

# ABSALOM THE AVENGER

STORY BY THE "HIGHWAY AND BYWAY" PREACHER

(Copyright, 1907, by the Author, W. S. Edson.)

Scripture authority—2 Samuel, chapter 13.

## SERMONETTE.

In this incident we see the beginning of the fulfillment of the prophecy of Nathan spoken at the time of David's great sin, when he declared that "the sword shall never depart from thine house," and "Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house."

The sins of the fathers are visited upon the children as the inevitable outworking of the natural law of cause and effect. It is as true to-day as in the days of David.

David could not violate the moral law without its exerting a hurtful influence upon the members of his household. His example proved demoralizing. His yielding to the lusts of the flesh encouraged a like indulgence on the part of his own sons.

Sad is it not to contemplate such reckless violation of parental obligations, and yet how repeatedly we see its repetition to-day.

Does that drinking father expect his children are not going to be influenced by his example? Does that mother think that she can abandon herself to the pleasures of society and indulge in all manner of excesses and not have the daughter's life poisoned by the evil example? Does that father of easy morals, who is reckless of the sanctity of another's home, forget that the monster of vice may enter his home and claim as a victim his daughter, or his son? Why is it that divorce is increasing at such a terrible rate? Is it not because children are following in the footsteps of their divorced parents?

But the sins of parents, while being a reason, are no excuse for the sins of children. The example of the parent may have encouraged the child to like sinful indulgence, but it does not absolve the child from responsibility for his own conduct.

Amnon, the firstborn son of David and heir to the throne, saw his father gratify his lustful desires at any cost, and why should not he?

Absalom saw David his father deliberately plot the death of another, why should not he? Absalom, the natural protector of his sister, should have seen that punishment was visited upon the head of the wicked Amnon, but it should have been strictly within the limits of the law. Had he in the heat of passion at the moment struck Amnon down it would not have been surprising, but for him to harbor hatred and wickedly and in cold-blood plot murder indicates an evil heart which knew not, neither feared, God.

## THE STORY.

HATRED nursed within the heart is a slow poison which at last permeates all the life, destroying the better impulses and giving rein to the evil passions.

So it was with Absalom, the handsome and prepossessing son of King David. For nearly two years now

there had rankled in his heart the evil passions which had been aroused when his beautiful sister Tamar had poured into his sympathetic ear the story of her grievous wrongs at the hands of her half-brother, Amnon, and certain it is that time had not softened his anger, or weakened his murderous resolve.

Day after day he had fed the flame of his hatred, and day after day he had plotted and schemed how he might compass the destruction of Amnon without danger to himself.

Secretly, Absalom rejoiced that he had found occasion against Amnon, for with him out of the way Absalom would be heir to the throne of David. From his earliest boyhood he could recall how his mother had encouraged him in the hope that some day he should be heir to the kingdom. His grandfather Talmai was king over Geshur, and why should not he be king over Israel, and thus unite two strong kingdoms? Absalom's mother looked with contempt upon Ahinoam, mother of Amnon, for she had no claim to royal birth, while she, Maacah, was daughter of the king of Geshur. And this contempt which she had felt for Ahinoam she had instilled into the heart of her son Absalom, so that he had come to feel that her son Amnon was quite beneath him. This feeling had grown with the years and there was no pleasant intercourse between the half brothers, and as Absalom came to manhood's estate and the pride and ambition took complete possession of his heart, there grew upon him the feeling that somehow Amnon stood in his way to success; that he was doing him an injustice.

He had been told too often of the charms of his own person not to be conscious of them, and he felt that his beauty and grace would never be fittingly set forth until he was surrounded by regal honors and power. Amnon seemed in his way of realization of this ambition, and long before the wicked conduct of Amnon had brought him within his power he had secretly plotted how he might compass his ruin without evil consequences to himself.

Hence, as we have said, when Amnon so wickedly wronged his sister, he welcomed it as the long sought opportunity, but even in his passionate eagerness to strike the blow he knew that he must move cautiously, else he would frustrate his own ends. For this reason he counseled his sister to say nothing which would bring punishment upon the head of Amnon and take him out of the reach of his power. His hand and his alone should deal with him, and all Israel should know that Absalom was as brave as he was beautiful, and as fearless in righting wrong as he was in defending the innocent.

So the time slipped by until, as we have said, almost two years had passed. That had been an exceptionally good year with Absalom. His fields and his flocks had yielded splendid increase, and there seemed nothing for him to desire.

Others had forgotten his enmity towards Amnon, in fact even the latter had in the brutishness of his own black heart ceased to think about it, for pleasures of the present always shut out the memory of past misdeeds. But, notwithstanding the prosperity which had come to him, Absalom was not satisfied. The rankling hatred in his heart gave him no peace day or night. The one thing he desired above all else was to destroy his brother Amnon. He deserved to die, he argued with himself, and his death would place him in direct succession to the throne.

One day, as the time for shearing the sheep drew near, as he was out inspecting the flocks and planning for the harvest of wool, the thought flashed across his mind:

"Why not make the feasting time and the time of gladness which always marked the sheep-shearing season the occasion of smiting Amnon? The very thing!" he exclaimed aloud. "All the royal family knows what a pros-

perous year this has been with me, and they will all find delight in rejoicing with me in the good fortune which has come to me. I will invite even the king himself."

"But what if Amnon will not come?" asked a voice from within, to which Absalom responded, grimly:

"Yea, but where the wine and the feasting are to be found there you may be sure Amnon will come. He will not withhold himself from the company of the king's sons."

And so Absalom came to King David his father and said:

"Behold now, thy servant hath sheep-shearers; let the king, I beseech thee, and his servants go with thy servants."

"Nay, my son," replied the king, "let us not all now go, lest the burden of our entertainment rest too heavily upon thee."

And Absalom pressed the king to go, but he would not; however he spoke his blessing upon Absalom.

"If thou wilt not go, then let him who is thy heir go that he may represent thee, for this shall be a right royal feast, for see how the Lord hath prospered me?"

And he pressed the king that he should let Amnon and all the king's sons go with him, and he finally consented.

And when Absalom had prepared for the feast and every servant was in his place he spoke secretly with those whom he could trust, saying:

"Mark ye now when Amnon's heart is merry with wine, and when I say unto you, smite-Amnon; then kill him, fear not; have not I commanded you? Be courageous, and be valiant."

And the servants of Absalom did unto Amnon as Absalom had commanded, and Absalom fled and went to Talmai, king of Geshur, his grandfather, who commended him for the success of his wicked plot and assured him of his support when he should strive for the kingdom of Israel.

## New Term in Law.

The plaintiff was stating his case: "Your honor, I was walking alongside of the waiting train, when this man, who is a stranger to me, and without any cause whatever, reached out of the car window and planted a couple of powerful blows upon my face."

"Your honor," expostulated the defendant, "I was so enraged by the delay of that train and the miserable service of that road in general, that I just had to give vent to my feelings in some way. I couldn't restrain myself."

"I feel for you," admitted the judge, who had occasion to travel on the same road, "but I am compelled to fine you nevertheless. That pair of hand-me-downs will cost you just \$10."

## Admiral Philibert.

Admiral Philibert, who is commanding the French ships off the Morocco coast which destroyed Casablanca, is in the French fleet what Lord Kitchener is in the British army. He is a progressive sailor, the best gunnery expert in his country's naval service, and it is largely owing to his influence and advice that the French government possesses such a fine flotilla of submarines, for Admiral Philibert has always been an advocate of the submarine as the power of the future.

## Hungry Multitudes.

More residents of New York take their midday meal away from home than do those of any other city, and one of the most populous eating sections of the city between the hours of 12 and 2 o'clock on every business day is in and around Herald square. Properly within that district are 31 restaurants and in them on a recent Friday during the two hours, 12,418 meals were served.

## Arise and Shine.

Occasionally a dull person shines in an emergency.

## For Better Butters.

England has an organization for the promotion of goat culture.

## Collection of Dolls.

Princess Clementine of Belgium, youngest daughter of Leopold, is credited with having the most wonderful collection of dolls in the world. Among them are specimens from Babylon, bone dolls from Greenland, a wooden one from Peru, a paper doll from India, Greek dolls with wardrobes, even dolls' houses, with furniture and dishes in them.

## The Cross.

The cross is not a symbol merely; it is clustered with the memories of a dark tragedy and a broken heart.

## Mountain Peaks of Glory.

The mountain peaks of glory have their foothills amid the ruin and the waste of this misguided world.

## Absent When She Calls.

The reason opportunity does not knock at some doors is that she finds them already open.

## The Prison of Caste.

Caste is the prison of character. The high caste has the worst of fates; it abideth alone.

## SOME WEAK POINTS

COMMERCIAL CLUBS SOMETIMES MAKE BLUNDERS.

## STARTING NEW ENTERPRISES

Bonuses Often Given and Little Benefits Gained by the Towns That Give—Protecting Established Industries.

Within the past few years a commercial club organization fever has taken hold of many towns in the western country. It is a kind of good fever to have, but quite often, like other of the less harmless fevers that afflict physically, passes away and doesn't make much difference with the our general health.

Town-building is much like erecting a good bridge. It is essential that a good foundation be laid. Natural conditions have much to do with it. Cities and towns spring up where there is a good cause for their existence. Artificial means may be employed for "booming" purposes, but unless there be something substantial and lasting, all the booming that can be done will not result in the accomplishment of permanent good. The average rural town receives its principal support from the business given it by the contiguous territory. The trade of a limited section of country will sustain a comparative number of business establishments. If a town possesses natural advantages, location, etc., for certain lines of manufacturing, so much the better. It would be foolish, as have been demonstrated in a number of western towns, to commence the manufacture of cottons, or silks, or furniture, when the raw material must be transported from a great distance, and also the fuel for power.

Still, if a town assume any great proportions, there must be industries to give the people occupation. The judicious investment of capital in canning factories, in paper mills, in glucose works and a few other enterprises, if these enterprises are rightly conducted, might prove a valuable factor in some of the western towns.

When a commercial club is organized, generally efforts are made to secure some industry for the town that will give its people employment and which will bring new residents to the town. Quite often bonuses are offered concerns, which are located in other places to relocate. It has been the general experience of towns which have made efforts along these lines that a concern that asks very much encouragement in the way of ready cash, is hardly worth bothering with and is likely to prove a failure.

Another thing that the average commercial club does not take in consideration is that it is better to build up institutions already located than to encourage new ones of doubtful success. A manufacturing concern is only valuable to the town as a means of placing a greater amount of money in circulation. The greater the payroll, the better for the town. But it matters not how big the amount is that is distributed among workers on a Saturday night, it results in little good to the town if it is sent to some other town for needed supplies.

Commercial club members should keep in mind that it is far better to devise means of keeping money earned by farmers and laborers from being sent to large cities for goods, than it is to have new concerns started. If there be a few hundred dollars a day sent from the place to mail-order houses, it would be far better to prevent this by devising means for having it spent in the town, than to encourage the location of a factory with a payroll of a like amount. It should be the first duty of a commercial organization to protect its home industries.

## TO THE FARMER-BOY.

His Chances Are Best in His Home Town Rather Than in the Big City.

My boy, the farm is all right. Sometimes you may feel that its environs are too narrow for you, its life too much of a humdrum, and that you would prefer to be one of the residents of the big city or town. There have been hundreds and thousands of others just like you, and with just such ideas. They have started from the farm buoyant with hope, and after years have regretted their youthful resolutions. Others have succeeded; have won laurels in the professional field, in business, in statesmanship; but the few who have succeeded thus are so small in number compared to the army of failures that there is little encouragement for the careful thinker to leave that which promises security from want and independence for a life time. The farmer is surely the most independent of all workers. He is sure to receive a greater reward for his labors, is his own manager, and if he will strive diligently can aspire to a place in the public estimate that few can attain in the large towns.

Of course there are times when you think there is almost an unbearable dullness about existence on the farm. Were you a resident of the city, there would be times when you would long for the quietness and the pleasure that the farm affords. Hours of work may be long riding the plow, or harvesting the grain, but far superior is the work than that the great majority of the city youths are compelled to follow, and how much greater the compensation? How would you like to stand behind the dry goods or grocery counter from morning to night for the small wages that the city clerk receives? Year after year the laborer lives in cheap boarding houses and rarely save sufficient to engage in business. His is a mere subsistence, and a constant struggle. The best years of life are wasted in making money for others, while the industrious farmer is working for himself, saving money year after year, and when the time for rest comes it enables him to take it.

Cities are overcrowded with clerk help. An advertisement inserted in any daily paper for a clerk to fill any position will bring hundreds of responses. The array of unemployed and those seeking to better their conditions is always large. Of late years a large element of workers from cities are looking toward the farms for employment. They realize that the farm offers more permanency of occupation and greater independence than like efforts in the city can possibly afford. Before you concentrate your attention on employment in city or town, weigh every matter well, and then act according to what reason dictates. You will be very likely to conclude that the farm is a good enough place for you, and that your own little home town is preferable to the overcrowded city. Remember that your greatest interests center in what you call your "home town." Do all you can to assist in its improvement, and make it a better business place. D. M. CARR.

## Education.

Intelligence is the distinguishing mark between the savage and civilized man. Education is one of the greatest of God's blessings, and ignorance a curse. In America there exists no valid reason why every man, woman and child of normal brain should not have an education. There is no phase of life where knowledge is not necessary. In the most progressive communities is where the superior schools are found. Help along your town and help along education in general. By affording your children a chance for a good education, you offer them riches that cannot be destroyed; it is ready cash in hand, assets that one cannot be robbed of only by act of Providence.

## OPPOSED TO LOCAL PROGRESS.

Journals That Help to Concentrate Business in Large Cities.

There are thousands of so-called agricultural papers published in the United States, all of more or less merit. Yet few are all that they should be. There is an inconsistency about them that invites careful study. While they are supposed to represent the best interests of the great class of workers whom they gain support from in the way of subscriptions, the majority of them apparently work against the progress of farming communities by becoming the mediums, a part of the machinery, which draws from country towns the support which they should have.

It is to be regretted that many of these so-called agricultural papers are merely published for the purpose of circulating the advertisements of concerns which seek to secure trade from residents of farming districts to the

detriment of the home towns. These establishments take money from the rural communities to the large financial centers. The thoughtful man or woman can see how injurious it is to the interests of the farmers to take away the surplus earnings which represent the wealth of the community. It requires but little observation and study to understand that to a great extent farm values are dependent upon the importance of the near-by town, and that any system that takes away its business, will result in a decrease of farm values. Such papers as advise the farmers to patronize other than home institutions and which advocate systems that are opposed to the up-building of industries in agricultural districts are not worthy of support.

## Value of Good Roads.

Good roads leading to a town indicate the progressiveness of the citizens of the community. Invariably poor roads mean indifference and lack of confidence in the stability of the town.

## NEWS ITEMS FROM KOREA.

Quaint Notices That Appear in the Country's Newspapers.

Quaint and curious are some of the Korean news items that find their way into Japanese newspapers. For instance: "The native curiosity of the Korean people is quite beyond description and in many cases rather astounding. Since the opening of the railway traffic, which is one of the recent great events in the chronicles of the hermit nation, almost all third-class compartments of each train are filled with a great number of native passengers, so that there is scarcely a seat left unoccupied. Most of the passengers take the train not for the transaction of any business, but only for the mere satisfaction of their curiosity, some of them being foolish enough to exhaust their means and run into debt in the constant pursuit of this idle pleasure."

Extremely early marriage seems to be the fate of Korea's rulers. "The latest sensation in Seoul is that meas-

ures are being taken to find a consort for the prince imperial, although he is only 11 years of age. There is talk of the daughter of the present prime minister, but whether that is by the desire of the prime minister himself or at the suggestion of Lady Om seems to be uncertain."

Again: "The imperial household Japan has presented a carriage and a pair of horses to the emperor of Korea. This is doubtless a timely gift in view of the fact that the present sovereign of Korea intends to inaugurate the custom of emerging from the perennial seclusion of the palace."

## The Living Sacrifice.

The man who would spend his life to the glory of God must first devote it upon the altar.

## World Color Blind.

The promises of God are the rainbows of grace. The world's fault is that it is color blind.

## Secret Prayer.

The secret of a happy life is solitary prayer.