye; the world would be full of joy for him and for Lydia.

When he entered the house that evening he was full of resentment toward his father, and sullen with the remains of an ugly rage. And now to be actually craving the affection of the man who humbled him, even in the presence of servants! It was unbelievable. He could not understand himself. A wonderful, compelling tenderness filled his heart. He longed to throw himself at his father's feet and crave his pardon for the harsh, vengeful thoughts he had spent upon him in those black hours. He hungered for a word of kindness or of understanding on which he could feed his starving soul. He wanted his father's love. He wanted, more than anything else in the world, to love his father.

Lydia slipped out of his mind, Yvonne was set aside in this immortal moment. He had not thought of them except in their relation to a completed state of happiness for his father. In distinctly he recognized them as essentials.

Ay, he was lonely. The house was as bleak as the steppes of Siberia. He longed for companionship, friendship, kindness—and suddenly in the midst of it all he leaped to his feet.

"I'm going out, gentlemen," he exclaimed, breaking in upon an unappreciated tale that Mr. Riggs was relating at some length and with considerable fierceness in view of the fact that Mr. Dawes had pulled him up rather sharply once or twice in a matter of inaccuracies. "Excuse me, please."

He left them gaping with astonishment and dashed out into the hall for his coat and hat. Even then he had no definite notion as to what his next move would be, save that he was going out—somewhere, anywhere, he did not care.

Somehow, as he rushed down the front steps with the cool night air blowing in his face, there surged up within him a strong, overpowering sense of filial duty. It was his duty to make the first advances. It was for him to pave the way to peace and happiness. Something vague but disturbing tormented him with the fear that his father faced a grave peril and that his own place was beside him and not against him, as he had been in all these illy directed years. He could not put it away from him, this thought that his father was in danger—in danger of something that was not physical, something from which, with all his valor, he had no adequate form of defense.

At the corner he paused, checked by an irresistible impulse to look backward at the house he had just left. To his surprise there was a light in the drawing-room windows facing the street. The shades in one of them had been thrown wide open and a stream of light flared out across the sidewalk.

Framed in this oblong square of light stood the figure of a man. Slowly, as if drawn by a force he could not resist, the young man retraced his steps until he stood directly in front of the window. A questioning smile was on his lips. He was looking up into Ranjab's shadowy, unsmiling face, dimly visible in the glow from the distant street lamp. For a long time they stared at each other, no sign of recognition passing between them. The Hindu's face was as rigid, as emotionless as if carved out of stone; his eyes were unwavering. Frederic could see them, even in the shadows. He had the queer feeling that, though the man gave no sign, he had something he wanted to say to him, that he was actually calling to him to come back into the house.

Undecided, the man outside took several halting steps toward the doorway, his gaze still fixed on the face in the window. Then he broke the spell. It was a notion on his part, he argued. If he had been wanted his father's servant would have beckoned to him. He would not have stood there like a graven image, staring out into the night. Having convinced himself of this, Frederic wheeled and swung off up the street once more, walking rapidly, as one who is pursued. Turning, he waved his hand at the man in the window. He received no response. Farther off he looked back once more. The Hindu still was there. Long after he was out of sight of the house he cast frequent glances over his shoulder as if still expecting to see the lighted window and its occupant.

As he made his way to Broadway, somewhat hazily bent on following that thoroughfare to the district where the night glittered and the stars were shamed, he began turning over in his mind a queer notion that had just suggested itself to him, filtering through the maze of uncertainty in which he had been floundering. It occurred to him that he had been mawkishly sentimental in respect to his father. His attitude had not changed—he was seriously impressed by the feelings that had mastered him—but he found himself ridiculing the idea that his father stood in peril of any description. And suddenly, out of no particular trend of thought, groped the sly, persistent suspicion that he had not been altogether responsible for the sensations of an hour ago. Some outside influence had molded his emotions for him, some cunning brain had been doing his thinking for him.

Then came the sharp recollection of that motionless, commanding figure in the lighted window, and his own puzzling behavior on the sidewalk outside. He recalled his impression that someone had called out to him just before he turned to look up at the window. It was all quite preposterous, he kept on saying over and over again to himself, and yet he could not shake off the uncanny feeling.

Earlier in the evening, without warning, without the slightest encouragement on his part, there had suddenly leaped into existence a warm, tender and wholly inexplicable feeling toward his father. At first he had been amazed by this unwonted, almost unnatural feeling, which later on developed into something quite tangible in the way of an emotion, but he was beginning to realize that the real mystery lay outside of any self-analysis he could make. Like a shot there flashed into his brain the startling question: Was Ranjab the solution? Was it Ranjab's mind and not his own that had moved him to such tender resolves? Could such a condition be possible? Was there such a thing as mind control?

An hour later Frederic approached the box office of the theater mentioned by Yvonne over the telephone that morning. The play was half over and the house was sold out. He bought a ticket of admission, however, and lined up with others who were content to stand at the back to witness the play. Inside the theater he leaned weakly against the railing at the back of the auditorium and wiped his brow. What was it that had dragged him there against his will, in direct opposition to his dogged determination to shun the place?

The curtain was up, the house was still, save for the occasional coughing of those who succumb to a habit that can neither be helped nor explained There were people moving on the stage, but Frederic had no eyes for them. He was seeking in the dark-

He Was Looking Up Into Ranjab's Shadowy, Unsmiling Face.

ness for the two figures that he knew were somewhere in the big, tense throng.

The lights went up and the house was bright. Men began scurrying up the aisles. He moved up to the railing again and resumed his eager scrutiny of the throng. He could not find them. At first he was conscious of disappointment, then he gave way to an absurd rage. Yvonne had misled him, she had deceived him—ay, she had lied to him. They were not in the audience, they had not even contemplated coming to this theater. He had been tricked, deliberately tricked. No doubt they were seated in some other place of amusement, serenely enjoying themselves. The thought of it maddened him. And then, just as he was on the point of tearing out of the house, he saw them, and the blood rushed to his head so violently that he was almost blinded.

He caught sight of his father far down in front, and then the dark, half-obscured head of Yvonne. He could not see their faces, but there was no mistaking them for anyone else. He only marvelled that he had not seen them before, even in the semidarkness. They now appeared to be the only people in the theater; he could see no one else.

James Brood's fine, aristocratic head was turned slightly toward his wife, who, as Frederic observed after changing his position to one of better advantage, apparently was relating something amusing to him. They undoubtedly were enjoying themselves. Once more the great, almost suffocating wave of tenderness for his father swept over him, mysteriously as before and as convincing. He experienced a sudden, inexplicable feeling of pity for the strong, virile man who had never revealed the slightest symptom of pity for him. The same curious desire to put his hands on his father's shoulders and tell him that all was well with them came over him again.

Involuntarily he glanced over his shoulder, and the fear was in his heart that somewhere in the shifting throng his gaze would light upon the face of Ranjab!

Long and intently his searching gaze went through the crowd, seeking the remote corners and shadows of the foyer, and a deep breath of relief escaped him when it became evident that the Hindu was not there. He had, in a measure, proved his own cause; his emotions were genuinely his own and not the outgrowth of an influence for good exercised over him by the Brahmin.

He began what he was pleased to term a systematic analysis of his emotions covering the entire evening, all the while regarding the couple in the orchestra chairs with a gaze unswerving in its fidelity to the sensation that now controlled him—a sensation of impending peril.

All at once he slunk farther back into the shadow, a guilty flush mounting to his cheek. Yvonne had turned and was staring rather fixedly in his direction. Despite the knowledge that he was quite completely concealed by the intervening group of loungers, he sustained a distinct shock. He had the uncanny feeling that she was looking directly into his eyes. She had turned abruptly, as if some one had called out to attract her attention and she had obeyed the sudden impulse. A moment later her calmly impersonal gaze swept on, taking in the sections to her right and the balcony, and then went back to her husband's face.

Frederic was many minutes in recovering from the effects of the queer shock he had received. He could not get it out of his head that she knew he was there, that she actually turned in answer to the call of his mind. She had not searched for him; on the contrary, she directed her gaze instantly to the spot where he stood concealed.

Actuated by a certain sense of guilt, he decided to leave the theater as soon as the curtain went up on the next act, which was to be the last. Instead of doing so, however, he lingered to the end of the play, secure in his conscienceless espionage. It had come to him that if he met them in front of the theater as they came out he could invite them to join him at supper in one of the nearby restaurants. The idea pleased him. He coddled it until it became a sensation.

When James Brood and his wife reached the sidewalk they found him there, directly in their path, as they wedged their way to the curb to await the automobile. He was smiling frankly, wistfully. There was an honest gladness in his fine, boyish face and an eager light in his eyes. He no longer had the sense of guilt in his soul. It had been a passing qualm, and he felt regenerated for having experienced it, even so briefly. Somehow it had purged his soul of the one lingering doubt as to the sincerity of his impulses.

"Hello!" he said, planting himself squarely in front of them.

There was a momentary tableau. He was vividly aware of the fact that Yvonne had shrunk back in alarm, and that a swift look of fear leaped into her surprised eyes. She drew closer to Brood's side—or was it the jostling of the crowd that made it seem to be so? He realized then that she had not seen him in the theater. Her surprise was genuine. It was not much short of consternation, a fact that he realized with a sudden sinking of the heart.

Then his eyes went quickly to his father's face. James Brood was regarding him with a cold, significant smile, as one who understands and despises.

"They told me you were here," faltered Frederic, the words rushing hurriedly through his lips, "and I thought we might run in somewhere and have a bite to eat. I—I want to tell you about Lydia and myself and what—"

The carriage man bawled a number in his ear and jerked open the door of a limousine that had just pulled up the the curb.

Without a word, James Brood handed his wife into the car and then turned to the chauffeur.

"Home," he said, and, without so much as a glance at Frederic, stepped inside. The door was slammed and the car slid out into the maelstrom.

Yvonne had sunk back into a corner, huddled down as if suddenly deprived of all her strength. Frederic saw her face as the car moved away. She was staring at him with wide-open, reproachful eyes, as if to say: "Oh, what have you done? What a fool you are!"

For a second or two he stood as if petrified. Then everything went red

For a Second or Two He Stood as If Petrified.

before him, a wicked red that blinded him. He staggered as if from a blow in the face.

"My God!" slipped from his stiff lips, and tears leaped to his eyes—tears of supreme mortification. Like a beaten dog he slunk away, feeling himself pierced by the pitying gaze of every mortal in the street.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Vogue of White Paint.

A clever decorator who remodeled the dining room in a New England farm house has even gone so far in her use of white paint as to finish the floors with it. The woodwork and furniture were also white, but plenty of color was introduced by bright chintz-patterned paper and plain bright green rugs. The white dining room table was always bare, which allowed the mistress to use many attractively colored doily sets. Her china showed up to splendid advantage on this white ground, and the flowers from the garden seemed unusually bright and pretty in the midst of all this white. A country house near Cleveland has all its floors painted white, with bright green, blue and purple rugs used to carry out certain color schemes. Of course, using white on floors is practical only when you are far from the city's smoke or motor's dust.—The Countryside Magazine.

Happy Times.

"The cotton growers seem to be hard hit."

"Yes. And many of them are longing for the good old days when all they had to worry about was the boll weevil."

INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

(By E. O. SELLERS, Acting Director Sunday School Course of Moody Bible Institute, Chicago.)

LESSON FOR JUNE 6

NATHAN REBUKES DAVID.

LESSON TEXT—II Samuel 11:26-12:13.
GOLDEN TEXT—Create in me a clean heart O God.—Psalm 51:10.

This is a lesson that demands care in its presentation and treatment which will differ widely according to age. For the younger the briefest of statement that David fell in sin with Uriah's wife and to obtain her had her husband killed will be sufficient. With such, throw the emphasis upon the danger of harboring evil thoughts and the need of heart purity (see Golden Text).

With adults, however, some time may be devoted to the social evil which is such a menace to every nation, care being taken lest the discussion become morbid, or that we neglect to emphasize the fact that the remedy is not in regulation or reformation but in the regeneration of the human heart.

I. David's Many Good Deeds. II Samuel, 7 and 9. As a background for his most repulsive sin David had a long list of excellent deeds. His desire for a better abiding place for the ark was not according to God's will for two reasons: first, that an ornate house might easily corrupt, through idolatry, the spirtuality of the Hebrew religion; second, David was a man of war and therefore not qualified for temple building. Though denied, David did not despair, but at once provided that his successor carry out his desire. Again, David's treatment of Mephibosheth, Jonathan's son, in according with the covenant made between the two men, is an inspiring episode and one of great spiritual suggestiveness; it has furnished material for countless sermons.

II. David's One Great Sin, II Samuel, 11:6. David's victories over his enemies are dismissed in a few verses, yet his sin is set forth in detail—another evidence of the divine origin and inspiration of the Bible. David had followed the example of neighboring kings and taken to himself many wives, evidently regarding his fancy as supreme and himself as above the law. David was "off guard" in the matter of temptation, a dangerous position for all, both soldier and civilian. David had had too long and too great a period of success and prosperity after his long period of persecution, and this led to carelessness and pride. David was "off duty," indulging in ease while Joab did his fighting. As a result he became an adulterer and a murderer, and the record in no way seeks to palliate his guilt. From all this the record brings to us many important lessons. Outwardly prosperous and his army successful, David must have felt in his heart a spiritual blight in the words, "but the thing was evil in the eyes of the Lord" (v. 27 R. V.); no psalm writing then.

III. Nathan's Parable, II. Samuel, 12:1-7. It is an evidence of God's grace that he sent his servant to rebuke and restore this "man after his own heart." Such is his mercy, he does not will that any should perish but that all might come to the knowledge of forgiveness (Ezekiel 33.11; Matthew 23:37). No parable ever had its desired effect more quickly than this one. It brought conviction and repentance (v. 13) and led to the writing of the fifty-first psalm. It was a delicate task set before Nathan thus to rebuke the king, yet it reveals the essential nobleness of David in that he did not become angry. Nathan's task and his wisdom are revealed in his approach and in the way he led David to condemn, unwittingly, his own course of action. This was better than to begin by upbraiding and denunciation. Verse two suggests, inferentially, God's great goodness to David, which made the offense one of gross ingratitude. The picture of the rich man selfishly sparing his own and seizing the poor man's treasure—his all, which lay on his bosom, drank from his cup and was as a child, exhibits the worst sort of scoundrel. No wonder David grew indignant (Romans 2:1) and declared that such a man "is worthy to die" (v. 5 R. V.).

IV. Thou Art the Man"—v. 7a. Thus far the story is one all too common, then and now, of the strong crushing the weak and glorying in their selfishness. What follows is the evidence of God's response to man's repentance, the parallel to which has nowhere else been found in the ancient world. The glory of it is that David heard and heeded God's messenger. The whole sordid story with its resultant action on David's part brings us many priceless lessons. (1) That man who had lived a life of faith and communion fell most miserably when he neglected his duty and took his eyes off God. There is a grave danger ahead of the man who begins to trifle with sin (I Cor. 10:12). (2) Though a man fall (the godly man) yet he is not utterly cast down. There is pardon for the vilest sinner and the most abject backslider. David's murderous hands and sin-stained soul found pardon (Ps. 32 and 51). (3) A man's sin, though he may find pardon, will cloud all of his future.

David felt it in his own life and family; both daughter and sons felt its blight (see chapter 13), and it brought forth David's immortal lament over Absalom.

David's trusted friend joined the son's rebellion and caused David great sorrow (see 11:3; 23:34; 15:21 and Ps. 55:12-14).

David's hypocrisy upon receiving the news of Uriah's death deceived no one and put him into the power of Joab, who became a curse to him and whom he constantly feared (I Kings 2:19-22).

God sternly judges uncleanness and adulterers (Heb. 14:4).

KNEW IT HAD TO BE DONE

Rule in Mathematics Puzzled Farmer, Though He Recognized Necessity for Its Observance.

A New York engineer was surveying the route of a branch line for a railway system. An old farmer with whom he stopped for a time admitted one day, when he saw the engineer figuring in the field, that mathematics always seemed a wonderful thing to him

Being young and enthusiastic, the engineer began to enlarge upon its wonders, telling the farmer how we could measure the distances to different planets and even weigh the planets; how we could foretell the coming of a comet or an eclipse years in advance of its actual occurrence, determine the velocity of the swiftest projectiles, ascertain the heights of mountains without scaling them, and many other things meant to astonish the old man

"Yes, them things does seem kinder curious," said the farmer, "but what always bothered me was to understand why you have to carry one for every ten. But if you don't," he continued, with conviction, "the darned thing won't come out right."—Everybody's Magazine.

No Doubt About "Everlasting Fire."

A dentist recently made a new set of teeth for the bishop of ——. He anxiously watched the prelate as he examined himself and his teeth in the pier glass and was startled when he heard the bishop mutter something in which he emphasized the fearful words, "into everlasting fire."

The dentist ventured to suggest that his lordship might feel rather uncomfortable at first, but in a little time he would get used to them.

Without appearing to notice the dentist, his lordship exclaimed, with tremendous vehemency, "Into everlasting fire!"

"But, indeed, my lord, if you have patience," pleaded the dentist, "in a week's time or so—"

"What do you mean?' inquired the prelate, turning round with a benignant smile. "Why should I have patience? The teeth fit beautifully. It is the first time I have found myself able to pronounce the Athanasian creed with distinctness for these twenty years."

Hindrance to Progress.

Nothing so hinders us in what we are doing as to be longing after something else; in so doing, we leave off tilling our own field, to drive the plow through our neighbor's land, where we must not look to reap a harvest; and this is mere waste of time. If our thoughts and hopes are elsewhere, it is impossible for us to set our faces steadily towards the work required of us.—St. Francis de Sales.

Fact Not Generally Known.

Contrary to general belief, the Babes in the Wood were not innocent darlings, but outlaws who infested the hills of County Wicklow, Ireland, many years ago.