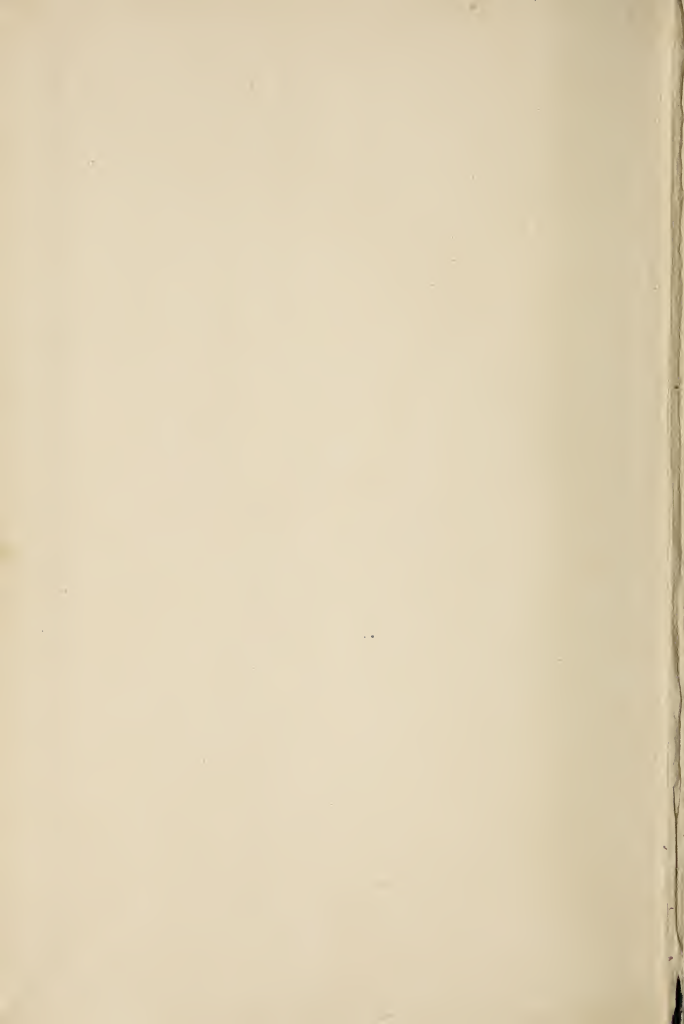


# "TWICE BORN"



S. C. Swallow  
Harrisburg.





TWICE BORN;  
OR, THE  
TWO LIVES  
OF  
HENRY O. WILLS,  
EVANGELIST.

BEING A NARRATIVE OF MR. WILLS'S REMARKABLE EXPERI-  
ENCES AS A WHARF-RAT, A SNEAK-THIEF, A CONVICT,  
A SOLDIER, A BOUNTY-JUMPER, A FAKIR, A FIRE-  
MAN, A WARD-HEELER, AND A PLUG-UGLY.

ALSO,

A HISTORY OF HIS MOST WONDROUS CONVERSION TO GOD,  
AND OF HIS FAMOUS ACHIEVEMENTS AS  
AN EVANGELIST.



CINCINNATI:  
PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR  
AT THE WESTERN METHODIST BOOK CONCERN.  
1890.

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HENRY O. WILLS,  
1890.

## DEDICATION.

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As another evidence to my God, that I most  
earnestly appreciate the glorious  
second life  
into which He has brought me, I humbly

### DEDICATE

this plain and unassuming presentation of the  
leading facts and experiences in my  
life, to Him and His  
holy cause.

HENRY O. WILLS.



4

HENRY O. WILLS.



MRS. HENRY O. WILLS.



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## PREFACE.

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WHY have I written this book?

Because I want money.

For what purpose?

To make an effort, by the grace and under the direction of God, at demonstrating the uses to which He intended money should be applied.

What are those uses?

As He has revealed them to me, any measures, however crudely or with whatever elaborateness they may be prosecuted, which have the salvation of mankind and the glorification of His holy kingdom, are proper uses to which to apply money.

How do I hope to accomplish such ends through the publication of this volume?

Because I have faith that the story it tells will bring to others now in the clutches of the devil, the new and beautiful life which, praise God, has been bestowed on me.

Because I have faith in God's love of business. He helps those who help themselves.

No man has a right to ask for or expect to get something for nothing.

I want money to enable me to enlarge my work and ability to do service, and I don't want to get that money in a way which would be unfair to God or man. Believing that this volume—solely for the lessons it presents—is worth full value of all that is asked for it, and confident that through God—not through Wills, mind you—it will prove of direct value to each reader, I herewith submit it without further apology, so far as myself and my venture are concerned.

In beginning this first book-making venture, I want to place myself squarely with the reader by saying, that, while I am the author of the work, I did not do the editing. That has been done by a friend who, knowing both the old Wills and the new Wills, was sufficiently interested in the latter to undertake the work of preparing my manuscript for publication. "His chief regret," as he said, "viewing the enterprise both from religious and business standpoints, is that it was not practicable to present



the story in *fac-similes* of the original manuscript." Therefore, in his behalf I desire to say that but little else has been done by him than to tie together in consecutive form, the material I have furnished. That my manuscript showed neither graceful diction or elegant chirography is not strange, when it is considered that I am, as everybody knows, not an educated man, as to book-learning. The only book about which I profess to have some knowledge is God's own Book, and all, or nearly all, that I know of that, has been revealed to me by His gracious goodness within the past seven years.

Thus much explanatory will set us right as to the character of this volume ; and now, as you are about to read of a man once a sinner, and almost hopeless in his devotion to the devil, I may be pardoned, I hope, for introducing copies of a few of my most highly prized testimonials.

HENRY O. WILLS.

## TESTIMONIALS.

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FROM THE LATE GEORGE DUFFIELD, LL. D.

BLOOMFIELD, N. J., June 12, 1888.

H. O. WILLS :

DEAR SIR,—I was glad to receive your paper from Glenn's Falls, giving an account of your work there. For a month past I have been unable to write to any one, and only within two or three days have I gained a fighting chance for life.

It is a great pleasure to me to know that you are still faithful in your labors for the salvation of human souls. It is a grand work—the grandest in which mortal men may be employed; and so long as you stick to your motto, "He died for me," I do not doubt of your success.

This simple truth is mighty, through God, for the pulling down of the strongholds of sin and Satan.

My brother, Bethune, unites with me in thanksgiving for what you have done and are still doing for the cause of our Savior, the Redeemer of the world. With love to you and Mrs. Wills,

Fraternally yours,           GEORGE DUFFIELD.

## FROM A NEWSPAPER PROPRIETOR.

DETROIT EVENING JOURNAL, June 6, 1890.

THE work at the Casino Tabernacle began with the efforts of Rev. H. O. Wills, which resulted in the conversion of a large number of persons, and the spiritual quickening of many more. The work which Mr. Wills thus successfully began, has since been maintained with satisfactory increase.

Mr. Wills is original in his methods, an evident student of the Bible, and a graphic expounder of its pages. Conversions seem invariably to follow his work, and if the Lord honors his work, others may well be slow to criticise.

W. H. BREARLE

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FROM THE GREAT MERCHANT.

DETROIT, MICH., June 7, 1890.

I HAVE known H. O. Wills several years. He is an earnest, honest Christian worker, not doing things by halves, but openly advocating whatever he believes.

I take great pleasure in saying these few words in his favor. I believe he has done an immense amount of good in Detroit and Michigan.

Yours truly,

J. L. HUDSON.

## FROM A NEWSPAPER EDITOR.

DETROIT, June 6, 1890.

TAKE pleasure in bearing witness to the fact that,

WHEREAS, once H. O. Wills was a drunkard, a brawler, a ward-heeler, a profane and vulgar bruiser, he is now a conscientious, generous, intense, and successful lover of his fellow-men.

He claims that religion has made this change. I do not know the cause, but the result is apparent.

Mr. Wills has the confidence of the people of Detroit—Christians and many worldings, too—and he has never abused that confidence. He is a better citizen than he was before the “great change” came over him; a better husband, a better father.

C. F. LEIDY.

## FROM A DETROIT BANKER.

DETROIT, April 30, 1886.

H. O. WILLS:

DEAR SIR,—Continue in your good work, and I pray that God may pour upon you his richest blessing. “Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass.” “Trust in the Lord and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.” Inclosed find ten dollars, which please accept for yourself and your work in this city.

Yours truly,

T. S. ANDERSON.

## FROM A DETROIT MANUFACTURER.

DEAR BROTHER WILLS,—Inclosed check for fifty dollars to help on your work. If you need more let me know, only don't *publish*\* me. Wishing you well,

Yours sincerely,

A. McVITTIE.

## FROM A LANSING MANUFACTURER.

LANSING, MICH., Nov. 16, 1889.

H. O. WILLS:

DEAR SIR,—Inclosed find check for ten dollars for your personal use. I feel certain you are doing good, and want to show my appreciation of the same.

Yours truly,

A. O. BEMENT.

## FROM A "FEW FRIENDS."

DETROIT, Jan. 19, 1887.

MRS. H. O. WILLS:

DEAR MADAM,—A few of Mr. Wills's friends have subscribed for a fund of \$600. (Fifty dollars per month for one year, to be paid you through the State Savings Bank), for the support of yourself and family while Mr. Wills devotes himself to his evangelistic labors in Michigan. The first installment of this fund (\$50 for January) is now ready to be paid you on application in person at the bank.

Respectfully,

T. S. ANDERSON.

\* The above note was written over a year before this volume was published, and its present use is, by consent of Mr. McVittie, especially given for this purpose.

The following testimonials, from the heads of the criminal courts of the city of Detroit, show the feeling in those courts :

POLICE COURT OF THE CITY OF DETROIT.

DETROIT, June 10, 1890.

I UNHESITATINGLY and gladly recommend H. O. Wills and his work to all thinking people. A discussion of his methods is not necessary from one who knows the results of that work as well as I do. He is a man who has, to a sublime degree, the courage of his convictions, and who, no matter what his early life has been, is, as I believe, a thoroughly honest man at present. That he has done great good is known to all the people of Michigan, and I am certain that that same people join with me in wishing him a continuance of his valuable service.

Respectfully,

EDMUND HAUG,

Police Justice.

RECORDER'S COURT OF THE CITY OF DETROIT.

GEO. S. SWIFT, } Judges. GEO. H. LESHER,  
 FITZWILLIAM H. CHAMBERS, } Clerk.

DETROIT, June 9, 1890.

*To whom it may concern :*

I HAVE great pleasure in saying that I am acquainted with H. O. Wills, evangelist, and I know of the great and good work in which he has been for a long time engaged. He has been most suc-

cessful, and has done a vast amount of good. He is an affable and kind-hearted gentleman, but an uncompromising enemy of sin and vice in every form. He is a man of experience and a judge of human nature. I respect and admire his heroism in attacking vice in high as well as low places. I hope he may be as successful in future as in the past.

I am, respectfully, F. H. CHAMBERS.

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FROM SHERIFF STELLWAGEN.

DETROIT, Nov. 20, 1886.

*To whom it may concern:*

THIS is to certify that H. O. Wills stands unsurpassed, in my opinion, in prison work. He has labored for the past two years in the Wayne County Jail with marked success, under my own observation.

I cheerfully testify to his good work, and sincerely hope that every opportunity will be offered him in his noble calling.

GEO. H. STELLWAGEN,  
 Sheriff of Wayne County, Michigan.

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FROM U. S. MINISTER, THOS. W. PALMER.

OFFICE OF T. W. PALMER, DETROIT, Dec. 23, 1889.  
 REV. H. O. WILLS, 357 Clinton St., Detroit:

DEAR SIR,—The Hon. T. W. Palmer, now at Madrid as U. S. Minister to Spain, has cabled me

to-night, directing me to bear to you his assurances of esteem and friendship, and to say that he is with you in spirit at this time of Christmas rejoicings, if not in person.

He directs me to say further, that while wishing you health and happiness, he has caused to be placed to your credit in this office the sum of \$25, which amount I will be pleased to hand you at any time. With kind regards, believe me,

Yours truly,            FORD STARRING, Agent.



## INTRODUCTION.

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**G**OD moves in a mysterious way in calling and selecting those who are to carry forward the interests of his kingdom, which contemplates the world's evangelization.

What Christian of the early Jerusalem society could have had the remotest idea that Saul, the cruel persecutor, would be called of God to be the great apostle to the Gentiles? What Christian Council of the sixteenth century would have selected Luther, the poor boy, the miner's son, as the most suitable man to inaugurate a new era?

Or, who among all the Christian people of Chicago thought of looking to D. L. Moody as the man who would awaken the Church of the nineteenth century, to see the vast possibilities in the use of lay workers, to hasten the world's evangelization?

I met a cultivated young Scotchman in Austria, some time ago, engaged in mission-work.

He told me he had been awakened to give himself to such service by D. L. Moody, during his work in Scotland. How strange that the uneducated Chicago Moody should be sent to cultivated Edinburgh, rich in Christian learning and great teachers, to awaken her young men to give themselves to God's service! How true the words of Isaiah, "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord!" No; this is not the human way. Man could not work out results along this line; it is not natural; it surpasses human thought; it looks to be, it must be divine.

To take the most unfit person, naturally considered, and to work out through him the most marvelous results, is not human, but divine.

We have something of this in the case of the subject of this volume. H. O. Wills was rescued suddenly out of the very mire of a long life of sin, having no fear of God before his eyes, and transformed by the power of God, and chosen as a messenger to do strange things and a great work in the kingdom of God.

On Thursday night, late in October, 1883, I was conducting the usual prayer-meeting service

in the Jefferson Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church, of Detroit. At the close of the meeting, which had been unusually quiet, a large, rough-looking man arose, and began to give his experience. I had never before seen the man or heard his voice; but as, in subdued tones and with tears, he related the story of his strange conversion a few nights before in his own bedroom, his words thrilled me, and produced impressions I can never forget, which led me to say within myself: "I do n't know this man, nor his history, but he is a wonderfully transformed being, and is surely called of God for some great work."

He joined the Church, but could not be satisfied with the ordinary Christian life. He was working for God anywhere and everywhere, in season and out of season, but especially among the rougher class among whom he had spent his life. At last he gave up his profitable business, and committed himself to God to do special Christian work. When we had arranged to build a new church, I saw him rally financial influence to purchase this building, in which he had given his first public experience, and having removed

it several blocks, conducted therein a mission for many months; then he went forth into a larger field. All this time he was being trained of God by severe trials and discouragements, often without money, seemingly without friends, severely tempted, but through it all he grew in grace, and more abundant in labors.

Friends have often come to me saying: "You had better see Brother Wills; he is having such trial, and will surely give up." To all such I have always replied: "No, he will come out of his trial glorifying God."

Nearly seven years have now passed. No man could be more changed than he, in the time. That the hand of God has been in it all is beyond question, and we look for continued, wide-spread usefulness, and for the awakening of multitudes of dead souls through his earnest labors.

REV. WILLIAM DAWE.

## TWICE BORN.

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### SELF-WILLED IN INFANCY.

**A**LTHOUGH I have lived through a half century, and in spite of the fact that my life has been, up to within seven years ago, a checkered one, the single beacon-light in that life, the one unfailing token of my hopes and dreams, has been my memory of my mother. Left a widow when I was but six months old, and left alone, too, in the large city of Troy, N. Y., without money and with but few acquaintances, to do as best she might in bringing up her small family, she struggled against poverty most bravely. Firm in her faith in God, she made honest and continuous effort to teach me the right way, but without success. She was patient, forgiving, self-sacrificing, and most gentle with me, trying to deal with me as only a mother can, and while I occasionally brightened her dreary, dark existence, it was only for a moment,

so to speak. Well do I remember how she taught me the pretty little petition to the Giver of all good; and many and many a time, since then, both in prison and when free, has come to me the words, "Now, I lay me down to sleep, I pray the Lord my soul to keep."

The same prayer, taught generation after generation, most potent in its simplicity, and known to the universal army of children, has been, beyond any question, of inestimable good to the world; but, as in my own case, it has been too often learned as one of infancy's "stints," to be chattered off parrot-like, so long as parental authority demands it, to be finally abandoned when that self-control, which comes with advanced youth, asserts itself. There is one characteristic about the prayer which proves its value; I had almost said its immortality,—it is, that no matter how vicious or how wicked a man or woman may become, the text of that prayer is never forgotten after it has been once committed to memory.

Reader, do you remember it? Does it ever come to you, gray-headed though you may be? God grant that it does, and that it may again,

and that through it, if you are not yet in the light, or, if once a believer, you are faltering, you may be brought to Christ!

While I was, as most young boys are, fond of my mother, and while I used often to help her, to the best of my ability, doing errands, helping about the house, and the like, still I was wayward and unruly, and my chief protests were against attending school and going to Sunday-school.

I wish to say, right here, that the most fatal mistake that can possibly be made by a boy or girl is to neglect whatever school privileges may be offered. Nine-tenths of the beginnings in crime come because of the shiftless, aimless, and degrading hours of idleness, brought about through failure to go to school.

I was sent by my mother to the Rev. Dr. Beaman's (Presbyterian) Sunday-school; and while I did go occasionally, and while once or twice I was known to have my lesson, still I was most irregular and unreliable, and more than that, I could not arouse any interest in the school and its teachings. Yet God is good as well as mysterious, and I often find myself now wonder-

ing whether it is not the few scattering seeds sowed at that time, and in that school, and almost by accident, as it were, which, in full bloom and firmly rooted in my heart, are now giving their best blossoms and choicest fruit, in my behalf. Who can say that the Wills who is now writing this, is not like the prolific, full-ripe wheat, that sprouted and grew luxuriantly after having been hidden for ages in the long-forgotten graves of the Egyptian mummies?

Of course my present chief regret is that I did not obey the pleadings of my mother and the instructions of my teachers. Well, I moved from bad to worse until, when eleven years of age, my dear mother died, and I was left alone to battle with life, and educated to that most wicked pitch where I firmly believed that the battle of life meant literally a cruel, unscrupulous, and sanguinary struggle. Mother had said to me, just before she died, "Henry, what will you do when I die?" and while she begged of me to place myself in the care of either my uncle William or my uncle Jim (her brothers), I felt guilty; that is to say, I know now that I felt guilty. At the time, however, I felt angry and



wicked, and humored my false belief that my uncles had no interest in me, and would do nothing for me. Of course I promised my mother that I would go to them, and after she died, I did go to live with my uncle William. He was a wholesale crockery merchant at No. 79 Pearl Street. While I know that I gave him plenty of trouble by refusing to go to school, and by various other acts of disobedience, and while I am sure I was a disagreeable addition to his family, as I had a quick, ungovernable temper, and a natural tendency toward fighting, still I fancy my evil qualities were not wholly the cause of my troubles. For instance, I had many rows through refusing to shine my cousin John's shoes, and repeatedly I resented what I called unwarranted overbearing, both on the part of my uncle and his son. Finally, after I had played "hookey" the larger part of an entire term, the climax was brought about by my uncle's asking me to bring home my school-books, that he might see the progress I had made. Like all sinners, I was a coward. I was afraid to face my uncle's wrath, and so when I left my uncle's house that morning ostensibly to

go to school, I left for good. I left to continue my already well-begun downward course.

Did I have any money? Not a copper; but that fact did not alarm me. I had been on the street too long not to have learned that I could get money either in one way or another. What did I do? Anything that came my way. I carried a "route" for the *Troy Daily Press*, I ran on errands, blackened shoes, and so on, when I could n't get money in other ways. What other ways? They were innumerable as to details of operation, but they all came under the head of stealing. I was in all kinds of deviltry. I recollect, one bright summer day, I asked a boy named Albert Higgins, where a Mr. Andrews (who was approaching us) lived. Now, we had just stolen a box of liquid stove-blackening, and when Albert pointed toward Mr. Andrews, I threw the blacking all over the gentleman's suit of white duck, and cut and run for it. I simply relate this little incident to show how willful and malicious we were in our deviltry. I worked for a time in the molding-room of a stove-foundry, and while there I used to shake out sand, and cut it for John Morrissey, afterward a noted



WILLS, A NEWSBOY.



pugilist, and still later noted as the proprietor of the finest gambling-hell in Saratoga, while he was at the same time a member of the United States Congress. Then I used to "run" with "Old Ten" (a fire-engine company), and I had the then great honor, to me a boy, of "holding the butt" when the old *Alhambra* was burned; I took an active part in the great fight between "Six" and "Ten," when Orr's paper-factory on River Street was burned. Recollect I was not yet ten years old, so far as age counted, but in knowledge of the world in its worst sense I was a man. As a boot-black and newsboy, with my kit and papers, I worked my passage on the boats to New York City, and here I brought up at the Washington Market, then the place of all places in the great American metropolis to go to school. To learn astronomy and mathematics? Not much! but the veritable American university of learning as to petty thieving and swindling operations. Here I ran errands for the fishermen and oystermen, not with a view to earning money honestly, but as a cloak, from beneath which I might keep watch all the time for an opportunity to do the

devil's work; because I now claim it was the devil in me that made me do those things.

O the schemes we had for dishonestly getting money! They are old games now; but they were new then, and seldom failed to work successfully. There was the stuffed pocket-book dodge, where we would drop a pocket-book full of counterfeit money behind a man, whose dress and manners would tell us he was from the country. We would do it in such a way that he would surely look around just as we would, picking it up again, pretend to have just found it. Then, before his wondering eyes we would open it, so that he could see the gold, the bills or the drafts, all bogus. Then one of our gang would come up from the opposite direction, just as though he was a stranger to everybody, and ask the countryman if he had not just lost his pocket-book. By this time we would be across the street examining the book, apparently with great interest and greater secrecy. Our "pal" would assure the countryman that he saw him drop it, and offer to help him get it back again. Do n't you see? the countryman has had a glimpse of what he supposes is a big boodle of money, and

he thinks he has got a disinterested friend to prove the property is his. The temptation is too great, and about six times out of ten the countryman would fall into the trap. Then he and his new-found friend would come over to us, claim the pocket-book and threaten arrest unless we would give it back to the owner. Of course we would be much frightened, and we would kick a little. Then the man who found the pocket-book would suggest a reward, and the trick would generally end up in our getting from fifty to sixty dollars reward for a book full of worthless stuff, that had cost us a couple of shillings.

Another great "racket" we had, was the sale of "snide" jewelry. At the market, when the crowd was the biggest, one of us would approach some benevolent, wealthy-looking lady, as though trying to conceal something, and as though afraid of detection. After attracting the lady's attention, he would cautiously open one hand, displaying therein what appeared to be a fine gold ring. (It was a heavy brass affair, thinly plated with gold, and costing about a dollar a dozen.) He would say, timidly: "Missus, do n't

you want to buy this? I just found it out there in the street." Ninety-nine times in a hundred the bait would catch the fish.

Well, this sort of thing went on all summer, and then came winter. Truly it is said that one-half the world knows not how the other half lives. It might be added that they do not care. What do you think of a boy, just eleven years old, sleeping out on the wharfs in the fall of the year, with nothing under him but a barrel of salt, and with a big, black, stiff tarpaulin or a heavy sail-cloth over him? Who-o-o! It makes me shiver even now to think of it. Why in those days a good, big dry-goods box, with straw or paper in it, was for us as good as a room in the Astor House,—at that time the leading hotel in the city. Do you wonder that I was a thief? That I stole everything I could lay my hands on?

Next, I got a job watching rats. What's that? I'll tell you. It was to watch the wholesale stalls in Washington Market, to prevent the rats from eating the meat kept there. My pay was a shilling a week for walking up and down at night in front of the stalls. Armed



with a stout club, I would walk from one stall to another, rapping on the meat.

Say, you all know what rats are; but if you are ever in New York City, I advise you to take a stroll, between twelve and one o'clock at night, through Washington Market, or, in fact, anywhere in the vicinity of the river front. Rats! You would surely cry out "rats," for there you will see myriads of the little beasts. No, you won't see them by the dozens, for they scamper about in troops of hundreds, and the noise made by a gravel-slide over a tin roof is the nearest *simile* I can give to the noise they make as they run along.

While I knew that my shilling a week earned as rat-watchman was as pure gold compared to the devil's dollars I captured each week by thieving, still I want to ask you, is it any wonder that most of the scores of boys of my age were, as I was, thieves and devil's aids? They could get work and wages. Yes, they could patrol a great market all night, saving hundreds of dollars worth of meat each night, for the magnificent salary of one shilling a week!

O God, why did I not know then that you

loved me so; that even then you were watching over me? I thank you now, O Jesus, that I know it, even at this late day!

I believe it would take more time and paper than I could get hold of to tell you of all the thieving scrapes and swindling operations I engaged in, of how many times I got into the police station and got out again.

O, I was so innocent-looking! It seemed to everybody that it must have been somebody else who committed the crimes, or who put me up to them. Even after I was in the Tombs (city prison), waiting for trial, the commissioners who came in said, as they looked at me, "This boy must not be kept here with the regular criminals, for they will ruin him;" and so they had me taken out and sent to the "Home of the Friendless."

If these men had known me, they would have known that I could have taught the most hardened criminal in the Tombs a good deal of the science of thieving and lying.

Well, I staid in this good home just long enough to get a good dinner, and then said "good-bye," and then went down to the market.

There I looked around, and about the first thing I saw on one of the stands was a fat pocket-book. The devil said to me at once, "Get it," which I did quickly. I then shot out of the market, and made "a bee-line" for the Hudson River Depot, and was soon on my way to Troy.

(O, how I wish I could give back to-day all that I have stolen! But I can 't. God says, "Let him who stole, steal no more," and, God being my helper, I will obey.)

I well remember how, while going to Troy, I had a seat in the car with an old man, who, in paying the conductor, pulled out a handful of gold and silver, and some of it dropped on the seat. You may rest assured that I did not call his attention to the overflow, but considered it my own, and took it. When I got back to Troy I was awfully alone—no home to go to, and no mother to greet me. She was gone, gone! O, mother, mother! God being my helper and my Redeemer, I will come to you; for I believe you are with God. Well do I remember your last words while living. They were words of prayer to God for your wayward boy—the prayer ending with the words, "Jesus, come quickly."

Let whoever reads this book remember that when your mother is gone, you have lost your best and truest friend next to God.

I was by this time about twelve years old, and the little money I had was soon gone; but I found a place as chore-boy in the Troy Museum or Theater, which was in charge of Joe Howard; and O, if I had even heeded the good advice which he and the tragedian, John R. Scott, gave me, I might have been a better boy. During this time, too, Charlotte Cushman, America's greatest actress, and Kate Denin, another eminent American actress, were good to me, and gave me good advice. I used to carry little Cordelia Howard from the Mansion House to the theater. - O, why did I not mind God, and see that he had raised up for me true friends?

The reason was, because the devil was my master, and he was determined that I should not see and know that these kind souls were my friends. The devil was my master. I had to obey him; he lived in me; he was stronger than I, and made me do his will.

I had two cousins in Troy, both boys, and one day as I was returning from an errand, bring-



WILLS, THE BOY-DRIVER ON ERIE CANAL.



ing some guns and pistols to be used on the stage, I met these two boys. They said they were running away from home, and it did not take much urging on their part to get me to go with them. They had money, and I had guns and pistols; so we started West on the Erie Canal, and by the time we got to Lockport we had neither money, guns, nor pistols. The boys left me to take care of myself, and I went back to Troy by working my passage as driver on the tow-path. I walked.

I think I could preach a sermon to a lot of canal-drivers—such a sermon as they would listen to a good deal quicker than to a sermon from Talmage or Spurgeon, because I could speak to them in their own language: “And they were amazed and marveled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galileans? And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?” (Acts ii, 7, 8.)

This is the true way to preach the gospel; then every man can understand it; we must prove that we are not above them, but are one of them,—“Behold, he eateth with publicans and sinners.”

Well, I got back to Troy, and in a few hours I had a boarding-house where people are taught to play checkers with their nose. I was tried and convicted, because I could not come any gush on the Troy officers. You see, they had come to know me so well. I was sent to the House of Refuge to stay until I was twenty-one years old. I was in there but nine months, for here fortune stood my friend again, and while there the officers took to me, and gave me the soft job of hall-boy.

After I was in the House of Refuge nine months, a farmer came along from New Jersey, and I was bound out to him. He took me home to his farm, which was a terribly stony one. I did n't like to pick stone very well, so I said "good-bye" to the farmer, and was gone before he knew it. Run away? Of course I did. That was about all I knew enough to do; and, like all tricky, dishonest people, I steered at once for my old haunts and companions.

Well, back to Troy I went. I was now fourteen years old. I go into all these little details because I want to tell what a blessed Savior I have found, and to do this I must tell how bad



I have been. Then one can see just what he has saved me from.

Did I continue to steal? Yes, everything I could lay my hands on. I thought that God and all the world hated me; so I said, "Tit for tat."

Since I have started to serve my Savior, in these late years, some have called me "Crazy Wills, poor crazy Wills;" but this is not true. I was crazy when I got back to Troy, the time spoken of above.

At this time I was so crazy that I thought every store was mine, with all the goods. I helped myself so much, and so often, that before long I was again taken before the judges. They declared me so crazy that I would have to be locked up again; they gave me my choice of asylums, either to go back to the refuge, or to the State prison. If I went to the prison, it meant two years' confinement; so I chose the crazy asylum. You see, I knew if I was taken back to the refuge, after I had run away from the stony farm in New Jersey, I would have to stay until I was twenty-one years old, or be sent to sea on a whaler, and I preferred to stay on land.

When I reached the asylum, they put bracelets on my ankles, and tried to cure me of my lunacy.

They put me at work in the iron-mines. I sawed wood, and did other work, while they dressed me in a beautiful suit of clothes, so that if I should happen to stray away from the Home I would not be lost. All the people about would know by my clothes that I belonged to the Home, and would kindly bring me back in safety.

O God! This was the time I was truly crazy, and I want the reader to judge whether I was the craziest then or now.

Even here God helped me again; for one of the prison contractors took a fancy to me, and was good to me, because I was only a boy, not sixteen years old, and "smart," as they called it. They put me in the machine-shop, placed me under one of the best machinists in the world, and told him to teach me all about an engine.

This machinist was John Phillips, who was in for life for killing his wife.

I served my "time" without punishment, and was pronounced cured, and I thought I was cured.

Do you ask how much I got when I came out? O, wonderful, wonderful! I got six dollars, which would feed me and take me back to Troy.

Do you think I was met on my return by any good people, who rejoiced that I was cured? O no, not that; but this: "This is Wills, the State-prison bird;" and you may be sure that the officers kept an eye on me and my movements. Could I get work as an engineer? No, no. No, I had to go with that one shirt, which was on my back, and one suit of clothes, take work as I could find it on the docks, in the brickyards, and elsewhere. At this time I was not very strong, because my work in prison, while under the machinist, was light and easy, and had given me but little strength, while the work I was forced to do now was too hard for me. I made a great exertion, however, and did my best; but I got no encouragement,—I was a State-prison bird, and that was all there was about it.

Accordingly I went crazy again, and said to myself: "Every man's hand is against me, then let my hand be against every man."

Soon the law was hot on my trail again, and I started West. I came to Michigan, first to

Detroit, and stopped one night in 1858; then on to Grass Lake, where I tried to learn to be a farmer. I did not like to be so near to Jackson, however, and so I came back to Detroit, where I did not let anything grow on the palm of my hands. I believe I could get away with "boodle" as readily as any man in the State, at this time, and yet I was only a boy.

I won't go through all the details at this day which made it advisable for me to seek an eastern climate, but I did. Can any one tell us why a thief can't keep away from the place that has "sent him up" so many times?

Well, again I was back in Troy, and I am sure I was watched pretty close, but I did not steal with a gang any more; I went it alone. I said to myself: "If I get caught I will suffer alone, and I will not have to 'divy up the swag' with any one. I will take all or none."

At this time I did not drink; but with an old companion one night, I got drunk, and we made Rome howl until the "peelers" got us, and we got sixty days in the Albany penitentiary. Of all the prisons I ever saw, this "takes the cake." Whoop! but it beats all I ever heard of. O,

what a table! My, my! Rice and cock-roaches, and all such dainties. Enough, enough! Two months later I got my liberty. Now, what is liberty? I will define true liberty, but not what I called liberty in the days I write about.

Here is the definition of true liberty: "If the Son, therefore, shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." (John viii, 36.) This is liberty, indeed; bless God for his Son Jesus Christ, who can give us such liberty!

Well, once out in the world again, the "fly cops" watched me, and I watched them, week after week and month after month. They would say: "What are you doing now, Wills?"

"Have n't you heard of the fortune that was left me?" said I, and they would answer: "No, who left it to you?" I would guy them with, "I will tell you in my will," or some such stuff, and they would pass on to keep up watch for me to "go wrong."

Let me say right here, that it does not take a smart man to steal, but it takes a smart man to hide. This explains why so many men are in prison to-day. The greatest trick for the thief to learn in order to keep clear of the prison, is

to learn to control himself, so that he never gets the big-head, and, imagining that he is very smart, try to run on year after year stealing and being crooked, without getting the "peelers" onto him.

This is the fatal mistake I made. I got so crazy at this time, that I forgot my cunning. One day, in passing a place, the devil said to me: "This place and all in it is yours, and you must move it to-night, or the creditors will take it." So, that night, instead of taking a man, as a friend, to help me, I took the best friend on earth to help move or take stock, a friend I could trust—an iron bar, called a "jimmy." Not having the key, I opened the place with the jimmy, and moved a good share of the stock that night, thinking all the time, as I worked: "What are the police doing? What will the peelers say?"

The devil, who hates everything that is made in God's image, told me how to take the goods; but he did not tell me how to hide, and in a few days the asylum officers came, and said: "Wills, we want you to come and be examined, to see if we can let you run at large any more."

I said to them that I was all right ; but I had to go with them, because they were the strongest. When we arrived at the Ferry Street boarding-house, and the examination began, they told me that they had proof that I had forgot myself again, and had been helping myself to other people's property.

I laughed at them, and said: "How can you think me so foolish? Do n't you see that I do n't kick, bite, or rave as I used to when I was crazy ; I talk just as sensibly as you do.

"That makes no difference, Wills," they answered ; "you forgot one important point this time."

"What do you mean?" said I, and then they told me I forgot to hide goods this time, and that I had the big-head ; that by patience and a good deal of watching, they had got me "dead to rights." And so they had ; they had got the "swag," and I was in for it again. In this operation I had taken all the risk, and kept all the boodle ; there was no one to turn State's evidence. I was caught, after all, in the long run, and must suffer.

What to do I did not know. If I stood trial and was found guilty, I would get the extreme

penalty of the law, because the same judge was on the bench that sent me up before. His name was Judge Hogeboom, and he was noted as being bad on old offenders. At this juncture I sent for my cousin and the prosecuting attorney, and asked them: "What was the best that could be done if I pleaded guilty?" They said they would see the judge and let me know. So they talked it over, and said they would give me three and a half years in the penitentiary. (The full penalty was seven years, and by pleading guilty I could save half.) I knew it was "all up" with me, and said to them: "Drive along, and be quick about it."

I put on lots of bravado; but down in my heart I was sick, because I had to go back to "school," as I did to the asylum. O that I had known something about Jesus at that time, or that I had been taught that Jesus loved me! It seemed to me that everybody hated me, and I thought that Jesus must hate me, because I was so bad. Well, they put the bracelets on my legs again, and on two other thieves at the same time.

We often hear and read of the "great honor there is among thieves," and I wish to correct



that impression. Wills, who writes these words, knows what he is talking about, because he has been with them. Wills says there is no honor among thieves. How can there be honor among devils? Devils hate each other. The devil is the *evil one* who makes thieves, and he must make beings like himself—beings who must hate each other. Let one devil have a chance to get out of prison by giving the other devils away, and he will do it quick enough, unless they be first cousins.

Well, I was sent to the mines, and if I had known anything about God's Word at that time, I would have seen the truth in the words: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." (Gal. vi, 7.)

O, it was an awfully long harvest which I had! How I suffered no one can tell! I often said in my cell, "What will it come to?" But I knew the ropes, and I soon had one of my old places back as engineer. You see, I knew that engineers were scarce in the prison. I got along all right until I tried to go out, without first getting a letter of recommendation from the prison officials.

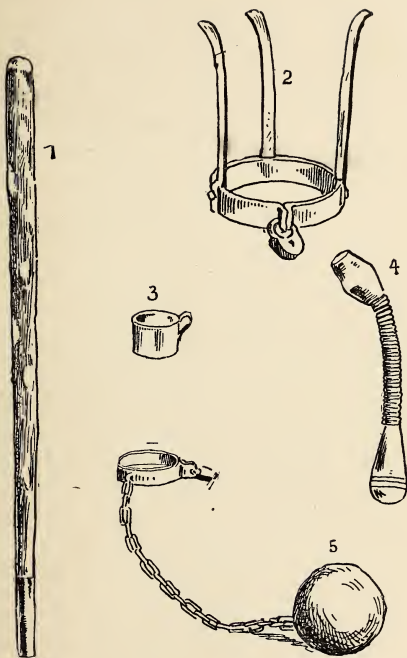
For this breach of discipline, the officers pronounced me crazy, and gave me "a watch and chain" to wear. The watch weighed fifty pounds, and instead of fastening the chain to my vest, they fastened it to my leg.

They also gave me a neck-tie, but I did n't like it, for it was made of iron instead of silk; and it was fastened with a padlock, so that I could not take it off. After a while I was put back in the mines; but not for long, for soon they needed an engineer in the nail rolling-mill, and I was sent there.

O, my God, as I write this to-night, I thank thee for what thou hast done for me! "O Lord of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee!"

I had been in the rolling-mill but a short time, when a few of us formed a plan to escape. The job was "put up" by a man named Burke, and another man named Lewell.

Lewell was to hit the keeper, whose name was Wright, just before we were changed for the other gang, who came on to take our place (as we worked half the night and half the day); but before it came off, Burke was pardoned out, and I was changed to the lower rolling-mill, on account of the engineer at that mill being taken



*caption*

### PRISON CURIOS.

- No. 1. The warden's cane, "loaded" at the lower end.
- No. 2. Iron collar and head-braces, with padlock.
- No. 3. Half-pint cup, holding daily water allowance.
- No. 4. Skull-cracker. Two lead knobs connected by a handle made of spiral steel wire.
- No. 5. Ball and chain.



sick. When the night arrived, that we were to try to go out, I could n't be there, because of the change, and I was locked up in my cell, when Lewell hit the keeper, as agreed upon. Instead of knocking him senseless, as planned, he knocked him dead, dead!

O God! O Lord! how can I thank thee to-day for delivering me from being present at that horrible death?

Yes, the men got out and over the wall, but it was not long before the great prison-bell began to ring harshly and loud, and soon "tramp, tramp," then the great cannon boomed out.

It was the rule of the prison (which was in the midst of the great forests of Northeastern New York State), that if a convict escaped, the cannon should be discharged three times. When it began to fire this night, I said, "O, why am I locked up here? Why did I have such hard luck? Why was I sent down to the other mill?" But, O God! I little knew what had happened.

"Boom, boom, boom!" rang out the gun, and peal after peal, until one would think all the prisoners had escaped.

At last it stopped, and all was silent until morning. Then, O, what a story ran through the prison! All the men in the upper rolling-mill were gone, and Wright, the keeper, was dead.

No work to-day. Every man locked up, and the whole village was off in the woods. The prison was in the midst of a dense woods, sixteen miles from Plattsburg, on Lake Champlain. The woods were alive with French charcoal-burners, for we used charcoal in making the iron; and there were hundreds of these charcoal-burners in the woods. When these men heard the gun fired three times, they knew it meant that a prisoner had escaped, and they knew that whoever caught him would get fifty dollars' reward. So the charcoal-burners left their work, armed themselves with all kinds of weapons,—pitchforks, scythes, guns, and clubs. It seemed to them a better job than burning charcoal, for they had to burn so much of the stuff to get fifty dollars.

The men were soon caught and back in prison again. I say right here, it is almost impossible to escape from Clinton Prison, even if they

should let you out, unless you have help on the outside,—some one to furnish you clothes.

The men were now locked up in their cells until court convened in Plattsburg; and then they were tried and convicted, some for murder, and some for manslaughter.

Lewell, Hall, and Brady were sentenced to be hung, and the others got off with a short imprisonment, because they knew nothing about the plan, and only went out with the others.

Readers, do you think I could be too zealous in the cause which God has called me to labor in? Could I love too much the Being who saved me from having any direct hand in killing Wright—the Being who has saved me from the tyranny of the devil? Unless I do all I am able to do to show the criminal, the thief, and the drunkard that Christ is the true friend of all, I would absolutely be a coward, and morally an imbecile.

Well, Lewell, Hall, and Brady had their death-sentence commuted by Governor Hoffman to imprisonment for life; and, since I have had my liberty, Lewell, the man who struck and

killed Wright has died. Hall is still in prison, and Brady (whose story appears elsewhere in this book) is at liberty.

I won't tell the reader of each one of my prison days, each one of the days I spent in hell; for every day *was* a hell upon earth. One of the punishments in the prison was the shower-bath; not such a shower-bath as the reader would like, for they shower you with water until you are within an inch of being drowned, and a doctor stands by to see that you are not punished to death. After this they buck you for an hour or two. O dear! how can a man endure to write about it, let alone going through it!

“Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will *have mercy* upon him, to our God for he will abundantly pardon. (Isaiah lv, 7.)

Time passed, and again I was set at liberty, with the same magnificent sum of seven dollars as before, to help me on in the world. Again I had no friend, no mother to say to me: “Come, boy, let us see what can be done to start you right.” Although I was a man in experience,



I was only a boy yet in years. Of course I went back to Troy. This was in '62, and as I went along I saw soldiers, soldiers, nothing but soldiers. Finding no money growing on the bushes, my seven dollars was soon gone; and, with my money all gone, and seeing so many patriots going to fight for their country, I thought I had best go along and fight with them. I always liked to fight, and there are but few men from Troy that do n't.

I believe that Troy has turned out more fighting men, thieves, and harlots than any city of its size in the world.

I doffed my citizen's clothes, and soon was a soldier. That is, I thought I was a soldier. Since I have been, however, in the service of my Lord, I have found out that it did not make a soldier of a man just because he had his name on the books, had his uniform on, and was fitted out with accouterments. O no, that do n't make the soldier.

We had to drill and march, march and drill, work, and polish, and keep clean. To become good soldiers we had to do all these things.

To become a good soldier, you should study the

tactics, so that, if the commanding general made you a corporal, you could drill a squad. A good soldier is always ready, because he knows the enemy is on the move; and unless he is watchful, the enemy will outflank him. The good soldier of Jesus Christ is always ready, and when called on he won't weaken when he ought to be strong.

How would it look for one of the soldiers in our army, when called to go on picket-duty, to take an umbrella to prevent getting wet? How would it do to let all the soldiers in an army act as hospital stewards? In the Christian army there are a good many Christian soldiers who seem to want to be hospital stewards, and I am sorry to say it. I will say to such soldiers, keep your guns bright and clean, inside as well as outside; see that your saber is sharp and always ready for battle, for we never know when the bugle will sound, "Fall in, fall in; the enemy is upon us!" Remember that the Christian's enemy is very cunning; he does not use shot, shell, and sword-thrust as much as he used to do; he has found something which he thinks is better; he uses chloroform. It has put most of the

Christian army to sleep, and lets the devil and his army ride on to victory.

O wake up, wake up, soldiers of the cross ; the battle will not be long !

But I must come back to our soldiers. We were soon on our way to the front, and brought up at Martinsburg, and here commenced the real soldiers' life.

It seemed so strange to me, I had to obey a little fellow I could almost eat, when he said: "Fall in, fall in for squad-drill;" and I had to run and step just when this little fellow told me. I thought to myself: "Is this what is called soldiering?" I said to some of them: "I thought we came here to fight somebody?" and was told I would get enough fighting before I got through. Well, we drilled, drilled, and drilled, and dug, scraped, shoveled, and threw up breast-works and rifle-pits.

Some may ask: "What did you do all this work for? All this drilling, marching, running, and digging, do n't whip any body? What's the use any way?" I answer, and say it was right; it taught the soldier *how to do* those things which he would have to do if he was a soldier.

The Christian soldier who enlists to fight the devil must be on hand at drills, must help throw up breast-works, dig rifle-pits, and it won't do for him to say: "O, I have no time for prayer-meeting, or class-meeting, or to visit among my neighbors; I have no time for these things, for I am a hospital steward." This won't do. God help and save the good soldiers who enlist to fight the devil, and strengthen all the hospital stewards!

We soon got marching orders to go to that *Gibraltar*, "Harper's Ferry," which could have been held against all comers, only for General Miles's weak, false, and almost timid judgment.

We marched with song and laughter for a while, and it was very nice; but a gun, knapsack, haversack, five days' rations, a canteen, and sixty rounds of ammunition, with a hot sun, a hot day, and roads full of dust, soon put a stop to all singing and laughter.

It is nice to be a soldier. When you start from home people give you flowers and cheers and loud hurrahs; but in this march we saw something of the soldier's life as it is—men throwing themselves down tired out, and the sides of the road

littered with guns and knapsacks. O, the sun! We would not walk in the sun and carry all the load. "Why do n't the captain wait until night, and let us walk in the cool of the night?" we asked each other. "We enlisted to fight, and not to die in this way," we murmured; and, "If you stay right in this road here about ten hours, you will have all the fight you want," some one shouted. I was not used to walking and carrying such a load, so when we had gone along forty or fifty miles, I met one of the natives, and asked him how far it was to Harper's Ferry. He said: "It is a right smart distance, I reckon—more than two looks and a shout;" so I concluded if it was as far away as that, I would go the rest of the way "flying light." Then I threw all I carried into the ditch by the roadside. Some of the boys asked me what I would do when we got to Harper's Ferry, and I said: "We are going to war to fight, and when the fight comes on, some one will want to go to the hospital, and I will borrow his gun; then when we have licked the enemy I will help myself to what I want. If we get licked, I have nothing to lose."

Well, we were drawn up in line of battle two

or three times, but there was no enemy to fight after all.

“O dear!” said I, “this is the sickest fighting I ever got into. Why don’t they stop and throw mud at us or something like that. I am sick of this kind of fighting.”

I knew but little about what a soldier was, and what he had to go through, but I realized everything when we got to Harper’s Ferry, and staid there until Stonewall Jackson had us surrounded. We were taken prisoners—some thirty thousand were paroled, and were sent on to Chicago to Camp Douglass.

And here, let me say, I saw so much working for money and self, and so little of patriotism, that I came to the conclusion that when the regiment went back, I would not go with it. I said to myself: “They do not care down South where they shoot or who they hit, and I do not feel anxious to die for my country, a country which had been so good to me as to lock me up the best part of my life.” It seemed to me that I did not owe my life to my country; so when we began to get ready to go back (after we were exchanged), I stayed at Chicago.

And now let me speak of one who, through God, has been my Savior. That one is my noble and loved wife, whom I first met in Chicago, while our regiment was at Camp Douglas.

I asked her to marry me almost as soon as I made her acquaintance, and I got the consent of her mother and brothers. Her father was a very hard drinking man, and her home was not a happy one on his account ; but he is dead, and we will let him rest. We were married, and lived together pleasantly for some time. I went to work, for I now had some one to take care of. I said to myself: "They don't know me here, and I will live an honest life and do right." So I worked in a cracker-bakery, making hard-tack for the soldiers, and I said: "We can't all go to war ; some of us must stay behind and make things for the boys to eat." I worked, making hard-tack some time ; then I went firing on the railroad, then in the round-house, then down to the freight-depot.

One day a man came to the depot and asked if my name was Wills. (I had not changed my name, and I now believe it was either my wife's father, or one of her sisters that notified

the authorities.) I confessed that Wills was my name, and the man told me that the provost-marshal, on the other side of the river, wanted to see me. Never showing any fear, I put on my coat and started with him, asking him what was wanted. The man, whom I knew to be a detective, said he did not know, and we walked on. The officer was not careful, or he would have put the bracelets on me at first. However, we crossed the bridge together, and just as we reached the corner of Lake and Water Streets, I saw a woman coming toward us. I told the officer that I knew that young lady, and wished to speak to her a minute. I stopped her, and got her between myself and him; then I threw her against him, and took down Water Street; but there were too many on the street, and he soon had me again. Then he did what he ought to have done in the first place; he put the "darbies" on me, and I was soon in Camp Douglas again. After a few days we were sent to Cincinnati, where Joe Hooker commanded, and were put in the military prison, where I remained until they found what regiment I belonged to, when they made up a train-load and sent us on to the front. My regiment was





WILL'S ESCAPE FROM THE PROVOST-MARSHAL.



at Gettysburg. All went well until we got to Harrisburg. Here I made up my mind that I had got about as near to the front as I wanted to be ; so, after it was dark, I changed from one track to another, and instead of going on to Gettysburg, I was taken to New York, and so on up the river to Troy.

I did not put up at the Troy House, or call on those in authority, but went to see my cousin, where I staid over night. In the morning I started West, got as far as Buffalo, and stopped to see how they run things there.

They were making it so nice for the boys there, I thought I would like some of it myself; so I took a man's place in the ranks, whose business was so pressing at home that he could not leave; besides, he had a bone in his leg, which made it difficult for him to walk. This man agreed to pay me a certain sum if I would go and be a patriot for him; so I took the name of John Farrell, and once more moved on towards the front to whip the "Johnnies."

We were sent first, however, to Camp Elmira, where we staid about a month, and had a good time, but were soon ordered to the front; arrived

in New York City, took a transport vessel for Alexandria. O, the first night out was a wonderful night! The boat was loaded with bounty-jumpers; a good many were farmers and country people, besides a lot who had not been in this country long, and did not know how we did things here. Well, I was with two more who were like myself, and I promise you we did not sleep much that night! What a sight there was in the morning! Men that went to sleep with from five hundred to one thousand dollars in their pockets, awoke in the morning with the same pockets empty, while we had suddenly become rich. I do n't take any pride in writing these things now; but how can I tell what a Savior has done for me, unless I tell all the horrible things which he has made me hate, and which he has saved me from? "I will praise thee, O Lord, my God with all my heart: and I will glorify thy name for evermore." (Psa. lxxxvi, 12.)

We arrived in due time at the front, where my two pals and myself staid about two months, when we concluded to take a journey home without waiting for advices from Washington. So we just dropped out of the line, and let the army

go on. We went back to Baltimore, and so on to New York again. I stopped in the city briefly to get rested, and then started on West. My wife had brothers in Cleveland, so I bought a ticket for that city. Just as we got to Elmira the car-door opened, and who should walk in but my captain. It did not take me long to get out of that car and say good-bye to the train.

I thought I would let him go on, and not try to stop him, while I remained behind to bring on the baggage.

At last I arrived at Cleveland, and went to inquire about my wife. I learned that she had heard that I was dead, and had gone on to Troy. Soon I had the wires at work, and in a few days we were brought together again.

God bless my dear wife, and he has wonderfully blessed her, both in health and home, and in every way!

Well, I once more tried to be honest, and earn an honest living, and did after a fashion. For about eighteen months I worked at almost everything, braking on the railroad, firing and running an engine, etc.; but I remembered how I used to have such big money, and it seemed to

me that every body was having all they wanted, while every thing was very high. My wife was not well, and I wanted more money than I earned, so I threw up my job, went into the bounty-broker's business, taking chances in the drafts, and once more I had lots of boodle, and nothing to do but spend it.

I joined the fire department as "minute man," and was connected with it some three or four years, and was presented by the boys with a silver cup, the tragedian, the late John McCullough, making the presentation speech on the stage of the Cleveland Theater, John Ellsler and Clara Morris being on the stage also. I made lots of money, and spent it as fast as I made it, until the war was over.

I have forgotten to speak of one incident, but will do it now. In one of the drafts I was the lucky one, and was drafted. The boys thought they had the laugh on me, for at this time substitutes were worth one thousand five hundred to two thousand dollars. "Now is the time, Wills," said the boys, "when a bank account would be a good thing;" for before this I used to tell the boys that as long as I could talk and



WILLS A FIREMAN AT CLEVELAND.





walk, I did not want any bank account, because as long as I had brass in my face, silver in my tongue, and a dollar in my pocket, I could start and go around the world with the dollar, and have hundreds of dollars when I should reach the end of my journey.

The boys thought for sure that I was in a fix; but I knew a trick that none of them were up to, and have never told any one about it until now.

I knew that the law of the land was that no felon would be taken in the army; so I laid the facts of my case before the provost-marshal, gave him the proofs that I had served two terms in State prison, and got my discharge. This made me more popular than ever, for they thought that I "stood in" with the provost, and I got more work to do than the others, and made it pay first rate.

After the war was over, I worked for a wholesale grocery and cheese-house, selling to the city trade. I was still in the fire department. After about three years the firm took in a new partner who had been a whisky-distiller, and I now had to sell whisky in addition to the other goods.

And here is where the devil got in his work. He got hold of me again through the whisky. I worked for these men about two years; then the devil put it in my heart to run away with all the money I could lay hands on. As I was salesman and collector, I had the handling of all the money from the city trade. I had used my collections, and knew I could not pay it back; so I sold my home, collected all that was standing out, and left my wife and went back to Troy—to the very place that was the most hateful to me. I had to go to this hateful place, because Satan had got me again through the whisky.

O, no one but Satan could have made me do these things which I tell of! After I had been in Troy about three weeks, I had dropped almost all the money I had. Then I sent to my wife's brother to send on my wife, and not let the police "get on" to it. But the police were not asleep; they were watching for just such a move, and when my wife left, a letter followed her. When she stopped in Troy, the letter also stopped.

I took my wife to my cousin's, who was a

detective, and while I was at supper with my sisters and my aunt, my cousin called me out and asked me what I had been doing in Cleveland. I said I had done nothing. He then showed me a hand-bill offering a reward for me; and I had to spend the night and two days in jail, when the officers came on and took me back to Cleveland.

It will do no one any good to tell how I got out of this scrape. Suffice it to say, that I had one member of the firm on the hip, as we call it, and I told him if he prosecuted I would squeal on him; and so, after a time, I was let out on bail, myself being the bail.

I worked it smart again, and got into the fire department, and made lots of money out of it; but I won't tell how I made it, because it will do no good, and it might lead others to do the same. I lived off from it a whole summer, and it took lots of money to keep me; but they "tumbled to" it at last, and I was "done up" in the department. They could do nothing to me, however, in the line of punishment,

I now went to the oil-region to take charge of oil-wells, which I did for two weeks; then I

turned speculator myself. And money! O my, cords of it! Wonderful! Talk about California, it was nothing to Oil City and that region in '65 and '67. Money, barrels full of it; and I knew how to get it, but not how to keep it. I lived like a prince, and we made things fly.

Would to God I had that money now to put in my Master's cause! But it is gone, and all other things we then had are gone away from us. For God says: "If we come unto him, he will put away our sins as far as the east is from the west." (Psa. ciii.)

Next I took up one of my old trades, one I have not yet mentioned. It was faking, or street peddling; and I was called one of the best, because, they said, my tongue was hung in the middle, and I never got tired of talking, drinking, or fighting. I went from city to city, and finally brought up at Cincinnati. I was selling a can-opener—the first in the market, and they sold as fast as I could make change. I sold out of an open carriage, the harness on the horses being covered over with tin cans, all cut up with the knife I was selling. This exhibition attracted great attention.





About now, however, the devil told me I must do something, so as to get into another scrape. It was election time, and I thought it would be smart for me to swear in my vote, and help the Democratic party win.

The devil thought so too, and as we both agreed, I did it, and got the "collar" for it; had to lie in jail about a month before I was tried, and then I got another month without a fine.

Here, let me say, I learned something of the frisky little bed-bug. I used to watch them and see how they worked. They are about as smart and scheming as the smartest saloon-keeper on earth. If they failed to do a thing the first time, they tried it again and again, until they made it out. It put me in mind of a story my mother used to tell me, when I was a little boy, about a good king somewhere, who had to hide in a cave or something, because his people were so wicked and wanted to kill him. Now, this good king had tried lots of ways to make his people do right, but always made a failure; and here he was in the cave, almost ready to die, because he was discouraged. After a while he saw a spider try to swing himself off from the

wall to another wall; but he failed to reach it. He crawled back and tried again; failed again. He did this a good many times, and after a while he got there. Then my mother told me how the king said to himself that he would n't give it up till he had tried as many times as the spider did; so he went out of the cave, and finally gained the victory.

Now, the spider is smart; so is the saloon-keeper; he generally gets there. What he do n't know about getting a poor man's money and blood is not worth knowing. I would not trust him any sooner than I would a bed-bug. They are both after blood.

After I had served my time and got out, I left the city for good. They could not appreciate my patriotism in offering myself up on the altar of my country. It does not do to appreciate these things after the election is over, and you have been caught. Of course it is all right, if they do n't catch you at it; but if they do catch you, it is a crime which everybody must sit down on.

Then I went back to Cleveland, but thought I would try Chicago, and see if I could not



make a fortune there. I have said before that almost anybody can steal, but it takes a smart man to hide; and I say further, any man that has brains, if he sets out to do it, can make money, but it takes a man with more brains to keep it after he has it.

Well, I went to Chicago with the can-opener, and I made money, as I did in the oil regions, and spent it in about the same way as I did there. I believe if I had been like some men I could have been a millionaire to-day; but, suppose I had become one, the question is, Would I know Jesus as I do now know him?

I worked Chicago until it seemed to me that every man, woman, and child in the city had a can-opener, so I had to find something new. This I did, and in handling the new article, I found that Barnum was right when he said "that the American people were the easiest people on earth to be humbugged." I have proved the truth of these words of Barnum in a great many ways. I have sold perfume made of paraffine and oil of wintergreen or bergamot, and done up in tin-foil, which sold for twenty-five cents a package, and only cost five mills; that is, sold for two

hundred and fifty mills an article which cost five mills. I sold a non-explosive coal-oil powder, made of colored salt, for twenty-five cents a box. It cost me three mills. I sold the California diamond polish, said to have been made in San Francisco, and good for all things, but in reality made of Akron water-lime. This polish sold for three dollars per dozen, and it could be bought for a dollar and a half per barrel. One of the best sellers I had in Chicago, after the can-opener, was a fan. Only think of men buying fans in the dead of winter; but they did, and they bought of me. I had almost the first that were made. They were called the Magic Fan (they are very common now). It pulled open from a tube-shaped handle with a cord and tassel; and pulling on the other end would close it again. It would have surprised even Barnum if he could have seen how I sold those fans that winter.

Now, friends, I was working all this time; still I was "crooked," and would steal when the opportunity offered itself; but I was very, very watchful and careful, for I did not want to do any more time, and I never have.

People often wonder how the crooks know where a man carries his money, and how thieves can get into their houses and know where the valuables are kept. Now, suppose you are traveling on the cars, or you are waiting in the depot. The "mob," as it is called, is made up of three or five persons, who travel together. One of these is called the "wire," and it is his business to "go through" you, and get your money. It is done in this way: The "mob" comes into the car or depot, and cries: "Look out for pick-pockets!" Any man having money on his person, and not up to the trick, will, on hearing the alarm, put his hand at once over the pocket that holds the cash. Doing this, till that good-looking gentleman, the "wire," who has an eye like a hawk, sees just where to put *his* hand and get what he wants. Then the "mob," or one member of it, cries out for passengers to take the next car for such and such a place, or "change cars," "all aboard," or something of the kind, and when the people make a rush to get in the right car, the gang will crowd about the door and push, while the nice man just behind you, or the one coming in while you are trying to get out, has taken

your money. Suppose you have your hands in your pockets, with your pocket-book in your hands; all the thieves have to do is to push each other and rush you about; then one of them will hit you on the top of the head and drive your hat down over your eyes. Out come your hands to lift your hat so you can see. Your pocket is unguarded, and—biff!—your money is gone, and the crowd also.

So beware of the cry, "Pickpockets!" either in the car or depot. Keep your hands still! Do n't tell them where you keep your money. To do this will sometimes require an effort, because most men, knowing where their money is, find that their heart is there also. "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." (Luke xii, 34.)

I have seen a man who was smart—at least he thought he was—and after a "mob" had "worked" a depot, and eight or ten people had lost their wealth, he was saying, "What fools the traveling public are!" and all such talk. When the conductor came along for tickets, this man would put his hand in his pocket to get the book that held his ticket, only to jump to

his feet and shout: "I have been robbed!" Probably the very man he had been giving the talk to about his smartness had gone through him while he was telling it, to pass the pocket-book to his pal in the next seat behind him, and he to another, and so on, until one of them would go with it into the water-closet, where he would skin it. That is, he would take the money out, and drop the book on the track.

In this way thieves do their work, and it is but one of a hundred equally dishonorable schemes.

I began by this time to get tired of Chicago; and, as I had found another great fake or humbug with which to gull the people, I started towards Cleveland. In that city lived one whom I had promised to cherish and protect, which promise I had failed to keep—my wife. I had been away from her a couple of years, and she had, through her brothers, made application for a divorce, and had disposed of her furniture, but had not yet got the pay for it. So, when I got to Cleveland, and we had talked things over, she, with all the love in her heart of a true wife, wanted me to go away from Cleveland with her

to some place where we were not known, so that we could start on a new life.

The new thing which I was now selling was a "Fountain Pen." The composition was called "oroid gold," and it was a wonderful thing to sell. I told my wife I would take a trip down through the oil regions with it, and when I came back we would move away from Cleveland and begin a new life. I wanted to do what was right, but did not know how to begin. In my heart I believed in God and in Christ, because my mother had taught me when a little boy. There is something most wonderful about how a wicked man will think of the good and true things which a Christian mother taught him when he was a little bit of a kid; but they will do it every time. Since I have been in the service of our blessed Redeemer I have seen so many instances which prove this to be true, that I *know for sure* that the teachings of a good mother can never be wiped out.

Well, I went down through the oil regions, but the times were changed; it was not like the old times, when everybody's pocket was full of money; but I had a sight after all, for I had a

good selling thing, and didn't let grass grow under my feet. There were twelve pens in a box, with a pen-holder, and the outfit sold for fifty cents, at a cost of but six cents. There was hardly a business man who would not take it in his hand and give it a trial; and if he did that, I knew I was sure of his fifty cents, because it worked as smoothly as a gold pen, and would write four pages of note-paper with one penful of ink.

If I had known how to keep money, it would have been a Bonanza to me; but, after all, I was doing better, because I really wanted to have a home with my wife again. My wife and I both loved children, but had none of our own. I believe that God saw that we loved children, for he induced us to adopt four, two of whom have died; but we have two left, who now belong to the Lord.

I had good luck, and was soon back in Cleveland. We recovered our furniture, and I made arrangements to go to Detroit and see what kind of a place it was. If it suited me, we decided I was to rent a house, and send for my wife. I came on, and looked the city over, and said, I

will drop anchor right here. I rented a house on Beacon Street, our furniture came on, I got ready for my wife and a home again, and we were soon in good shape, and very happy. I had a snap on the town as street fakir, because no one could get on to the place where I got my pens; and, besides, I sold so many that the dealers in Philadelphia would not let any one else handle them where I intended to stop. I used to work a couple of hours a day, and make three or four dollars, and then lie around. One of the first men I got acquainted with in Detroit was Ed. Sweeney, now an ex-alderman. Well, locating at Detroit in the winter, I worked the town pretty well, also Windsor and Chatham. Finding a good field in Canada, I sold out in Detroit, and, with my wife, started for a trip through the Dominion. I worked London and Toronto, and left my wife in London, while I run up the line to Goderich, working all the towns, making money, and having a good time in general. My wife joined me, and we went on to Sarnia, working the towns, and enjoying ourselves well. Leaving my wife there, I worked out on the different branches of the road, and



over to Port Huron. From this point, my wife and I went to Milwaukee, and I left my wife in that city while I worked the State of Wisconsin. In the fall we came back to Detroit. Leaving my wife in Detroit, I took a trip back to Wisconsin; worked on up to St. Paul, and then down the river; and, with what I made and beat others out of, I came home in the spring pretty well fixed.

We now bought furniture and went to house-keeping again; for I had decided to stay permanently in Detroit, and not rove about any more. I said to myself: "The first thing you know, Wills, you will get careless, as in your younger days, and think you know it all, and then you'll have to do time again; then what will your wife do?" Said I: "This won't do; it must stop."

At this time my wife was not in good health, and I loved her, because she was so good and true, and stood by me in all my waywardness. She was a woman who would have died for me; and may God ever bless her!

So I said to her: "I am going to try and get work, and live square, and be a man." I began

on Woodward Avenue, and visited every store, looking for a job as salesman; then I took Jefferson Avenue, and went in every wholesale notion-house on the street, to always get "No" for an answer. I don't wonder that all the answers were no at that time; for, two years after this, when I had secured a place, my employer, W. H. Shaw, said to me one day: "Wills, do you know what I took you for that day you applied to me for a job?" I said I did not, and he continued: "I took you for a pickpocket or a burglar, for you had that look." He had "sized me up" pretty well, and no mistake.

I must tell how I finally came to get into his employment. His place was at No. 162 Jefferson Avenue. I went in and asked of the head clerk if they wanted a salesman. He said, No. By this time I was about discouraged; but he began to talk, and asked me where I was born, and when I told him Troy, he seemed another kind of man altogether. After talking, we found that we were old playmates, and had lived on the same street when boys. Well, he asked me if I had any letters, and I told him I had a hat full of them. I guess if Mr. Shaw had read

one of them, he would not have felt like trusting much of his wealth with me.

This man's name was James Deering, and he proved to be a friend at the right time. May God bless him! He told me to come in the next morning, and I was on hand. Deering told me Mr. Shaw was in the office; and I went back there, and took off my hat, which was a thing I hardly ever did to anybody. I asked him if he wanted a salesman. O, how he did look me over! I looked more like a cow-boy than a competent salesman; but Deering had put in some fine work in the way of talking, which had fixed things. Mr. Shaw asked me if I had ever sold notions, and I told him I had not, but that the thing had not yet been made by the hands of man or woman which I could not sell, and that he would find it out if he would only try me. Just at this point in the game, Deering came in and put in a word about how he ought to have some one to sell goods in the city, as it was a good trade and cash; no four months' business about it, like the country trade, but clean cash, and could be worked up big.

Mr. Shaw did not ask to see my hatful of

recommendations. If he had, I do n't believe I would be writing about these things now. He did ask, however, if I could give security for the samples. I had thirteen dollars, which was the bulk of my wealth ; so I told him how I was fixed, and how I had a sick wife. He told me to come in the next morning ; so I went home. I do n't know what Deering told him, but when I went in next morning, Mr. Shaw made up a lot of samples, and told me how to work. I was to have twelve cents commission on every dollar. The first day out I made four dollars. I had to sell and then deliver the goods, and collect the money. I worked in this way and did well, sometimes making as high as twelve dollars a day, and Shaw was not long ignorant of how I did things.

One day he called me up-stairs and said he wanted to talk with me. Now, I was something on a talk myself, so I said, "All right," and we went up. He asked me how I would like to work by the year, he to furnish me a horse and buggy. I finally agreed to work for eight hundred dollars a year, and from that time I worked for him until he failed in business. He was one of the best, most generous, and

kind-hearted men I ever knew, and could I have helped him, I would have done it, because he was a true friend to me. I pray God to bless him and his forever.

The goods which I handled for Shaw were sold in grocery-stores, and almost every grocery I went in had a bar-attachment. After the first year I began to drink and mix in ward politics. Now, every body knows that beer, whisky, and ward politics mixed and stirred up together, and taken in big doses day after day, is the very best prescription the devil has for his patients. Satan just dotes on that prescription; it is his big card, his "leader," and he knows how to play it for all it is worth. Do n't let us ever forget that. The more I took of this prescription, the more I did n't get any better. I soon got to be the old original Wills, of Troy, of Cleveland, and Chicago. I was always in a fight, if I could get in, and I got my share of slugging.

I had a large city trade and a large acquaintance. I spent money as I always did. I had a bad deal one day. I was driving down the Gratiot road, and a German ran into my buggy and bent the axle. I jumped out to stop him, and

taking hold of his horse, I held him, and would n't let him go until he told his name. This he would not do, and just then a gang of his countrymen, who were digging a cellar, gathered around us, and began the fun by yelling out, "Kill him, kill him! Take the horse away!" and they crowded around me till it looked as though there was going to be trouble. I was alone; but I was bound to keep the horse until I knew who was to pay the damages, and they were determined to either get the horse or kill me. I made up my mind if I was to be killed that I would not go on the journey alone; so I pulled out my knife and opened the blade with my teeth, and told the leader: "All I ask is the name of the man who owns this horse, and I am going to know before I let go. If you and your friends want to kill me, I won't charge you a cent; so just drive your crowd along as fast as you can." They did not move, but a man who was in front of me came up and said: "Wills, let the horse go, and I will tell you his name and where he lives." Accordingly I let go and started for my buggy. Then the crowd surrounded me. I saw I was in for

it; so I pulled out the knife again. One man tried to be my friend by throwing his arms around me, while the whole gang rushed on me with paving-stones and clubs. Then I went to work myself, and made a slash at the leader, Fashnute, to cut his throat. I missed it, and the knife only cut his arm. He struck at me again with a club while the others were at me. I made another slash at him, intending to cut off his head, but missed and the knife went in the top of his shoulder, and came out at his wrist, making a cut the whole length of his arm. Then they scattered like sheep. I can see it all now—how God kept me and preserved my life.

I was arrested, tried, and found guilty of simple assault, and it was lucky that the charge was no greater, or I would have gone over the road, for every man in the gang swore falsely. I was fined twenty-five dollars for a thing for which I was not to blame.

Right here was where Mr. Shaw stepped in and stood by me; and I believe to-day as I write, that it is through him and his influence that I was saved. His kindness helped to keep me sober about six months.

But how could I, without the grace of Almighty God to help me, keep from drinking when every place where I sold goods had liquors to sell? I wanted to be a good man, in my heart I wanted to do right and be at home with my family, but the devil was in me. Sometimes he would let me alone for a season, and I would get along fine; then he would seem to drive me further and further away from what was right. After working for Mr. Shaw for about four years, he failed, and was bought out by Jacob Brown, for whom I worked about four years. Mr. Brown was another man who was like a father to me.

I was pretty straight for a couple of years; but in the end I was about as bad a man as there was on earth. When I was in liquor I do believe I was even meaner than the devil himself. Joe Berger (now a captain of the Detroit police) used to say, Wills was the meanest and most tantalizing devil at the election-polls that the devil had in his whole army. Many a time I have felt that I would love to club Joe to death; I was just aching all over to do it; but when I kept sober and was straight I had no such feelings. So it was not Wills after all, but the devil which was in Wills.



My employer would tell me: "Wills, do n't drink any for three or six months, and I will give you one hundred dollars." I would start in on it in good faith, and in a week or two something would turn up to make me mad, and off the track I would go again. Then, when I would send word down to the store that I was sick, they knew just as well as I did that I had been drinking, got into a fight, and was either cut all up, or my head was pounded all out of shape.

Well, this good man stood it a long time, but finally said, "I can't and I won't stand it any longer," and he let me go. Then I swore I would never drink again, and I did keep sober for a time.

I did not stay idle long, for I had a big city trade; and, though I drank and was mean at times, I was pretty well liked. You see, I spent money and worked hard for my friends at election times, and I held my trade against all comers for fourteen years. A good many different men tried to run me out, but it was no use; they could n't do it.

When I kept sober I always had a good home and well furnished, and took good care

of my wife and children. They had the best in the market; for I was always a good liver myself, and thought more of my stomach than I did of a bank account. A few weeks after my discharge by Brown, I was employed by S. Simon & Co. May God ever bless Mr. Simon and Ike Mendelssohn, his present partner! How hard they tried to make a man out of a mean devil! What patience they had! When I think of what those two men bore from me, it makes me wonder. A stranger would have thought, had he seen me at times, that I owned the store, the way I went on. These gentlemen are Hebrews, and they were the straightest men I ever knew. I pride myself on knowing something of human nature, and, as such a judge of men, pronounce these men *true blue*.

If I should write all summer I could not tell all they did for me. They were as good to me as they ever could be to one of their own family. I was with them five years.

I forgot to tell of an incident which happened to me just before I went through Canada, and as it will illustrate the kind of people I sometimes met with, I will tell it here.

I was canvassing along on Jefferson Avenue, and went into the Linn Brothers' store to show the gentlemen what I had. I asked one to try my pen, telling him it would write four pages of note-paper with one penful of ink. He asked me if I had time to wait until he wrote four pages, and I said I had, taking off my hat and sitting down. The gentleman began to write and ask questions. Where did I live? Where was I born? How many cities had I lived in? How long had I been selling pens? Was I married? Did I have children? I suppose he wanted to see if he could tire me out; but I did not tire, for I knew I had my man. I knew I was making money while I sat there. At last he said: "I guess it will do all you say it will, and I will take a box; how much will it be?"

"Fifty cents," said I; and I shoved him a box, with twelve pens and a holder.

"All right; I will take it," he said. Just as I was going out, he called: "Hold on; I believe my book-keeper would like a box," and he took it. Then he continued: "Now I have taken a good deal of your time, and

have the pens, and you have the money; now, really, how much do the pens cost you a box?"

I told him six cents, and he responded: "Humph! no wonder you can spare lots of time for a person to write four pages; no wonder. Humph! six cents! No wonder you have time."

"Dear sir, do n't go mad," I said. "Here is your money back if you want it; and the pens, too, if you want them." I was not such a guy as to lay the money down for him, you may bet.

"No, sir; no, sir. Good morning, good morning," and he showed me out of the office.

Now, this is only one example of what I have seen and of the men I have met. There was lots of fun in the business. Some would say: "Git; or we'll throw you out!" (and I would think, What will I be doing all the time?) Others would say "yes" at once to get rid of me; others would chat sociably and not buy; and yet others would be gruff enough to sour milk, and yet buy my goods. But to come back to the time I was employed by Simon & Co. I had some

## WONDERFUL ESCAPES FROM DEATH.

O, how good is God, that he has spared my life! I hope and pray to be able to prove to these good men, and all that know me, that our Lord Jesus Christ, the lowly Nazarene, is the true Messiah. I hope to prove this by the life I live through him, for without him I can do nothing.

To show how God spared my life on one occasion, I will relate an incident. While I was with Simon & Co. I was out one Friday afternoon. This day always being the longest day I worked, I had finished my sales and was on my way home, when I stopped at a place on the Gratiot road to get a glass of beer. While standing at the bar drinking, with no thought of a fight at all, a clothing merchant, of whom I had bought the coat I had on, came up, and, being drunk, asked me how much I had paid him for the coat I had on my back. I told him I had paid him about one-half more than it was worth. The words were hardly out of my mouth, when a man who was in a gang of five drinking at a table behind me, stepped up and said I was "a liar, and had not paid that much." Before these words were cold, I crammed them

down his throat, and then the whole gang pitched into me. I soon had the saloon empty; and, thinking it was all over, I was drinking with the proprietor, when a man came in and told me that the men were still outside and were going to kill me; but that if I would go out the back way he would bring my horse around to me on the other street. I asked him if he ever knew me to sneak out the back way, and said: "No, sir! no, sir! I shall go out where I came in—at the front door; and if they kill me, you can bet there will be more than one funeral. So I went out and started for my rig that stood in front. These men had been at work repairing the water-works, and had lots of picks and tools outside. So, as I started for my rig, the man whom I had first hit came towards me with a stone-hammer, but I caught him before he struck me; held him with one hand, while I punished him with the other. While I was at work, another man struck me on the head with a monkey-wrench, and another man struck me from behind with a pick-handle, splitting the back of my head, and knocking me senseless for the instant. As I fell on my

knees, the man I was fighting with, having a chance to use his stone-hammer, hit me in the front of my head, and this last blow brought me to life, as it were. Then I jumped to my feet as though nothing was the matter with me, and soon had the gang in flight.

To-day, as I think of it, it seems to me that God was watching over me; for one man seemingly killed me with a pick-handle, and the other man brought me to life with a stone-hammer, which made a hole big enough to lay your fingers in. I had the sorest head I ever had in my life, and I have had some bad ones during that time. I got an awful talking to by my employers and by my poor, dear wife. It is a wonder that she is alive to-day. I now went from bad to worse, until Mr. Simon, like Mr. Brown, told me that if I did not stop drinking and fighting and getting into trouble every day, I would have to quit. After this, I tried to hold up a little, but it was no use; I soon got into one of the worst scrapes I ever had. It happened in the same place where the last thing happened, only it was now kept by the notorious Tom Keenan.

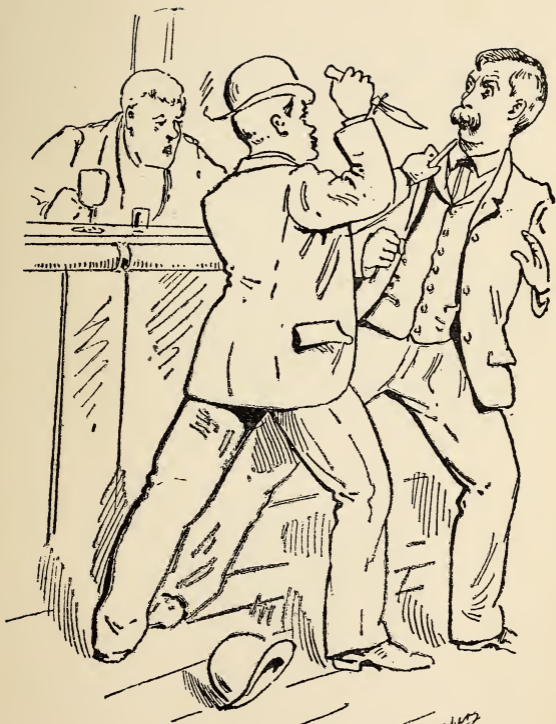
I called in, as I did before, to get a drink, and as before, it was on Friday, and Keenan's wife was 'tending bar, and there were three men in the place. One of these men was quarreling with her about some pool money, which she claimed he owed her, and this man called her bad names. I asked him how he dared call a woman names such as that, and he gave some answer back, at which I slugged him in the jaw just once; but he showed no fight nor the others who were with him.

I believe if I had known him I would not have been so quick; but whenever I saw a woman insulted by a man, I never stopped to get an introduction before hitting that man.

Well, I thought no more of it. The men went into the back room, where the man whom I had hit was washing himself.

Tom Keenan had now come in, and I stood with one hand on his shoulder and the other on the counter, talking to him, when two of the men run out of the door as though they had been shot. Soon an officer, who was in citizen's clothes, came in, and asked me what was the matter. He had seen my horse and rig out-





*Caplan*



side, and, seeing the two men run out, he said to himself: "Here is trouble." I told him that there was nothing the matter, only a fellow had insulted Keenan's wife, and I had hit him in the jaw—that was all. While we were talking, the man whom I had hit came in a side door, just behind me, with a big hunting-knife, and, before I knew it, drove it into my side twice. Detective Tuttle was the officer; he gave the man a trip, and had a handcuff on one wrist before he knew he was an officer. Then he began to kick; but Keenan put his knee on his neck, and the man put up his other hand, and was fast.

This was the closest call I ever had, and for three or four days all was dark; but God in his mercy watched over me, and I got well.

Some time later I found out that the man I had hit, and who knifed me, was a brother-in-law to Ed. Gillman, and that his name was Charles Moore. He was then about as bad as they make them. The police wanted him out of the way and advised me to push him through; but Ed. Gillman was my true and good friend, and had been for a long time. Well, he, with

others, came and talked it over with me. They pictured to me how, if I pushed the matter, Moore would get from ten to fifteen years, and how his old mother loved him, and how his wife was Ed.'s sister. They offered to pay for my time and my doctor's bill while I was laid up, and so I "let up" on him. I told Gillman that which I had never told any one in the West; I told him all about my past life, how I had "done time," and all about it, and told Ed. that if it was necessary at the trial, he could bring up my record, and thus help to get Moore clear.

However, it was not necessary to do this after all; for Hon. Wm. C. Maybury, Moore's lawyer, got him off with a fine of one hundred dollars, and I was not given away.

God knows how I would like to win Gillman and some others like him over to His cause. I do pray that I may live so close to Jesus, and follow him so truly and honestly, that these men will finally believe in him. I want to hear Gillman and that class of men say: "Show me thy ways, O Lord, teach me thy paths!" "Lead me in thy truth and teach me, for thou art the

God of my salvation ; on thee do I wait all the day." (Psa. xxv, 4, 5.)

Look at the case of Ben. Hogan. By the grace of Almighty God he no longer does evil, but is the servant of the Most High God, and is trying to do good with all his might.

After I got well, I did a little better for a while ; but it did not last, and I went from worse to worse, until Mr. Simon, my good friend, could stand it no longer ; and while I was in Cleveland on a visit, he discharged me, and sent postal-cards to all my customers that I was no longer in his employ. Accordingly, when I got home, I found myself out in the cold.

Mr. Simon and his partner are both good and true friends to me now, and I have asked them since I have been converted, whether had they known that I had been a professional burglar and general thief all my life, they would have trusted me with their money as they did.

They said they would not have trusted me had they known this, but that now they would trust me with any amount. So we see what the blood of Jesus Christ is able to do when it can change

such a miserable man as I was, so that even those men who do not believe in his name would trust a man who was a confessed thief from childhood. What a power there is in Christ! Surely, "it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." (Rom. i, 16.)

After my discharge I thought I was "done up," as I had been in Cleveland; but I began to look around, and people knew that I could make money for them if I would attend to business and stop drinking.

I got Messrs. Jacobson, Hertzog & Co. to give me a trial. They were another lot of honest men, square all through, and real good friends to me. Mr. Simon was angry with me because I had acted so badly, and he tried to persuade them not to employ me, because he knew I would take my trade to any store where I worked, the same as I had brought it to him from Mr. Brown's store; but I promised the firm I never would drink again if they would give me a trial. They concluded to try me, and I went to work for them. I was all right and kept my word about a month, when I was drinking just as bad as ever.

O, how Mr. Hertzog pleaded with me to do right! May God bless him and all that belongs to him for the good advice which he gave me! What chances I have had to be somebody, and what friends I have had to help me! It seemed to me that this man could do more with me than any man I ever worked for; for after he had talked to me, I always held up for a while, but the devil would get me again. I now come to

#### THE GREAT TURNING POINT

of my life.\* As I have said before, I was always at the caucuses and conventions, and to-day, as I sit and write this account, I believe the meanest of all devils, and worse than all thieves on earth, is the low "ward politician." He will steal the votes and stuff the ballot-box, and an honest man has no more chance in a caucus than the devil has of getting to heaven.

One of the greatest things I have to regret, among so many hundreds which I do regret, is that I was a Democratic howler and thief. I do n't say, and I do not believe that all Democrats are thieves. Horace Greeley once said that all horse-thieves were Democrats, but all Demo-

crats were not horse-thieves. I say that all Democrats are not as bad as I was. I never could see much difference between the Republican and the Democratic ward politician ; but I honestly believe, from what I have seen, that the very, very little difference is in favor of the honesty of the Republican. I learned so much about both parties that I knew the victory would always be where the money was.

Now, before I tell about the great turning point in my life, which I spoke of, which was just after the fall caucus, October 25, 1883, where I had done my share of stealing votes, I wish to talk about some of the terrible things I have been through ; things which I have suffered, because I was so wicked, and things which I have not yet spoken of.

I have been showered with ice-cold water, out of the mines ; I have worn the ball and chain ; I have been bucked, and I have worn the iron collar with a padlock to keep it on, and it needed no starch to keep it stiff.

O, what terrible punishments I have had ! But I never squealed or hollered in my life but twice. Once in Clinton Prison, when I was



locked up in the dungeon; and once in Detroit, which I will tell about when I write the story of the turning point in my life. This story will tell how God manifested himself to me.

I have often wondered that but one man in Detroit ever spoke to me about hell. This one man was W. H. Suite. He used to say to me, "Wills, you are surely going to hell if you keep on in the way you are going," and I would answer: "All right; I will have lots of company when I get there." And now, whenever I tell the wicked what God says, "The wicked shall be cast into hell, and all the nations that forget God" (Psa. ix, 17), some of them answer me as I did Suite—that they will have lots of company.

Now as to the time I was locked up in the dungeon in Clinton Prison. This dungeon was a hell. On each side of me was a cell, and both were occupied. Above me was another, while in front a guard passed every half hour. Still there was no company for me. No man can describe how awful it is. Imagine yourself in a bank-vault, with the door shut on you, and you aware of the fact that they had lost the

combination, are certain that you will never get out. Do you think either the guard outside or those above and around you would be any company for you? O, how dark my dungeon was! So black and dark was it that it seemed thick with black space, and full of lifeless air. No company for me. If we continue in our wickedness, and do not repent of our sins, the darkness of a dungeon will be bright sunlight, compared to the terrible darkness of hell, where the wicked will surely go.

I used to think in those days that I had a little "sand," and could stand punishment, but it was nothing. We had a prisoner called Tom Kelly who was the devil in the flesh—like Christ was the Lord in the flesh. He was sent to Sing Sing from New York City for twenty years for burglary in the first degree, but he was transferred to Clinton Prison, because they could do nothing with him. He was always trying to escape, and, always failing, invariably got punished for the effort. After he was in the Clinton Prison a week or two, he resumed his schemes and working to escape, and kept right on getting punishment. They would shower this man until

he was drowned, then bring him to. The reader can have no conception how terrible this punishment is. Hands and feet in stocks, neck and head in a trough filled with ice-cold water, and with a towel packed around your neck so that the water comes up around your mouth. Then the keeper begins to talk to you. He asks if you will behave, and the minute you speak he pulls the string, and you do n't have a chance to catch your breath. The little breath you have is taken away by the rush of cold water, and it do n't take long to drown you.

Now, when the man Kelly was served in this way, and was brought to all shaking and shivering, as though his teeth would rattle out of his head, they would ask him if he would behave himself. He would take a breath, and then spit in their faces. Next, they would buck and gag him. To do this, they would handcuff Kelly's wrists together tightly. Then they made him sit on the stone floor of the cell, with his heels drawn as closely to his buttocks as possible, thus forcing his knees close up to his breast. Then his fastened hands would be passed over his knees, an arm on either side of his legs. Next a short

iron bar would be passed through, over the arms and under the knees, and there he was absolutely helpless. Next a wooden gag would be put in his mouth, and tightly fastened there by means of cords passing around either side, and tied at the back of the head. Thus restrained, and with no support except the floor, Kelly would sit upright as long as possible, and then, through pure fatigue, fall over to one side or the other, and lie there until some keeper would come along and set him up again. It is a hellish punishment, and becomes absolute torture in a very short while.

But Kelly was a man of iron will, and with the disposition of a bull-dog. Of course he could not speak while bucked and gagged, and when they would take out the gag that he might say whether or not he would behave, he would again spit in their faces.

The keeper would say: "Will nothing tame this man?" Then I heard some of them say: "Yes, yes; forty-eight hours in the dungeon will make even this devil crawl over the stone flags in the hall of the prison, and beg like a whipped school-boy. So into the dungeon he goes."

Let me tell how one feels while in this dungeon. It seems as though the walls were coming together, and that, closing in on you, you would soon be in a stone coffin, unable to move a finger. Then you get so hungry, it seems as though you could eat a stone, and there, right before you, would appear tables loaded with food, rivers of waters, and banks of fruit, and you not able to even touch a thing, or stoop to get a drink. Next the awful room would seem filled with all the devils in hell, who had come for you and were dancing all around you, grinning and shooting fire-balls at you. You need not shout, no one can hear you; the doors are too thick, and the walls are very heavily built of stone.

Well, this was the hell where Kelly was put, and when his time was up they asked him if he would behave himself, if they would let him out?

“O God, yes!” he cried in terror; “let me out! I will behave.”

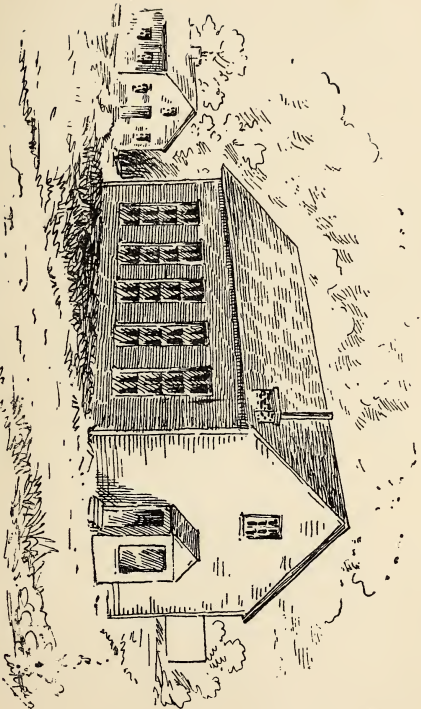
Thus, you see, may the horrors of a dungeon on earth, made by the hands of man, affect a strong man. What then must be the suffering of those to whom God will say on that great day,

“ Bind him and cast him into outer darkness,” where there will be weeping and wailing! Compared to the sufferings in a dungeon made of stone, it will be as an ocean to a drop of water. When God locks the door of hell on us, the key or combination is lost forever. I pray that the words which are here written, by one whom God in his mercy has saved, may rescue some from this hell.

I used to say when in prison, when the minister was preaching (and he was a poor preacher, too): “ I wonder if that man would be preaching like that, if, when a boy, he had been obliged to sleep in a fish-stand, or under the docks, or in a dry-goods box ?” Then I would say: “ I could be good, too, if some one paid me for it, as they paid him, at the rate of one thousand five hundred dollars a year. I, too, would be good if I had nothing to do but go around and talk, and read the Bible, and get paid for it.”

Well, friends, the time did come when I, too, went around to preach and read the Bible, and I did not get the one thousand five hundred dollars either.

I hope no man will ever look to be converted



THE McAULEY MISSION.  
(Wills's first effort.)





just as I was. Just rest on God's promised word, and believe what he says. I have proved again and again, that God spoke the truth when he said : " Be not deceived ; God is not mocked : for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." Hence I say, once again, do n't wait to be converted just as I was, because you might not live to go through it. I happened to have " sand " enough to bear it, and you might not have this " sand." Do n't wait, but believe in God now.

Cease to do evil, and begin to do well.

Now, as you read this book, is the time to begin. Take God at his word, and come to him just as you are ; in prison or out of prison, God will receive you, because he has said : " He that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out."

On the night of October 25, 1883, in the city of Detroit, State of Michigan, I reached my home, No. 309 St. Aubin Avenue. I got home early, perfectly sober, and in my right mind. My stomach was not out of order, and, so far as I could tell, I was in perfect health. I was a great hand to read in bed ; and so that evening I went to bed to read by the light of a large

study lamp at the head of my bed, and, as was my custom, I had my tobacco and cigars on a stand at the head of the bed. (I had been for over thirty years an inveterate user of and slave to tobacco.) The stand near the head of my bed was full of books, magazines, and papers, and not one religious work in the lot. My wife was at her sewing in the adjoining room. As I said, I went to bed early and in my right mind, except that I had no more thought of God than that I would discover a method of making six out of two and two. I had been to no meetings, I had read no tracts, I had not heard any preacher of the gospel, and I do not believe I had opened our Bible since coming from prison, save to look at a few pictures my wife kept there for want of a better place.

Thus what followed that night can not be credited to any religious influence through man's intercourse with man; and neither may it be attributed to anything I had read, eaten, or seen. No one had *ever* talked to me about my soul since my dear, dead mother's departure, save W. H. Suite, to whom I have already alluded as telling me I was going direct to hell, sure.

I had not met or talked with Mr. Suite that day, or within a great many days. You see, I hated him most bitterly, and was always on the alert to avoid him. No, it was not me that hated him; it was the devil, the "old" Wills, who despised and would have killed him had he dared to do such a thing.

About nine o'clock my wife came in to go to bed. I was still reading, but as she came in I asked her if there was any nervine in the house; if she had any valerian or other quieting medicine. She said she had not, and so I got out of bed and dressed myself. Then I went to the drug-store, two squares away, and got a bottle of valerian and returned.

"If you were in good health, and in your right mind when you went to bed," I think I hear some reader say, "and if you had not been drinking, and were in every way all right when you retired, what sudden ailment had seized you?" you ask.

I will tell you. Call it a whisky delirium, the tremens, superstition, an overloaded stomach, or what you will, no earthly theory, no words of man, no human power can cause me to

change my belief as to the cause and details of the revelation.

When I returned from the drug-store I asked my wife to bathe my feet, and she did so. I took two doses of valerian, and returned to my bed. Picking up my book, I tried to resume reading, my wife standing at the time at the bureau. I could not read; I could not lie still; every nerve in me was acutely sensitive; the air seemed to be rapidly becoming less and less in quantity; and, laying my book down on the stand, I said to my wife: "Mamma, I am going to die."

She tried to appear unalarmed, and smilingly turned to me, with: "Why do you think so?"

"This is the last of Wills," I said. "I have been such a bad man, such a devil all my life, that God is tired of me. The book is full, and I am surely going to die."

My wife tried to quiet me kindly, but I insisted; and as true as there is a God, I felt that I was dying—that I would die. I asked her to get the children, that I might bid them good-bye; and, realizing how bad a man I had

been, and feeling guilty because I had been so wicked a husband, I craved her pardon, and begged the forgiveness she so quickly gave.

As I talked with her, there suddenly appeared on the ceiling directly over my bed a dazzling white light about the size of a bean. (Bear in mind that, at the time, my study-lamp was burning, and there was no darkness in the room.) The light on the ceiling increased in size, and shaped itself until it seemed like a large eye, looking directly down on me. If I could pray always as I began to pray as I saw the eye, and as I prayed for a long time thereafter, I would now do nothing else. O how I called to God to forgive me, a sinner, and how (remembering what I had heard while in prison about Christ's forgiveness of the thief on the cross), O how I told God that I was a thief, and had sinned against him, and how I begged him to forgive and save me!

As I pleaded, some invisible and irrepressible power gave me such a shaking as could not have been duplicated by the combined efforts of six men, each as large as myself, and I weighed

two hundred pounds. Not a hand touched me. I was alone; for by this time my wife had gone for Dr. J. E. Clark, my family physician.

What was it, or who was it that shook me? Do you ask the question, or do you say it was imagination, a nightmare, superstition, or delirium tremens? Say what you will, I got the shaking up, and I got it good! It seemed at times as though I would go bang to the ceiling. And sweat! Well, I have sweat in the foundry, I have sweat in the dungeon, but never did the perspiration run off from me as it did that night.

When my wife reached Dr. Clark's office, he asked her what was the matter, and she told him I was praying so loudly that the whole neighborhood was out. He told her that if H. O. Wills was praying, she must get some other doctor or some one else, as he (the doctor) did not know how to pray. So she returned, to reach my side just after I had seen the vision of the eye a second time. When she told me what the doctor had said, I cried: "Hurry, mamma; hurry and bring Mr. Suite here, quick!"

So off she went, and at my request, for the

man I hated above all men on earth. What did I want of him? I hear you ask the question, and it is the question I asked myself after my wife had started after him. Then I thought, in fact I was cock-sure, that I would die if I saw the eye a third time. I remembered that I had read in prison that no man could see God and live, and it seemed to me that I had twice seen God's eye, and that each time it looked me through and through.

Finally, after a third shaking, and with my bed fairly saturated with perspiration, I said to myself, "It is almost over," and, straightening myself out as best I could, I folded my hands over my breast, so that if I died before my wife returned, she would find me laid out.

Mr. Suite's wife was opposed to his coming over in answer to my request, because she knew how I had hated him, and feared danger; but when (after asking my wife what was the trouble) she told him I was praying, he did not stop long. I believe he would have gone into the portals of hell had he heard that some one was there praying to God for help. You see, he had himself been snatched from hell, and was no coward.

He is to-day no coward, and does not lack courage to do anything that requires that quality in doing God's service.

Well, just before Mr. Suite entered my house with my wife, I saw, or seemed to see—as many of my good friends have asked me to put it—that bright, searching eye on the ceiling, and then came such a shaking up as put the preceding shakes in the shade. Catching a view of Mr. Suite as he entered, I cried: “Mr. Suite, I am lost! I am lost! lost!”

“Thank God, you *are* lost!” he cried, as he stepped to my bedside.

Even then I thought I was dying, and I said, taking Mr. Suite's hand: “Have I lost my senses? am I out of my mind?” and he said I was not. “Be sure!” I cried. “Do you think I am crazy; do you think I know what I am talking about?” He answered: “I am sure you are sane; but what's the matter?”

“Be sure I have not been drinking; that I have not got the tremens, that I am in my right mind!” I said.

“Yes, go on; what is it?” said Mr. Suite.

“Well,” I said; “I know there is a God! I



know it for sure, because he has been here, and I have seen him."

Mr. Suite said: "Yes, Wills, I know, too, that there is a God." And then, still believing that I had but a short time to live, I said: "Mr. Suite, I want you to tell the boys out in the street and over in the saloon that I died believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, and I know that he is the Christ. Do n't forget to tell them that I died believing in and praying to him."

Mr. Suite was sitting in a rocking-chair, and as I finished speaking he said to me, in a voice I never heard him use before or since: "Wills, you are not going to die. God has a great work for you to do. Will you do it?"

"Yes!" I answered. Then he asked a question I had never heard put to any one before, and have not heard it since: "Have you counted the cost?" he asked. "Have you counted the great cost in this? You will lose your business; men will scoff at you, and mock and laugh at you. Will you stand all this patiently and for God? Will you tell of this night on the commons and on the street-corners, in the saloons, and wherever you have a chance to do so?"

Again I said, "Yes," and then shouting, "Glory to God!" Mr. Suite sang a hymn, and I, having become calm and supremely happy, listened with all the ears I had. Then he prayed with me and for me for a long time. Finally, with a kind "good night," and a warning to be true to God, he left me.

I soon fell asleep, and after sleeping about two hours I got up, had breakfast, and went to my work of delivering goods. I came home about eleven o'clock A. M., my wife meeting me radiant and joyful at the door. Peace and happiness had come to us at last.

I wish to say, parenthetically, at this point, that Mr. Suite still lives, thank God, and is still a resident of Detroit. To him, and to the citizens of Detroit, where I have lived sixteen years, and who knew the old Wills, and who know the new Wills, I refer any doubting person—and I can not blame any person, not yet knowing God and his ways, for doubting my story—who may wish to investigate my history. Some people, not caring to investigate, may say: "Bosh! Crazy Wills! Imagination!" Well, for the sake of argument, let us admit that it is

imagination. Then, from that awful night to the present time, I have imagined that I don't want to drink beer or liquor; my imagination has kept from me all desire to swear, lie, or steal; imagination has driven all the wicked lust out of my eye and out of my flesh. Imagination has taught me to love God with all my soul and mind and strength, and to hate the devil and all his works. Imagination prompts me to praise God's holy name. This being so, all I can say is, that it is the most wonderful and most blessed imagination I have yet heard about. O, come and get some of this imagination, quick! quick! before it is too late! Turn unto the Lord, and he will receive you. "He that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out." (Isa. i, 18.)  
Read the good news!

There you will find out how I was received, and then you will learn why it was that the second morning after my new birth I was able to say to my wife: "I am not an Indian giver, and when I gave my heart to Christ the other night I gave it all to him and forever. In return, he has given me one of flesh for the stony thing I once called a heart."

## HOW THE NEWS WAS RECEIVED.

For nine years I had been known in Detroit as "a tough," as wicked as the worst of them, ready to fight at the drop of the hat; absolutely shameless in my devotion to vice; drunk most of the time, and disgraceful the rest of the time. In brief, I was a faithful servant of the devil, doing quickly, and to the best of my ability, whatever he told me to do. Consequently, you may be sure no "cannon-ball" train or fast-mail service were required to quickly spread the news of my conversion all over every part of the beautiful City of the Straits.

Then I began to catch it! Then I learned the force of Mr. Suite's "Have you counted the cost?" There was hardly a block on any street in the city that I did not hear, "Come, Wills, have a drink;" and, thank God, not one of those invitations from that time to this has received from me any other than a negative answer. When I would say to my old cronies that I would not drink, that I was through with beer and all liquors, then they began to call me a crank, a crazy bigot, a Salvation Army lunatic.



WILLS, HIS BIBLE, AND HIS HORSE AND BUGGY AT THE SOLDIERS' MONUMENT.



“Crank, crank!” was the most frequent cry, and I could only say: “Well, a crank is something that turns things around and upside down, and, I thank God, he has seen fit to make of me a crank to do my share toward upsetting the devil and all that is his.”

I kept working for Jacobson & Co.; but evenings and Sundays, and whenever I could get a chance or a hearer—at saloons, on the street-corners, about the Soldiers’ Monument, in stores, anywhere, and at any time—I talked the word of God. My Soldiers’ Monument meetings were grand successes in the cause of the good, great Friend I had found.

As an example of the invariable courtesy with which I have been treated by the press everywhere, I present the following notice of one of my meetings, which was published by the *Free Press*:

About six o’clock last evening a buggy, drawn by a meek little bay horse, stopped in front of the Soldiers’ Monument. It contained a thick-set, middle-aged man, with a heavy mustache, dark clothes, and black Derby hat. A silver cross gleamed on the lapel of his coat. He planted a short pole in the buggy, and displayed a banner, with the words,

in big letters: "Old Kentucky Bourbon Whisky." Then, standing up, he began singing, in a hoarse voice, "Come to Jesus." There were only two or three boot-blacks on hand when he commenced; but the streets were filled with people going home from work, and in less than five minutes a motley crowd of men and boys surrounded the buggy, and stared at the singer, whose song was strangely out of keeping with the words painted on his sign.

"Praise God for the blood of the Lamb!" shouted the man with the big mustache. "Praise the Lord because he has made it possible for all men to be saved! The good Book tells us that God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. I was a great sinner until I found God. For forty-six years I was a thief, a liar, and a drunkard. I could n't say fifty words without forty-five of 'em being oaths and lies. But at last a great change came over me. The blessed spirit of God filled my heart, and I began to lead a new life. O, I can't begin to tell what a glad day that was when I experienced religion. The old H. O. Wills died, and a new man took his place. Thank God, old Wills is dead!"

About this time a beer-wagon paused on the edge of the crowd. It bore a sign in big letters: "Philip Best's Milwaukee Lager." The driver, a rosy-faced young German, named Otto Schoeffler, had noticed Brother Wills's placard, and stopped to hear what he was talking about.



"I've come down here to give you a gospel temperance lecture," continued Brother Wills, shaking out a placard, inscribed, "Fresh Cold Lager." Then, observing the beer-wagon, he displayed another, labeled, "Rotten Barley-water," and shouted: "That's what your cool, fresh lager is—rotten barley water!"

"Bet you a hundred dollars!" cried Schoeffler.

Brother Wills paid no further attention to the beer-wagon, and went on with his harangue. After talking about twenty minutes, he gave way to a young man named Charles Ege, who climbed into the buggy, and told the crowd what a bad egg he used to be until he experienced religion a couple of years ago. He urged young men to let liquor alone, and stop buying fine clothes and plug-hats for saloon-keepers.

Ege talked about ten minutes, and Brother Wills followed, displaying more placards, such as "\$10 or 90 days;" "Murder—The Sentence of the Court is that You be Confined in State Prison;" "Old Sour Mash," and others, designed to illustrate his remarks on the evil of intemperance. At 6.30 o'clock the meeting closed, and Brother Wills drove away, after distributing a lot of tracts, headed, "Have you Heard the Good News?" He announced that he would hold gospel temperance-meetings at the monument every evening at six o'clock until further notice.

Mr. Wills is looking around for a chance to start a mission near the market. It was a noticeable fact

last evening that nobody in the crowd tried to guy him or make any disturbance. The man is so honest and sincere, and there is so much homely truth in what he says, that his words are listened to with respectful attention, even by those who are not in sympathy with the cause he represents.

Was I ashamed? Ashamed of Christ! Not a bit of it. Was I bashful? What, me an old fakir? Not much. I had talked to too many street-crowds, and, having good lungs, I could make myself heard. No, I gloried in my new work, and was getting on. The devil was not to be so easily defeated. Finding he could not embarrass me, he did the next thing. He tried to break down my temper. O, how he has tugged and tugged away to make me mad! When I would be selling goods in a store, he would send men up to me who would shove a glass full of beer under my nose, and say: "Come, crank, have a drink;" and the men, too, would not have dared three months earlier to have looked crooked at me. I would say to these men: "Will you please tell me what keeps my hands down by my side, or why I do n't knock your nose all over your face?"

Then when they would look frightened and draw away, I would add: "I'll tell you what's the matter. It is because the old Wills you used to know and get drunk with, is dead. It is the new Wills you are testing, and you are putting your tests against a man who has the same spirit in him that was in Christ, when, as he was on the cross, he lifted up his eyes saying: 'Father, forgive them, they know not what they do.'"

On the other hand, my new life was not all a fight against the devil, for God sent me a few good friends who would come to my home to pray with me, to teach me, and to read God's holy Word to me. One of those friends, one who trusted me and believed in me, is now with her God in heaven. Alas! I did not know Mrs. Orrilla Hawley and her whole worth until after she was gone. She was a noble Christian woman, whose silver hair and serene face were a benediction upon all who met her. Another equally kind supporter and friend was the good Mrs. S. B. McNeil, late a missionary in Egypt. God bless both of these noble women!

Then there was the Jefferson Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church congregation, and their

pastor, Wm. Dawe, who were very kind to me. Many a time after my first relation of my "experience"—as alluded to in Rev. Mr. Dawe's introduction to this volume—have I listened to that pastor's lessons, crying all through the sermons. My! what food it was to my hungry, broken spirit!

Finally, Mrs. McNeil came to me one day, and asked how I would like to talk to three thousand people at once. I said I would like it immensely, and she said: "Come with me on Franklin Street, and talk to the poor people there, who not only knew the old Wills, but who will listen to and be benefited by the new Wills. There's your start. Begin at the foot of the ladder, and some day you will reach the top, if you keep low. Then, some day, you will be able to talk to three thousand, yes, ten thousand people. Do n't begin at the top; for starting there, there is but one way to go, unless you jump clear of the ladder."

I accordingly took her advice, and talked to the people on Franklin Street, and in about the "Potomac" quarters. I began at the foot of the ladder; and I am there yet, thank God. More

than that, I hope to stay there until God, the good Master, shall say, "Come up higher."

### HOW TO LOSE ONE'S BUSINESS.

Up to the time I began taking Sister McNeil's advice, the idea of becoming a temperance-talker had not entered my head, and of course I had never, publicly, said much about temperance.

Hence, although I had become quite well known in the city as a "religious crank," I had thus far been able to hold the whole of my trade as a salesman. The time was at hand, however, when I was to be put through the fire for a test. God only wants workers who are tried and true. He has no place for cowards in his army.

I had made the acquaintance of an evangelist named Murrell, who was conducting a series of revival meetings near the city limits, and who had invited me to visit him. So, one day, not being especially busy, I drove over to his house. Mind you, up to this time I had never, at any of my meetings, spoken a word about temperance. I was at his house most of the forenoon, during which time he played and sang for me,

and just before dinner I was looking around the room at the pictures on the walls. Presently my attention was fastened on one picture showing a white cross, and just above it were the words, "He died for me." Mr. Murrell remarked that that picture had been presented to him when he was a lad, that he prized it highly, and would almost part with anything else rather than that. Then dinner came, after which I went home. Three days after that, while holding family service at my home, the Spirit of God told me to start a temperance organization, and take the white cross with its motto, "He died for me," as the design for the badge of the organization. When God tells me to do anything, I do it as soon as I can, and I did as he directed. I began at once the organization of the White Cross Temperance Society. At first I used little badges made of cloth, but soon we had grown so in members and resources that we were able to have badges made of white metal. Soon the nature of my new work became generally known throughout the city, and almost as soon I was out of business, commercially speaking.

You see all of my customers sold liquor, and

I was a confessed public organizer and worker against that branch of their business. My customers dropped me like a hot potato. Friends, some of them Christians too, advised me to let the temperance question alone, and talk nothing but religion; but God had told me to do this, and he had my promise. I could not and I did not want to break it. I knew that if I could not sell goods any longer, I could and would dig in the streets if necessary to get a living. I had started to serve God with my whole soul, and, with his help, I would never "gig" back on my word.

For fifteen months after this I worked at whatever I could get to do that was honorable, even though it was humble, and so took care of myself. Meanwhile the White Cross Society grew, until thousands of the little badges, worn on the outside of the coat—not on the vest or under the lapel of the coat—testified to the power of God in rescuing lost souls from the fiendish grip of the devil's adjutants, the saloon and liquor-men. Finally a grand lodge of the White Cross was organized; and so we grew, and praised God that many of the hardest of hardened sin-

ners were turned to God by our efforts. Clubs existed all over the city and country; many clubs were organized throughout the State, and the work had an overflow, until many clubs existed in Canada. The work was now seen to be plainly the work of God. The clergy stood by me most nobly; the ground was broken, and the seed, which is the Word, was sown. Since that time, and even now (and I pray God it may continue for a long time to come), good, glorious fruits are the result. As one of many, many illustrations of this work and its results, I present the following:

#### ALMOST LOST.

*"Is not this a brand plucked from the fire?" (Zech. iii, 2.)*

CHARLES GETTY, the subject of the following sketch, died in the village of Leamington, County of Essex, Canada, on Sabbath, the 28th of March, 1886, at the early age of thirty-two years. Born and brought up in ordinary circumstances, his life was spent in the occupations common to the lot of the farmer or working-man. About seven years ago he settled a little to the west of the village, on a farm adjoining that of Mr. Theodore Quick. Having been addicted to the excessive use of intoxicating liquors and profane language, Mrs. Quick felt impelled to talk to him about his manner of life, and



reprove him for his conduct; but with no good effect. She often spoke to him about his soul, heaven, hell, and eternity. He listened respectfully, but would not carry on any conversation. To her only would he listen. All others attempting to speak to him were at once and decisively repelled. He would say: "I do n't believe in Christianity; I do n't bother myself about hell." He avowed himself to be an atheist, and was regarded one of the most hardened unbelievers in the village and vicinity. His wife was brought under serious conviction during a revival meeting held some time ago in the village. Rev. Mr. Harris called one day to see and converse with her. Mr. Getty was present, but would allow no conversation on divine subjects with himself. During prayer, which was permitted to be offered, he remained sitting, and sneered at the petitions offered up.

Some time ago consumption laid its hand upon him, and brought him low. Mr. Harris visited him in his sickness, and upon his entrance to the sick-room said: "I have come to see you." "O!" was the reply. "I do n't wish to hear anything about religion; I am perfectly satisfied." He persisted in saying that man is no better than the lower animals, and perishes like them. "Do you wish to die like a beast?" "I do," was the reply. "I want to be left to myself. I have no preparation to make." No prayer was offered up on this occasion. On a subsequent visit, the same gentleman was greeted with the words, "Are you come to palaver again

about religion?" To his own friends he often said he hated to hear anything said about religion.

The Rev. Mr. Burtch also visited him. He was kindly received; but Mr. Getty would not allow him to read the Bible or pray, notwithstanding the earnest entreaties of his wife to allow him to do so God, who

"Moves in a mysterious way,  
His wonders to perform,"

had his agents secretly at work to break this hardened man. To all appearance, man's words of warning and advice were as the gentle ripples touching the foot of the rock-bound coast, leaving no trace of their touch on the towering cliff. Some Christian friends who, unknown to each other, had become secretly drawn to this man, bore him on the arms of their faith to their Savior. Their prayers had for some time been wafted on high for the conversion of this enemy of God and his truth. As his life kept ebbing away, their hopes became fewer; but their faith did not falter. The impression was made on their minds that he would yet become a trophy of the redeeming grace of God. Mr. H. O. Wills, of the McAuley Mission, Detroit, was in Leamington addressing meetings. On the afternoon of Tuesday, the 16th of March, after his address in the Presbyterian Church, he and the village minister agreed to offer up, separately, secret prayers for Mr. Getty and others. On Friday evening Mr. Wills called at the house of the dying man. Mr. Wills told of his own conversion, and then asked to be allowed

to pray. The request was refused, whereupon Mr. Wills said he would pray elsewhere that God would deal savingly with him. As the invalid was apparently sinking fast Mrs. Quick felt impelled, in her spirit, to speak once more to him of his state. On the Saturday forenoon (the 20th) she warned him, that should he die as he then was, he would be lost forever; and that if he were lost, her words would ring in his ears through all eternity. He then showed the first signs of interest in his spiritual state; and asked some of his neighbors, who had called, if they believed in the existence of a God, a heaven, and a hell. Shortly before dinner-time, Mr. Fuller, banker, called on business. When the business was transacted, Mr. Fuller spoke seriously to him; told him of his position before God, and pressed on him the necessity of fleeing from the wrath to come. By way of an apology Mr. Getty replied: "I never wronged or cheated anybody; I do n't see that there is anything wrong with me." Though admitting that he was a sinner, he pleaded that he was no worse than many others. Mr. Fuller told him of our relation to Adam; then related the account of the fall, and Adam's hiding himself from the presence of the Lord. He also explained the nature of sacrifice, and that the sacrificial death of Christ is the only ground of the sinner's hope before God; for "without the shedding of blood there is no remission" of sin; and also, that to be received into God's favor and friendship, we need to be clothed with the robe of Christ's righteousness.

In the afternoon, about three o'clock, he called his wife to his bedside, and said that he was about to die and go to hell. He bade those around good-bye; then, stretching himself out, appeared to be dead. In this state he continued but a few minutes. When he regained consciousness, he cried at the top of his voice that he was lost. "O, I am going to hell! I am going to hell! there is a God, there is a God! I am going to hell, and will burn forever in the fire, and forever cry out, O God, O God!" For some time this was the burden of his cry, which was mingled with the prayers, "O save my soul! O pray that God would save my soul!" His piercing cries were heard rods away. Then he called on Mr. and Mrs. Quick to come and pray for him; and afterwards cried: "Send for all the preachers and praying people in Leamington to come and pray for me." Some in the room were alarmed, and left. Friends gathered around his bedside, and pointed him to the Savior. To them he related a vision he had seen. He thought he was dead, and that he went to heaven. The Lord standing at the gate stopped him, and said he could not enter, but bade him go down to hell. Having gone, he there saw the agonies and heard the blasphemies of the damned, and himself was made to feel something of, as he said, "the bitter pains of hell." Having returned to heaven, he was told that he must go to earth and repent of his sins before he could enter. He was to tell his companions that there is a God, a heaven, and a hell, and that they must

repent of their sins, and pray to the Lord for pardon, else they would perish forever. Revs. Messrs. Miers, Burtch, and Scott were soon at his bedside. As they were administering comfort his cry was: "There is a God, there is a heaven and a hell; I am lost, I am going to hell; O Jesus, save my soul! Pray that God would save me." He even belched out profane and blasphemous language, that can not be written, and said: "That is the way they speak in hell."

When directed to go to the Savior for pardon, his cry was: "It is too late; I have sinned away the day of grace." Messrs Miers and Scott, who remained, said: "No; God has not left you, but has aroused you to feel yourself to be a sinner; and God says he is able to save to the uttermost all who come to him through Christ Jesus, his Son." Friends filled the room, and in wonder, amazement, and pity, saw him in his soul agony, and heard his piteous words. He complained of a burden that was bound on his soul, and that the devil, by means of it, was crushing him down to hell. That burden he acknowledged to be his sins.

About seven o'clock Mr. Getty sent for Messrs. Harris and Burtch, and asked their forgiveness for the way he treated them. His soul was still tossed about. Mr. Harris asked: "Is it the fear of hell—of being lost—that makes you feel this way, or is it sorrow for your sins?" His reply was most satisfactory: "It is sorrow for my sins against God, who has loved me so much." Among passages read

and quoted to him were; "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters," etc. (Isa. lv, 1.) "Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely." (Rev. xxii, 17.) "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man open the door, I will come into him, and sup with him, and he with me." (Rev. iii, 20.) "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John i, 9.) Comfort was sought to be given to him from the sympathy and work of the Redeemer. "A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench; he shall bring forth judgment unto truth." (Isa. xlii, 3.)

After these ministers left, Mr. Scott called again, and found him still troubled. "Are you wishing to be saved?" asked Mr. Scott. "Yes!" "Do you believe that Jesus is willing to save you?" "Yes!" "Then repeat this prayer: 'O Lord Jesus, save my soul; cleanse it from all sin, for thy name's sake. Amen.'" He repeated these words with all the earnestness of a dying man. As Mr. Scott required to leave for a short time, and Mr. Getty was anxious to have a minister constantly beside him, Mr. Miers was sent for, came, and conversed with him. When both were again at his bedside, Mr. Getty said that he died at three o'clock that afternoon, but that God gave him life and repentance; that God was teaching him to pray, and not he was speaking, but God in him. Fears still clouded his soul. He was asked if he could give himself to the Savior, and trust

himself in the hands of Jesus. "Yes!" he replied; "I give my sins, my body, my soul, my spirit, my all to Jesus." Still the tempter made him think that he was lost. He complained of the devil's power over him. Mr. Scott then read Heb. ii, 14, 15: "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also [Jesus] himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver them who, through fear of death, were all their life-time subject to bondage." In explaining these words, he pointed him to the fact that Jesus lived and died, not only to save his people from their sins and eternal misery, but to conquer Satan, and deliver the oppressed from his power. Seeing Mr. Getty's mind was not now so much troubled about God's willingness to save, as about his own lack of knowledge or feeling that he was saved, he directed him to Phil. i, 6: "He that hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." Also to John vi, 44, 37: "No man can come to me, except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him." "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." He showed that, as God had, as Mr. Getty admitted, begun the good work of salvation in him, so God would finish it. That as he had gone to Jesus for salvation, it was because God the Father drew him to Jesus, or God the Son; that as the Father had drawn him to the Son, and had given him life and repentance, so he

was God's child, and that no one, not even the devil, would pluck him out of God's hand. (John x, 28, 29.) "What you need," Mr. Scott added, "is patience, till God shall finish the good work he has begun. He will yet give you light; he will take away this burden, and fill your heart with peace in believing." Mr. Miers directed him to cast his burden on the Lord, to cling to Jesus, who says: "Come unto me, all ye who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." "Rest for me?" "Yes; rest for you!" As it was getting late, and he seeming inclined to sleep, most of the visitors left.

About midnight his mind was again much troubled; but after a short sleep he awoke about two o'clock, and exclaimed: "Praise the Lord, my burden is gone." He asked for a Bible. It was opened at the fourteenth chapter of John. Having read that and following chapters, he exclaimed: "O how sweet! it is God's word." Mr. Scott, who had gone early to see him, on hearing his story of deliverance, asked if he had any message to his former companions. "Yes," he replied; "tell them there is a God, and I know it; tell them there is a heaven and a hell. Tell them I am a converted man; that my soul is saved; that unless they repent, and pray to Jesus for the forgiveness of their sins, they will go to hell, and perish forever." During the week the ministers frequently visited him, and friends from all parts came to see this miracle of saving grace. The clouds of Charles Getty's sins, and the thick clouds of his transgressions, he



now felt to be rolled away. Light shone into his soul; his body made a temple of the Holy Ghost. "Charlie," said Mr. Fuller, during a visit in this calm, which continued till death came, "have you not all your life been trying to get away from God?" "Yes!" he replied; and again said: "The Lord hath saved me; there is no use in resisting; the Lord hath showed it unto me." His mind was perfectly clear when relating what the Lord did for him. Next day he transacted some business with business men, to their full satisfaction. During the week his bodily strength gradually failed him. On the Saturday, when in delirium, his words were: "Lord, Lord! light! light!" He died next morning at nine o'clock.

As soon as Mr. Getty was brought to realize that he was a lost sinner, his first cry was to God for mercy, through Jesus Christ. He did not urge the plea of personal righteousness, nor that he was as good as his neighbors. Even in his agony he showed that the Holy Spirit taught him the true nature of sin, as against God, and led him to Christ only for pardon. He laid hold of the rope of saving faith the Spirit threw out to him, as he was struggling in the waters of conviction; and by God's help, he held on till he was landed on the shores of "peace in believing," where he experienced "the joys of salvation."

The change was not in the heart only, but in the conduct of Mr. Getty. As soon as the Spirit of God took away the stony heart, Mr. Getty asked

the forgiveness of those he had formerly repulsed, and sent a message to Mr. Wills to the same effect.

In his hardened state he would not allow a Sabbath-school paper or a religious tract to be in his house. He had no Bible, and confessed he never read it. Now he would have the Bible beside him, and either read it himself, or get others to read it to him. It opened up a new world to this, a new creature. He desired more light from the Scripture, and frequently expressed great surprise at the information given in the Word of God. He regretted he had not lived a better life, and said that had he been a changed man before, his home would have been a happier one. He requested his wife to bring up their children in the fear of the Lord, and pleaded with unconverted relations to give themselves to Jesus, to live good lives, join the Church, and earnestly prayed for their salvation.

Reader, what is your state before God at this moment? Accepting Christ as your Savior, or rejecting him? "He that believeth on the Son [of God] hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." (John iii, 36.) "I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that all should come unto me and live." (Ezek. xxxiii, 11.) Jesus saith: "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." (John vi, 37.)

Unconverted brother, do not think that some such striking event will happen to you. "The wind bloweth where it listeth," etc. (John iii, 8.)

But it does not always blow with the force of a hurricane. To you the Spirit of God says: "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." (2 Cor. vi, 2.)

Utter indifference to death is no preparation for future existence. One may not fear to die, yet be a lost soul. After death comes the judgment. Are you prepared for this? If you, brother, neglect this salvation—the only salvation in existence—which God has provided for you, how can you escape the furious storms of divine wrath, or free your soul from the guilt and curse of sin? (Read Prov. i, 20, to end.)

"It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners." (1 Tim. i, 15.) "If we confess our sins to God, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John i, 9.) "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." (Acts xvi, 31.)

J. B. SCOTT.

LEAMINGTON, May 3, 1886.

#### WILLS AT THE MCAULEY MISSION.

In November, 1884, Mr. Wills opened an un-denominational Christian church-building, which he named the McAuley Mission. On the night of the dedication services, Rev. Dr. Duffield, Rev. Louis R. Fox, Rev. Wm. Dawe, Rev. C. R. Henderson, Rev. Dr. Smith, Charles Buncher, and a

large audience participated. The enterprise was kept open until April, 1886, when it was closed. As a sample of Mr. Wills's earlier style of work, the following report by the *Free Press* is reproduced:

“For the benefit of those, both young and old, who have come in here to-night for the first time, and may never come again, I want to say that this is the McAuley Mission, and that you 'll have to keep quiet. When there's any talkin' to be done, we 'll do it from up here; but when we're singin' you kin all join in.”

These words were last night addressed to the three hundred or more people who had assembled in the McAuley Mission, corner of St. Aubin Avenue and Sherman Street, by Henry O. Wills, one of the gentlemen who has undertaken the arduous and thankless task of expounding the Gospel to those in that locality who have no church home to go to, and, even if they had, would not probably be in attendance oftener than once a month.

The persons for whom the language was especially intended did not seem to comprehend the force of Mr. Wills's argument, judging from the loud conversation which was kept up, and he directed one of his lieutenants to put any one out who acted in an unruly manner, which had the desired effect.

Several hymns were sung in succession, after which Mr. Wills announced that the next one he

would give out would be the last before the meeting was formally opened. The first stanza had not been concluded when a terrific crash was heard, and the frightened audience made a break for the door. Mr. Wills took in the situation in an instant, and, jumping to his feet, told them to keep their seats; that nothing more serious had occurred than the toppling over of a rickety chimney. The incident, however, afforded him a good opportunity to lecture his frightened hearers, which he did by telling them that if the mere falling of a chimney would frighten them, and if they were unprepared for it, how much more unfitted and frightened to meet their God would they be when the last great crash came! He said: "When the last great earthquake comes—and we can't get away from that, boys—you won't have any chance to run out of the mission then. You want to be ready to say to the Master, 'I'm ready,' and up you'll go with him. We will now finish the singing of this hymn, and when we are through, Rev. George Duffield will take charge of the meeting."

The hymn being concluded, Rev. Mr. Duffield made a prayer, following with a short sermon to the children, in which he illustrated the benefit to be derived from following in the footsteps of Him who said: "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven." He also told the little ones of the terrible fate which befell the children who wickedly mocked and scoffed at Elisha, and admonished them so to

live that when they reached the age of maturity, they would look back with pleasure to the days when the saving truths were explained to them from the pulpit of the McAuley Mission. He then directed his remarks to the older portion of the audience, and said that no heart was so black but that God could and would cleanse it. People seemed afraid to fall at the feet of God, who had given his only Son to be crucified that the sins of all might be atoned for. Christ died for all, individually and collectively, and every one who would give his heart to him and take up the cross would be saved.

Mr. Wills brought the meeting to a close with a few short remarks, in which he detailed the manner of his own conversion.

### THE CASINO TABERNACLE.

Of the last very important work done in the city of Detroit by Mr. Wills but little need be said; for at this writing (June, 1890,) the work itself still remains, a monument to his earnestness and efficiency as a worker in the field of religious labor. The work in question is best known as the Casino Tabernacle of Detroit. "The Casino" was the name of a low variety theater in the very business center of the city, and directly across a narrow street from the city's high-school. It was a stench in the air,

an excrescence on the beautiful face of a lovely city. Mr. Wills, by his own energy, raised a sum sufficient to influence the lessee of the Casino Theater to agree to transfer the lease to Mr. Wills, could he raise a sum large enough to pay a good rent. The situation was laid before W. H. Brearly, of the Detroit *Evening Journal*, and the result was that about the first of May, 1889, the Casino Variety Theater ceased to exist, and the Casino Tabernacle opened for business, with H. O. Wills as the evangelist in charge. To-day the Casino Tabernacle has business men's prayer-meetings each noonday; each evening religious meetings are held; and on Sundays large congregations (undenominational) are present, mornings and evenings; and a Sunday-school, having several hundred pupils, is conducted there.

#### AN EXAMPLE OF WILLS'S STYLE.

The Detroit *Evening Journal*, preserving the spontaneous enthusiasm of Mr. Wills in excellent style, published the following:

"GLORY TO GOD!" It was Brother H. O. Wills. Who else could it be, with those lungs and that

salutation? Detroit's Sam Jones has been to Saratoga. Every time sin showed its head he mauled it. The work kept him pretty busy. Yesterday morning he dropped into the *Journal* office to tell about his trip:

“O dear! what meetings I had! Such a crowd! We had to hold up the sides of the tent so that the crowd outside could hear. I fought against sin, and I fought against the people living away from home. One man said there was no harm—did n't God say, 'Go and take a rest awhile?' 'O dear, no!' I answered; 'Jesus Christ did n't go to a place like Saratoga, but into the desert, to rest; and when the people saw him coming, they took a short cut across lots, and Christ took compassion on them. Christ was in the desert, and the people got hungry and he fed them; and it gave the disciples more work than ever, and they got no rest at all.'

“Both those in charge of the tent and the ministers told me I spoke too loud. They said it was an outrage to let that man talk. The language that he uses and the slang that he uses is an outrage. I said: 'Let me alone. I know how to fish. I am fishing for eels and bull-heads, and they lie in the bottom, and I have got to use live bait.' That put me in mind of the boy who, when he was asked what he had got in his mouth, said: 'I have got wo'ms for bait.' He caught fish. I had the 'wo'ms' in my mouth. But some o' these ministers, they can't get the people on the hook, because they



do n't get their hooks baited with live bait—worms.”

“Were there many ministers in Saratoga?”]

“O, dear man alive! Hundreds of 'em—playing croquet, and ministers going to the races! They were mostly from country towns.”

“What do you think of the Saratoga women?”

“Loud! That's it. Loud in every way! I can not see where the good looks come in. They had lots of toggery on. Diamonds—but they're only rhinestones when you get close to them. I said in my talks in the tent: 'God says, Strip, and show them that it was not outside dress that counted with God.' I had some green corn in my tent, one day, when I spoke to a large audience. I showed them a cob with nice husk around it, and I said: 'This looks like a good one, but strip it.' I stripped it, and the cob was all soft—just a little nub. 'And so some of you look like Christians; but when any one comes to strip you, you kick and do n't like it, because you are only little nubs of Christians.'

“‘No harm in playing croquet?’ said I to the ministers. 'You pay sixty cents an hour for the grounds. Then some of your congregation come along and see their pastor playing croquet. Then they think if he can play it, surely it is not wrong for them to go to the horse-races. Same with the club and dances and balls.'

“O dear! what a blaze of diamonds I saw! I told them I was going to put the plowshare six

inches deeper than usual, and I told them if they did not like it they must lump it. When I got through the plowing, then came the cultivating (that's the easy task, you know); and the last two nights there were fourteen came for the Lord Jesus Christ. And there were some young, wealthy ladies came out too. I had stacks of letters sent to me. One man addressed me as 'H. O. Wills, Hallelujah Devil-driver.' A man from Fairhaven, Conn., said he had been benefited by my preaching. He had had many doubts in his mind before I went there; but he had attended the meetings, and he had heard everything, and was made strong in Christ.

"O yes, Saratoga would be a good place for me to go another summer, and it would be a good place for winter. I had people from all parts listen to me—from Kentucky, Louisiana, New York, and Boston, and ever so many other places. They had a big coach there, with dudes and ladies all over the top of it, and four horses hitched on, and a horn as long as my two arms—a tally-ho they called the thing. So I got a wagon, and tacked my 'Devil's Toboggan-slide' picture on the wagon, and got a big tin horn, an' when they blowed I blowed too, and blowed louder than they.

"A great deal is being done to get Pat Brady liberated," continued Mr. Wills. "Mr. Moody wrote a long letter to Governor Hill, and a lawyer in Troy has written a number of letters, and he is bound and determined to get Brady out. I am just as sure that I shall get Brady out as I am that I am in the *Jour-*

nal office. I can't fail now. It can't be done in a minute, but it's only a question of a little time now.

"I have had a big battle, and I have had a good time. I like the work. I went to a number of places while I was out there. I went to Northfield and Round Lake. Sam Jones was at Round Lake, and got twelve hundred dollars for five days' work."

"Do they give you anything?"

"They do 'nt give me anything. I worked five days in Schuylerville, N. Y., and they gave me twenty-five cents less than my railroad fare cost me. In Saratoga I got about one hundred dollars, and they paid for my board. I made quite a little from selling my photographs. There were some who objected to my selling my photographs; but I told them that I had taken the best counsel in the West on the matter, and I thought there was no harm in selling my pictures. Why, one man said to me, 'Brother Wills, that is the very best way to progress in this work.'

"I am going to try and get Beecher's hall for a week or so. You tell the people that I have n't brought Brady with me; but I will—I'm positive I will."

#### A PHILOSOPHER'S COMPARISON.

George P. Goodale, for years city editor of the Detroit *Free Press*, and at present dramatic critic and special writer for that paper, is the

author of the following, one of his "pictures" being of Wills:

### TWO PICTURES.

BY SIGNOR MAX.

No. 98.

Could we rightly interpret all the lessons of life we might be able largely to control our happiness, or at least mitigate our miseries.

Within a week the pious world has been shocked by one of the most pitiful and tragic endings of a human life that it is possible for us to conceive. A young girl's suicide under any circumstances must excite a lively sympathy in all but the wholly selfish or the wholly depraved; but when she goes down to the grave that she has dug for herself, with words of despairing and awful reproach to Almighty God upon her lips, horror is added to sympathy.

Here was a girl reared in the religious atmosphere; to whom Christian precept and practice were familiar, who had presumably walked untainted along her short way of life, and yet who in the hour of death bequeathed to the world these desperate and whirling words:

"I have never found that God kept me in the hour of trial, and I have never dishonored him before man. O, terrible to love a supposed friend and Savior, and to find the one you believed to be almighty to save, neither able nor willing to do aught for you! As to the peace and love and joy that is

promised to a Christian, it is all a farce, and there is no such thing."

These sentiments have been characterized by some of the journals of the day as blasphemous. One writer has been found who made them and the circumstances of the tragedy his justification for assailing the dead girl's integrity. Being an influential writer and widely read, I assume that many of his audience favorably entertain his opinion. While that may not very strongly support their own claim of Christian charity, I do not feel called upon to judge them, well knowing that there are men and women so thick-clad in virtue as never to have been penetrated by compassion for the vicious. To loathe the sinner as well as the sin is a natural expression of their sense of exact justice. It is not for me to cast doubt on their conviction of superior and unassailable holiness, or to hint that there is aught in their judgment of human acts that suggests the Pharisee or the assassin. They are rather to be applauded for declining to recognize any claim of the woman who, while walking hand in hand with despair and death, could be so insensible to the wrath as to declare these things:

"I believed in God, and tried to brave it out.

"I have suffered enough to kill ten people that had not the bravery of a lion.

"I fought against unkindness until I could stand it no longer.

"I have loved righteousness with all my heart.

“O terrible! to love right, and feel there is no power in heaven or earth that can bring any good to triumph over evil, or help those who strive after righteousness.”

Duty to society and loyalty to our beloved faith alike command us to set our faces in perpetual frown against such blasphemous lamentation. In that conviction I am immovable, though when I began to consider the case I found it a little difficult to dispose of that fragment of history which, you remember, runs in this wise :

“And about the ninth hour  
Jesus cried with a loud voice,  
Saying, My God! my God!  
Why hast thou forsaken me?”

This mournful end of a life that we must believe was sweet and gentle in itself, and opulent once in promise of love and happiness, brings up anew the very old story of wreck and disaster where woman garners up her heart and finds her rock but shifting sand. The vigilant telegraph has told us why this woman wrote her *Book of Lamentations*. “She had been engaged to a young clergyman of New York City, but her affianced proved fickle, and during her absence in the country was married to another woman. It is believed that this unfortunate love affair was the prime cause of her despair and suicide.”

Were I a teacher to whose voice the people would give willing ear, I think I could offer something on a phase of the so-called woman question

that would be heard with interest; but being the unknown toiler that I am, let me persuade the reader to note that Washington Irving (whom none, I am sure, will refuse to hear) has said most beautifully what I would as beautifully say if I could:

“Man is the creature of interest and ambition. His nature leads him forth into the struggle and bustle of the world. Love is but the embellishment of his early life, or a song piped in the intervals of the acts. He seeks for fame, for fortune, for space in the world’s thought, and dominion over his fellow-men. But a woman’s whole life is a history of the affections. The heart is her world; it is there her ambition strives for empire—it is there her avarice seeks for hidden treasures. She sends forth her sympathies on adventure; she embarks her whole soul in the traffic of affection; and if shipwrecked, her case is hopeless—for it is a bankruptcy of the heart. Woman’s lot is to be wooed and won; and if unhappy in her love, her heart is like some fortress that has been captured, and sacked, and abandoned, and left desolate. Look for her, after a while, and you find friendship weeping over her untimely grave, and wondering that one who but lately glowed with all the radiance of health and beauty should so speedily be brought down to ‘darkness and the worm.’”

I do not know what is in the mind of that “young clergyman of New York City,” but I remember that a repenting Judas of old time cried

out, "I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood," and went out and hanged himself.

The melancholy story of Laura Nourse is a picture all in shadow. I know another story of one fellow-creature's experience with the spiritual side of earth which is all light. The two are hung at opposite ends of the gallery of life. I do not know that they teach a universal lesson, but I think every mind may dwell upon them with interest and possible profit.

In the first picture we see a woman whose path, from petted infancy to her dismal death, was strewn with the flowers that bloom in Christian homes.

The second picture is of a man who knew nothing of beauty, nothing of virtue, nothing of high thought, and all of depravity, for more than forty years, yet who has now consecrated himself to good works, and is daily doing the noblest and most devoted service to man in the ideal Christian's spirit. He is no fanciful creation, but a tangible, walking, toiling, flesh-and-blood fact. Until two years ago, he was a dangerous menace to society—a brawler, a criminal, a convict, a drunkard, a debauchee—a vulgar and brutal despot in his squalid home, and a common butcher of the decencies of life.

These are harsh lines; but they comprise a truthful likeness of the man as he was. I knew him at his worst. I know him now, and it is my opinion that a better citizen can not be found in the directory. The change in him is a nineteenth-century



miracle. Two days ago I asked him to recite his version of it, and this is the story he told :

“It was all brought around by God’s love and mercy. You know there was n’t a harder man livin’ than me, nor one that cared less for superstition and religion and all that. I had done everything that a bad man could do who did n’t know what good conduct meant, ever since I was eight years old. Nobody ever talked to me about religion, and I do n’t know as I’d ever thought about it. Two years ago this fall I went home one night after a long drunk, with nerves all gone, pockets empty, and no food for my family. I tried to sleep, but I could n’t close my eyes. While I lay on the bed wide awake, and wonderin’ whether there was n’t a bottle of valerian in the house, I took a sudden notion that my time had come. Now, you know I’ve been in the toughest places a man ever got into and out of, and never squealed—not even when I’ve nearly had the life kicked out of me. That do n’t count much, maybe, but I never knowed the time that I feared anything in mortal shape. I was n’t afraid to die; but all at once I was overwhelmed with a rushin’ sense of my whole life, like a dam breakin’ away with the spring floods, and sweepin’ everything in its course along helpless. On the wall I seen a glimmer of light. (I know it’s natural for you to smile at that; but you want me to tell my true story, and I’m doing it literal.) As I kep’ lookin’ at it steady, it gradually took the form of an eye; and I says to myself: *It’s God’s offer of a last chance!* When I lay down on

that bed I was an unclean thing, soaked with whisky, steeped in tobacco, and a blasphemer of everything that men hold sacred in time and in eternity. From that hour, now twenty-two months back, I've never once had the name of God on my lips, except in reverence and prayer.

"O yes! I thought I was bound to quit tobacco and drink, as well as other unclean habits, because I did n't see how I could make my body God's temple without first givin' it a scourin' out. The love that has filled my heart from that time on has brought me happiness and peace greater 'n I can ever tell. O, my dear friend, you should come to my home, and see the wife and children who have come out of the depths of sorrow. If you could only catch—if I could only express—the meaning of God's merciful goodness, as it has been shown to me, you would n't wonder that I'm resolved to serve him with clean hands and all my heart. From the night when his eye pierced me, I've never felt the slightest wish to go back to the old way of livin', and though I'm a rough, uncultured, storm-beaten old pilgrim, I thank God that I can feel the inspiring truth of his love, and that I can find words, such as they are, to tell men what that love has done for me. I'm tryin' to be a livin' epistle, and if men won't read the Scriptures, they must have a chance to read Wills."

My imagination has not led me into raptures or exaggeration. I have given facts and set down without embellishment the words of this ignorant

man, whose rude eloquence and glowing zeal have made his little mission-house the pool where many Helons come to wash their leprosy.

### DID N'T WANT A PENSION.

Shortly after the appointment of Corporal Tanner as pension commissioner, Mr. Wills received a card from the Pension Bureau, asking him to fill out a printed blank on it, regarding his army record. The information was desired as an addition to a record that has been established in the Bureau of Pensions of all surviving soldiers and sailors who served in the Union army or navy during the late war.

Brother Wills is not particularly proud of his war record. In the rebellion days he was numbered among the Philistines. He was a bounty-jumper and deserter of the most accomplished type. He filled out the blank as follows, and forwarded it to Washington: "Name, Henry O. Wills; late rank, 'high private;' company, F, in all round regiment; enlisted in Troy, N. Y., in One Hundred and Twenty-fifth New York; vessel, Deserter; squad, homeward bound. Discharged? No, ran away at Chicago in '62; enlisted again at Buffalo, and deserted again. Enlisted again and again, and deserted each time. Residence, 357 Clinton Street, Detroit. Future change of residence, Heaven, I hope; for if I was a bad soldier in time of peril, now I am a soldier of the cross, and enlisted for the war. Have served faithfully for six years, and am now orderly sergeant;

but I hope soon to be promoted to a captaincy. I hope this card will find its way to some one who is a true soldier of the cross; or, if not, that it may meet the eye of some one now in rebellion against the best government in the world; namely, the government of our Lord Jesus Christ. God bless Corporal Tanner for his love of the soldier! Please don't think I am a crank. Make an investigation."

All over the card were pasted little stickers, bearing Scripture texts.

#### WILLS AT BAY CITY.

One of the most successful missions ever conducted by Mr. Wills was at Bay City—the third largest city in Michigan—and while great work was done, through God, the experience resulted in a somewhat interesting *finale*. The Bay City *Tribune*, speaking of Mr. Wills's efforts and methods during the revival, said:

The arch enemy of mankind is on the run. Evangelist Wills got his head turned in the right direction Saturday evening, and last night set him in motion. It was a bad night for people to leave their homes for any reason; but while the wealthy and aristocratic remained inside, and the preachers in the fashionable churches spoke to empty pews, several hundred workingmen, with their wives and families, made their way through the pelting storm to the City Mission. Every chair was occupied, and

standing-room was in order before the services commenced. Brother Wills had two clocks fastened to the wall over the platform, and used them to illustrate the address of the evening, after music by Hudson's orchestra. Both clocks bore the same appearance to the unaided eye; but, while one was perfect in its works, well regulated, and capable of keeping good time, the other was without works at all, and of no value whatever.

"Faith without works is dead," quoted Brother Wills; "and if that clock is taken to represent faith, it is without life. You would n't put any faith in it either, if you wanted to know what time it was."

The good clock represented the Christian; the other, the man without the love of the Lord in his heart; and the speaker drew the comparison between the two very finely and skillfully from first to last. The story of Patrick E. Brady's prison-life was again quaintly told, and the latter made a brief address, in which he stated that Thursday or Friday night he would relate his prison experience, suffering confinement, innocently, for nearly thirty-one years, to a Bay City audience. He returned to Detroit last night to look after some work in that corner of Brother Wills's vineyard, but he will be in Bay City again Thursday morning. Some of Brother Wills's quaint sayings last night were as follows:

"How will the miser feel when he goes to hell, and the Lord takes the love of money out of his heart? Do n't you think that will add to his punishment?"

“You need never think that God will go with you into a game of cards, and help you out, especially if you hide a good hand up your sleeve.

“You laborers, who get but ninety cents a day while your employers are coining your life’s blood into gold need not be ashamed or too modest to come to Christ. He was a workingman himself, and if he were here now I believe he would be at the head of the Knights of Labor instead of Powderly.

“When a man with old clothes on, and moccasins upon his feet, calls at your house for help, do n’t turn him away. You do n’t know who he may be. Christ used to go round in plain garb himself.

“If you are sinking in the sea of sin, and I throw you a rope, you may not want to take it, and if you do n’t, you ought to hand it to some other fellow.”

Just before the meeting was dismissed Brother Wills asked all those who desired his prayers to hold up their hands. Two or three were raised. Then he asked those who considered themselves Christians to stand up. Over fifty did so. Finally, about twenty-five men and women, the most of the former looking like woodsmen, expressed a desire to lead better lives, and at the close of the meeting had a few minutes’ conversation in private with the evangelist.

Illustrating the gossip, the backbitings, and other trials which all evangelists must meet, and to show Mr. Wills’s method of fighting such

enemies, the following from the Detroit *Evening News* is published:

There is some question about Brother Wills's board-bill at Bay City, according to the Bay City *Press*. In flaming, double-column head-lines it announces: "Brother Wills's Board-bill!" "He stopped at the Rouech House for ten days, and the question agitating the mind of the landlord is, Who will pay for the brother's meat and drink?" "The Board of City Missions refuses to pay." "Brother Glidden promised to be responsible, and it looks as though the burden would fall on his shoulders. Sequel of the recent revival."

The paper then gives the details of a recent meeting, and says:

"The bill of H. O. Wills for fourteen dollars for board at the Rouech House during his stay here was disallowed. The Board was unanimously of the opinion that the mission funds should not be diverted to such a purpose. There was considerable dissatisfaction expressed at the record Wills made while here; and the city missionary was further enjoined not to hire any more so-called evangelists. It is the purpose of the Board to conduct the mission in a quiet, orderly way, and it does n't approve the hullabaloo method of assaulting the ramparts of Satan. The regular meetings of the Board will hereafter be held on the second Tuesday of each month."

A *News* reporter called at Brother Wills's resi-

dence, 357 Clinton Avenue, this morning, but the evangelist was down street. The above item was shown to Mr. Brady, who was at Bay City with Brother Wills.

"Disallowed, eh?" said Mr. Brady. "Well, I heard the city missionary tell Mr. Wills during a conversation in Mission Hall at the expiration of the week's work there, that Mr. Wills's expenses at the hotel would be paid."

"How were your expenses paid, Mr. Brady?"

"Mr. Wills told me that he paid two dollars a day for me out of his own pocket."

Later Mr. Wills was interviewed on the subject, and said:

"The biggest share of the Bay City Mission Board is Universalist, as I understand it. That's the reason they do n't believe in onslaught. I'll tell you how it was. I was in Alpena with Brady, holding a sort of little lecture tour for the purpose of raising money enough to send him home to England. Rev. Mr. Glidden wrote me, asking what I'd come to Bay City and work for. My wife forwarded the letter to Alpena to me. When through at Alpena, I had intended going to Bay City anyway to get a hall for Brady to tell his story in, and while there I thought I might as well do the mission-work. So I telegraphed Mr. Glidden in answer to his letter, to get me a place to stop, and that I would be there that night. He got bills out after he received my telegram that day, announcing us for that evening, and had a bell-boy from the Rouech



House meet us on the train before it reached Bay City, to conduct us to the hotel.

"I spoke in the Mission Hall Saturday and Sunday nights. Monday night was their meeting, and they held it. Tuesday, Rev. Mr. Glidden came to me, and said the Board could n't pay me anything, but would pay my bill at the hotel, and Mr. Glidden so told Mr. Rouech. I asked Mr. Rouech before coming away: 'Is it understood between you and Mr. Glidden that the Board will pay my bill here?' Mr. Rouech replied that was his understanding, and said everything was all right. I paid Brady's board. Mr. Glidden gave me all the collections of the mission that week.

"Now as regards my hullabaloo methods, I wish to say that the Board not being evangelical, but a big share of it Universalists, no doubt they don't like my handling of them without gloves. That's the sum and substance of it. I preached for Rev. Mr. Morgan in the West Bay City Methodist Episcopal Church Sunday morning, and talked to the largest Sunday-school that's been known there since their church was built.

"If my methods have been wrong, they nevertheless called people to the Mission Hall until they had to be turned away. Sunday night the hall was packed and jammed, and standing-room was at a premium because 'Christ was lifted up.' (John xii, 32.) Rain was coming down in torrents, and still they stood in the streets to listen. Seven dollars was given that night by the common working-

people at the collection. That shows whether the work was appreciated or not.

“At the meeting Sunday night, that is, after the dismissal of the people, we held a second meeting, at which between thirty and fifty men and women, without any pulling or hauling, walked deliberately to the front, and made a decided stand for Christ. If that’s hullabaloo, God send some more hullabaloo methods to Bay City to assault the ramparts of Satan and Universalism. The devil and kirmess and Universalism have truly got a stronghold there.”

### THE DEFENSE IS GOOD.

The *Evening News* continues :

Evangelist H. O. Wills has received the following letter from George L. Lusk, of West Bay City, regarding that unpaid board-bill. Mr. Lusk is superintendent of a Methodist Sunday-school, and his words will carry weight :

“WEST BAY CITY, January 23, 1890.

“DEAR BROTHER WILLS,—I wish you to believe that this is a huge love-letter, in point of size, of spirit, and true fraternity. I send you with this mail a paper which will, no doubt, reveal statements quite misleading—certainly unjust and entirely unjustified. I believed when first I saw this contemptible head-line that your version of the matter had not been given, and I know such information from yourself would put a vastly different light on the question. I looked for some defense by Mr.

Glidden, or some one as well informed, in your behalf, but have seen none in the papers. I believe the paper is directly responsible for publishing such meanness, and stigmatizing a worthy name without cause. I have ordered my paper stopped indefinitely.

“I would add my wish for your health and happiness. I am truly happy in the remembrance of your visit to our Church and my home Sunday. From a personal condition, it was one of the best occasions in a young life. I am delighted in the memory of our association together Sunday. I have listened to Talmage with eagerness and delight; to our eloquent Vincent; to Wendling, Willets, Henson, Wright, Fisk, Foss, Goodsell, Newman, and a host of such grand men—listened to each and all of them with pleasure and sincere appreciation; but, withal, it remained for H. O. Wills, in truth and love, and by the vigorous recital of pathetic and irresistible facts, to touch my innermost being, and open every avenue of my soul in gratitude to God. That was a magnificent effort. I wish that you could continue to tell such a story for one thousand years. The joys of life to a million souls would surely be more plenteous, and heaven would be richer in very deed.

‘Tell it again! Tell it again!

Salvation’s story repeat o’er and o’er.’

“I pray that God will continue to lead and bless you and yours graciously.

“I shall follow you as you go on such missions of love and ‘good-will to men’ with much eagerness and high anticipation.

“Very sincerely yours,

“GEORGE L. LUSK.”

### PAT BRADY'S STORY.

One of the most interesting achievements in the life of Mr. Wills was his success, after years of work, in obtaining a pardon for Patrick Brady, serving a life sentence at Auburn (N. Y.) prison. Brady's thrilling story, already alluded to in this volume, is told in his own words as follows, which narrative he first reduced to writing to send to Mr. Wills:

H. O. WILLS:

DEAR SIR AND TRUE FRIEND,—Embarrassed with emotions of mingled gratitude and anxiety, I am seated in my lonely cell, attempting to acknowledge your kind and welcome letter, and to give you an outline of my unhappy life and its perpetual thralldom. I am encouraged to this by the fact that, in this gloomy gulf of deep despair, you yet remain the one unextinguished, constant beacon-light that cheers me to make another feeble struggle to reach my long and vainly-sought haven of hope, which else must prove the paradise of my despair.

When but thirteen years old, I left home with



PATRICK BRADY, THE "LIFER."



my uncle, an officer in the English navy, to be trained and schooled in that service until old and steady enough to enter college. My home was then in Ireland. This uncle carried me to the Black Sea in 1854, where he went on some mission connected with the Crimean War. For some breach of discipline he severely flogged me. In consequence of this, I ran away from him when he returned to England, and went to another uncle, who was the captain and owner of a ship. He took me as cabin-boy on several voyages, until I ran away from him at Quebec, and came into the State of New York at Niagara Falls, in May, 1858, when I was seventeen years old. I gradually worked my way to Albany, where I got into bad company, which resulted in my commitment to Clinton Prison on December 19, 1858, for a term of three years and six months, on a charge of burglary in the third degree. Early days of July, 1861, I was persuaded to escape, although nearly three-fourths of my sentence had then expired.

There were some ten of us to go. James Sewell was the leader. We were at work as a night-gang in the rolling-mill. Sewell had provided a key to unlock the mill door. There was no time fixed to start; we were to go the first opportunity to unlock the door. My part was to carry a sack of bread that was secreted near where I worked. The open door was to be the signal to make the break for liberty. A few minutes past midnight, July 12, 1861, I saw the door wide open, snatched

the bread, and rushed out just behind some others of the party. I saw nothing of our keeper (Augustus Wright) nor Sewell when I went out. Seven escaped, the hearts of three having failed them at the last moment. Four of us crossed the fence together. When we were over, Sewell said: "Boys, I have killed Wright!" He said, when he made the start he ran against the keeper, caught up a four-inch bolt, and struck him with it, intending merely to stun him; but that hitting hard, in the excitement of the moment, and striking the temple, the blow proved fatal. Sewell had the keeper's watch and pistol. Three days after, we were caught and returned to the prison. Sewell admitted at once that he alone was responsible for the death of Wright. We were chained to the floor of dungeons, and thus remained for three months. Early in 1862 we were carried to Plattsburg, to stand for murder in the first degree.

The three convicts who staid behind at the time of the escape were promised pardon for testifying against us. We were denied the right to challenge the jurors. Two of the seven, who had influential friends, were not tried; and two others, who had friends with money, were acquitted. The trial commenced at the opening of court in the morning, and three of us were convicted and sentenced by seven o'clock P. M. the same day. We were sentenced to hard labor for one year, and to be hanged at the end of that time.



The next morning after this sentence a chain was riveted to my leg, to which was attached a twenty-six-pound ball, which I wore day and night altogether five years, one month, and twenty-five days, from which resulted lameness for life. I was put to work in the tailor-shop for some time; then I was returned to the rolling-mill, with my ball and chain. After a time, my services being very valuable, the ball and chain were taken off, and I was again put to work with the night-gang. Four horrible years had passed over my wretched head under sentence of death all that time. For three years I looked every morning for the mail to bring my suspended death-warrant, which was in the hands of the governor.

The rolling-mill was fully five hundred yards from the prison. It had been a one-story saw-mill. The unbarred skylights were but a few feet from the ground, and a ladder always handy. At any time I could put myself on the ground in less than a minute, where my way would be clear to liberty. The temptation to this constant opportunity through the long hours, night after night, and the anticipation of what the morrow might bring, at last rendered my situation intolerable. I went away, but was caught before a great while, and returned to my recent chain and its heavy ball. After ten years of excruciating suspense, under the shadow of the wing of the death-angel, my sentence was commuted to a doom of perpetual incarceration in a

living tomb, the cruel, bitter experience of which has now been my lot nearly fifteen tedious, dreary years.

With the many noble and humane efforts that have been made for my relief you are not acquainted. The recommendations of all the leading citizens of Plattsburg; of the British consul; of the *New York Herald*, at the expense of sending a representative to the prison to investigate, a three-column article and a long editorial, as the result, in issue of September 8, 1879, and a liberal article in issue of August 20, 1880; and of your own kind exertions since.

Year after year I am held, seemingly the victim of example, while scores of cold-blooded murderers, whose guilt was undoubted, have been pardoned. Many and many times have I been told, "We do n't give a d—n whether you are guilty or innocent; you will be held just the same, simply for the sake of example." I am persuaded that this spirit, and the lingering prejudices entwined with the record of my last escape, have combined to generate the untoward influence that has prevented my liberation for the past ten or more years. I believe that each governor before whom my applications have been presented, labored under the erroneous impression that my last escape was after my commutation of sentence. Justly the escape should not have prejudiced my cause. I was not legally in the rolling-mill in the tempting presence of that opportunity. My sentence of a year at hard labor had

expired three years before. There was no legal authority to keep me at work another day after that expiration, while the death sentence remained undisturbed. Properly I should have been in a cell in a county jail. Certainly the officials had no right to have me away from the prison at work in the night. Under all the circumstances, few rational persons can blame that escape. In my conscious innocence, I knew I was fleeing from an unjust doom.

Besides his early admissions long since, Sewell made two affidavits exonerating me from any complicity in his crime; he is now dead. James F. Brady and Charles O'Connor declared the law under which I was convicted unconstitutional; its abandonment, together with the fact that out of eighteen capital sentences under it there was not one execution, confirmed their theory. Out of the eighteen, all but our ill-fated trio have been liberated more than fifteen years. This seems to afford further proof that the law was without authority. If the law was unconstitutional for others, why not for me? Can it be, in this free country and enlightened age, because I was a friendless stranger and a convict when I was tried?

Out of more than two hundred life men in the prisons of the State at the time of my conviction, there is but one now in confinement. The average time actually served by the large number who have been released by executive clemency was less than fifteen years, and very few, if even one, of them

were in as long as I have been, nor were they released under plea of innocence. O, perverted justice! O, partial mercy! Where, O where, slumbers thy vaunted equity and divine attributes, to permit influence to unshackle the guilty while thy ministers are deaf to the prayers of the innocent and friendless? The law under which I was tried was passed in 1860, and repealed in 1861, after the escape, but before the trial. This circumstance should be considered, together with the fact that I was a boy at the time of escape; but there was no testimony against me more than against the two who were not tried and the two who were acquitted; that the only witnesses were three convicts, originally of the party to attempt the escape, and that they were bribed with the inducement of pardons; even they, however, did not implicate me in the assault on the keeper.

Samuel D. Phillips, an officer at Clinton Prison, the person on the spot after the assault was committed, swears that all the circumstances and evidence of the convicts present at the time of the assault went to show that James Sewell was the only man who struck Augustus F. Wright. Two other keepers, William H. Graves and Abner S. Roberts, swore to the same. The chaplain, August 24, 1879, says: "Patrick Brady is one of a few men confined in this prison for whose liberation I am exceedingly anxious. I am fully persuaded that his long confinement has much more than answered the ends of justice, and that therefore he ought to be

free at once. From what I have learned of his case, I can not consider it an aggravated one by any means. I can discover in him no disposition to wrong his fellow-man ; on the contrary, I see in him the elements of an industrious man and good citizen."

I write you this letter with some uncertain, shadowy hope that you may be able in some way to make it instrumental in enlisting such good people in my behalf as might be induced to sue for my emancipation from the fearful doom, and not in vain. I have no other medium of appeal to the world, from which I have been so long and cruelly banished. Surely there are many good people in the commonwealth ready, if they knew the hardship and injustice of my awful situation, to take measures to prevent its perpetual continuance. If such intercessors can not be found, there is no end to anticipate but the redemption that death must some time bestow. To the contemplation of the guilty such a fate must be terrible, to the innocent it is nameless.

O, I am a friendless waif, the sport of adverse circumstances in a strange land! In the name of benignant charity, I beseech all Christian people for the love of Christ, and all honest people for the love of justice, to let me breathe my last beyond the polluted shadows of these walls, free from the menace of these bars and bolts, to whose stern frown and stifling breath I have been a prey for 10,240 days, 245,760 hours, 14,745,600 minutes, 884,736,000 seconds—think of this! Each one of this appalling

accumulation of seconds has been to me an infinity, a pulsating pang of living death. I am prematurely aged, bent as under the weight of fourscore years, maimed and emaciated. O, who but God can measure the depth of my anguish as I turn on my pillow in these slowly journeying nights in my twenty-ninth year of brooding darkness and haunting despair, that makes me wish for that sleep that knows no waking? Again and again I had the greetings of a "Happy New-Year"—what hollow mockery! Happiness to me is a stranger for evermore. I must sensibly realize that I have no claim on you or the public, more than what friendlessness and wretchedness under unjust persecution have everywhere on common humanity, and on this I must fondly rest my earnest application, and will try to trust that it may be crowned and blessed this once with success.

Your very humble and much obliged servant,

[Signed,] PAT. BRADY.

AUBURN PRISON, N. Y., June 27, 1887 .

It only remains to be said that on September 4, 1889, Governor Hill signed Brady's pardon, who, after thirty years, seven months, and twenty-six days of existence as a convict, was a free man again. He went into prison a boy only seventeen years old; he came out prematurely old, white-headed, bent, and broken. Wills was on hand to meet him (having been notified by

Governor Hill), and at once he brought him to his home in Detroit. Six or eight months later, through God's goodness, shown through Wills's efforts, he was able to start for Europe, in the hope of finding his relatives.

Reaching England, he found two sisters still living. Brady's real name, never learned till he returned to Europe, is Charles E. Beresford.

## TESTIMONIALS.

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THE above word looks well in large type, but in its appearance it comes nowhere near expressing the gratitude and pride I feel in the receipt and ownership of a bushel or two of letters, all bearing evidence of the power and glory of God. I publish a few, trusting that you are sufficiently interested in the matter to examine this book to its end; and all I have to say in regard to them is, that they are among my choicest treasures, coming as they have without solicitation, and, as I firmly believe, from the very depths of the heart of each and every writer.

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### WILLS AT LANSING.

LANSING, MICH., Nov. 22, 1889.

To H. O. WILLS:

DEAR BROTHER,—I write you commendation, and nothing else.

Whenever I have had the privilege of listen-



ing to you, I have thought of "Paul to Timothy," second book, fourth chapter, and five first verses: "Preach the word;" "watch;" "endure affliction;" "do the work" of an evangelist; "make full proof of thy ministry." Keep humble; lie at the foot of the cross. God bless you, and give you thousands of souls as seals to your ministry.

D. C. JENNINGS.

LANSING, MICH., Nov. 25, 1889.

DEAR BROTHER WILLS,—I thank God that I have had the privilege of hearing a man that's not afraid to speak the truth.

For a long time I have had a hungering and thirsting for the truth, and you have explained the Word as I never heard it before, and I have fed on it with relish; and mean, by God's help, to keep up the search that I may be the means in God's hands of doing more good than I ever have done.

I shall ever remember you in my prayers, that God may bless you in your work. God be with you till we meet again. Good-bye.

MRS. A. CHILDS.

LANSING, MICH., Nov. 21, 1889.

I have attended as many of the meetings from the first as I possibly could, and have appreciated them very much. I am convinced that Brother Wills has done a great work in this city.

He has been the instrument through which the Lord has rescued many souls, I am satisfied. I think he has reached many who never would have been saved but for his efforts. I know it is through him that great joy has been brought into the hearts of my husband and myself, and a light into our lives, which has given us a peace which we never knew before—"the peace which passeth all understanding."

Very sincerely,      MRS. S. C. OATMAN.

LANSING, MICH., Nov. 22, 1889.

BROTHER H. O. WILLS,—Please accept a small offering from a laboring-man, as a partial compensation for the many good and true things which it has been my pleasure to hear you say.

What do I think of your work? Well, I think nothing succeeds like success, and I regard you as an enemy of all unrighteousness. Please accept my best wishes for your success,

and believe that so long as you continue steadfast, I shall hold you in the highest esteem. In the hope of eternal life, I am,

Very respectfully, FRANK L. HENDERSON.

LANSING, MICH., Nov. 22, 1889.

BROTHER WILLS,—Having attended your gospel meetings every night so far, I wish to say that you have preached the gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ as I have never heard it preached before, so plain, that all poor people, like myself, could understand it.

I can say that I have learned more of God and the Bible than I ever learned before. May God bless you and your family and Brother Stuart!

Accept this mite, this one dollar which I send you, and the Lord prosper you in your great work! By the help of the Lord we will meet in heaven. Until then, I remain, yours for Jesus,

CHAS. M. PULCIFER,

Member of Central Methodist Episcopal Church,  
and member of the Church of God.

LANSING, MICH., Nov. 21, 1889.

H. O. WILLS:

DEAR SIR,—The position of an evangelist or preacher of the gospel is one to be en-

vied. At peace with his God, doing fully his service, his own heart approving his work, he ought to be happy. Yours truly,

CHARLES H. THOMPSON.

“The Lord bless thee and keep thee.” “The Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee.” “The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.” (Numbers vi, 24, 25, 26.) ADA BELL THOMPSON.

LANSING, MICH., Nov. 20, 1889.

H. O. W.,—This poor old pen of mine can never write and tell you what blessings I have received in the last four weeks from your teaching, and my *prayer will forever be* that you may always have success in teaching the love of Christ to sinners.

From one that loves Christ,

MRS. SCHULTZ.

NORTH LANSING, MICH.

BROTHER WILLS,—Preach plain, be in earnest; it is through your earnestness that I have been brought out of darkness into light.

Taffy is good, but it will not save souls. May God bless your work, is the prayer of

D. A. OCTELL.

LANSING, MICH.

DEAR BROTHER WILLS,—I want to criticise a little. I think you give the rich man a little too much praise for doing part of his duty. I know one poor woman in particular—an earnest Christian (and there are others not far behind her)—that has a drunkard for a husband, and he opposes her in everything that is good. She has been to the meetings nearly every night, and every five-cent piece she gives would cover Bement's check so that you could n't see the corners sticking out from under it.

Go on, Brother Wills; you are doing a glorious work. I stood by you the first night you came to Lansing, and am going to stand by you till the last night, and then keep right on fighting the devil, whether he is in the Church or in the saloon.

Praise the Lord! I am a poor man, and this campaign has cost me more than ten dollars, but I feel it is well laid out in this grand work. Glory to God!

The Lord be with you wherever you go. Praise his holy name!

Your brother in Christ Jesus, now and forever,  
ADDISON CHILDS.

BROTHER AND SISTER WILLS,—I send a small offering, not as a recompense for what you have done for me, for money or words can not express what I owe to you. You have taught me the way of life more perfectly than I ever knew it before, and may God reward you with his choicest blessings! Your banners have been very instructive to me. If I had the means I would like to give, as an offering to you, the price of the banner representing the human heart. It is indelibly written on memory's pages, and it has shown me the sinfulness of my heart as I never saw it before, and has taught me what I must overcome if I would be acceptable in God's sight. May God help you to present it to others, that it may lead many to Christ!

From your friend,                      SARAH RANSOM.

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#### WILLS AT EAST SAGINAW.

EAST SAGINAW, Dec. 19, 1888.

DEAR BROTHER WILLS,—I have not written Brother Carnalia; stand by your colors, and God will give you the victory.

Grant said to his men: "*Forward, march!*"

*Forward, march! Forward, forward!*" He never allowed anything to stop him—cannons, bombs, grape-shot, fire, water, storms, death, groans, suffering—all the same, *forward*. You have got Christ with you, and God bless you. You have got the stuff, *sand*.

I would like to go, but can not; it is impossible; so many things to do to close up the year.

In haste.

G. W. STEVENS.

EAST SAGINAW, MICH., Feb. 18, 1889.

DEAR BROTHER WILLS,—I noticed by the papers that you *thumped* the whey out of some dirty dog on the street-car, who was persecuting you. *Glory to God!* I am glad to know that there is one minister who, if necessary, will fight to defend the religion of our blessed Savior.

Men take up arms and shoot the enemies of our country and government like dogs. People are not allowed to persecute any country, government, or nation. If they do, they must suffer. The devil in this Dalton, whom you licked, got beat with his own weapons. Now, do n't worry about this. Any Christian man on God's universe will say you did right; you defended the relig-

ion of Jesus Christ, and God loves you better for it.

If you will lick the devil out of some more such cattle, they will leave you alone, and in doing it you are defending your profession against the onslaughts of the dirty devils that are in men.

Glory to God! go in, old boy. Do n't weaken. They would put you back in the gutter if they could, and then jeer and laugh at you. If you are fined, draw on me for the money. In haste.

Your brother, G. W. STEVENS.

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### WILLS AT OWOSSO.

OWOSSO, MICH., Dec. 16, 1889.

MR. H. O. WILLS:

BROTHER,—Your meetings were highly appreciated by myself and family.

I regret that you are about to leave us; you have explained the Word of God in such a manner that there can be no excuse for either the old or the young to misunderstand it.

I wish to God there were more men like yourself and Brother Stewart. You will long be



remembered by myself and family. God is your guide and protector in your good work.

Your brother,                      JOHN I. MACKEY.

OWOSSO, MICH., Dec. 16, 1889.

BROTHER H. O. WILLS,—I thank God and you for the truths you have spoken, and of the many things you have shown us in the Bible. I love my Bible, but the light I have received by your lessons makes it seem doubly dear.

If we never meet again on this earth, I want to live so as to meet in heaven.

O, pray for me as I will pray for myself!

With respect,              MRS. ELLEOI STUART.

OWOSSO, MICH.

BROTHER WILLS,—Those Bible-lessons you gave have been a great help to me. May God Bless you for your labors in South Owosso!

Yours truly,                      MRS. S. R. HORNER.

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WILLS AT FLUSHING.

FLUSHING, MICH., Feb. 8, 1889.

MR. H. O. WILLS:

DEAR SIR,—I can not find words to express my heart-felt thanks for the good you have been

to me, through this revival. God has sent you to do his work; and through you, by the help of God, I am saved.

Please accept my offering, which is the iron-work on your banner-pole, and twenty-five cents. I hope, with God's help, never to forget your goodness to me.

THOMAS MCKENZIE, Blacksmith.

FLUSHING, MICH., Feb. 9, 1889.

BROTHER AND SISTER,—I can not express myself in your behalf. You have brightened our home and cheered our hearts, and taught us many good lessons, which we are all thankful for. Please remember us in your prayers.

Yours truly,

ANNA ROOT.

FLUSHING, MICH., Feb. 10, 1889.

MR. WILLS,—I write you these few lines to tell you that I have enjoyed the meetings very much. I think your banners and the lesson they taught us are very wonderful, and I shall never forget them.

I did not exactly like your ways when I first heard you speak; but after the first prayer-meet-

ing I attended, I changed my mind, and did not notice your way of speaking. I did get angry at things you said, and I knew you meant me, because I thought I deserved it; and you speaking to us three girls as you did, showed me just where I stood and what my duty was, and I thank you for it. Yours respectfully,

ALLIE INGHAM.

FLUSHING, MICH., Feb. 10, 1889.

MR. H. O. WILLS:

DEAR SIR,—I am very grateful to you for your seeming harshness, as I know this was the means by which I was shown that I was standing on very dangerous ground. May God ever bless you! Yours sincerely,

NETTIE PHELPS.

FLUSHING, MICH, Feb. 10, 1889.

DEAR MR. WILLS,—I am so glad and thankful that I have known you.

I know that I needed just such harsh words as you have spoken, to show me where I stood. In all the things that you have said, that which

touched me the most, was when you said that "we were spitting in God's face." I saw myself then as I never did before. Again I thank you, and that God may ever bless you and your wife, will be my earnest prayer.

Your faithful friend,           JENNIE BENHAM.

FLUSHING, MICH., Feb. 10, 1889.

DEAR BROTHER WILLS,—For a long time I have been seeking for more love for God's Word, and more power in teaching it, and have been almost in despair because I have not gained what I sought.

I can not thank God enough that he sent you to teach me how to *feed* on the Word. I can never forget it, for my Bible is marked, "H-O-W to find the bread of life," "H-O-W-to be filled with power," and so on through all the lessons you have given us. I know I shall be more meet for his use through the help you have given me, and I shall strive to pass it on to all within my reach.

May God ever keep you and your good wife full of his love!

LIZZIE KENT.

FLUSHING, MICH., Feb. 10, 1889.

DEAR BROTHER AND SISTER,—Inclosed is a small token from a heart which would willingly give more if I had it at hand. If it had been a week later, I could have done better. I have all your banners, for they have all taught me a blessed lesson, which I shall never forget.

If I chance to meet you again, I will make up to you for the good you have done for me. I shall never forget you or Mrs. Wills, and am very sorry you are going away.

I wish you could stay all this week, but friends must part. I thank you sincerely for what you have taught me, and remain,

Yours truly,            MRS. ANNA GRAVES.

**Flushing.—From the Pastor of First Baptist Church.**

DEAR BROTHER AND SISTER WILLS,—I shall ever thank God for these few days that have brought us together in Christian work. I have learned to love you dearly during this short time, because I see in you the love of Jesus. There are family features that mark you as one of my Father's children.

I can not tell how much good you have done me, both in respect to my own Christian life, and in respect to my work for Christ.

I expect to be a better Christian and a better minister, because of the hours spent in your society. May God bless you with heaven's richest blessings, and crown your life with the greatest success! is my prayer. Do n't forget to pray for me, that I may learn at the feet of Jesus, and be wise to win souls.

Accept this small offering from myself and wife, not as the measure of our love for you and for our common Savior, but as a small token of that love. I wish it were ten times the amount it is.

Yours in the closest bonds of Christian love,  
L. B. PETTIT.

FLUSHING, MICH.

DEAR BROTHER WILLS,—Please accept the inclosed as a small token of my appreciation of your labors among us in Flushing. You have done us great good, and I know the Master will amply reward you. My whole family join in warmest regards to you and your noble wife.

Your brother,                   JOSEPH FRAZER.

BROTHER WILLS,—Please find inclosed a few stamps. I wish it were possible to send more.

I shall always bless the day you came to Flushing. Your sermon showing how the diamond was polished, showed me why I have had to endure so much chastening; but, by God's grace, I will suffer patiently as a true Christian. I joined the Methodist Episcopal Church yesterday. Praise God.

MRS. M. S. HALL.

FLUSHING, MICH., Feb. 8, 1889.

BROTHER WILLS,—May our Father in heaven reward you for the unceasing labor for the salvation of sinners! is the prayer of your sister in Christ.

MRS. T. T. ROGERS.

BROTHER AND SISTER WILLS,—Please accept my offering of one dollar and fifty cents, with the prayer that you may have many stars in your crown, on account of souls won to Jesus.

YOUR SISTER IN CHRIST.

BROTHER WILLS,—I inclose two dollars, as a thank-offering for the gratitude I hold in my heart for what you have been instrumental, in the hands of God, in doing for me.

D. W. TURNER.

## WILLS AT VERNON.

VERNON, MICH., March 24, 1889.

BROTHER WILLS,—I like your style of teaching the word of God with your charts. They are a sermon of themselves. You preach a heaven and a hell. I have always believed in rewards and punishments. I have learned to love you as a brother. I have been fed as never man fed me before, and may God bless you for it! I shall always think of you with pleasure.

JOHN Q. DAVIDS.

VERNON, MICH., March 26, 1889.

DEAR BROTHER WILLS,—My prayer for you is that the grace of God our Father, and his Son, and Holy Spirit may fill thy heart to overflowing; that your strength may endure; that you may be a power in the hand of God, in saving a million of souls! From your brother in Christ,

A. W. NICHOLS.

VERNON, MICH., March 23, 1889.

DEAR BROTHER AND SISTER WILLS,—We thank God that you ever came among us to preach the Word in all its *purity!*



May your labor be as "bread cast upon the waters!"

MR. AND MRS. R. HOLMDEN.

VERNON, MICH., March 24, 1889.

DEAR BROTHER AND SISTER WILLS IN CHRIST,—We do thank you for coming to Vernon and using the gospel lash. We have taken what belongs to us, and have received no more than we were deserving of. Our spiritual strength has been renewed; and as we have listened to the teaching of God's Word, we have received light, and feel that we have Christ crowned within us. Be not discouraged, brother and sister, though the clouds look black and heavy. Go forward! Discharge your duty! My prayer is that you may be led by the Holy Spirit into the realm of bliss, where Jesus reigns without a rival, and where all the heart-forces are united in the willing service of the King of kings.

Yours fraternally.

C. AND E. HUFF.

VERNON, MICH.

MR. AND MRS. H. O. WILLS:

DEAR FRIENDS,—We desire to express our thanks to you for your efforts to present the

gospel in a plain manner; also, that you have taught us to search the Scriptures, that we may have eternal life. Although we have walked in this narrow way since childhood, and have lived as near Jesus as we knew how, we are determined, by the help of God, to live nearer than ever before. We have regretted very much that we could not attend the afternoon meetings, but our position as teachers prevented us from doing so.

We think the charts a good way of presenting the truth; for one can understand what he sees better than what he hears only.

May God bless and help you in your work! is our prayer.

ALLIE VAN AKIN AND JENNIE SHELDON.

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#### WILLS AT CHELSEA.

CHELSEA, MICH., April 15, 1889.

TO BROTHER H. O. WILLS:

DEAR BROTHER,—May God help and bless you in your work! is the prayer of your friend. God grant that you will remember me in your prayers! and I will pray for you and for my-

self. I can say that I thank God for sending you to Chelsea; for it has brought me nearer to my Lord and Master than ever before; and may God give you strength to preach the gospel according to his Word, which I know you do, as I have followed you through all your Scriptural lessons.

May God bless you! Please accept this small offering from your friends,

BYRON AND MATILDA WIGHT.

CHELSEA, APRIL 14, 1889.

TO MY BELOVED BROTHER, H. O. WILLS, who led me a sinner from the path of sin to the path of righteousness, and brought comfort to our earthly home: I pray that God may reward him in heaven, and that we may all meet in that new Jerusalem.

JOHN R. THOMAS.

CHELSEA, MICH.

BROTHER WILLS,—I do believe you are a sincere, true Christian, and that good *has* and *will* attend your work here in Chelsea, and that it will continue to bear fruit after you are gone.

I like your pictures and plan of working. You have done me and my family good; and if I may say a word, it would be, Hurl as much Scripture at the wrong-doer as you can; put it on thicker and faster and more of it. "Thus saith the Lord God." But don't waste one precious moment scolding them. It is not right to hold it against them when Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

Yours truly,

E. L. FREER.

CHELSEA, April 14, 1889.

BROTHER H. O. WILLS,—May God bless you for what you have done, with his help, in saving my father and me!

God bless you and crown you with success!

MISS LIZZIE PAGE.

CHELSEA, April 14, 1889.

MR. H. O. WILLS:

DEAR BROTHER,—I am sure that one who is so zealous in the cause of our Master as yourself will hear, "Well done, good and faithful servant," at the last great day.

EMMA R. KEMPF.

## WILLS AT SAUGATUCK.

JULY 13, 1889.

DEAR BROTHER,—You gave us envelopes to fill with good news; and we do jointly agree with God to hold you up to the throne of grace, that you may continue on, and become such a servant for God that you can bring souls to him by the thousands, with your banners and the way you have explained God's Word to us.

We have looked into our hearts, and have seen the dark corners that were there, and by God's help we are willing to obey his laws. Brother, you have done us a wonderful sight of good, and it is through faith that we do believe that God has chosen you as a teacher. May our Heavenly Father bless you, and put into your mouth words sharper than a two-edged sword, that may send the truth home to the poor sinner's heart; and that he will give up and do as we have done, and say, "Father, be merciful to me, a sinner."

May God be with you and bless you! is our prayer. Amen.

MR. AND MRS. J. D. MYERS.

SAUGATUCK, MICH., July 13, 1889.

DEAR BROTHER WILLS,—God bless you in your work! With all my heart do I indorse you; and have, with God's blessing, profited from the Bible teachings.

MRS. J. Q. NIES.

SAUGATUCK, MICH., July 13, 1889.

MR. WILLS, BROTHER IN CHRIST:

We have no criticisms to make. We do thank you for making the Bible so plain to us, and also our duty to God.

Please accept what we are able to give. It is freely given, and we only wish we had more to give.

MR. AND MRS. FRANK CARMON.

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#### WILLS AT NEW LOTHROP.

NEW LOTHROP, MICH., January 13, 1889.

Please accept this small amount of money. I wish it was ten times as much. I believe that money in your hands, through God, will be the means of doing a wonderful amount of good. Praise God that his Spirit led you to New

Lothrop! The good you, by the grace of God, have brought to this place, can not be told in words; and the prayers of my wife and myself are, that God will keep you, and bless you and yours; and that wherever you go, success may attend you in winning souls to Christ. Your way of working just suits us.

Yours, MR. AND MRS. O'DELL.

NEW LOTHROP, MICH., Jan. 19, 1889.

BROTHER H. O. WILLS,—May God give you great power and strength to perform the duties which he has laid out for you to do!

We thank God that he ever showed you where to carry the worms when fishing for the souls of men. All honor and praise be to his holy name!

MR. AND MRS. W. H. DAVIS.

NEW LOTHROP, MICH., Jan. 20, 1889.

TO MR. AND MRS. WILLS:

DEAR BROTHER AND SISTER IN CHRIST,—May you long live to do good and win souls to God, ever keeping thyself humble before God, and when your work on earth is done, may you be gathered safe in the arms of Jesus! is my prayer.

Remember me and mine at the throne of our common Lord; when you think of us, think of us kindly. Good-bye.

MR. AND MRS. J. H. BAILEY.

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### WILLS AT PERRY.

PERRY, MICH., March 4, 1889.

BROTHER WILLS,—Your banners and explanations have made the way to live plainer than it ever was before. I can not tell how much good you have done us.

May God bless you in your noble work of bringing souls to Christ!

MR. AND MRS. JAMES SUMMERS.

PERRY, MICH., March 2, 1889.

DEAR BROTHER AND SISTER WILLS,—We feel as though we never could pay you for the lessons you have taught us. These lessons have opened our eyes to see ourselves as God sees us.

Those banners have taught us more about the Bible than we ever heard in all our lives before, and we have been taught it from infancy.

We want you to always remember us in your prayers. May the Lord ever bless you with an



abundant harvest, and a crown with many shining stars! Ever yours,

MR. AND MRS. GEORGE HASKIN.

PERRY, MICH., March 3, 1889.

BROTHER WILLS,—Your coming to Perry has shown me just where I stood; your Bible-lessons have been a great help to me.

May our God bless you and your dear wife every day you live! is the earnest prayer of your humble sister in Christ,

MRS. BELLA C. WEST.

PERRY, MICH., March 4, 1889.

MR. H. O. WILLS:

DEAR BROTHER,—You have been the instrument in God's hands of saving my soul. And I pray that the spirit of the Holy Ghost may rest and abide with you and yours forever and forever.

I have started out to serve Christ, and am determined, by God's help, to at last gain a home in heaven. Pray for me.

Yours in Christ, LILLIAN DALRYMPLE.

PERRY, MICH., March 22, 1889.

DEAR BROTHER WILLS,—O, I am so thankful that you came here and brought your ban-

ners, you have done so much for myself, wife, and boy. We never saw the light as we see it to-day. Brother Wills, please carry the news to Vernon that Hiram Hosmer and wife have come out on the side of the Lord. It may be the means of helping to bring some poor soul to God, for I lived in Vernon twelve years.

May God ever bless you and your good wife!

MARY A. HOSMER.

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#### WILLS AT LUZERNE.

LUZERNE, MICH., March 14, 1888.

DEAR BROTHER,—Accept this offering from a sister in Christ, if she is a washer-woman, for the good you have done in Luzerne. May God bless and keep you!      MRS. JOHN SMEAD.

FLINT, MICH.

DEAR BROTHER WILLS,—Please accept this from a washer-woman. My heart and hands are with you in your glorious work. God bless you. Remember me in your prayers.

ANNA TUPPER.

LUZERNE, March 14, 1888.

MY DEAR FRIEND IN THE LORD (for I verily believe you are a child of the Lord),—I write you

a few lines. I am quite well in the body, and much better in the spirit of the Lord than I was when you left here. Tell my wife the Lord is with me night and day. Bless the Lord! I have a few things to confess to God and the Church and all the people, which have been hidden in my heart for eighteen years. No one knew of them but God and myself.

Eighteen years ago, this spring, there were five children sick with the scarlet fever; they all died except one, a boy. That boy had a good Christian mother, and she, no doubt, offered up many a prayer, and shed many tears, so that God would save her little boy from death. The father of this little boy was a sinful man, though, sinful as he was, he prayed to the Almighty God, and made a solemn promise that if God would save his child's life, he would serve him all the rest of his days. The boy lived, and is alive to-day. The father is the one who is writing to you, and the mother is my dear Christian wife. I have been afraid many times that God would cut me down like Ananias and Sapphira. I have kept back part of the price. This will be news to my wife, as I never told her of the promise I

made God. How good the Lord has been to spare me till the present time! His spirit has been striving with me all these years, and I would not yield to it until now. What a wonderful and most merciful God he is! O, brother, I can't praise him enough! I hope and pray that this letter I am writing to you, if you read it to the people where you go, will bring some poor wanderer back to his Father's house. It is my desire, if you see fit and think it is proper, that you should read this letter to the people of Sandy Hill. I want the world to know how good God is to his children, and how good he has been to me and my family. See how he has spared me! I believe it is for some good purpose. The Lord has many ways to bring about his work and his will among the children of men. I hope the steps I have taken, and my prayers, may be the means of turning many poor sinners to God. Not that I have done any good myself, but it is God's Spirit working in me. I can say truly that Jesus Christ, the Lord, is in my soul this blessed morning, making me do his will. I find many blessed promises in his holy Word to sustain and keep me. I am sixty-four years old in the

world, and ten days old in the Lord. Bless his holy name! Let me hear how you are getting on with your meetings. May God bless you, and let you see his work being done in Sandy Hill before you leave that place!

From your brother in the Lord,

P. C. SCOVILL.

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MISCELLANEOUS.

SANDY HILL, N. Y., April 3, 1888.

DEAR BROTHER WILLS,—It is with untold gratitude that I thank God for sending you to this place to redeem my lost soul. Dear brother, your banners are wonderful. The man who can not read can understand them. My earnest prayer is, God bless you, and give you means to spread the gospel news. God bless Mrs. Wills.

JOEL F. DICKINSON.

SANDY HILL, N. Y., March 31, 1888.

DEAR BROTHER WILLS,—After more than three weeks of evangelistic work in my Church, I take great pleasure in expressing to you my appreciation of you as a Christian worker. I have been instructed in the Word of God, helped

in methods, and certainly God has honored your labors among us in a remarkable manner. May your efficiency increase as the years go by! Wherever you may go, my prayers shall follow you, that God will bless you, and that sometime the desire of your heart may be realized in an income that will enable you to start the missions you desire.

Your brother and co-laborer in the work of  
the Lord, C. EDWARDS,  
Pastor Methodist Episcopal Church.

BRENT CREEK, January 20, 1888.

REV. H. O. WILLS,—May your efforts be crowned by the acknowledgment of your Maker! is my best wish for you and the cause you are engaged in.

Yours respectfully,

E. A. BAILEY.

MORRICE, MICH., March 3d.

DEAR BROTHER,—I will say as Paul said to the Philippian brethren: "My God shall supply all your needs, according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." I shall never forget your banners of the shipwreck and the Christian sol-

dier. Pray for me that I may always wear this Christian armor.

Your sister in Christ,

MRS. B. A. McDIVITT.

ROSCOMMON, Mich., Dec. 23, 1888.

BROTHER WILLS,—Little Ellen Mulserhill willingly gives to you the pennies she had saved for Christmas. God bless you.

SHARON, MICH., April 21, 1889.

H. O. WILLS, DETROIT, MICH :

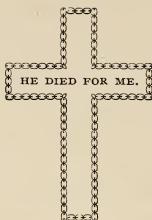
DEAR BROTHER,—Received your picture. Myself and family were very much pleased that you so kindly remembered us, although we have been slow in expressing our pleasure at the receipt of them. We should be very glad to have a visit from yourself and wife at any time. I will meet you at Grass Lake any convenient date.

When I think of the past, I think your conversion truly one of God's miracles.

Your visit strengthened and helped us much. God be with you till we meet again.

With many good wishes from myself and family, I remain your friend in Jesus,

J. R. LEMAN.



## THE WHITE CROSS.

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WORDS BY CHAS. B. HOWELL

TUNE: "In the Cross of Christ I Glory."

DEDICATED TO THE DETROIT WHITE CROSS REFORM CLUB.

Up above the clouds and darkness,  
Up above the blinding mist,  
Lo! the cross so white is lifted—  
By the Son of God 't is kissed.

To the one whose life is smitten  
By the curse whose end is death,  
Lo! his white cross, pure and holy,  
Comes with heaven's healing breath.

Lives are blasted; men are dying;  
Lo, the world is full of strife.  
Look upon this holy symbol—  
Take new heart, and hope, and life!

From his throne the pitying Savior  
Came, and "hung upon the tree."  
Bitterest agony he suffered—  
Yes, he died—"he died for me!"









