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MENDING MEN

THE
ADULT SCHOOL
PROCESS

BY
EDWARD SMITH
J.P.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION
BY THE REV. R. F. HORTON, D.D.

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MENDING MEN



SAM'S FIRST SOCIAL CLUB ROOM AND AIR-GUNS.

[See page 59.]

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WITH AN INTRODUCTION

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REV. R. F. HORTON, D.D.

*"And the power that helps
Enters the individual and extends
Thence in a thousand gentle influences
To other hearts"*

George Macdonald

LONDON

THE RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY

4 BOUVERIE STREET ; & 65 ST. PAUL'S CHURCHYARD E.C



PREFACE

MOST of the following letters were written from Marvel Cottage, by a working man, well known as Sam, who, about nine years ago, was brought under the influence of the Adult School Movement. The individual to whom they were addressed, has often found them excellent illustrations when speaking at Adult School, Brotherhood, and other religious gatherings; their wit and humour, homely metaphor, and abounding faith in Gospel truth, always "struck home."

At the request of many, and with the permission of their author, the "President,"—as he is so often addressed,—ventures to publish them. They give a picture of much of the life lived in the Black Country,—the

PREFACE

coal and iron working district of East Worcestershire and South Staffordshire,—and they reveal how warm-hearted and loving is the natural disposition of the people who live there, amid surroundings which to many would appear depressing.

These letters will show, moreover, (and for that they are published,) how effectively the Sunday Morning Adult School operates in reforming men and women, and in lifting them from the degradation of sin.

With the new life and new vision, men and women associate themselves, either directly, or indirectly through their children, with the Churches, and thus help to bridge the gulf so many deplore; while they are ever leavening and influencing their neighbours with eternal principles that make for truth and good living.

An acknowledgment is due to the Rev. Walter Lee, of Malvern, for kindly correcting the manuscript.

E. S.

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INTRODUCTION

IN a former generation there was a book called "A Jewel of Grace in the Black Country," which was widely read, and had a great influence. This might be the title of the present little book; only I think it would be necessary to enlarge it, and say "a casquet of jewels." For no one can read through these letters without seeing jewel after jewel emerge; human souls which appear at first like coal, but prove to be diamonds. They say that a piece of coal and a diamond are identical in composition; the difference comes from the pressure which has been applied. The pressure in this case has been the constraining love of Christ.

INTRODUCTION

Under this pressure the black and grimy coal of a human heart becomes a transparent diamond, which shines, and also can cut.

Let not the fastidious reader turn aside because the writer of these letters uses the colloquial language of the Black Country, and is, like a certain famous Roman Emperor, "above grammar." When the writer attempted to give a sermon in a frock coat and starched collar, he quickly, under the wise counsel of the President, repented in dust and ashes. He knew that to be natural and homely, and to speak what he knew, and to let the love burn through his unaffected words and gestures, was the secret of the Divine gift within him. And it would be an equal blunder to correct the grammar, and to give these letters a literary form.

One of the most interesting results of modern research is to show that the lan-

INTRODUCTION

guage of the New Testament, with the exception perhaps of Luke and the Epistle to the Hebrews, was not a literary language, but the vernacular of everyday speech. Sam's letters are really much nearer to the language of the apostles and the Evangelists than theological and homiletic literature which conforms to the canons of correct taste.

It is to be hoped that all parsons and priests will read this book. It may be to them a great help in that fishing for men, which is the object of their calling. Drink and gambling, which are the curse of the workers in the Black Country, are not the only vices that have to be overcome by the Gospel of Christ. There is pride, even spiritual pride; there is pleasure-loving which destroys God-loving; there is the love of money, the root of all kinds of evil; there is the practical atheism of class feeling; there

INTRODUCTION

is the subtle unscrupulousness which invades commercial undertakings on a large scale. These and many other vices have to be vanquished by just the same principle which wins the men of the Black Country from drink and gambling. It is the principle of the Seeking Love, the love which is in God, and sought the world in His incarnate Son, and seeks the world still in all who are made one with the Son by faith. The book therefore has a lesson and encouragement for all who are seeking to save. "Go and do thou likewise" is the Master's word ringing through it to every reader.

Then, what a vindication this narrative is of that Apostolic movement of modern Christianity, the Adult School! The Adult School might be called the Primitive Church, but that the name has been forestalled by other organisations. I cannot deny that the Adult School depends for its saving effect

INTRODUCTION

very much on the president and other leaders. But where the president is right, and on fire with the Seeking Love, what an instrument the Adult School offers! Its simplicity, its humanity, its freedom from conventionality, are just what men want. Surely this little book will find a Sam, and found an Adult School, in every place to which it penetrates.

ROBERT F. HORTON.

"CHESIL," HAMPSTEAD.

July 19, 1911.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCING SAM

The Bowling Green—The Story of Sam's Conversion, and of the Purchase of Marvel Cottage—Resolution to Win Men for God—Ground Bait—Sam and his Pal, Fishing—I am very glad I am a Child of God

A LETTER having been received from a man, as to a bowling green about to be opened, in connection with an Adult School, in a mining village in the Black Country, a small donation was sent. In reply the following letter of thanks, which introduces the writer, Sam, was received :—

“DEAR SIR,

“I should like to tell you what good our bowling is doing for the men of our Adult School. There was only two things for the

INTRODUCING SAM

men during the week, and that was the pub. and the street corners. Last year, I gave a portion of my garden, and we set to work and made a green of it. Our attendance at the school was low; this year it is more than double. At the bottom of my garden, there is some old pit mounds. About seven weeks ago, the men said to me, 'Sam, you are a good old pal, you have given we half your garden for a bowling green, and that is too small for us; now let's ask J. M. how much he will rent us a piece of his land for.' No sooner said than done, and we took a piece at fifteen shillings a year, we men to pay for it ourselves, not the School. It took three weeks to level it, working every night at it. Two gentlemen were building some new houses, one a mile away, and the other a mile and a half. We went and saw them, and asked them if we could have the turf of the land, to make a bowling green for our Early Morning School. One was a councillor, and the other a publican.

THE PUBLICAN'S GIFT

They said to me before we started, 'Sam, don't ask the man at the boozers,¹ he won't give it thee ; you have took such a lot of us chaps from him.' I said, 'If he was to give me the land and part of the houses, it would not pay me back again the money I have spent in booze² in his house.' So I went in, the second time for six years, and when he seed me and my pals, he says, 'Good old Sam, what'll you have to drink?' I says, 'A bottle of pop.' He says, 'Have something better.' I says, 'You don't keep it.' He says, 'All right, Sam, what do you want?' I says to him, 'Me and my pals have come to ask you if you will give we the turf off that land, where you are going to build them houses on, for our new bowling green, for our Sunday Morning School.' 'Yes, Sam,' says he, 'there is about a cart-load cut already, and you can have that, and as much as you want, for I like you, Sam.'

"I may say that the boozers is only two

¹ Public-house.

² Drink.

INTRODUCING SAM

doors from the schoolroom where we hold our Early Morning School, for he says, 'I do like the singing of you chaps, and I like to hear you say the Lord's Prayer; I very often say it with you, for I can hear every word in our back yard.'

"Dear Mr. President, I always get by the school door, ever since he told me that, and I open it a little when we are saying our prayers. I met him the other day, and he said to me, 'Sam, I am going to give the boozier up, and going to live in one of my new houses.' 'Thank God for that!' says I to him; and we shall not let him rest till we get him in our School.

"I ain't much of a speaker, but God has used Sam for the last six years in winning many souls for the Kingdom; and, dear President, all the years have passed by, while I have been working in the Adult School as A, B, C Teacher and Secretary, you have never known that it was you who led me to

SAM BREAKS DOWN

Christ. Six years last Spring Conference at Birmingham, you was in the chair, and a man from Coventry was saying what a bad fellow he had been, and all the rest of it. He did not make me cry, for I had been as bad as him ; but when I saw the tears run down your face, I says to myself, 'Why, the President loves him,' and it broke me down. I started crying, and my pals as sat by me says to me, 'Sam, what's the matter?' I says, 'I don't know, but the President has not said a word, but it's him has made me cry.'

"I don't remember any change, but I have been a good lad ever since. I told my darling when I got home all about it. You know her was always a good one to me ; her has prayed for me when I have been drunk ; and she said, 'Thank God, He has answered my prayer through a good man's tears ;' and we got on our knees, and said, 'God, make Sam to be a good man, to win and love them like our President ;' and I have been trying in my

INTRODUCING SAM

'umble way to do so for six years. Now, Mr. President, you may wonder why my cottage—(for it is all my own, I have saved the money, and bought it since then,)—is named Marvel Cottage. It *is* a great marvel. My father was a local preacher ; my mother was a good Christian ; my wife loved God and served Him ; and yet none of these had any effect on me ; it was through your tears that Sam is what he is to-day. When the Great Book of God is open, I will answer to my name, and can say that it was our Adult School President that's led me to Christ. Oh, the jewels that will be added to your crown ! God bless you, and give you health and strength for many years to come, to hold the Cross of Christ before dying humanity, and tell the story of the Cross.

“ It is a long story to tell you, but I can't help it ; the Spirit of God has impressed me to tell you all about it. I shall have to close now, for a chap is coming here to-night ; he's not

THE RIGHT SORT OF MEN

been doing much work, and I promised to beg him a pair of trousers, to come to School in on Sunday morning. They are not very well off in our School ; but they are the right sort of men we want.

“ Again thanking you for your gift ; we want to buy some new balls to bowl with.

“ God bless you and yours, and our Adult School Movement.

“ I am,

“ Yours in Christ,

“ SAM.”

It has been the custom of the President, for the past seven years, to post weekly to the addresses of men convicted of drunkenness, or petty offences, as reported in the local press, an envelope containing suggestions for an improved life, accompanied with a pledge-card, a halfpenny Gospel, and a card with the addresses of local Adult Schools. These are often followed by visits made by

THE PIGEON FLIER

cock ;' but before we got to the house he was inside.

" I rapped at the door, and a voice said, ' Who's there?' I said, ' Me ; can I come inside?' And he said, ' Aye, if thee likes.' The moment he sees me he turns his head away. I says, ' My name's Sam, and our President has sent me to see you.' He says, ' All right, I see thee in the court when I was had up.' I says, ' No, you dain't.' And the mother was on the squab,¹ with a bad leg, and her says to a little girl who was in the corner, ' Ain't these bobbies?' I says, ' No, we ain't' ; me and Bill works harder than the bobbies, and we belong to an Adult School, and we both have been rum chaps before we joined, and we've given our hearts to God, and we wants your son to do the same.' Then he says, ' I ain't had any drink since the magistrate spoke to me.' I says, ' Thank God for that!'

¹ Rough wooden seat.

INTRODUCING SAM

“Why, bless you, sir, his mother thanked we a thousand times for coming to him; her said her got one son on the black list, but he was all right now; and this one don’t have any drink since he had that letter from the magistrate. Then I let Bill have a packet¹ at him, and he wanted the chap to come to our School next Sunday morning, and he would come half way to meet him, and he would see that he had a good breakfast. We got to go again, and he will tell us when he will come.

“There does want a School there; the hundreds of men we saw sitting about, and round pigeon-pens, made me send a prayer up to God, that He would speedily put it into the hearts of some men to start a School there. I know you are wanting to hear how I got on; well, I’ve got another soul to add to my prayers. God bless you!

“I am yours, in the work,

“SAM.”

¹ Direct speech.

A POUND OF CHERRIES

The man whom Sam had visited, and who is known as E., went well for two years, when again his name appeared in the police court report. Sam, who was acquainted with the fact, writes at the end of another letter :—

“And now for E. I knew where to find him, for I often sees him in the market ; so I went last Saturday, and found him, and he says, ‘Mister, don’t condemn me altogether ; it’s the company I ’as to get into to find me a livin’, and the drink.’ So I whispers in his ears, ‘Lad, I ain’t never missed praying for thee since I came to your house the first time.’ He says, ‘Ain’t yer?’ But oh, the look in his face ; and I says, ‘God bless you ; give us a pound of cherries.’ And I left him at his stall in the market, for the Spirit to do the rest.”

After two and a half years, Sam’s prayers as regards a School at G. have been

INTRODUCING SAM

answered, for one was opened on January 1, 1911, and it numbers about 100.

The bowling green proved such a success, that Sam and his good wife, with their friend Bill, began to think of the autumn and winter, and what indoor attraction could be arranged to tempt the men from their only form of recreation, the public-house. They agreed that the outbuildings must be enlarged and furnished with bagatelle and air-guns and target; but then the question of money faced them. The men would pay something, but not enough; surely God would provide. So a prayer-meeting was resolved on. Bill, on his knees, prayed with simple faith, "Good Lord, Thou knowest what we're a wantin', and what we wants it for; send the needful along, O Lord. Amen."

It so happened that the first letter had been read by a lady friend of the President who was much interested in the Adult School work. She was very much touched by the simple

THE ANSWERED PRAYER

story of the bowling green, and Sam's loving sacrifice for his fellows; so she informed her friend she would be pleased to contribute to Sam's good work, if it would be acceptable. The friend at once communicated the fact, and sent him the address, and suggested that he should write one of his good letters.

The little prayer-meeting is over; the post-man appears with a letter. Sam opens it, and with tears in his eyes hands it to Bill. "Read that, Bill; thee sees, God has answered th' prayer almost before thee is up from th' knees;" for this letter contained the lady's address, and the promise of help, if sought.

The next letter acknowledges a photo sent him by the President, who felt that so faithful and earnest a worker should be reminded of one who loved the work, and the men it gathered.

"MY DEAR PRESIDENT,

"Many thanks for your photo. The missus says we shall have a golden frame

INTRODUCING SAM

for it. You know, I had to drop some tears when I saw it. Just like you when I saw you for the first time. How kind of you to think of Sam like this! it is more than I can bear, and the missus can't understand it. The first time we have ever had a photo sent us like yours, and our chaps in the School are as pleased as punch over it, and they say, 'Sam will be a magistrate yet.' I don't want to be.

"I am very glad I am a child of God and an heir of glory. We had six new members at our School this morning, so God is blessing us, and we are looking for greater things to come. Thank you for your splendid letter. I always remembers you in my prayers. The missus wished to be remembered to you, and her thanks you a thousand times for the photo of her Sam's saviour.

"Yours faithfully,

"SAM."

CHAPTER II

“OUR JOE”

“Our Joe”—His Fall—His Conversion—His wish to help others—The Adult School Movement and Church Leaders—A Police Court incident—Sam’s Resolve—Ready to be used of God—A Present from Sam

ARRANGEMENTS were now being made for the Autumn Conference of the Midland Adult School Union. A simple testimony from a working-man is often acceptable, and Sam was asked by the President to testify to the benefit of the Adult School Movement. He replied in a letter which must be historic, in view of the events which have arisen from it.

Before the letter can be read, however, it is necessary to introduce a young man, who shall be known as “Our Joe.” He was

“OUR JOE”

brought up in a Church of England Sunday School. He was a singer in the choir, and was launched in the world with every promise. He entered the employment of a tram company, and in due course became the conductor on the run from his native town to a large city. He soon learnt to drink, and at one public-house at the end of the route he reckons he has spent over £200.

After ten years, his character had gone, and he was discharged. His wife, poor woman, suffered much, and prayed with her brother, an earnest Adult School teacher, for “Our Joe’s” conversion. When sunk to the lowest depths of poverty, and almost of despair, he entered an Adult School with his brother-in-law, three miles distant from his native town. The singing of some 150 working-men of his own class touched him, for he had been a singer in many of the pubs of the neighbourhood. This singing was to him reminiscent of happier days. He went

UNDERGROUND SCHOOLROOM

again, signed the pledge, found his Saviour, obtained employment, joined the Church his brother attended, and went thoroughly into the work of the Adult School. He felt that the movement which had brought him salvation when all others had failed must be right.

There was no School at the Church he and his brother attended, so they swarmed off from the other, and opened one, especially for the roughest and poorest class, in an underground schoolroom. Success attended their efforts. Joe's thoughts now were for his native town ; so, consulting with the President of the Union, an open-air meeting at the place was arranged, when Joe bore testimony to his change, and urged the starting of an undenominational Adult School, on the ground that he wanted to see many old companions saved from sin.

Subsequently, he interviewed the Vicar, and visited members of other denominations, but with no result. The reply was that they all had Bible-classes, and that surely the present

“OUR JOE”

schools and organisations were sufficient. Joe, meanwhile, had accepted the offer of a good situation at a prosperous city, twenty miles away, where several Adult Schools flourished. What he now beheld made him yearn the more for a School to be started in the town of his birth; so in letters to the President he again and again referred to it. Once he visited the President, and conveyed the news that two men had come to work in the city whose conversion he was praying for, that they might go back and plead for a School. “Our Joe” is an enthusiastic worker in the Movement, and the following extract from a long letter sent to the President when leaving for Australia, will reveal the man:—

“I write to wish you every success in the primary cause of your visit, but also success in God’s very own Movement. You know what I mean—our beloved Adult School—for there is no doubt to my mind that this is

“THIS IS GRAND!”

God's own way of sweetening the great Social Movement. Why, only last Sunday, the twenty-fourth anniversary of our School, we had a glorious sight; we had a procession of between 500 and 600 men marching to Queen's Road Chapel at 7.30 a.m.

“On the way, we saw an American gentleman, over here on business. He stood on the pavement, and reviewed us as we marched past; and just as our column was passing I heard him say, ‘This is grand!’ He had no idea of such a thing. It *was* fine, too; it was a sight which sent the blood tingling through one's veins, and a prayer from one's heart that all who were there should just step over the border-line, and give their hearts to their rightful Owner. I pictured to myself what this body of men could do, with the great Spirit of God working through them. Well, thank God for what He has already done, and may the success of the past be an impetus to aim still higher!”

“OUR JOE”

John the Baptist told the religious people of his day, “Begin not to say within yourselves, ‘We have Abraham to our Father; for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.’” This has been illustrated in the Adult School work. Workers have often sought from Church leaders encouragement and help, but have frequently received only criticism and refusal. Grieved and disappointed, the matter has been laid before God; then wonderfully He has surprised all, by calling some unknown stranger out of the darkness, and by bidding him go and save his fellows.

“Our Joe,” when home for holidays, called on parson and preacher, deacon and teacher, to no good; then, just when he was getting disheartened, this remarkable incident occurred at the police court. A man, charged with being found drunk at 3.0 a.m., on some waste land, appeared before the magistrate who has already been referred to. The man was very

A REMARKABLE INCIDENT

contrite, and he much appreciated the kindly words spoken by the presiding magistrate, who reminded him that he (the magistrate) had been an abstainer fifty-two years, and that he certainly would not be occupying his present position had he not been an abstainer. The man took the pledge, and promised that he would never be intoxicated again.

A paragraph which appeared in an evening paper, with a report of the magistrate's remarks and the defendant's promise, caught the eye of Sam, who, in a letter which will presently be reported, speaks of his determination to visit the man, to invite him to his School, and to use his best endeavours to help him in his good resolution. He did so, as this extract from the man's letter confirms :—

“ Mr. Sam came to see me on Sunday morning. He told me you were the instrumentality of his reforming, and I am sure it is in my case. He has invited me

“OUR JOE”

down to see his Sunday morning School, and I am going to see the working of it, and by God's help I mean to refrain from all intoxicants for the remainder of my life. Your prayers for me will be most helpful.”

Many letters have been received. It has proved a remarkable conversion. Sam became a fast friend. The President, later in the year, when conducting anniversary services which will be referred to in due course, met this man and his wife, who drove over in a well-equipped pony carriage, to take tea at Sam's house. Round the table the power of love to heal and restore was rejoiced in, and then and there the decision was arrived at to leave no stone unturned so that a School might be started in “Our Joe's” native village in the new year.

Joe's prayers were answered, and subsequently a social club was started, which bids fair to be of great service. In consider-

AN EVENTFUL LETTER

ing the eventful letter, Sam's promise to speak at the coming Conference reads as follows :—

“ DEAR MR. PRESIDENT,

“ I am in your hands ; you can use me just as you like for the honour and glory of God and my fellow working-men. If I can only say a few words at the Conference that will help my brothers to turn from the paths of wrong-doing to the ways that lead to God, in my humble way, I shall only be doing a little for my Saviour, Who has done so much for me. I know where my reward is, if I only keep faithful.

“ Me and Bill are going on Sunday morning next to see that chap who was before you on the Bench this week. I saw it in the paper, and I says to Bill last night, ‘ Shall we go and see him ? ’ and he says, ‘ All right, Sam. ’ So we are going. Send a prayer up

“OUR JOE”

to God for us, that He will give us the right words to say to him.

“ I wants to ask you if you will have a little present from Sam. God knows how I love you, for what I am and where I am is all through you. When I was a youth, pure and happy, God gave me a talent ; but when I grew up to be a man, the devil took it all from me. I used to paint little pictures, but it all went from me through the drink. This year, I have started to do some again, so one night the missus says, ‘ Sam, I should like you to do something for the President.’ Her says, ‘ Make him a fire-screen.’ I says, ‘ All right, my wench, I will.’ Her knows I can do a bit of carpentering, so I have done it nearly, and I have painted two pictures on it, just to show what God can do with a chap that was no good to his wife and children, and no good to hisself. I shall try and finish it for next week, if you will accept it, and when you look on it, you can say, ‘ Sam did that—



SAM'S RECREATION.

SAM'S GIFT

the chap I led to Christ.' God bless you!
may we have a good time at the Conference.

“ From,

“ SAM.”

The fire-screen duly arrived, and all the summer months it stands before the fireplace in the President's office. Many and many a time it has proved a help in saying a kind word to men, who are often brought in, by Christian workers and others, for the advice a man of experience is able to give.

CHAPTER III

SAM AS A SPEAKER

The Conference—Sam's Debüt as a Speaker—An Insidious Temptation—Met in Time—A Firm Resolve

THE Conference was a great success. Two special trains were chartered. The old-fashioned little Worcestershire town was awakened by the advent of some 500 to 600 respectable working-men and women delegates from the Midland Adult Schools.

After Conference and tea, a crowded public meeting was held, at which many local residents were present. The Mayor of the Borough presided, and gave the visitors a very hearty welcome. A clergyman from the neighbouring country mining village was the

THE CLERGYMAN'S JOY

first speaker, and his excellent testimony to the work was highly appreciated. He said he had been an ordained clergyman eighteen years, but had never experienced such joy nor seen such results as since he had started an Adult School, as a result of a visit from the President.

Next came a veteran worker of the big city who had been used by God to win many to the new life. He had for years conducted a very large class, and was able to relate many incidents. He admirably voiced the experience of hundreds of teachers like himself, who labour with great devotion in the Sunday Morning Adult School, yet are popular local preachers.

The last speaker was our Sam. With much humour and pathos, he held the attention of every one, as he gave his experience as one who had seen both sides. As he walked to and fro on the platform, he appeared to be talking to himself; then,

SAM AS A SPEAKER

with sudden, passionate earnestness, he would plead for loving help to be extended to those who, in ignorance, were wasting their lives in drinking and sin. Sam's reputation was made. Many seemed eager to get his address, and invitations followed requesting him to visit Morning Schools and Afternoon Brotherhoods.

A few months had passed, when Sam and the President were announced as the speakers at the anniversary of a School at a mining village, where a good School had been established for some years, through a remark made in a public-house. On this occasion a good company of working people filled the chapel.

The President spoke first, and looked forward to hearing Sam give again some of the humorous yet useful addresses he had heard he had given that winter. But when Sam stood up in frock-coat attire, with notes in front of him, to which he frequently looked for inspiration, and then, with loud voice,

THE UNFORTUNATE FROCK-COAT

launched out in denunciation, the President sat aghast, and wondered who had been coaching Sam for a local preacher. That night he ventured to write him a loving letter. The reply is unique. For the first time he addresses the President as "My dear spiritual father," and the phrase is repeated in every subsequent letter :—

"To whom can I go but unto you for earthly advice? Yet at the same time they all are interested in Sam. Some of our Adult Schools want to make Sam a parson ; for instance, they wanted me the other Sunday at the people's mission, to address the Adult School in the morning, to preach at 10.30, and again in the evening at 6 o'clock. Why, it's like putting a cart-horse to win the Derby Cup. It's no use trying to make Sam a sermonite. As you say to me in your letter, the simple story of my life, and of my daily experience of the struggles and triumphs

SAM AS A SPEAKER

of the men I come in contact with, told in the true spirit of the Adult School Brotherhood, will reach the men for whom the Adult Schools were started; therefore it is only right I should confine myself to it.

“ You will remember, in my first letter to you, when I was in the railway-carriage coming from B’ham, my first prayer was, ‘ God make Sam useful.’ God answered my prayer in the way I asked, and if I go against what I asked God to use me for, I shall make a failure of myself, and shall fail to reach the men God intends me to reach.

“ I am sure it is the work of God that you should stop me in the course I had just started on; that is, making my addresses more like sermons, which I am not fitted for. As to speaking loud, I will try and drop that, and tell my story simply, and in as touching a way as I can.

“ Oh! how I thank God for your advice! I can see it all now. It is not the way God

“ALL RIGHT, MR. DEVIL!”

wants to use me. I have been led away by my own self-conceit, and the advice of others, who ought to have known better.

“When I came to think of it, me putting on my frock coat, and standing on a platform to speak to men who have done time in jail, and who have fallen into the deepest depth of sin, is the thin end of the devil’s wedge, just filling me up with pride of myself, and trying to make me forget my past life and what I have done.

“God forgive poor Sam! God has told you to stop me and to open my eyes, which the devil was closing with frock coat and starched collar, and his winning ways that I should make a fine chap, if I would only act the fop a bit. All right, Mr. Devil, I’ll make you sit up for it. I see you want me to let your chaps alone, as they should take no notice of me with the parson’s clothes on. Now bain’t you clever? But you must understand that God is above the devil, and I have

SAM AS A SPEAKER

a spiritual father on earth. Ah! just in the nick of time, they have stopped your little game. Thank God you stepped in. But ain't he crafty? God took me from him, a poor worthless creature, and now he wants to make me a fop, to use high words that will go right over my poor fallen brothers, and fail to touch their hearts. I'll make him sit up for it, in the name of God, I will!

"God bless you, and spare you for many years, to be a mouthpiece for God to we poor easily-led-astray chaps of the Adult School.

"This is a lesson to me for life, and will put me on my guard to teach men the crafty ways of the devil, how he tries to starch them up. Oh! how I shall watch these points, for since I received your letter God has shown me the way the evil one was taking me in. God forgive me, and bless you and all our Adult Schools, is the prayer of your penitent son,

"SAM."

CHAPTER IV

TRIUMPHS OF GRACE

Success in Soul Winning—Sam receives a Present—
“I shoots 'em” — The Chain-maker's Vision —
Changed Lives

ON reading Sam's first letter, at a gathering of some 150 men at a large mining and chain-making village, the President found it created a profound impression; so much so, that several men walked six miles one Sunday morning to see Sam in his own School, and they prevailed upon him to pay them a visit, which he did. Hearing of the success of this visit, the President wrote Sam a letter, to which he replied. After thanking him for his letter, he says:—

“I saw a chap the other day; I did not

TRIUMPHS OF GRACE

know him, but he stopt me and says, 'Ain't thee Sam?' I says, 'I bin'; and he says, 'God bless thee; I 'ave been a good chap ever since I heard thee in our town. Dost thee know I've bin a hot un? But I bin agoin to be a good un.' Then I just gave him a bit of an experience, what a publican said to me once after I had spent all my pieces.¹ I was drunk, and I asked him for some strap; he told me to 'go home, and wash my dirty face.' You know that touched him [the chap]. I thank God for sending me to that place.

"Do you know, Mr. President, I know you'll be glad to hear what they have done for me at our School; they've took and give me a beautiful walking-stick, and an illuminated framed picture. You know, it fairly took my duck² off when they give it me. I couldn't spake for some time; at last I says, 'Lads, I thank you all what you've done for

¹ Money. ² The top stone in a game often played.

SAM "SHOOTS 'EM"

me. The devil never give anything like this to me; he only give me a ragged jacket, a poor home; and he had my money, and give me a big head for it.' God bless you! I owes it all to you, and I am certain God will put you into the best mansion, when you goes to heaven."

Sam was asked to go another time to this chain-making little town, and was promised a big afternoon meeting. Sam replied that he would go, if the President took the chair. On being asked, the President replied that the Vicar would be the proper person to preside, and that, knowing him well, he was sure he would gladly accept, if asked.

A great crowd assembled, and the good Vicar, who presided, was delighted; but he remarked to Sam afterwards, "How is it you are able to interest so many?"

"Well, sir, I shoots 'em!" Sam replied.

"Shoots 'em! What do you mean?"

"Well, you parsons all tries to, but you

TRIUMPHS OF GRACE

aim at their head, and misses; the shots go clean over; I always goes for the third button on the 'westcoat.'"

"Capital," replied the Vicar; "I'll not forget the lesson, and will try for the heart." But Sam's letter will describe the gathering:—

"I went to Q. B. on Sunday afternoon. A fair toff that parson is, I can tell you; he is the right sort for our Adult School men. You know, he wouldn't say anything first; he says, 'I want to hear Sam.' So he calls on me. Dain't I give the beer some rock!¹ You know, I can always spot them that drink, for they've only got one set of togs;² and there were lots of them there, and, above all, (a chap tells me after it was over,) there was a bloak there that keeps a boozer. You know I loves him, for he is my brother; but it's the stuff he sells I fight against. God knows I have cause to do it. Well, when I done, the parson says,

¹ Shaking.

² Suit of clothes.

THE SMALL MAN

'Go home, all of you, for I cannot say a word that shall take anything out of your minds what Sam has said, for every word ought to be printed in gold.' But, you know, I wanted to hear him say a few words, for the very smile on his face was love for the chaps. So we ended a very good meeting."

Some two years previously to Sam's visit to this mining village, the President spent a day there, and spoke at the Morning School, and also at an Afternoon Sunday School anniversary at a place three miles away. He then returned back again in the evening to the anniversary at another little mission church. A message had been sent to his host that a chain-maker wanted to see him; so host and President, on their way to the service, called at a cottage containing scarcely any furniture. The man was small, the woman large. All stood, and then the man began by saying, "I

TRIUMPHS OF GRACE

have seed Jesus,—seed Him as clear as I am a-seeing you. I was dreamin' I was in the public I uses, when I seed a man, and he says, 'Ge us another pint, missus,' just as I've done lots a time; and when he was puttin' it to his lips, and a-shakin', for he had had enough, I seed it was me. Then I looked round, and seed Jesus a-standin' there. He says to me, 'See where you are a-goin'!' I looks, and I seed the gates of hell, and the policeman that walks our street a-waitin' to take me. I put the jug down, and says, 'Lord, I'll ha' no more;' and then He baptised me, and I felt some'at come all over me. I looks round, and I sees the missus; I says, 'O Lord, baptise her too,' and He did, but her says she 'dain't feel nothin'.'"

So real was this recital, that all knelt, and the President and his friend both prayed. "Oh! what awful havoc this drink causes!" remarked the President; and then continued, 'I've an account in my pocket of a man who only last week turned his children out in the

DRINK TRAGEDIES

cold street on the Saturday night, and who, when before the magistrates, said 'he hadn't the slightest recollection of what he had done.'"

"Oh, sir," said the chain-maker's wife, "that ain't nothin' to what my husband 'a done to we. Many a Saturday night have me and the children been turned out, when he's come home drunk."

"Ah, well, come along with me to the chapel," said the President.

"I can't come," pleaded the woman; "I've nothing to go in."

"Oh! it doesn't matter, they are only working people."

"Oh no, sir, I was respectable till he brought me down." The man and his daughter came to the service. The friend was asked to look after these people since it was a remarkable case. He did so, and invited them to his house on the Whit Monday following. In answer to a letter, the woman sent the Presi-

TRIUMPHS OF GRACE

dent an account of this holiday visit, in which she says :—

“ It was the best I had ever spent since I was married,—come twenty-seventh July next,—through havin’ a sober husband. I felt happier than the Queen, with all her money. If I could tell all my life to the world, what I’ve gone through over the drink, it would open a lot of their eyes.”

When July 27 came, the President remembered that it was the anniversary of the chain-maker’s wedding-day, and he sent a letter of congratulation. He never will forget the wife’s reply :—

“ I thank you for your kind and thoughtful letter, and I am so proud to say it was the best wedding-day I’ve ever seen, even better than the first, for my husband got drunk that day ; and I never knew he got drunk till then,

A HAPPY CHANGE

and then I knew I was done for. But never mind, he is better now, thank God ; he gets better and stronger against the drink every day. He says, never as long as he lives will he have any more. He is still going to the Sunday Morning School and chapel, and the children and I hope to go, as soon as I get some things."

Happily, they are all now attending the chapel, and various visits and letters have confirmed the happy change. So Sam was asked by the President to call at this home ; he did so, and he reports the result in the concluding part of this last letter :—

"Well, I did as you told me ; I went and saw David and his good wife. Her ain't half a toff in her new dress, and the house was very clean, and her looks a good sort of a wife. You know, David ain't very big aside of her ; my word, hers big enough to give him

TRIUMPHS OF GRACE

a good lamping when he was on his drunken sprees. When she seen me, she says, 'I am glad to see you, Sam; I have been by my bedside asking God to bless you this afternoon, and I was a-thinkin' how thy poor wife has gone through the mill like me, for I was a good un before he turned me;' but her says, 'thank God he's turned, and we shall go on all right, if we can get some work. Dave's been a rum un, but he's all right now, God bless him.'

"I am, your spiritual son,

"SAM."

CHAPTER V

SAM'S HOLIDAY TRIP

**The Enlarged Club-room—Sacrifices—And Rejoicings
—Delivered from “Hell-fire Jimmy”—“I’ve Crossed
the Bridge”—At Scalby—At Scarborough—New
Work—And Some Fishing Reflections**

SAM'S first social club-room, built in his backyard, was often referred to as the smallest clubhouse in England, but the influx of members made an enlargement necessary ; and the next letter describes the ways and means by which it was carried out. When complete, it was furnished with a bagatelle board, which was presented by the superintendent of the School, who was a local tradesman and a prominent worker in one of the Free Churches. This friend loved to join the happy week-evening company, and he entered into their sport,

SAM'S HOLIDAY TRIP

and led their conversation into the discussion of current topics. They all rejoiced in the great advance from the public-house smoke-room to this social club-room. Sam says:—

“ I am always glad to have a letter from you, for you know it always puts new life in me. When I had your letter, me and the missus was a-talking about Scalby ; we were going there this year for our outing ; only, you know, it's like this. Our School has grown to a big one now, and our Social Club was too little for the chaps, and they wanted some room, and the chaps said they'd pay to have it made bigger ; so me and the missus says one to t'other like this ; her says, ‘ Sam, you know it's our property ; they wants to make it bigger, and I do like it ; how if we spent our trip money, and made it bigger for them ? ’ So I says, ‘ Good old wench, that all's right. ’

“ So we did it, and her has been bad ever since, and you know the doctor has to be paid ;

THE CLUB-ROOM ENLARGED

so it's a bit hard. Never mind, God has give Sam good health to work, and we've made the chaps dance with joy, and kep' 'em out of the boozers.

“One chap took me to his home t'other night, and he says, 'Sam, ask the missus how many suits of clothes I 'ave bought since the club was made bigger.' So I asked her, and her says to her man, 'God bless thee, Joe, what's want Sam to know for?' And he says, 'Only to let him know I 'ave been a good un.' And her says, 'Five, nor he don't get drunk now, Sam, and he's as good as gold to me.' I don't want to go trippin', nor the missus, if we can do things like that. You'll be surprised, our club ain't big enough now; so the chaps are a-going to have a meetin' to-night, to ask me and the missus to make it bigger. You know, her says, 'Do it, Sam, and it won't take much this time;' for I made it as I could soon make it bigger, and all the chaps will help. You know, it's my old pal Bill as does all this; he

SAM'S HOLIDAY TRIP

allus asks the missus first, and then Sam has to say, 'All right, we'll do it.' Why, Mr. President, I shall have a bigger and better cot than Marvel Cottage, when I gets home to my Father's home in heaven. It won't want making bigger, nor it won't want paintin', will it? Then I can tell the chaps it was for this end I did it for 'em.

"God bless you, it's through you all this is being done. 'Hell-fire Jimmy,' that was what we used to call the bloke that kept the boozer where I used to take my pieces; don't get 'em now; and what I am spendin', in trying to make my brothers better, and their wives and children, I bin a puttin' in God's bank, ain't I? And He'll see as the bank don't burst.

"I shall have to close. Bill's come, and shoutin' for Sam to come to the Social Club for the meetin'.

"Yours as ever,

"SAM."

“I’VE CROSSED THE BRIDGE”

The President went over one Sunday to an anniversary. The Silver Band from another School was playing on Sam’s little lawn. The feelings of the President can be imagined, when he looked at these strong miners and iron-workers, seated on chairs brought from the cottage, and remembered they were all men whom Sam had won for God. One big fellow, nursing two little children, particularly struck him; there was a calm and peaceful look on his strong face, yet marks were there which showed that it had not always been so. “Sam,” said the President, “what’s that man’s history?”

“Why, he has been a bad un; he has been off the drink now for over twelve months; but last week he says, ‘Sam, I’ve crossed the bridge.’”

On enquiring as to the meaning of this expression, Sam answered, “Why, sir, that’s what we says in the Black Country when a man has come to the light.” The man who

SAM'S HOLIDAY TRIP

had "crossed the bridge," was the Joe mentioned in the last letter, of whom his wife had said, "He's as good as gold to me."

The President, when he heard that Sam had sacrificed his trip money for the Social Club, and that his wife was unwell, immediately sent the needful. The following touching letter was received in acknowledgment:—

"MY DEAR SPIRITUAL FATHER,

"God knows, I didn't tell you what I had done with my trip-money, for you to send me and my darling wife to Scalby. I only tells you and God what I does. I never tells my superintendent, nor none of the chaps; when it's done, they all says, 'God bless you, Sam, and your missus.' You know, when we gets your letter, and I reads it to the missus, we had a belly full of crying; and her says, 'What did you tell him for, Sam?' And I says, 'My dear, I got nobody else on earth to tell, for you know my own father and mother are gone to heaven, and I wouldn't do what

HEAVEN WAS VERY NEAR

they told me, and it was our President as led me to Christ. God knows, I didn't tell him for this.' And her says, 'God bless ye, Sam ; give God the praise.' So we drops on our knees, and if ever heaven was near us, it was that night, for we prayed God to bless you, and your dear wife, and your dear children, and bless your coming in and going out.

" And how I did pray for God to make my wench better. God knows, it were Sam as ruined her health, sittin' up for him nights, and then to come home drunk and ge'en her a good lamping.¹ I can't tell you any more about it. God knows how it pains me, and I can't keep from crying ; but I believe God is answering my prayer, for her has been getting better ever since. And what do you think? We are goin' to open the Social Club to-night, on my birthday, July 12. My mother said, 'I was born on a Sunday,' and her allus said, 'God would make me a good lad when her was in

¹ Abuse.

SAM'S HOLIDAY TRIP

heaven.' So God has answered her prayers, through my spiritual father.

" Well, I was telling you about opening the club. We are a-going to make the missus a present of a dinner service, we chaps are, for being such a good un in lettin' we make it bigger; and we're a-going to have a good blow-out with some boiled ham and bread and pickles, and six half-gallons of pop; and we're a-going to pay ninepence a-piece for it. How I wish you could just pop your head in, and see we a-gettin' it down! I knows it would make your heart dance for joy. Well, we're got a grand club now, plenty of room; and I knows it will knock the devil's duck off. I'll give him some'at to go on with, for I owes him a big grudge."

All Adult School men and women have heard of the Adult School Guest House at Scalby. In that house there is a spiritual atmosphere, which refreshes the soul, as the

AT THE FLOWER SHOW

Yorkshire air refreshes the body. No wonder Sam and his wife began to count the days. He wrote, however, as follows :—

“ I wants you to let me do a little work for the Master, Who has done so much for me. Do let me tell the men of Scarboro’, that it was you, my dear spiritual father, that led me to Christ ; and what I am is all through you. If I had a thousand tongues, they all should be used in telling the glad news how I was won to Christ.

“ I went about three years ago on a day trip, with the workmen from our works, on the Bank Holiday ; and when I got there, the first thing I saw was a bill telling me there was a flower show of Adult School men’s growing. I made straight off to it, and the chaps let me go in for nought ; and I was introduced to Mr. John Wilhelm Rowntree, and he said he wished I was stopping a few days. And all the chaps got round me, and asked me about

SAM'S HOLIDAY TRIP

the Black Country Schools; and they would have kept me all day talking to them in my Black Country language; but I told them I wanted to see Scalby House. So six of them takes me to see it, and they tell Miss Walton I was a Black Country man, and she makes quite a fuss of me; and I went round the grounds. So they showed me all the show, and they gets me back just in time for the train; so I dain't see much of Scarborough, nor did I want to, when I could get with Adult School chaps. We shall get there on Saturday. So let me do a bit of work. If you were to tell some of the Rowntrees I was a-coming, I am sure they would arrange for me to speak at the School on Sunday.

“God bless you, and a thousand thanks for your kindness to me and the missus.

“Yours as ever,

“SAM.”

Scalby Friedensthal was full; but rooms were found for Sam and his wife in the village.

A YORKSHIRE SUPPER

The following letter describes the holiday :—

“ I can tell you that it is the best holiday that me and the missus have ever had in all our born natch,¹ for the folks we were living with were fair toffs. I wrote and told them, before we went, as we weren't proud folks ; we were plain Adult School chaps. So they were glad of that. Well, when we got to the man's house, they were ready for us, with, you knows, a good bouncing Yorkshire supper ; and I can tell you we wanted it, for it's a good way to ride in express train. We had only just sat down to have some tommy,² when a man sends his card in, and asks 'if Sam has come ?' Now, that was eight o'clock at night ; so I says, 'Tell him to come in here.' So he comes in, and says, 'I am from Scarboro', and we can't rest till we knows you can come.' 'Well,' I says, 'I am here, and my wench.'

¹ From birth.

² Food.

SAM'S HOLIDAY TRIP

But her was so tired, her could hardly eat a bit of tommy ; but I makes her get some down her. 'Well,' the man says, 'I have brought you the *One and All*, and a man is coming to meet you on Sunday morning, and you're to carry the paper in your hand, and he will carry his ; so when you meet, both of you will know you're right.'

"Well, I went to Scarboro' on Sunday morning, and we had 'fair beeno,' as my little chap used to say the next morning after I had been drunk over night ; he used to say, 'Mother, daddy says he had a fair old beeno.' Well, I had one for God.

"Mr. John Watson Rowntree was in the chair, and another Mr. Rowntree was present, and some chaps from London and Doncaster and Manchester, and all over the place. I had about half an hour and ten minutes speaking to the chaps, and then some of the 'tother chaps had five minutes ; but it was all Sam they were talking about. Well,

A MAN CATCHING FISH

I walks back to Scalby, and the missus has a good breakfast ready for her Sam; and I tell you I did shift some, for the air don't half make you eat.

“On the Sunday night, we has a little prayer-meeting all on our own, for God to cure my old wench's cough; and on the Monday morning I says, ‘Look here, my old sweetheart; I am a-going to take you to the sea every day, and you are to have your mouth open and let the sea air blow straight through, and it will blow that old cough right away.’ And as I said it, it was right; in three days it did it. Thank God for the sea air! Well, I can tell you, it is the best place as ever I seed in all my life.

“One thing I was looking at, and that was, a man catching fish out of the sea, and he was putting them into a basket to die. I says to myself, ‘Sam, lad, you 'ave been catching fish out of the Brook (Walbrook), but your fish have been dead uns,—dead in

SAM'S HOLIDAY TRIP

trespasses and sins; but, my lad, you're putting them in the ark, and they have found the newness of life.' And I looks up into heaven, and I says, 'Thank God for it.' I had your little books you sent; they are fair toffs.

"God bless every word in them, is the prayer of your spiritual son

"SAM."

CHAPTER VI

IKE AND NAVVY BILL

Ike at last—"Another of my Pals"—Navy Bill—He meets Sam—The President's School—The Choir and the Leader—The Chairman and his Hospitality—Some Reflections

IN an earlier page is explained the President's method of sending Adult School invitations to men whose names have appeared in the local police court news, for drunkenness, &c. Year by year, it has been interesting to notice the varying decrease in the list of police charges in the different towns. So successful have Sam's efforts been in reducing the number in his locality that there was but one in the President's note-book. Sam was written to, and asked if it were not possible to have this

IKE AND NAVVY BILL

one rescued. A postscript to a letter which he sent in reply, reads as follows :—

“ I forgot to tell you about Ike, who went to jail for a month. I have tried hard to get him for years to our School. He came out [of gaol] last Tuesday ; so I went after him, and said, ‘ Our President loves you, and has asked me to look after you.’ And you should have seen him cry. He says, ‘ Sam, you have asked me hundreds of times to come to your School, and I only cust thee. I was obliged to go when I was in jail, and if I only twisted my eyes, they shouted at me as if I was a dog ; and you says a magistrate loves me.’ I says, ‘ He does, Ike, my lad.’ You know, he had been drinking all day at the boozier, and when he had got shut of all his pieces, he pinched ninepence in the boozier, and the bloke give him a month for it. I says, ‘ That’s what they do with thee, Ike ;’ and he says, ‘ I will be a better chap.’ So

SAM HAS A REAL GOOD TIME

he comes to School on Sunday morning, and he says he won't stop away ; so I buys him a card, and pays his twopence towards a half-yearly prize. I thank God for another of my pals."

The President, being called away a good deal, necessarily requires occasional supplies for his own School in the Worcestershire little town, which is so well known for its charming situation. Sam had been invited for a Saturday afternoon and Sunday, at the time of the year when everything looked at its best. He had a real good time.

It is necessary to describe one man with whom he palled, who has proved, through the influence of that visit, a soul-winner amongst the navvies in different parts of the country. Navvy Bill, as he was called, had, from a youth been on and off a member of the President's School ; but drink had gripped him, and dragged him down. So

IKE AND NAVVY BILL

terrible had been some of his bouts, that he would fall down as one dead. More than once he narrowly escaped drowning in the river. But in January, 1907, he signed the pledge, as the result of a visit from a reformed collier; and, through much temptation and struggle, kept it. In January, 1908, the President was in Australia. He will never forget the joy he experienced at Sydney, on receiving a letter from his navy scholar, telling him of his twelve months' victory. On his return, no one welcomed him more warmly than Navy Bill. As he moves about the country, he loves to write to his teacher. Here is a specimen letter:—

“MY DEAR SIR,

“I now take the pleasure of writing to you, hoping that you are quite well, as it leaves me, thank God. I am proud to tell you that I spoke at the Mount Zion Chapel, Wolverhampton, on Sunday afternoon, and

“IT’S GIVING UP THE BEER”

told them about the love of God, and what the Adult School and P.S.A. had done for me. It was a good meeting, and I hope what I said would do some good.

“My dear sir, I have got an old pal, a navvy, come to work with me,—one that I have not seen for five years; and he said to me, ‘Why, Billy, you look a different chap now, than when I saw you last.’ I said, ‘Joe, it’s givin’ up the beer, and joining the Adult School; you could be the same, if you did not have so many half-pints; and you would be able to get up and come to work, and not have such a big head.’ I said, ‘I have been through the mill, and I know which is best.’ But, sir, I shan’t let him rest till I get him.

“With love, and God bless you, sir,

“ I remain.

“ Your affectionate scholar,

“ BILL.”

IKE AND NAVVY BILL

Sam and Navvy Bill came together in the following way. On the Saturday evening, Sam took a walk by the banks of fair Sabrina. The sight of the river set him thinking ; and, turning to his host, he said, "The last time I went up this river was in a boat, with a public-house picnic party. I and another man quarrelled, and we went in a field behind yon cottage to fight it out, and we fought for nigh two hours."

"One of our scholars lives there," said his companion.

So in they went. Navvy Bill is the tenant of that little cottage, which is charmingly situated. His wife caters for trippers, and provides teas, mineral waters, &c. The result of Sam's visit was, the finding of a twin soul. Sam, knowing that many Adult School trips are made in the summer to that spot, offered to paint a special signboard. When finished, it was dispatched soon after Sam's return. No one interested in Adult Schools fails to

A GRAND TIME

call at Bill's house, when he reads the words of the signboard :—

TEAS PROVIDED FOR ADULT SCHOOL MEN
AT MODERATE CHARGES.

The President's daughter is the secretary of the afternoon meeting, held in connection with his School. She had secured, as chairman, a gentleman who owns a large portion of the forest land near, on which he has built, in a very beautiful spot, a small bungalow. At the time of Sam's visit this gentleman was spending a few days at his summer retreat; this will explain Sam's humorous references in the following description of the meeting :—

“I had a grand time on Sunday, both morning and afternoon. You have got a good School, and a real set of chaps, especially Bill; you know Bill has got some metal in him. We were good pals on

IKE AND NAVVY BILL

Saturday night and Sunday. Bill wants some work to do, and he talks to me like this: 'Sam, what we wants at our School is some bits of paper, so the teachers can put the names of the chaps that stop away from School, and give them to the chaps that are there, and make 'em look after 'em in the week.' He says, 'Sam, I am sure we can double our School.'

"Bill says he would do all he could for a double up; he's a good chap. Then there's your daughter; her's a fair angel; the sweet smile on her face, and the love in her heart, is enough to draw all the women in the district to her School. It was a grand sight, I can tell you, to see so many women there; but no wonder, when they've got such a good leader as your daughter. Why, her choir is a fair snip, and I can tell you they can sing. Well, it were grand. Oh! how I thank God that He has given unto you such a daughter, to help you in bringing men

THE "BUNGLE-HOLE"

and women to Christ. God and heaven bless both of your labours, and crown them all with abundant success.

"Then there was that chairman. When it was over, he says, 'Sam, I want you to go with me to tea; I have got a place where I stops at from Saturday till Monday, and there is only me and the missus.' So Mr. B. gives me up, so I goes with him. I didn't know who he was, and nobody told me. Well, we got to a big house, and we goes in, and he says to a lady, 'This is Sam, who you have heard so much about;' and her says, 'Glad to see you, Sam; how are you?' And I says, 'All right; thank God for it.' So her soon gets the tea, and we has a lot of talk about Adult Schools and the chaps in 'em; and then he says, 'Mother, I want to take Sam through the Forest.' So we starts off, and he says, 'It's all private property; but I can take you through it;' and when we gets in it, he says, 'Sam, I can give you a note that will

IKE AND NAVVY BILL

take any of your chaps through here when you likes.' Then I tumbles to it that it belonged to him; so he tells me all about it, how he had bought it. And then I says, 'If Sam had got a little corner of this Forest, I should think I was a millionair.' And he looks at me, and says, 'Sam, you would not be so happy as you are now.' And Sam looks through the trees to the sky, and says, from the bottom of his heart, 'O God, Sam don't want forests; he wants souls for Thee.'

"So we went on till he brought me to a heaven on earth, as we Black Country chaps calls it when we sees a fine place. I think he called it a 'Bungle hole'; but I thinks he made no bungle about it when he picked that spot to build it on, for it's a grand sight, I can tell you. I don't think any would die there, unless they were shot. Well, some of his lads were there, and a fine lot they were. I had a drink of lime-juice, and

“IT MAKES ME CRY”

put me name in the visitors' book ; and then he brought me to the station. Thus ended one of the best times Sam has ever had in his natch.

“When the devil had Sam, nobody would look at him. Oh! how it makes me cry, when I thinks how good God has been to me, all through my dear spiritual father. Where should I have been, if it hadn't been for you? When we both goes to heaven, we shall hear the angels strike upon their harps the Songs of Zion, ‘Oh! how He loves.’

“Yours as ever,

“SAM.”

CHAPTER VII

SAM AT DONCASTER

A thankful Heart—And a Quaint Prayer—A Bank Cashier's Enterprise—A flourishing School—Sam's Testimony—The Mayor and the Race-course—Sam at Doncaster—Sam studies Elocution—And Gives it Up

WHEN it became known that the President was going to visit Sam's Schools, Sam remarked in a letter:—

“ Our chaps ain't half glad, now they know our President is a-comin' to our harvest thanksgiving ; they says, ‘ We mun have some bills out, Sam.’ I says, ‘ All right, lads.’ And they says, ‘ For you knows, Sam, if God had not sent the President to save yer, we

THE WAGES OF SIN

would not have had our Social Club and bowling green, and new clothes.' I says, 'Give God the praise, lads.'"

Sam, having read a biographical sketch of the President published in one of the Christian weeklies, writes:—

"I am glad to know where you sprung from. You have got many spiritual sons besides Sam. I knows now when you gid your heart to God. If Sam had only gid his heart to God when he was twelve! You don't know how it pains we chaps, when we thinks of the many years we worked for the devil, and got nothing but a black heart, the gravel rash,¹ and a thick head. If I could get all the young men together in one place of this land of ours, and I had a voice strong enough, I would shout, 'Give God your hearts while you're young, and you will never repent. Amen.'

¹ Wounds on the face from a drunken fall.

SAM AT DONCASTER

“I often says in my prayers, ‘Heavenly Father, why didn’t you send our President to me sooner?’ And then I says, ‘Never mind; Lord, I thanks you; it wasn’t too late, and I will do all I can to make the lost time up;’ and I thanks God a thousand times for finding me a job in the Adult School workshop, with the good Lord as gaffer,¹ and your dear self as foreman. We don’t want troff reform; we want to keep to the free Gospel of Jesus Christ, which freed Sam when he was bound fast in the chains of sin, and made him free.

“God bless you!”

Sam paid a visit to a School, which was opened, a few years ago, under very romantic conditions. A young man, a bank cashier, who had removed to a village just on the outskirts of the Black Country, saw there an opening for an Adult School. One was eventually established, and nothing can

¹ Master.

“WORTH A BOB TO BE THERE”

describe it better than the young man's letter to the President, after the second Sunday following the opening. The only room available was one beneath an old chapel :—

“A splendid day last Sunday. I could not eat my breakfast. 109 on the books, and 99 present; an increase of 34 from last week, and mark you, men who go nowhere. Oh! the singing was magnificent: ‘Down in the Valley with my Saviour I will go.’ Some of the men said it was worth a bob to be there. 56 men joined, and paid their entrance fee to the sick and draw club. And remember, that a week or two before Christmas no Adult School had been thought of by them; and now they say, ‘Why didn't you come before?’ Same old story; the church and chapel had never appealed to them.

“There is a horse-nail industry around here, and last week two or three of us paid

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a visit to each shop, and told them of this new brotherhood. Never in my whole experience have I known the joy of life, as I have experienced it in connection with this School. Cannot you come and see for yourself? ”

The President went, and found 160 men crammed at 7.30 a.m. into an underground schoolroom, which was required at 9.30 for the Children's School. No wonder it soon became evident a building must be erected which would contain class- and recreation-rooms. Land was found, and the building was erected ; and now for six years, at the time of writing, a good work has gone on. Sam was invited to give an address at 7.30 a.m. He had to make a cross-country journey of some seven miles as well as he could. Fortunately, the help of the man whose history from police dock to Adult School has been noted, was at his service.

“WE’RE RARE GOOD PALS”

The story is best described by Sam in his own way :—

“I went to K. this morning, and it rained all the way going ; but I only thanked God for the rain, to swell the grain and make the grass grow, so that the cows and hosses should have plenty to eat. You know, I ain’t a weather-cock when I promises to go to a School ; the weather don’t stop Sam.

“Well, we had a good time. I opened my mouth, and God filled it. There were 95 there ; that wasn’t bad for a wet mornin’.

“I musn’t forget to tell you what my pal did for me. We’re rare good pals ; he won’t let me call him ‘Mister,’ for he says we are brothers now. I walked from home to his house, and gets there at half-past six. He puts his hoss in the trap, and he took me to the School, and brought me back to his house again. Now, ain’t he a good ‘un? That’s what we make of men, when they gets

SAM AT DONCASTER

a clout with the Adult School stick. You should have seen the tears run down his cheeks when I was having a packet at the drink. When we was a-comin' home, he says, 'Sam, I would sooner drop dead than touch another spot of drink.'

"I say, that superintendent knows how to take care of an Adult School ; and what a nice lot of chaps he has got round him, and what a nice schoolroom they've got! When we came out, I saw your name on one of the foundation stones, and I says to my pal, 'Ain't we proud when we sees his name, for he is our father?' and Will says, 'God bless him.'

"The chaps wanted me to come and preach for them some night, and I says, 'I ain't a parson ; but I am going to send our Super to preach, and he can do it.'

"I am,

"Yours as ever,

"SAM."

TOUCHED THE KING

The next letter treats of varied incidents. The President was travelling, in the North of England, with a party of town planners; and, as usual, he was not long before he touched on the subject of Adult Schools. He soon found, in an elderly gentleman from Doncaster, one who had over fifty years' experience with Adult Schools, and who was as enthusiastic as ever. This good brother was quite a hero in his way; for, while Mayor of Doncaster, he declined the summons of the late King to meet him on the race-course. His courteous refusal, on conscientious grounds, touched the heart of King Edward, who remarked that he wished all his subjects were as loyal to conviction.

The President had one of Sam's letters with him, and it was read to two or three of the travellers. Sam's address was asked for, and in due time our hero had an invitation to the anniversary gathering at Doncaster. It so happened that a railway man, a member

SAM AT DONCASTER

of a neighbouring School, had been a guest at Scalby at the time of Sam's visit ; and he enthusiastically prepared the way for the reception of the working-man from the Black Country. Sam writes :—

“I knows you are longing to know how Sam got on at Doncaster. Well, I can tell you,—‘first class.’ I had three goes ; one on Saturday night at Balby ; then at the big School at Doncaster on the Sunday morning ; and again at Balby in the afternoon,—all crowded meetings.

“Mr. C. wanted me again in the evening, but the chaps said it was too much to put on me, as I had to travel all night to get home. I left Doncaster 7.45 on Sunday night, got home at 3.30 on Monday morning, and was at work at Wolverhampton at 7 o'clock. I think's it's a bit too much for Sam. I haven't been well since. I caught a cold waiting at Sheffield station two hours

A SPECIAL DAY

for a train to Birmingham ; then I had to walk to Wolverhampton in a downpour of rain."

It was a special day for the President to visit Sam's home and people. He had been at a large Birmingham school in the morning, and had gone over for an afternoon service in the little chapel at which a Silver Band and a picked choir were assisting. There was a great volume of sound, to express all the love and interest felt. The assembly on Sam's lawn after tea, has already been mentioned. There was a crowded gathering at night, in a chapel decorated with a wealth of fruit, flowers, and vegetables. Sam writes :—

"I wants you to forgive me for being so long in not writing ; I have been full up with Adult School work. First of all, I must tell you, our School is going on first-class now. We are increasing every Sunday since you came to see us. We had twenty-one

SAM AT DONCASTER

fresh 'uns on Sunday week, and eight last Sunday; there has been 81 and 88 present, and we've on our books 136 now; ain't that good? You sowed the seed on good soil, and, will you believe it, we had the worst chap of the place at our School last Sunday morning, and we are goin' to try and keep him. He was one of my pals, you know, when I was a bad un. He knows Sam knows all the game; so I tells him to chuck it up, and he says he's had enough. You know they can't half suck it down, and they have learned the women to do it as well; so if we can keep him to the School, his missus says she will chuck it too. It will be hard work for 'em at first, but we're bin a-prayin' for 'em both, and I bin sure it will come alright.

“Tell our beloved editor¹ of *One and All*, I should like him to come and see our club some night. Tell him, when you see him, as Sam would make him

¹ Editor of the Midland Supplement.

THE ERROR OF SHOUTING

welcome, and the chaps would be glad to see him."

Now Sam, in his strength and earnestness, often raises his voice unnecessarily, and the President thought it a kindness to once more remind him of it. He endeavoured to point out the futility of raising the voice, and enforced the advice by the illustration of gas being turned on too much. Sam replies :—

"I was glad to receive your letter ; I bin always glad to have advice from you. I will get in the back room, and practise to give over that shouting. I tells you, it comes in the nature to shout ; where my dear old dad was a-preaching, you could hear him a mile and a half away from the meeting, if he was a spaking outside. Well, I am not so bad as that, so I'll take your advice.

"God bless you for telling me ; I bin glad for you to tell me ; it is all for my

SAM AT DONCASTER

good. Do you think I could buy a book on spaking? If you knows to one, and can tell me, I'll buy it. It is as you says: if there is a lot of air in the gas, it's only a hissing noise, and then that there noise wants to be turned off; and I see now it is the same now with spaking. It's a big row; and you loses all interest with the speaker. It's good on you to show such interest in Sam."

The President met Sam's request, and sent him a well-known book on the art of speaking—*The Grammar of Elocution*.

Sam, in his reference to this book, lets himself go in his native vernacular:—

"MY DEAR SPIRITUAL FATHER,

"I con mak' no hond on the book of grammer and *execution*. I have bin at it every night since you sent it me, and the missus says, if I am to talk like it says in the book, I shall have to have my tongue

“OLD PEG-LEG”

split, as they splits the tongues of jackdaws, to mak 'em spake. You know, if I was to say 'menothongal' and 'diphthongal' to the chaps, and they was to ax me the maining, I should have to say, 'It mains ooze or booze in the Black Country twange.' You knows, if I was to put my mouth in the shape to say 'po-ta-to,' Bill 'ud want to know if I was a-chewin' my fat; and if I telled him that was the right way to say taters, he 'ud say, 'Sammy, ye've got a slate off; you caw ¹ make a black man white; but, thank God, through the old Black Country twang, the black hearts of many of our chaps are as white as snow.'

“‘Old Peg-leg’ was a man with a wooden leg. He used to preach in our village. You know, the folks wouldn't lend him a chair to stand on; if they did, he was sure to break it, stamping with his wooden leg, and shouting, 'Glory.' My poor old mother always let him

¹ Cannot.

SAM AT DONCASTER

preach on the pig bench¹ in the back yard, on a week night, and I can tell you they had some romping doings; and, will you believe it? when I have been studying that book, I thought about old 'Peg-leg.' I had got no pieces, one night, to get my legs and feet in the sawdust at the boozer; so me and some more thirsty uns sat on our pigsty wall, to hear old 'Peg leg' have a go. Looking at me, he said, 'You chaps on yon wall would like a drink of tuppney;² but you 'an gob your strap,³ and the bloke won't ge none on you a drink of penny beer. But if you will come to the fountain, and have a drink, God will wipe all the strap off the slate for you all.' I didn't know the meaning of it then. Of course, I shouted with the others at him; but it touched one

¹ Very thick bench on which the pig, when killed, is laid.

² Cheap beer at 2d. per quart.

³ Gone to the full length of their credit.

“ WAS THAT GRAMMAR ? ”

chap, and he went to the little chapel. Was that Grammar?

“ God bless you, I know you wishes poor Sam well. I won't shout again when I am a-spaking ; but I can't get my tongue to work right in my mouth for fine words. You knows I shall always keep the book for your sake. You knows, Mr. Devil has had a packet at me again, and he said, ' You try, Sam, and swallow all the book, and be a parson, and you'll have an easy job some day.' I says to him, ' Who do you think you have got, Mr. Devil? You very near had me once at the parson's game, but my spiritual father stopped you.' So I told him to get off with his fine tales. I have asked God about it all, and it will come right. Praying God will bless you on all your journeys, and bring you safe home again, is the prayer of

“ SAM.”

CHAPTER VIII

ADULT SCHOOL TRAINING AND ITS FRUITS

**Adult School Methods—Their Fruits—An Example—
Teachers Wanted—The Essay and its Value**

THE time spent on a Sunday morning, in a well-ordered Adult School for men is usually not less than an hour and a half. The School is opened with devotional exercises: the singing of a hymn, often the reading of a short portion of Scripture, and prayer. Generally, the superintendent conducts the meeting; but in many Schools this duty is divided, or is undertaken by some scholar the president selects. The devotional exercises are followed by two educational courses:

TEACHING METHODS

one for Bible study, and the other for some social, scientific, or other helpful topic likely to contribute to daily well-being. In many Schools the lecturette is taken first ; while in others the Bible lesson has priority. The School breaks up after another hymn, and prayer. At the turn over, from first half-hour to second half-hour, an opportunity is given for the roll call, for receiving bank deposits, and for transacting other business, if it is not deferred to the close. The one primary feature is, to maintain and promote the Adult School spirit ; to see that everything is done in love and mutual sympathy ; to seek to create an atmosphere that will generate the good we know to be in every man, however much it may be buried by sin and past neglect.

When leaders make for these primary ends with patience, success is certain. Men will bring their pals. Fellowship in the pursuit of good promotes the highest desires, and talents, long latent, are discovered, and come

ADULT SCHOOL TRAINING

to fruition. These are the issues which give romance and passion to the work.

One never knows what a man will be when he enters an Adult School, after seeking in vain an escape from the monotonous round of a cheerless existence. Often the love of literature or of science is aroused; highways of learning are discovered to be at hand, accompanied with invitations to "taste and see." How many of the most unpromising men have taken advantage of the opportunities offered!

One such case must be mentioned:—A man, from a worn-out Shropshire village, finds, in his Adult School in Birmingham, these rich fields of knowledge open to workingmen. He enters them with enthusiasm. How interesting it is to see him spring to his feet, generally the first to do so at any conference, and to hear him plead with his fellow workingmen to take advantage of the Workers' Education League! He tells them of the

AN ADULT SCHOOL HERO

self-sacrifice which professors from the University will make to meet them ; “ How they love to come and talk to us chaps ; yes, they thank us for listening to them and asking questions, for it lets them know what we want.” He denounces with scorn the garbage and rubbish which so many of his brothers seem to revel in, instead of rising to their opportunities. He again and again astonishes his brothers, by the list of philosophical and erudite authors he recommends them. So keen is his love for his fellows, that he often leaves his home in Birmingham at 4 o'clock or 5 o'clock on a Sunday morning, and cycles twenty, thirty, and sometimes forty miles to a School, to give it a stir up ; or, if necessary, he speaks in the open air of the glorious possibilities of the Adult Schools, if men will only use the brains God has given them.

Many Schools, however, have not the advantage of a large city ; they have not the teachers at hand. The intelligence in smaller

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areas is of a lower order ; but if a body of men can be gathered,—from the street-corners and public-houses, to read and study the Bible, —into one large class, under the direction of one man, something is achieved ; fellowship in good things is promoted, drunkards are rescued, wasters are made thrifty, and neglectors of homes are taught to think of their responsibilities.

Sam describes a flying visit of the above friend :—

“ We had a surprise visit from Wilcox¹ on Sunday morning. You knows him as spoke at the Conference on yeadication. We let him have ten minutes in School, and then we had breakfast at Marvel Cottage ; then I shows him round, and asks him what good would Ruskin's works do for our chaps ; and he says, ‘ No good.’ But he says, ‘ Sam, I can tell you what good you could do for your chaps ;’ and that was, to yeadicate the

¹ Called to Higher Service, October 2, 1911.

SELF INSTRUCTION

collier chaps on some mining subjects. I never thought about that; don't you think that would do 'em good? We could get Mr. T. M. to come and speak to our men on the subject. Will you write and tell me if I should be doing right?

“Yours as ever,

“SAM.”

So something in the direction of instruction in mining has been attempted, with great results. Another excellent plan is, to arrange for men to write short essays on the characteristics of their own everyday work. Before the day arrives, they read all they can, and from one source or another pick up some of the technicalities of the work; while their own experience proves interesting to them. Though crude and weak the effort often is, it has its reflective educational value, for the man has learnt something by the effort. It has also encouraged others of his class to try and do

ADULT SCHOOL TRAINING

likewise. The President himself has gained in his School many useful points, from wool-sorting, printing, signalling, gardening, and photography; and has found many apt illustrations for the enforcement of spiritual truths.

CHAPTER IX

A CONVICT'S STORY

An Old Pal—A Tragedy—The Would-be Suicide—
“I'm a Backslider”—The Message of Hope—The
Results—A Convict's Letter ; his Return, and Visit
to Marvel Cottage

SOON after the time when Sam came into the personal knowledge of the President, he solicited his help to get a letter through to an old pal then suffering a long term of imprisonment in Dartmoor. Sam had written to this man more than once, but had received no reply.

“What was the man's offence?” the President enquired.

“Why, when drunk, he attempted the murder of his wife and daughter, and attempted

A CONVICT'S STORY

suicide." Sam added: "We have had many a drunken spree, but the worst of Tom was, he *invariably* set about his missus; but I do want him to know about the new life I have found, and tell him about my Saviour."

The President remembered the tragedy, which had shocked the Midlands, and he told Sam of his own experience with this very man, whom he had visited in the hospital one morning nine years before.

It was as follows:—On arrival at the hospital, he was informed that this man and his wife and daughter were patients. The secretary remarked that he had heard the man was once a Sunday-school teacher. The President, before leaving, found the man in a small ward, propped up, with his head and neck almost covered with bandages. A nurse was feeding him with a spoon, while the policeman in charge sat near. Looking at the sad object, he said, "My dear man, I have come to help you, if I can; I have read your

“I AM A BACKSLIDER”

terrible story, and what you have attempted ; but God stayed your hand, that you might return to Him, and learn of His forgiveness. I'll tell you a story of something that took place, ten years ago, in this very room. While walking round the wards one morning, a nurse invited me to speak to a would-be suicide.

“In yonder corner he lay, bandaged as you are ; he was breathing from a bronchial kettle, which was steaming at the fire. Bending over him, I said, ‘What did you do this for, my man?’ In a husky voice, he murmured, ‘Trouble, sir, trouble.’ ‘Oh yes,’ I replied, ‘but we all have our troubles ; didn’t you ever hear of Him who said, ‘Let not your heart be troubled ; ye believe in God, believe also in Me’? And again He said, ‘Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.’ ‘That’s not for me,’ murmured the man ; ‘I am a backslider. Fifteen years ago, I was a member of a

A CONVICT'S STORY

Christian Church, and fell away through the drink.' 'But, man,' I said, 'God invites the backsliders to return; who is to be believed, you or Him? God says, "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord,"—that means, to come back again;—"and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon." That abundant pardon is for you; He wants you, and that is why I have been sent to tell you, so thank Him for it. I am now going to the Committee, and I'll see you again.'

"Do you know, I came back in an hour, and found there was a change in the man? He muttered, in quite another tone, 'I believe it, sir, and oh! thank you for coming.' A few weeks after, he was cured, and discharged. He went back to his family in Lancashire, and sent a letter to another patient in the hospital, in which he expressed his joy at what God had done."

A PRISON CONVERSION

The recital of this story did not move the man ; so, turning to the nurse and the policeman, the President said, " Let us kneel and pray." A few earnest words were offered, but with no visible effect on the man. The President, on leaving, told him he was on the morrow going to America, and probably would never see him again ; but that, if he were sent to prison, even there he might be happy, if he would only believe in God's forgiveness, and live for Him.

The President, after three months' absence, once more visited the hospital. The nurse who had Sam's friend in charge told him the man changed the next day after the President's visit ; that he had proved one of the best patients she ever had, and that, as he left the hospital, he requested her to thank the gentleman for his prayers. Ten years' penal servitude was the sentence.

Sam at length received a letter from his old companion in sin, and writes:—

A CONVICT'S STORY

“At last I have the long-looked-for letter from Tom. You knows who I mean,—the chap you saw in the hospital. I am sending it to you to read; will you let me have it back again, to take with me to Scalby? I sent him another letter by return, and told him about you. Do write him at once.

“Yours as ever,

“SAM.”

The President took the following copy of the prisoner's letter from Tom; it is dated from Portland:—

“MY DEAR BROTHER,

“I now have the pleasure of writing these few lines to you, hoping to find you and your wife and children in the best of health. I am pleased to say that it leaves me well, and in good health; thank God for it. Dear brother, I am very sorry that you have had to write to a place like this; and I can tell you that I never thought that I

THE PRISONER'S LETTER

should ever come to this; but it has been the drink that has been my downfall; but I promise I shall never have any more drink or liquor as long as I live. Dear brother, I now have been living a Christian life over six years, and I was confirmed Nov. 11, 1903, at Dartmoor prison; and I have never missed the Holy Communion but once ever since Christmas, 1903, and then I was in hospital with a bad wrist. Dear brother, I mean, by God's help, to live a strict and sober life in future. Dear brother, please write as soon as you can conveniently."— Then, after remembrances to individuals, he adds these lines, as postscript:—

“What peaceful hours I once enjoyed,
How sweet their memory still!
But they have left an aching void
The world can never fill.

Return, O Holy dove, return,
Sweet messenger of rest;
I hate the sins that made Thee mourn,
That drove Thee from my breast.”

A CONVICT'S STORY

The President wrote, as requested, and in due time received the following letter from Tom, in Portland Gaol:—

“ DEAR SIR,

“ I now have the pleasure of answering your very kind and affectionate letter. Dear sir, I remember your visiting me in the hospital, and how kind your words was to me. Kind words can never die, and how you prayed by me, and asked God to bless me, and save me; and your prayers were not in vain. Dear sir, I have thought about you many times, but I had forgot your name till Sam told me in his letter. I have known him and his wife many years; they have always been very kind to me. I long for the time when we shall meet again, if not on earth, I hope we shall meet in heaven.

“ Best love to you, from

“ T. H.”

TOM AND HIS WIFE

At length news came that Tom would be liberated from Portland Gaol in three weeks' time. Sam puts a footnote to a letter :—

“Tom comes home in three weeks, from Portland. I have got him a home with his brother. You know, it's a bit hard for poor Tom; his wife won't have him, nor his children. You knows, he says 'I shall be all right, Sam. God won't turn His back on me.'”

At length he arrived, to his old friend's delight. Sam writes :—

“God only knows how I loves you, and prays God to keep you safe while in a foreign land. I can't keep from writing to you, as I wants to tell you about Tom, for I knows you will want to know about him, and how he is going on. Well, he gets a lot better in his talking. When a chap has been in a

A CONVICT'S STORY

convict prison for eight years, and only allowed to speak now and then,—when they comes out into the busy world they seems very strange, and only speaks in a whisper.

“Now I want to tell you I had him up at Marvel Cottage ; and will you believe it, it leaked out, and all the neighbours were out to see him. Poor Tom, you should have seen him ; he fairly broke down. He says to me, ‘ Sam, I dain’t do it, did I ? It was the drink.’ Well, the neighbours came one after the other to see him, and they all said they was glad to see him ; and the chaps had him in the Social Club, and we had a good time together. But what ‘ did ’ Tom—he could not understand Marvel Cottage, and he says, ‘ Sam, who’s died and left you the money to alter the house, and make it like a palace ? ’ I says to him, ‘ Nobody’s died, but I have come to life. I was blind, and could not see the fine feathers in the landlady’s hat at the boozer, and the gold chain across the waistcoat of the landlord,

“IT WAS THE DRINK”

and his fine house ; but when I had the new birth, and my eyes were open, I saw for myself, a fine house, better father, happy wife, good children, and heaven in the distance.’ So poor Tom says, ‘ Let me say my prayers in Marvel Cottage, and thank God and Mr. S. for all this change.’ He says, ‘ Sam, I never dreamt that you would have changed like this. You know yourself you was the leader of the gang of everything that was bad.’ So we said our prayers, and asked God to bless you, and make you a blessing in the country you have gone to, and bring you safe home again to dear old England.

“ I am glad to tell you Tom’s children have been to see him, and he saw his first grandchild on Thursday night. It was hard to see him kiss and love the child, which is five years old, and he says, between his sobs, ‘ It was not your grandfather that tried to kill your grandmother ; it was the cursed drink and the passion of the devil.’ I asked God to help him,

A CONVICT'S STORY

and we left his son and daughter in tears. His wife told me on Saturday, that if her meets him her shall speak to him, and I am sure God will answer Sam's prayers, and bring them together again."

CHAPTER X

PRAYER AND WORK

Sam's Intercessory Prayers—A Twenty Years' Effort
—“The Same Old Story”—The Changed Man—A
District Councillor

It is most encouraging to hear from time to time of the wonderful answers to Sam's prayers, and especially to his intercessory prayers. Are we not told again and again, that intercessory prayer is the most effective? The following letter opens on this subject :—

“ I was glad to have a letter from you ; you knows they bin like bank cheques from heaven. I can cash them with my Father God, for I always tells Him, in my prayers at night, I

PRAYER AND WORK

had a letter from you. Look here, I wants to ask you a little thing or two. I have got about twenty-five folks as I always ask God to bless every night. Of course E. [the pigeon-flyer he went to see at the magistrate's request] is one, I can never miss a single night since I went to see him at G. ; and, of course, your dear self, and I give you one or two extra in the daytime. But this is what I wants to ask you about. You knows Miss K. [the lady who sent the cheque for the Social Club]. I says every night, 'God bless Miss K., her father, and brother, because they bin good uns.' Now, I do not know if I bin right or no ; God put it into my mouth to say it, the very first time I had a letter from her. You might tell me, when you see me, if I bin right."

No man would have been more interested in the doings of Sam than the father referred

LIKE BANK CHEQUES

to, were he on the earth. Twenty-five years ago, he loved to visit the President's School, and to talk to the men; and he invited one man in particular, (who had been a terrible drunkard, but who signed the pledge on the occasion of one of his visits,) to go and see his beautiful garden at Edgbaston. Poor old C. never came back from a Birmingham visit without telling of the great kindness Mr. K. had shown him, as he took him round his garden, and showed what could be grown in the precincts of a big city. The way to win a man is, to establish community of interest, and then to seek the aid of the Spirit, to make full use of the channel, if opened.

The Adult School is a social lever of transcendent power for inducing men who have lived only for self to give themselves to the work of improving the locality in which they live. Sam writes, rejoicing in such a triumph:—

PRAYER AND WORK

“ Now, I want to tell you what we have done this year in our village. For over three years I have tried to get a chap in our School, and I have at last got him. Just before last Christmas I got him to come and see what I did with the chaps, of a Sunday morning. And, do you know, he heard you speak when you was over last time. He has turned out a fair trump. He is a man with a bit of money, and has a good business ; but he was fond of putting his little finger up.¹ I have had many a flare-up with him. He was one of my old pals. It is the same old story, the drink ; but he won't let a spot come into his house now. He asked me and the missus on Sunday night to have supper with him ; so we did, and he put two jugs of water on the table, and he says, ‘ Sam, we shan't have a big yead after drinkin' water.’ ‘ No,’ says I, ‘ we shall get a big pocket.’ And—will you believe it?—that Charlie has got that steady, that the folks

¹ A sign for drink.

CHARLIE

asked him to put up for the Council, and he did, and all the chaps worked hard for him, and he got in; he was very near the top of the poll. Now, ain't that good—a chap joining our School a little over four months, and making a councillor of him? I heard him make his first maiden speech the other night, and what do you think he said, 'Gentm, I am not much of a speaker, but I can think and do a lot for them chaps that have sent me here, and I have to thank Sam and the Adult School [for] where I am to-night.' My word, they didn't half clap him.

“ We re-opened our bowling green Saturday week, and I invited sixteen councillors to come, and they turned up, and we got them a good tay; and our Charlie, our Adult School councillor, says, 'Look here, chaps; you know what Sam does for these chaps; it can't be done without somebody putting their hand down. I propose we have a whip round;'

PRAYER AND WORK

and they did. £2 17s. was the result. Of course, all we chaps put some as well when the cap came round ; but we ain't half proud of our Councillor Charlie. You might drop him a line ; I am sure he would be glad to hear from you. There are lots I should like to tell you, but I will see you on Saturday at the Conference.

“ Yours as ever,

“ SAM.”

CHAPTER XI

NAVY BILL AGAIN

Gambling—Hard Cases—Sam's Perseverance—The School and the Magistrate's Sentence—Navy Bill visits Marvel Cottage—His "Precious Jewels amongst Navvies"—"A Grand Time" at Walsall—The Man on the Bench—"Mate, have you got a Mother?"—"I leaves the rest in God's Hands"

GAMBLING is a terrible snare in the Black Country. There are many open, uncultivated spaces, where the coal has been but partially gotten. The land lies unused, because of the possibility of a rise in the price of coal, which would make it profitable to get the ribs and pillars left from the old methods of coal-getting. Near the village where Sam lives there are many hundreds of acres of

NAVY BILL AGAIN

land in this condition. What a boon it would be if the surface could be *treated*. Even if yearly leases were granted, at peppercorn rent, it would be better than the sad waste which at present strikes every pedestrian.

These undulations, and the dilapidated engine-houses, invite little gambling groups, which, partly hidden, with one man on the watch, are very numerous on Sundays, and they seem to glory in outwitting the police. Sam had a little trouble in that direction, and he characteristically describes his experience. He sends a cutting of a newspaper, which reported the conviction of two young men for gambling ; but through the kind appeal of an Adult School, the defendants were allowed time to pay the fine, and they escaped a sentence of imprisonment :—

“ I am not very grand just now ; I have been put about over two young chaps that

“SPOTTING THE GAMBLERS”

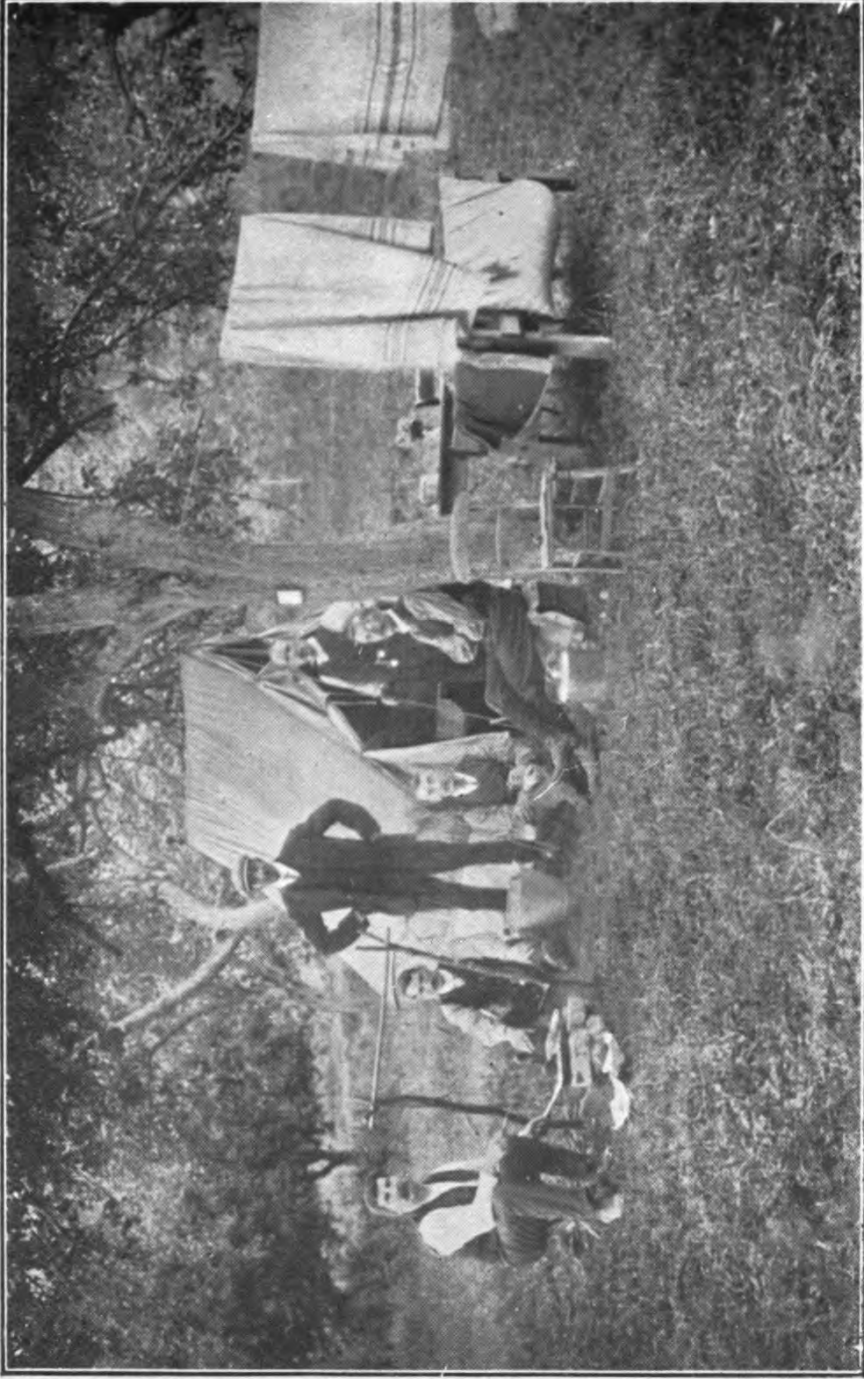
I got to come to our School. But you know, I ought not to, for when I looks at those marble statues that are by the Town Hall at Birmingham, I remembers they were a rough lump of stone once, until the man got his hammer and chisel, and cut a bit off here and there. And you know, they looks fair toffs now, and I have been trying to knock off of one since last December, and the t'other since Easter. We got them to come to the Social Club every night in the week ; and then on Sunday I have heard of them a-gambling, and, will you believe it? I have gone round the fields to see if I could find them at the game.

“About two weeks ago I spotted them ; but you know they spotted me first, and when I got to them, three were lying down like as if asleep, and the two were a-reading a paper. I says to them, ‘You have had ‘em out ;’ and they says, ‘I am sure we ain’t, Sam.’ They all knew I was on the beat.

NAVY BILL AGAIN

“Would you believe it! they went a mile and a half away, to do it under the lamp-post at night, and the copper copt them, and they have got to pay eighteen bob. You know, one chap is named Bob, and I says, ‘Old un, if Sammy didn’t catch you, the bobby copt you, Bob, and you an got to pay eighteen bob.’ Bob says, ‘Look here, Sam; if God will forgive me, I’ll never handle another card. To think you and the School have been so good to we chaps, and we to do this; we want chucking in the canal, and drowning.’ I says, ‘You don’t want that, but going through the fountain, and washing your sins away.’ I am sure it will do it this time; they were both at Adult Sunday School at 7.30; then again at 9.30; afternoon P.S.A., and preaching service at night; so I mustn’t grumble, must I? The stonemason is at work, and I feel sure they will come all right.

“When it was proved they had had three



CAMPING OUT NEAR NAVY BILL'S COTTAGE.

SAVED FROM PRISON

convictions, the magistrates said, 'One month, hard labour'; but Bob says, 'I have got a letter from the Early Morning School;' and they reads it. And then he says, 'Eighteen shillings, to pay it in seven days.' When they comes back, they says, 'Sam, if it wasn't for that letter, we should have had a month on the mill.' I hear their mothers are getting a bundle for the pop-shop, to find the money, as they have got none; but we chaps be having a whip round. Oh! thank you for the grand letter you sent me; it's Jesus at the beginning, in the middle, and at the end. God bless you!"

Reference has been made to Navvy Bill, and to his simple honesty and his deep conviction of the power of the Adult School to reach men such as himself. Sam invited Navvy Bill to his house, and thus describes the visit:—

"We have had Navvy Bill at Marvel Cottage; he came last Saturday afternoon,

NAVY BILL AGAIN

and stopt till Sunday night. You know, I'd sooner have had Bill than George the Fifth. We have had some noted chaps at Marvel Cottage, but Bill has capped the lot. You know, me and the missus did all we could for him and the chaps; our School was as proud of him as though he were a Lord Mayor. You know, I had him on his pins, to speak with the chaps in the School on Sunday morning, and what he said will stick to 'em as long as they live. He made some thick-yeaded 'uns cry. God bless him; he wants to do all the good he can, and he is doing good with the navvies he works with. I have to speak at the united meeting at Wallsall on June 26, and he has got four navvies promised to come and hear Sam. You know, he has got nothing else to talk about only Adult Schools, and what he is going to do to get men to join, and what precious jewels there are to be found amongst navvies. Only think; working all the week, and then walking ten miles to a School, to

THE DEVIL'S BLACK LOOKS

speak a word for the Christ Who has done so much for him! These are the men who are pulling the weeds of sin out of the lives of men, and letting the flowers grow. God bless my dear pal Bill."

The following letter, written by Sam, and describing the United Meeting at Walsall, appeared in the *Brotherhood*, of August, 1910. It was sent by the Rev. F. B. Meyer, who had received a copy from his friend, the President:—

"I want to tell you lots of things. They bin working me very hard, but oh the joy there is in doing my little bit for Christ, to the big lump I used to do for the devil; he only gave me black looks, the Saviour gives me smiles. I walked from our village to Walsall last Sunday, and had a grand time. I was speaking with a good Walsall J.P., in the Co-operative Hall at a united meeting; he is a grand fellow that J.P.

"I wants to tell you what God found me

NAVY BILL AGAIN

to do on my way to Walsall, at half-past six in the morning. From Wednesbury to the Pleck, there are some benches for you to sit on; on one I found a poor fellow, about seven-and-twenty, fast asleep. I goes and sits by him. I coughed to wake him up, and that don't shift him; so I lights my pipe, and lets him have a snift of the smoke. He opens his peepers and looks at me, and says, 'Don't shift me off here, mate. The copper made me shift out of Dudley last night. I have bin walking all night. Have ye got a match?'

"I says, 'I have.' So I gives him a light and a bit of baccy. He says, 'Mate, I wish I got a cup of tay. You thinks,—I mean you toffs,—as we poor navvy chaps only wants drink. You knows, when we meet mates as 'as been a-doing a bit o' graft,¹ you can always have plenty of booze, but not a bit of tommy.' I says, 'Mate, I bain't a toff; I knows what the gravel rash is, what a big

¹ Work.

SAM PUMPS THE TRAMP

yead is, and knows what it is to be hard up. I knows what it is to spike¹ it from Newport in Wales to where I lives. And after my old wench has sent me the pieces to ride back with, and I spent them on booze.' He says, 'You don't look it, mate, now.' 'No,' says I, 'it's the Adult School what's done it, mate.' He says, 'What's that?' I says, 'Look here, mate, I am going to a place in Walsall, where they are going to give some coffee away at 8 o'clock; and if you'll come with me I can get you some.' 'Right you are; I'm your man, honour bright,' says he; so I says, 'Gee us your hand, and off we goes.' 'You knows, Mr. President, I began to pump him, and he tells me a lot; and then I tells him how your dear self led me to Christ, and he says, 'You must be a trump;' but I tells him you're an angel, only God won't let you have any wings to lift you off this earth, so as you can catch chaps like him and me. So on we goes.

¹ Walk.

NAVY BILL AGAIN

“ I says, ‘ Mate, have ye got a mother?’ That did it ; it broke him down. ‘ I had one once, mate,’ he replied, ‘ but I broke her heart, and her died four months ago. Her always said I should come to bad, and I thinks I have, mate,’ (and the tears run down his face,) ‘ but, mate, if you can give up the drink, and you looks a fair toff, I won’t have any more.’ So I says, ‘ God help you, mate ;’ so I gives him a tanner.¹ He says, ‘ Look here, mate, I don’t want it off you ; you have done me more good than tanners.’ I says, ‘ Honour bright, you won’t let your little finger go up for drink out of my tanner?’ and he says, ‘ No, I won’t, mate.’

“ We were late when we gets to the meeting. My lord goes in like a Briton, and I sits him down with four more navvies, and I says to the Adult School chaps, ‘ Look after my mate when the coffee comes round, and I’ll pay for him.’ They says, ‘ You leave that to us, Sam ; you get on the plat-

¹ Sixpence.

“LEAVE THAT TO US, SAM”

form.’ At 8 o’clock the coffee comes round, and Bill give him some, and the other chaps gives him some, and we blows him out till he can’t eat another bun. You know, we did the five barley loaves and fishes on him, and then I has a packet at him for my Saviour, from the platform. That’s another soul I may never see on earth, but it’s another added to Sam’s prayers. I leaves the rest in God’s hands.

“One of the good chaps took him to his home, and give him a top coat, and let him have a wash, and promised to try and find him a job in Walsall. I am waiting for Heaven to tell me the result of this little deed.”

Writing on the following Sunday Sam remarks—“I have had a big day to-day at my own School, at 7.30; Dudley Port, 10.30; P.S.A. this afternoon; and wrote five letters. To-night ends another day in the Master’s service.

“Yours as ever,

“SAM.”

CHAPTER XII

SAM IN LONDON

Sam visits London — His Impressions — Workhouse Tragedies — Anxious Friends — Return Home—A Visit from the President—Mass Meeting

SAM is engaged at a large works at Wolverhampton, where much iron needed for constructive purposes, and for fencing, &c., is made. Oftentimes, it is necessary to dispatch skilled workmen to different parts of the country, to superintend the erection and finishing of the articles made. On such a journey Sam was sent by his employers,—to a large workhouse near London. This was a unique experience, for Sam had never before been to London. In a letter, from Kingston-on-Thames, he regrets his inability to keep a long-arranged visit to a School at the Lye, in Worcestershire, with the President :—

CROSSING LONDON

“I am very sorry I shall be away. I have to obey my employers; but this is the work of God that I am in London. You will fill my corner up. God bless you and your message; may the men who hear you no longer be ‘down,’¹ but arise, with healing in their wings.

“What do you think of your Sam being in London, and the first time in my life? Our manager asked me if I had ever been to London. I told him, ‘No;’ so he says, ‘We had better label you.’ I says, ‘Never mind; if I get lost, I shall tell them I bin Sam, the Adult School chap.’ So when I gets out of the train at Euston I asked a bloke which was the ‘bus for Waterloo Station; so he says, ‘Get in the front of my ‘bus here, and sit by me, and I’ll put you right.’ I says, ‘If you will, old chap, I’ll give thee an ounce of bacca.’ So in a minute off we starts, and when we gets outside the station I open my eyes almost as wide as old Betty Bywater

¹ A play on the name of the place.

SAM IN LONDON

did when her got up one morning, and found her cinder wall¹ knocked down; they said her never shut them again. What a sight! Big buildings, hundreds of motors, and thousands of people passing to and fro. I kept asking the driver what every place was, and the name of the streets. He looked very old at me; I think he thought I ought to make it a pound of bacca; if he did, he earned it.

“At last I landed at Waterloo Station, and then off again to Kingston-on-Thames, then by car to the Workhouse. My mother always said that’s what I should come to; that was when I was in the hands of the evil one; but now God is using me for Him. He has sent me here, to hear the stories of fallen humanity. Oh, the stories I have listened to from aged men! There is one old man, one whose father left him £7,000 twenty years ago, at a town you know; and through

¹ Many walls in the Black Country are made from the clinkers from blast furnaces.

THE THAMES EMBANKMENT

the drink he is in the Workhouse. I have given seven ounces of twist bacca away to them in a week, to get them to tell me what brought them there; nineteen out of twenty cases it is the drink.

“Oh! the sight I saw on the Thames Embankment last Sunday! It fired me with a greater desire to do more than ever to raise the fallen. I want to catch the post to-night; this makes twenty-nine letters I have wrote in a week. Every post I have letters from the chaps from our School, that God will bless me in London, and soon bring me back again. One chap wrote me he cries every night over me; he thinks I shall get lost in London, and then what would they do?

“I am lodging close by the Adult School; they had me up last Sunday morning. When I went in, I said I was a chap they called Sam, from the Black Country, and that you was my spiritual father; that was enough.

SAM IN LONDON

‘ We knows him, he was at our last annual meeting, and we heard from him about you ; ’ so I had to have a go. On Sunday morning next I have to take the first half-hour, and some of the men said, ‘ Let him have the lot.’ I shall be thinking of you, at the Lye, next Sunday morning. I shall send a wire up to God’s throne for you all.”

In the course of a few weeks Sam gets back to his home and to his friends in the Black Country, and he writes :—

“ I am glad to be back at home again, after my long stay in London. London,—with its Houses of Parliament and places of grandeur, and Thames, and Royal House of the King of England,—is not half so grand as Sam’s Marvel Cottage ; it may not be as large as Buckingham Palace, and there are no men walking in front, with red coats ; but, thank God, I am a King’s son, and angels guard the dwelling of Sam and his queen.

FULL UP WITH WORK

“Though I found some good friends, I was longing to get back to the chaps I love. My old pal Bill was at the station to meet me; I wish you could have seen him, he was like a chap waiting for his sweetheart; and when he laid hold of my hand he said, ‘Sammy, you’ll never leave we again, shall ye, my lad; bin you any better?’ Of course, I didn’t tell you how I caught the rheumatic when I was camping out, Bank Holiday, by the river. All the time I was in London I was in great pain; but, thank God, I am getting better again, and are full up with work for the Master.

“We had a grand time at our School when I came home. I had to tell them about my first visit to London. Before I came away, I found out your son-in-law’s large shop. I went in, and bought a lot of presents for those at home and my dear pals. I had to get a box, and send them on first.

SAM IN LONDON

“Hoping you are well, after your long journey from home.”

In the Midland Union of Adult Schools, which is one of the largest of the thirty unions in Great Britain, there are some 285 schools. These are classified into eleven sub-unions. In the sub-union of which Sam is secretary, and in which his school is included, there are eight schools. As none are more than two miles apart in a thickly-populated district, arrangements are made for an annual mass meeting to be held in some building that will hold not less than one thousand men.

These annual gatherings are looked forward to ; they provide a good rally for looking up slack scholars, and for introducing to the Movement social workers, members of district councils, employers, working-men leaders, and all who may feel interested in the social welfare of the people.

A RALLY

Embracing as they do members of the Episcopal and Free Churches, these rallies demonstrate practical unity ; and as they are held at an early hour on Sunday morning, those present are conscious of an alertness which is manifest from start to finish.

The President of the Midland Union had not visited the section, of which Sam was secretary, for some seven years; his promise, therefore, to address its gathering was looked forward to by him and the schools with no little interest, especially as Sam had resolved that this rally should not be behind any they had had before.

Eight schools, some with bands, marched to a large Baptist chapel, which they filled at 8 a.m. The chairman was a beloved superintendent of one of the largest schools associated with the parish church of a neighbouring town ; while Baptist and Methodist ministers were present, and took part. The singing of Jackson's "Te Deum," and the

SAM IN LONDON

hymn "I will Sing the Wondrous Story," to the tune "Hyfrodol," will live in the memory of all who were present. Those who knew the history of many of the men who crowded those pews, and the joy that had entered into their lives, would wonder how any Adult School worker could ever be called a "kill-joy"; but so it is. The President's address was preceded by a solo, which was admirably rendered, and proved a most appropriate introduction to an address, on "Walking Worthily." Sam's impressions of the meetings, and his delight at entertaining the President at Marvel Cottage, may well conclude these series of letters:—

"It was a red-letter day for all at Marvel Cottage, in having you with us. I have had my prayers answered, for I asked God my Heavenly Father to open a way that you should sleep under the roof at Marvel Cottage, and in the same room where I and my dear

SAM AS HOUSE BUILDER

wife, on our knees, poured out our souls' desire that God would keep me steadfast, and make me useful in His service, that night I came back from Birmingham, after hearing your kind words, and seeing your tears.

“Thank God for what He hath done for Sam through you. The bad Sam has become a good Sam; the drinking Sam has become a sober Sam. The Sam as nobody cared for; and my dear children, who got out of his way when in drink, loves him now, and all through you pointing me to the Saviour. No. 25 in this street is now Marvel Cottage, with Sam as landlord. Would to God I had heard you years ago; instead of one cottage to-day, I should have had many more. I have helped to build the houses of the landlord of the public-house. Oh! how true it is: ‘Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging; and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise!’ They are blinded with the fairy-tales of the landlord and the smoke-

SAM IN LONDON

room company. The jug and glass, filled with England's curse, is drunk; and the brain is filled with fire of all that is bad and evil. Then a blow is struck, and man fights with man, and the landlord, after he has told you fairy-tales, comes to the rescue, and throws you into the street. Would to God men would open their eyes! But we can thank Him for the dawn, which is just arising. By His help, Sam wil do his best to help bring it into the full splendour of sunshine.

“Thank God for the splendid time we had at our annual meeting. It was grand to hear your voice, and hear the words of the Master fall from your lips. Thank you so much for *Broken Earthenware*; it is a grand book; it will be a great help to me, in leading men out of the curse of the drink unto the loving God. God bless you!

“Yours as ever,

“SAM.”

CHAPTER XIII

CONCLUSION

A Plea for the Extension of the Adult School Movement
—Testimony to its Work

THE foregoing letters have been given *in extenso*, to exhibit the warmth of feeling pervading the members of a true Adult School; this is an essential feature, if there are to be attraction, and development of character. This feature is often termed, by the members, "The Adult School Spirit." It is none other than the Holy Spirit Himself, evidenced by the vision of a new life, and the desire to serve and benefit others.

The recipient of these homely letters, was much impressed, thirty years ago, by the remarks of the late D. L. Moody, who,

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speaking at Keswick, said, "You English people are slow to observe what strangers see quickly. The working-men—90 per cent. of them—are utterly alienated from the regular services of the sanctuary, and are careless, and hostile to Christianity, as thus set forth. They have now the franchise, and unless you teach them Christian principles, there is a bad time before England."

It happened that, soon after, the writer was introduced, by the late Alderman White, of Birmingham, to the Adult Schools with which he was directly associated. The sight of the crowd of men who were rejoicing in the larger life, and who were receiving week by week instruction in Christian principles, convinced him that here was a practical way of doing the very thing Mr. Moody had shown was needed.

The Rev. Dr. R. W. Dale, one of the first theologians of his day, and one who was strong and definite in his teaching on

HIGH PRAISE

the doctrine of the Church, uttered these prophetic words: "I look upon the Movement with the largest hope, in relation to the future of religious life in this country. I believe that the Movement is only in the earliest stage of a great and glorious history."

Surely this was a call, to every man who desired to see the spread of a true and living faith in God amongst the masses, to come and help.

Dr. Graham Taylor, Professor of Sociology in the University of Chicago, eight years ago visited England, to study the various Christian Societies, and their methods of work amongst people outside the Churches. At a meeting at York, of Adult School leaders, he delivered this pregnant judgment: "Close observation, and considerable enquiry, have led me to the conclusion that this is the most vital, effective, and vigorous bit of Christian work for men that I have seen."

If this is the case, ought not the Christian

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Church to do her utmost to put in operation this means to win the lost? Millions have wandered from the Sunday Schools, and drifted from God, with no attachment whatever to the Church. What is the reason why this excellent institution is not popular with the majority of the clergy and ministers?

In 1905, there was a remarkable revival of religion and of concern for God in South Wales. The Churches everywhere were astir; men and women in thousands were quickened; and remarkable conversions were witnessed. The movement attracted hundreds of ministers from all parts of England, who were interested in the spread of the Kingdom of God; but in the Adult Schools, the return of the prodigal, the transformation of life and character, growth in love and knowledge, are everywhere recorded; yet it is quite the exception for Schools to receive visits from the clergy or ministers, to enquire, or give encouragement.

WHAT AN ADULT SCHOOL IS

Among thousands of Church-people, even where schools have existed for years, there is often the most vague idea of what an Adult School really is. One is driven to the conclusion that ministers are looking for a revival along ecclesiastical lines, and consequently are deaf to the sound of the wind stirring in other directions. John the Baptist, who had been the Lord's forerunner, and had witnessed the Spirit descending on Him, was in doubt, as he failed to see the Kingdom of God coming in the way he had expected; so messengers of enquiry were sent. The answer the enquirers received from the Master was, "Tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the Gospel is preached." Adult School workers everywhere are able, with much thankfulness to God, to answer critics in similar terms.

By its fruit is the work known. One teacher

CONCLUSION

asked the members of his class to reply, on a form he gave them, to the question: "What has the School been to you?"

Here are a few replies:—"You have not given me room enough." "Beyond all telling." "Better body, mind, and spirit." "Been kept teetotal." "Caused me to be teetotal." "Got plain truths in a plain way." "Feel I am getting in the right path again." "Have learned better habits." "Helped to live as the Master would have me." "Enjoy Sundays now." "Better in health and home." "Much happier home."

Sam, the principal character in this book, answered this enquiry: "How many in your School are associated with Churches?" He replied that he had counted twenty-four,—who had never been inside a place of worship since they left Sunday School (usually the time a lad goes to work) up to the day they went to a Sunday Morning School—who were now regular in attendance at various churches;

A CHANGED ATTITUDE

and added that several of them were in office.

One of the first bits of evidence of a man's awakening towards the Church, after coming to an Adult School, is the interest he takes in his children who attend a Sunday School. There is a change of attitude towards Christianity; the critic in the factory and workshop becomes the defender and advocate; and if he is slow to praise the parson, it is because he cannot understand,—since religion is of such vital importance,—why the parson has left him alone so long.

The Churches need to more fully comprehend their own definite work and calling in the Kingdom of God; then they will see the necessity of the organisations that are working outside ecclesiastical borders, to accomplish the work which the Churches, as such, cannot possibly undertake.

One of the first duties of the Church of Christ everywhere is, to convince the world

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she is a Divine Society, composed of disciples of the Divine Founder. This conviction is only possible, by obedience to the first command of Jesus Christ to His disciples, that they should "love one another." He thus emphasises the truth : " By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another." Again, the primary duty of the Church is the formation of character. Through the homes of her members, and the training of her Sunday Schools, the young life must be guided, and taught to serve God, and to do His will. Every care must be taken to avoid any cause of stumbling or risk of loss, "for it is not the Father's will that one of these little ones should perish."

The letters of the apostles are directed to the same end : the building up and perfecting of the Church, which is the body of disciples, so that it shall radiate light and truth, and attract all who are seeking a refuge from the storms of life. The Church must ever be

MILITANT METHODS

“militant,” if she would be “triumphant” ; she must be a fighting force, prepared and equipped to pull down the strongholds of Satan, and must be ready at all times to wrestle with the powers of evil.

How, then, can the Church undertake efficiently, as an organisation, the seeking of the lost ;—of those who have wandered, through her own neglect and shortcomings? How can she rescue others, who have never been within her folds? She attempts the work by Missions ; but they, virtually, are branches of the ordinary Church work which begin with the young, and which follow, only in a simpler way, the ordinary service of the Church. Again, spasmodic efforts are made by groups of Churches, or, by individual Churches, in special missions, extending over a week or a month. Lists of names are secured, of men and women professing conversion ; but experience proves that the great majority relapse, and that the most valuable results are the

CONCLUSION

bringing to decision of the elder of the children of the Sunday School, and the quickening of the spiritual life of the ordinary member. As a means of bringing home the realities of religion to the man in the street, all such efforts fall short. The Adult School organisation supplies just the means necessary; it is an effort to make "good ground" for the sower of the Word. Almost all its officers and teachers are, as individuals, attached to some Church or other; but for the special work they are undertaking, they must be free and non-ecclesiastical. As they are "out" for the non-Church-goer, they must attract by the exhibition of disinterested love, and must be prepared to adopt every method sanctified common sense will suggest. They need to study closely the methods of Jesus, for He drew all the publicans and sinners to hear Him; but He failed to win the approval of the Pharisees and Scribes—the religious class of His day.

SPIRITUAL DYSPEPSIA

Every Adult School teacher must remember he is a fisher of men, and must therefore be taught by Jesus.

There is room for such work in every parish and every village in the country. Teachers and leaders, of course, are needed ; they are to be found in every congregation, amongst the men and women who are at present doing nothing in the way of spiritual effort ; many of these retired years ago from the Sunday School, and are now suffering from spiritual dyspepsia. Through their over-absorption in material pursuits, they have lost the appetite for the Bread of Life ; and there is no restorative equal to the Adult School.

A medical doctor of a provincial town, in addressing men of his own class at a recent meeting, gave the following account of his experience :—

“ Are you satisfied with your lot in life ?
Are you really enjoying life as you think

CONCLUSION

you are? I thought I was enjoying life, but when nearly thirty-seven years old I reluctantly found out my mistake. If you want to make your life real, and to really live, I appeal to you to throw in your lot with the Adult School Movement. You have advantages in education, and you can help to impart knowledge to others. You need not come, feeling you have got religion. I entered the School, not knowing what the love of Christ was; but in the Adult School, through my fellow-men, I have learned what are the love and spirit of Jesus."

Let ministers and clergy recommend such men to help this work; they would then experience a reflected blessing, for when a man receives the Holy Spirit, as the result of humble service for his brothers' welfare, he cannot help adding to the spiritual power of his Church, though he may possibly be less regular in attendance. If this Movement

ADULT SCHOOL AIMS

could be extended, what beneficent results would follow! Baffling social problems would find a natural solution; the resultant spirit of brotherhood would smooth the relations of employer and employed; ethics of business would be improved; and temperance would spread at a greater pace through the land. All this and more would follow, as the teaching of the Book of Books was discussed. Soon would come the time prophesied by Jeremiah, "And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for they shall all know Me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."

Adult School aims are :—

1. To make and develop men and women, and to teach them the art of life.

CONCLUSION

2. To study the Bible frankly, freely, reverently, and without prejudice.
3. To establish an unsectarian basis for Christian effort and unity.
4. To bring the different classes of society together in helpful comradeship and active service.
5. To stimulate and educate public spirit and public morality.
6. To teach the responsibility of British citizenship.
7. To advance, as far as may be, the equality of opportunity.
8. In short, to help men and women to understand and to live the life of Jesus Christ, and to encourage them in their personal allegiance to Him.

THE END.

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