A Dark Night's Work.

By Paul Ingelow.

(CONTINUED.)

Then he took out a revolver. Approaching the vault, the weapon in his hand, he unlocked its door.

"Come out!" he ordered.

There was no answer.

He threw the door wide open.

"Come out, I say!" he repeated, loudly. "Out, man armed, and I will shoot if you attempt to escape from this room!"

The revolver went clanging to the floor. Aghast, the plotter stood, rooted to the spot, in dismay and horror.

Across the stone floor of the vault lay a prostrate form—Le Britta.

The air-tight compartment had done its deadly work. Its victim lay motionless.

Meredith at last stooped over and turned the face of the prostrate man toward the light. Its pallor terrified him.

He examined the heart. No pulsation there. "Mercy!" he gasped, tottering like a drunken man. "I have killed him. It is—murder!"

His face was the color of ashes, his nerveless hands began to tremble.

What should he do? Here was crime. Here was peril. He shuddered as the gruesome shadows about him seemed to frame the somber outlines of a prison cell, the felon's dock, the scaffold!

Then fright, deadly fear, impelled him to sudden, frantic action.

He dashed from the room, out into the yard, into the stables. He hitched up a fast horse to a close buggy. Then back he sped to the vault apartment.

His victim lay as he had left him. He seized him in his arms, bore him down a dark corridor, out into the garden, through the stable, and, placing the limp form in the bottom of the buggy covered it with a horse-blanket.

In five minutes he was traversing an unfrequented road leading to the suburbs. In half an hour he was in the open country.

Once he halted the horse on a rustic bridge, and seemed about to lift the body of his victim and destroy all trace of his crime by casting it over the rail to the raging stream below.

The approach of a pedestrian sent him speeding on, however. For miles he traveled a cheerless highway.

Finally he made out a dismantled structure standing back from the road. It was a place familiar to him, a residence some years since devastated by fire. "Just the place!" he ejaculated. "No one goes there. I'll hide the body in the cellar. It will never be discovered."

He entered the house staggering under his burden. He reappeared bearing the blanket, glancing apprehensively back over and anon, and hurrying on the jaded steed once again in the vehicle.

"That disposes of him" he muttered "I did not mean to kill him. He brought it on himself. No one will ever know What a dolt! I forgot to lock up the vault. Should a burglar enter the house and find his way to that room he might beggar me"

Utterly heartless Darius Meredith grew almost cheerful as he neared home again. A dangerous enemy had been removed from his path. The low souled scoundrel actually congratulated himself on his dark night's work. He entered the house and hastened to the apartment where Jera Le Britta had battled fate and had been defeated.

The lamp still burned on the table. The vault door was still open.

Entering the vault Meredith examined its interior.

"All safe!" he muttered "and the package"—

He sought to make sure of it by pulling open a drawer and gazing into it.

An awful cry escaped his lips as he did so.

"Empty—gone" he gasped. "Robbed. The money"—

Was not there. He reeled into the outer room. Almost fainting he felt a cold breath of air revive his tottering sensibilities.

With a wild cry he observed that a window was open.

And then the truth paralyzed mind and heart as it flashed across him with the intensity of a lightning shock.

During his absence some one had opened a window and entering the apartment had stolen the treasured package!

There could be no doubt of it and the plotter's heart stood still as he asked himself the question—

Had this mysterious person as well witnessed the crime, that proven, would send him to the gallows?

CHAPTER XXXVII.—THE BORDER-LAND.

There is no agent of death more potent and yet deceptive in its effects than that which induces dissolution by means of suffocation.

In drowning and the results of smothering gases, no trace of violence exists. There is a certain painless fading into insensibility, and a suspension of the natural forces of the frame that is marked and alarming, even before death arrives.

The shock to the system clogs the circulation, deadens the brain, chokes the lungs. It is intense, and often, even where the victim has not absolutely reached the danger point, there seems to be an absolute cessation of vitality.

The superficial examination of his victim made by Meredith after discovering Le Britta's insensibility in the vault, tended to satisfy him that the photographer was dead. He could detect no pulse or respiration, while the bloodless lips and leaden eyelids added a ghastly aspect to the face of his decoyed guest.

During that long drive into the country, Le Britta did not betoken one sign of returning consciousness, and when he was lifted from the buggy and carried into the old dismantled building, he lay as inert a burden as ever in the arms of his seeming assassin.

Jera Le Britta was not dead, however. That trance-like coma, that semblance of dissolution was but the lingering deadening effect of the blighted, mephitic atmosphere of the close vault.

Five minutes more confinement in that sealed safe would have resulted fatally, but as it was the precipitation of the murderous scheme saved the photographer's life, for the quick rush to the open air relieved the poison-charged arteries, and the lingering inertia of body and mind was simply the deadening after-effects of the suffocation.

Not a muscle, however, had Le Britta moved during that eventful ride, not a muscle moved as he was carried into the damp, gruesome cellar of the isolated building.

But what air, jolting and time had failed to effect, another potent element of nature consummated.

When Meredith placed his supposedly dead charge upon the cold, clayey floor of the cellar, he dropped him directly across a pool of water.

Haunted with dread for the results of his terrible deed, and frightened by phantoms conjured by his craven mind, that dark cellar-way, the miscreant bowed Le Britta to slip roughly to the floor, and fled precipitately.

With a slight splash, the photographer's head dipped into a depression in the soft earth, filled with water. The cooling fluid laved the base of his brain, and bathed cheek and brow.

There was a deep-drawn sigh, a spasmodic flutter of the nerves, and then, like a man chained but gradually coming back to life from a dense swoon, the photographer opened his eyes.

Here and there, through breaks in the wall and from sashless apertures, the pale light of the night permeated the place. He could feel the chill, the discomfort; he could discern that he was in some unfamiliar spot, and yet the last lingering vestiges of life against the invisible forces of nature in that ponderous tomb-like vault was so strongly present in his mind that, with a shock and a groan, he closed his eyes again, believing himself still to be a prisoner in the home of the plotter, Meredith.

These are the strange, uncanny experiences of existence, these moments when a person finds himself face to face with the untried, the unknown, the dim, the vague, the mysterious. It is then that the senses recoil alarmed; it is then that the soul, forced alone to battle with what the mind cannot grasp and comprehend, is revealed in its strong intensity, and man knows that the essence of immortality within him has a vivid existence and is a strong reality.

So Le Britta, at that moment still thinking that the strong iron walls of the vault enclosed him, that he was yet a doomed prisoner of villainy, awakening to a last final gasp of ebbing vitality, saw the world fade, forgot momentarily its cares and its pleasures alike, and faced the inevitable, dreamily yet tangibly.

All the good, all the bad his life had known flashed across him mentally. The shuddering fear of death was robbed of its sting. What was a sharp pain, a choking moan, a last throe of the overwrought nerves? But the soul!

In that moment there came to Le Britta what comes to every good man when the final moment dawns, be it slow or sudden, announced by lingering illness or speedily as a lightning's flash—peace; rare, calm, ineffable peace.

And joy! It was hard to leave a busy, bustling, happy life, with all its brisk, enticing changes; it was hard to leave loved ones, to close human eyes on a human world, radiant with beauty, flowers, bird-song and sunshine; but the glamor of a glimpse into the portals of another life—a sudden, certain comprehension of the heaven that lay beyond the borderland; entrancpt soul and sense in a delirium of joy.

Here was the Promised Land—here was the pledge old as the world, and sacred as only the word of divinity can be, that death had no sting, and the grave was robbed of victory, and life—real, final life, was vouchsafed to the man who had tried to do his duty because he loved humanity better than his own safety!

Le Britta sighed. So near to the seeming portals of death, so blest by radiant pictures of the future, so full of faith that those he loved would be cared for by divine mercy, he seemed to knock at the gates of heaven, and long to be let in upon the flawless fields of paradise.

"Good-by, old world! I have tried to do right."

A last murmur, a last settling back to dissolution, and then—

A harsh, discordant whistle, sharp, shrill, nerve-disturbing.

It pierced the solemn silence like the note of a bird of prey in a garden of loveliness.

Ruddy shocked, vividly disturbed, Jera Le Britta opened his eyes, and glaring into the darkness and gloom, listened intently.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.—A NEW TRAIL

Back to life in a flash, back to reality, to the earth-earthy, but with an experience that would impress his mind till his dying day, he startled Jera Le Britta was roughly summoned.

With clearer senses on the alert he could readily discern now that he was not in the vault at Meredith's house.

No, there was a damp cellar-way, and some one was approaching, the whistle announced it, the reflection of the rays of a lantern in some compartment near by plainly indicated it.

To a man who had given up his life as lost, and had bidden farewell to the world, the resuliant of an unexpected recall to earthly existence acted as a decided shock.

Each moment the photographer's senses cleared. A thought of duty at hand. Tasks uncompleted flashed across his mind, and he took up the armor anew of perseverance and faith without a murmur.

"Meredith! What a villain—what depths of evil in his cruel nature! The stolen treasure! Why, as never before, the issues of fate trembled in a perilous, uncertain balance.

"This is some cellar, the cellar of the house where Meredith lives," cogitated Le Britta. "Scarcely, for it looks disused and dismantled. Where then?"

That mysterious whistle was repeated, and around a corner of a stone partition the rays of the lantern again glinted across the slimy, damp foundation walls.

There was something sinister in that whistle, and a thought of Meredith caused Le Britta to hesitate as the impulse came to cry out.

He was glad that he checked it, for just then, as if in response to the first whistle, a second one echoed, and then a gruff voice exclaimed:—

"Ah! you've come at last, have you?"

"Yes, on time, ain't I?"

There was the click of a watch-case and the reply:—

"Scarcely. The appointment was for midnight, and it barely lacks an hour of it."

"Well, ain't that time enough?"

"If we hurry."

"Come on, then."

"I've got a boat."

"Then we can row to the point."

"Yes. Durand must have some mighty mysterious scheme on hand to go through all this secrecy and trouble."

"Durand!" gasped Le Britta.

That name acted upon him like a shock. He sat up abruptly; he surprised away all the lingering weakness of the moment by struggling to his feet.

Durand! Following up one branch of the case, he had accidentally stumbled across another, and both directed to

These men had spoken Durand's name; more than that, they referred to some mysterious mission for which he had engaged them—a midnight task, a sinister errand well in accordance with the usual evil methods of procedure of the villain who held the key to all the mysteries and counterplots that had grown from Le Britta's championship of the cause of beautiful, persecuted Gladys Vernon.

Arranging mentally the case as it stood, the photographer realized that here was a new diverging path in the case to follow, which might bring about great results.

The footsteps of the two men retreated, and the light from the lantern disappeared.

Le Britta started cautiously after them. At first, his progress was dizzy-headed and uncertain, but, once in the open air, his senses revived.

"They are going toward the river," reflected Le Britta. "They have a boat, and they meditate about an hour's row. How shall I keep trace of them?"

He cut across a thicket. Keeping slightly ahead of them, and never leaving a safe shelter to reveal himself to them.

The boat to which one of the two men had referred lay moored there. It was a yawl, broad and long and rather unwieldy for those waters. There was a cuddy at the bow, and as Le Britta saw the men nearing the spot, and felt sanguine that they would make their prospective voyage on that craft he decided on a rash exploit.

To accompany them unsuspected, would be to trace them surely to the lair where they had announced they were to meet Durand.

The photographer acted quickly. He sprang into the yawl and crowded through the little door leading into the dark and low-ceilinged cuddy.

It was close and damp but he did not mind those trifling discomforts, although he hoped no necessity would arise for the two voyagers to explore his hiding-place.

They stepped aboard, at once took up the oars, and devoted all their energies to smoking and rowing, scarcely uttering a word until they neared a high bluff, about five miles down the stream.

The yawl grounded on the pebbly shore, the men secured it, sprang out, and one of them, with a glance at his watch, remarked:—

"Just in time. Midnight. Come. It's only a few steps now."

Those few steps Jera Le Britta followed with anxious eagerness.

They led the men to an old building that resembled a residence, only that it was in a state of considerable decay.

The men went around to its side door. One of them tapped loudly. It was opened.

Le Britta, shrinking to the shelter of a bush, saw them enter, but could not make out the man who had admitted them.

In a few minutes, however, a light showed through the chinks in the blinds.

Approaching them, the sound of voices, however, and detected the odor of cigar smoke, so he knew that the windows beyond were closed or raised.

He cautiously pressed an eye to a break in one of the shutters.

His soul arose in arms, defiance and energy as he looked.

For he had found the missing marplot of the drama begun at Hawthorne villa, and transferred to this lonely house by the riverside.

Destiny had led him, strangely but surely, on the trail of the man he most wished to see of all men in the world.

Ralph Durand was before him!

CHAPTER XXXIX.—PLOTTERS IN COUNCIL.

At a glance, Jera Le Britta discerned that the three men had met for an important consultation, and he prepared to listen to some enlightening revelations.

They seemed to be the only occupants of the building, and Le Britta was apparently safe from discovery, for a time at least.

"What's the row, governor?" asked one of Durand's two visitors, "that we have to come here at this unusual hour."

"Work's the row," replied Durand, sharply—"work well paid for, so you needn't grumble."

"We don't, on that score, but"—

"I generally net for the best," pursued the plotter. "You have had a remarkably easy time during the past week."

"Yes, watching the house where the girl is with the old woman so she don't by any mischance escape is no great labor," laughed one of the men.

"And she is safe?"

"She's there watched closely, and, between you and I, governor, too crushed and despondent to think of running away."

"Good!" commented Durand, "that suits me; I fancy she realizes that to disobey me would involve her lover in serious trouble. Now, then, boys, you understand enough of this affair to realize that this same lover of hers, young Vance, is no friend of mine."

"We can surmise it, governor."

"It is in my power to send him to the gallows. On the other hand, once free, he might accuse me in turn of the murder of old Gideon Vernon. He is a disturbing element in my calculations, and the only one. I have laid my plans for the future, and I don't want them disturbed, so"—

"You want to get rid of the young man in question," slyly insinuated one of Durand's companions.

"I must. While he is living and a prisoner, he is a menace to the girl. By threatening him, I keep her in my power. All this however may lead to troublesome complications further on, so I have resolved on one grand final move."

"What is it, governor?"

"Money was my primal object in fighting for my position as guardian to Gladys Vernon. To my disappointment when I became legally appointed executor of the Vernon estates I found them heavily mortgaged and the proceeds had vanished. I imagine, I suspect that the girl or some of her friends know where this mortgage money is and are keeping it in hiding until she becomes of age. However, even abandoning the hope of ever handling that ready cash I find I can realize as much more by a bold move."

"How's that?"

"Sell the property at a sacrifice."

"Can you do it?"

"With the girl's consent."

"Not without it?"

"Scarcely. So I have resolved to marry her, and end the complication summarily."

To marry Gladys Vernon! The listening photographer thrilled at the revelation, more than that he shuddered at the thought of that pure beautiful girl wedded to a coarse, brutal villain, who, by thus wrecking her fair, young life, would silence her lips against him, would enforce the sacrifice under threat of doom and death for her lover, Sydney Vance.

"The day that occurs," went on the bold plotter, "I pay you each five hundred dollars."

"And how can we help you?" asked both the men in an eager breath.

"The young man Vance"—

"He is here?"

"Near here. I have held him a close prisoner. The day of the murder he pursued me. We met, I overpowered him. Since then, in one place or another, he has been my captive. I want him removed. I dare not kill him alone, for fear of escape. I dare not trust him in this district longer, for fear of discovery. To-night you are to remove him."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

A bill has been introduced in the Missouri legislature which prohibits trainmen from flirting with women passengers. Hood, the author of the bill, is a Populist and was formerly a school teacher. Doubtless he understands the dangers to be avoided.

Two great events are offering the Pacific roads new promise of life, one being the great prize fight in Nevada and the other the great Christian Endeavor gathering at San Francisco. So far the roads dare not offer cut rate to one for fear of offending the other. Suggestive rivalry, this.

THEY WORKED WONDERS.

Two Years of Bladder Trouble—Had Attacks of Inflammation—Cured by a Few Doses of Dodd's Kidney Pills.

Owen Sound, March 1.—(Special)—The people of this town are talking again of another cure credited to Dodd's Kidney Pills. This is the case of Mr. W. Cruse, caretaker of town buildings, who, when seen, had a story of the matter:—

"For over two years I have been an intense sufferer from kidney disease with occasionally acute attacks of inflammation of the bladder.

"Was under doctor's treatment and have been compelled to resort to instrumental relief many times.

"I have taken eighteen boxes of Dodd's Kidney Pills and am satisfied with results being perfectly relieved of all suffering."

An Equal Standard of Morals.

"I believe absolutely in an equal standard of morals for men and women," writes Edward W. Bok in the March Ladies' Home Journal, replying to an inquirer. "Nor is this an ideal condition because it does not now exist. It is not at all unlikely that such equality will be the standard of the future. At all events, for yourself live a pure life; so that you may be able to look every woman in the world in the face and have the greatest satisfaction that can come to a man; that when you marry you can give to the girl of your heart what you expect that she will bring to you: moral purity. It is the most solid of all foundation stones on which a man and a woman can begin a life of perfect understanding and happiness."

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Like a Dog.

"She treats her baby as though it were a dog"

"Is that possible?"

"Yes, she's hugging and kissing it all the time."—Chicago Journal.

A FESTIVE RELIGION.

REV. DR. TALMAGE INVITES THE WORLD TO A BANQUET.

He Takes as a Text, "Bring Hither the Fatted Calf," and Preaches an Inspiring Sermon on the Joy of a Saved Soul—A Grand Paradox.

Washington, March 7.—The gladnesses of religion are set forth by Dr. Talmage in his sermon under the figure of a banquet, and all the world is invited to be guests. The text is Luke xv, 23, "Bring hither the fatted calf and kill it."

In all ages of the world it has been customary to celebrate joyful events by festivity—the signing of treaties, the proclamation of peace, the inauguration of presidents, the coronation of kings, the Christmas, the marriage. However much on other days of the year our table may have a stinted supply, on Thanksgiving day there must be something bounteous. And all the comfortable homes of Christendom have at some time celebrated joyful events by banquet and festivity. Something has happened on the old homestead greater than anything that has ever happened before. A favorite son whom the world supposed would become a vagabond and outlaw forever has got tired of sight-seeing and has returned to his father's house. The world said he never would come back. The old man always said his son would come back. He has been looking for him day after day and year after year. He knew he would come back. Now, having returned to his father's house, the father proclaims a celebration. There is in the paddock a calf that has been kept up and fed to utmost capacity, so as to be ready for some occasion of joy that might come along. Ah, there never would be a greater day on the old homestead than this day. Let the butchers do their work and the housekeepers bring in to the table the smoking meat. The musicians will take their places, and the gay groups will move up and down the floor. All the friends and neighbors are gathered in, and an extra supply is sent out to the table of the servants. The father presides at the table and says grace and thanks God that his long absent boy is home again. Oh, how they missed him! How glad they are to have him back!

One brother stands pouting at the back door and says: "This is a great ado about nothing. This bad boy should have been chastised instead of greeted. Veal is too good for him." But the father says, "Nothing is too good; nothing is good enough." There sits the young man, glad at the hearty reception, but a shadow of sorrow flitting across his face at the remembrance of the trouble he had seen. All ready now. Let the covers lift. Music. He was dead, and he is alive again. He was lost, and he is found. By such bold imagery does the Bible set forth the merrymaking when a soul comes home to God.

The Joy of a Convert.

First of all, there is the new convert's joy. It is no tame thing to become a Christian. The most tremendous moment in a man's life is when he surrenders himself to God. The grandest time on the father's homestead is when the boy comes back. Among the great throng who in the parlors of our church professed Christ one night was a young man who next morning rang my doorbell and said: "Sir, I cannot contain myself with the joy I feel. I came here this morning to express it. I have found more joy in five minutes in serving God than in all the years of my prodigality, and I came here to say so." You have seen perhaps a man running for his temporal liberty and the officers of the law after him, and you saw him escape, or afterward you hear the judge had pardoned him, and how great was the glee of that rescued man, but it is a very tame thing compared with the ransom for one's everlasting life, the terrors of the law after him and Christ coming in to pardon and bless and rescue and save.

You remember John Bunyan in his great story tells how the pilgrim put his fingers to his ears and ran, crying, "Life, life, eternal life!" A poor car driver some time ago, after years having had to struggle to support his family, suddenly was informed that a large inheritance was his, and there was a joy amounting to bewilderment, but that is a small thing compared with the experience of one when he has put in his hands the title deed to the joys, the raptures, the splendors of heaven, and he can truly say, "Its mansions are mine; its temples are mine; its songs are mine; its God is mine!" Oh, it is no tame thing to become a Christian! It is a merrymaking; it is the killing of the fatted calf; it is a jubilee. You know the Bible never compares it to a funeral, but always compares it to something delightful. It is more apt to be compared to a banquet than anything else. It is compared in the Bible to water—bright, flashing water, to the morning—roseate, dew-wooed, mountain transfigured morning.

I wish I could to-day take all the Bible expressions about pardon and peace and life and comfort and hope and heaven and twist them into one garland and put it on the brow of the humblest child of God in this assemblage and cry, "Wear it, wear it now, wear it forever, son of God, daughter of the Lord God Almighty!" Oh, the joy of the new convert! Oh, the gladness of the Christian service! You have seen sometimes a man in a religious assembly get up and give his experience. Well, Paul gave his experience. He arose in the presence of two churches—the church on earth and the church in heaven—and he said, "Now, this is my experience, sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; poor, yet making many rich; having nothing, yet possessing all things." If the people in this house knew the joys of the Christian religion, they would all pass over into the kingdom of God the next moment. When Daniel Sandeman was dying of cholera, his attendant said, "Have you much pain?" "Oh," he replied, "since I found the Lord I have never had any pain except sin." Then they said to him, "Would you like to send a message to your friends?" "Yes, I would. Tell them that only last night the love of Jesus came rushing into my soul like the surges of the sea, and I had to cry out: 'Stop, Lord, it is enough; stop, Lord, enough!'" Oh, the joys of this Christian religion! Just pass over from those tame joys of this world, into the raptures of the gospel. The world cannot satisfy you; you have found that out. Alexander, longing for other worlds to conquer, and yet drowned in his own bottle; Byron whipping by disquietudes around the world; Voltaire cursing his own soul while all the streets of Paris were applauding him; Henry II consuming with hatred against poor Thomas a Becket—all illustrations of the fact that this world cannot make a man happy. The very man who poisoned the pommel of the saddle on which Queen Elizabeth rode shouted in the street, "God save the queen!" One moment the world applauds, and the next moment the world anathematizes. Oh, come over into this greater joy, this sublime solace, this magnificent beatitude! The night after the battle of Shiloh, and there were thousands of wounded on the field, and the ambulances had not come, one Christian soldier lying there a-dying under the starlight, began to sing—

There is a land of pure delight.

And when he came to the next line there were scores of voices singing:—

Where saints immortal reign.

The song was caught up all through the fields among the wounded until it was said there were at least 10,000 wounded men uniting their voices as they came to the verse:—

There everlasting spring abides
And never withering flowers.
'Tis but a narrow stream divides
This heavenly land from ours.

A Momentous Step.

Oh, it is a great religion to live by and a great religion to die by! There is only one heart throb between you and that religion. Just look into the face of your pardoning God and surrender yourself for time and for eternity, and all is yours. Some of you, like the young man of the text, have gone far astray. I know not the history, but you know it. When a young man went forth into life, the legend says, his guardian angel went forth with him, and getting him into a field, the guardian angel swept a circle around where the young man stood. It was a circle of virtue and honor, and he must not step beyond that circle. Armed foes came down, but were obliged to halt at the circle. They could not pass. But one day a temptress, with diamonded hand, stretched forth and crossed that circle with the hand, and the tempted soul took it, and by that one fell grip was brought beyond the circle and died. Some of you have stepped beyond that circle. Would you not like this day, by the grace of God, to step back? This, I say to you, is your hour of salvation. There was in the closing hours of Queen Anne what is called the clock scene. Flat down on the pillow in helpless sickness, she could not move her head or move her hand. She was waiting for the hour when the ministers of state should gather in angry contest and, worried and wornout by the coming hour and in momentary absence of the nurse, in the power—the strange power which delirium sometimes gives one—she arose and stood in front of the clock, and stood there watching the clock when the nurse returned. The nurse said, "Do you see anything peculiar about that clock?" She made no answer, but soon died. There is a clock scene in every history. If some of you would rise from the bed of lethargy and come out from your delirium of sin and look on the clock of your destiny this moment, you would see and hear something you have not see or heard before, and every tick of the minute, and every stroke of the hour, and every swing of the pendulum would say, "Now, now, now, now!" Oh, come home to your Father's house! Come home, O prodigal, from the wilderness! Come home, come home!

But I notice that when the prodigal came there was the father's joy. He did not greet him with any formal "How do you do?" He did not come out and say! "You are unfit to enter. Go and wash in the trough by the well, and then you can come in. We have had enough trouble with you." Ah, no! When the proprietor of that estate proclaimed festival, it was an outburst of a father's love and a father's joy. God is your Father. I have not much sympathy with the description of God I sometimes hear, as though he were a Turkish sultan, hard and unsympathetic and listening not to the cry of his subjects. A man told me he saw in one of the eastern lands a king riding along, and two men were in altercation, and one charged the other with having eaten his rice, and the king said, "Then slay the man, and by post mortem examination find whether he has eaten the rice." And he was slain. Ah, the cruelty of a scene like that! Our God is not a sultan, not a despot, but a Father, kind, loving, forgiving, and he makes all heaven ring again when a prodigal comes back. "I have no pleasure," he says, "in the death of him that dieth." All may be saved. If a man does not get to heaven, it is because he will not get there. No difference the color, no difference the antecedents, no difference the surroundings, no difference the sin. When the white horses of Christ's victory are brought out to celebrate the eternal triumph, you may ride one of them, and, as God is greater than all, his joy is greater, and when a soul comes back there is in his heart the surging of an infinite ocean of gladness, and to express that gladness it takes all the rivers of pleasure, all the thrones of pomp and all the ages of eternity. It is a joy deeper than all depth, and higher than all height, and wider than all width, and vaster than all immensity. It overtops, it undergirds, it outweighs all the united splendor and joy of the universe, and who can tell what God's joy is? You remember reading the story of a king who on some great day of festivity scattered silver and gold among the people, who sent valuable presents to his courtiers, but methinks, when a soul comes back, God is so glad that to express his joy he flings out new world into space and kindles up new suns and rolls among the white robed anthems of the redeemed a greater hallelujah, while with a voice that reverberates among the mountains of frankincense and is echoed back from the everlasting gates he cries, "This my son was dead, and he is alive again!"

The Home Coming.

At the opening of the exposition in New Orleans I saw a Mexican flutist, and he played the solo, and then afterward the eight or ten bands of music, accompanied by the great organ, came in, but the sound of that one flute, as compared with all the orchestras, was greater than all the combined joy of the universe, when compared with the resounding heart of Almighty God. For ten years a father went three times a day to the depot. His son went off in aggravating circumstances, but the father said, "He will come back." The strain was too much, and his mind parted, and three times a day the father went. In the early morning he watched the train, its arrival, the stepping out of the passengers and then the departure of the train. At noon he was there again watching the advance of the train, watching the departure. At night he was there again watching the coming, watching the going, for ten years. He was sure his son would come back. God has been watching and waiting for some of you, my brothers, 10 years, 20 years, 30 years, 40 years, perhaps 50 years, waiting, waiting, watching, watching, and if now the prodigal should come home what a scene of gladness and festivity, and how the great Father's heart would rejoice at your coming home. You will come, some of you, will you not? You will, you will.

I notice also that when a prodigal comes home there is the joy of the ministers of religion. Oh, it is a grand thing to preach this gospel! I know there has been a great deal said about the trials and the hardships of the Christian ministry. I wish somebody would write a good, rousing book about the joys of the Christian ministry. Since I entered the profession I have seen more of the goodness of God than I will be able to celebrate in all eternity. I know some boast about their equilibrium, and they do not rise into enthusiasm, and they do not break down with emotion, but I confess to you plainly, that, when I see a man coming to God and giving up his sin I feel in body, mind and soul a transport. When I see a man bound hand and foot in evil habit emancipated, I rejoice over it as though it were my own emancipation.

Joy of Saving Souls.

When in one communion service such throngs of young and old stood up and in the presence of heaven and earth and hell attested their allegiance to Jesus Christ, I felt a joy something akin to that which the apostles describes when he says: "Whether in the body I cannot tell; God knoweth." We have not ministers a right to rejoice when a prodigal comes home? They blew the trumpet, and ought they not to be glad of the gathering of the host? They pointed to the full supply, and ought they not to rejoice when thirsty souls plunge as the hart for the water brooks? They came forth, saying, "All things are now ready." Ought they not to rejoice when the prodigal sits down at the banquet? Life insurance men will all tell you that ministers of religion as a class live longer than any other. It is the statistics of all those who calculate upon human longevity that ministers of religion as a class live longer than any other. Why is it? There is more draft upon the nervous system than in any other profession, and their toil is most exhausting. I have seen ministers kept on miserable stipends by parsimonious congregations who wondered at the dullness of the sermon when the men of God were perplexed almost to death by questions of livelihood and had not enough nutritious food to keep any fire in their temperament. No fuel, no fire. I have sometimes seen the inside of the life of many of the American clergymen, never accepting their hospitality because they cannot afford it, but I have seen them struggle on with salaries of five on $600 a year—the average less than that—their struggle well depicted by the western missionary, who says in a letter: "Thank you for the last remittance. Until it came we had not any meat in our house for one year, and all last winter, although it was a severe winter, our children wore their summer clothes." And these men of God I find in different parts of the land struggling against annoyance and exasperations innumerable, some of them week after week entertaining agents who have maps or lightning rods to sell and submitting themselves to all styles of annoyance and yet without complaint and cheerful of soul.

How do you account for the fact that these life insurance men tell us that ministers as a class live longer than any other? It is because of the joy of their work, the joy of the harvest field, the joy of greeting prodigals home to their Father's house. Oh, we are in sympathy with all innocent hilarities. We can enjoy a hearty song, and we can be merry with the merriest, but those of us who have toiled in the service are ready to testify that all these joys are tame compared with the satisfaction of seeing men enter the kingdom of God. The great era of every ministry are outpourings of the Holy Ghost, and I thank God I have seen 10 of them. Thank God, thank God!

Short Prayers.

I notice also when the prodigal comes back all earnest Christians rejoice. If you stood on Montauk point, and there was a hurricane at sea, and it was blowing toward the shore, and a vessel crashed into the rocks, and you saw people get ashore in the lifeboats; and the very last man got on the rocks in safety, you could not contain your joy. And it is a glad time when the church of God sees men who are tossed on the ocean of their sins plant their feet on the rock Christ Jesus. Oh, when prodigals come home, just hear the Christians sing! Just hear the Christians pray! It is not a stereotyped supplication we have heard over and over again for 20 years, but a putting of the case in the hands of God with an importunate pleading. No long prayers. Men never pray at great length unless they have nothing to say and their hearts are hard and cold. All the prayers in the Bible that were answered were short prayers: "God be merciful to me, a sinner!" "Lord, that I may receive my sight." "Lord, save me, or I perish." The longest prayer, Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the temple, less than eight minutes in length, according to the ordinary rate of enunciation. And just hear them pray now that the prodigals are coming home. Just see them make their gates! Oh, heaven, so full of the sunshine anthems, flash upon us the vision of it. An old writer tells us of a man from India to France. He made up of French sailors long from home, and as he came along the coast of France he stepped the deck with glee, and ran to the spires of the church he once worshipped and to the bells they had played in boyhood. The ship came into port, and he saw father and mother and loved ones on the wharf, ashore and rushed up the city, and the captain had to detain a crew to bring the ship to port. So heaven will after we are fully in sight we can see the mansions, its hills, and we can report and our loved ones there that shining shore and spring up we will spring to the beautiful old ship of a world to be moored another crew, our rough voyage seas ended forever.

RELIEF IN SIX HOURS.

Geo. Scales, a Well-Known Niagara Falls, Complete[illegible] the Great South Amer[illegible] Cure—Thousands More [illegible] the Same Testim[illegible]

"I was a great sufferer [illegible] acute kidney disorder and [illegible] side. When almost all other [illegible] sellers had been fairly tried [illegible] I was advised to take S[illegible] Kidney Cure. One bottle [illegible] good I purchased two more [illegible] completely restored—feel [illegible] I have for five years. It [illegible] will give relief in six h[illegible] light in recommending it."

His Winning.

Mrs. Kirtland—And w[illegible] Mr. Dunley, that the wo[illegible] and more beautiful than [illegible] five years ago?

Mr. Dunley (who is [illegible] daughter)—Because—bec[illegible] not in it then.

Papa Kirtland's object [illegible] man have been overrid[illegible]

MIRACLES TO [illegible]

William H. White, of [illegible] Racked by the Tortures [illegible] is Quickly Relieved [illegible] Cured by the American Rheum[illegible]

"I was a martyr to ac[illegible] for years. All the know[illegible] best doctors were giv[illegible] nothing over gave me a[illegible] lief until I obtained yo[illegible] American Rheumatic Cu[illegible] so much for me that I [illegible] testimony, that other su[illegible] agonies of rheumatism m[illegible] vice and try this great r[illegible] satisfied it will cure the[illegible]

Badly Tan[illegible]

The Eon. Sammy—O[illegible] come off. My silly old [illegible] to your sister.

Gertie (of the Sisters [illegible] that's all right; that [illegible] name; she's my daughter.

I CAN'T S[illegible]

In the Daily Wail of Those By Who Have Suffered [illegible] fool, of Huntsville, Ha[illegible] the Great South Am[illegible] vine Did For [illegible]

I was greatly troubled [illegible] nervous debility, indigestion [illegible] ness. I tried a number [illegible] sulted best physicians [illegible] fit. I was finally induced [illegible] American Nervine Tria[illegible] some great cures by it, [illegible] relief from my suffering [illegible] one bottle sweet sleep ca[illegible] like a child. Six bottles [illegible] cured me.

An Ang[illegible]

"Husband and I have [illegible] declined Mrs. Hogby.

"What a perfectly [illegible] he must have inherited [illegible]

DEAFNESS CANNOT [illegible]

by local applications as they [illegible] diseased portion of the ear. [illegible] way to cure deafness, and [illegible] tional remedies. Deafness [illegible] lamed condition of the mu[illegible] Eustachian Tube. When [illegible] you have a rumbling sound [illegible] ing, and when it is entirely [illegible] the result, and unless the [illegible] taken out and this tube res[illegible] condition, hearing will be [illegible] nine cases out of ten are [illegible] which is nothing but an in[illegible] the mucous surfaces.

We will give One Hundred [illegible] case of Deafness caused by [illegible] be cured by Hall's Catarrh [illegible] culars, free.

F. J. CHENEY [illegible]
Sold by Druggists, 75c.

Sore Feet—Mrs. E. [illegible] agh, P. Q., writes: [illegible] months I was troubled [illegible] aches and pains in my [illegible] tent that I could not s[illegible] as my feet were badly [illegible] not wear my boots for [illegible] got a bottle of Dr. Th[illegible] and resolved to try it [illegible] men: I got almost instant [illegible] one bottle accomplished [illegible]

Cup and [illegible]

Howell—I told my w[illegible] poor ten.

Jewett—You should [illegible] face.

Howitt—I didn't. [illegible] face.

Out of Sorts.—Sy[illegible] loss of appetite, furred [illegible] eral indisposition. T[illegible] neglected, develop into [illegible] is a trite saying that a [illegible] tion is worth a pound [illegible] little attention at the [illegible] months of sickness and [illegible] For this complaint take [illegible] of Parmelee's Vegetable [illegible] bed, and one or two [illegible] succession, and a cure w[illegible]

Proba[illegible]

Gautier—Is it tru[illegible] writer has said that vir[illegible]

Dunstan—I judge th[illegible] Paris, from the despe[illegible] will go to get rid of it.

There are so many [illegible] the market, that it is [illegible] to tell which to buy [illegible] cough, a cold or any af[illegible] or lungs, We would [illegible] Consumptive. Syrup [illegible] used it think it is far [illegible] preparations recommen[illegible] plaints. The little fol[illegible] pleasant as syrup.

A Hopeful Cr[illegible]

"I think," said yo[illegible] "that we will like the [illegible] than we did the other [illegible]

"For what reason?" [illegible] band.

"She carries a sm[illegible] from her home."—Wa[illegible]

A Grand I[illegible]

A Tennessee man [illegible] dog, and in trying [illegible] owner how it occurred [illegible] him. In a further effo[illegible] accidentally shot the [illegible] out on bail trying to [illegible] whom he may explain [illegible] pense.

Cotillon Favors.

It is an interesting study to note the different uses to which the so called New York society girl puts her cotillon favors. One girl always has something ready when she hears the little voice in the early morning say through the crack of the door: "Sister, got anything for me? What did you get last night?" Another girl saves them all from year to year. She came out in society last winter, and one entire side of her bedroom is covered with every conceivable favor, even to an enormous Japanese spider, tied by the neck with a narrow ribbon. This year she has had a rack made to hang her new ones on. The effect is very bright and pretty in her room. Then we hear of still another knit of girl:—

This girl rips up almost all her favors and makes good, practical use of nearly every one. She trims her summer hats with the artificial flowers and ribbons, makes collars and belts of some of them, uses the fans and gives some away as presents. In fact, she asserts that going to a dance is great economy. The nicest one of all the girls who is lucky enough to get favors is "the one who, without telling any some or letting any one see, will divide with some other girl at the dance who has not had such a good time as herself and in that way will help to send her home happy and contented."—Harper's Bazar.

To-day.

Cease from this unstedding of your experience." Sufficient to-day are the duties of to-day. Don't waste life in doubts and fears; spend yourself on the work before you, well assured that the right performance of this hour's duties will be the best preparation for the hours or ages that follow it. "Tis the measure of a man—his apprehension of a day."—R. W. Emerson.

Be wise and taste

"S