

A SHATTERED FAITH.

REV. DR. TALMAGE TO THOSE BURDENED WITH DOUBT.

Preaches an Eloquent Sermon Showing the Foolishness of Questioning the Plan of Salvation—He Overcomes Many Objections Raised by Skeptics.

Talmage in Florida.

After many years of invitation, Dr. Talmage preached last Sunday at De Funiak Springs, Fla. From all parts of the South the people are assembled. The sermon is mightily helpful for those who find it hard to believe everything. Dr. Talmage returns this week to Washington. The subject of this sermon is "A Shattered Faith," and the text Acts xxvii, 44, "And some on broken pieces of the ship."

Never off Goodwin sands or the Skerries or Cape Hatteras was a ship in worse predicament than in the Mediterranean hurricane, was the grain ship on which 276 passengers were driven on the coast of Malta, five miles from the metropolis of that island, called Citta Vecchia. After a two weeks' tempest, when the ship was entirely disabled and captain and crew had become completely demoralized, an old missionary took command of the vessel. He was small, crooked backed and sore eyed, according to tradition. It was Paul, the only unscarred man aboard. He was no more afraid of a Eurocydon tossing the Mediterranean sea, now sinking to the gates of heaven and now sinking it to the gates of hell, than he was afraid of a kitten playing with a string. He ordered them all down to take their ration, first asking for them a blessing. Then he insured all their lives, telling them they would be rescued, and, so far from losing their heads, they would not lose so much of their hair as you could cut off with one click of the scissors—nay, not a thread of it, whether it were gray with age or golden with youth. "There shall not a hair fall from the head of any of you."

Knowing that they can never get to the desired port, they make the sea on the fourteenth night black with overthrown cargo, so that when the ship strikes it will not strike so heavily. At daybreak they saw a creek and in their anxiety resolved to make for it. And so they cut the cables, took in the two paddles they had on those old boats and hoisted the mainsail so that they might come with such force as to be driven high up on the beach by some fortunate billow. There she goes, tumbling toward the rocks, now prow foremost, now stern foremost, now rolling over to the starboard, now over to the larboard; now a wave dashes clear over the deck, and it seems as if the old craft has gone forever. But up she comes again. Paul's arms around a mast, he cries: "All is well. God has given me all those that sail with me." Crashed went the prow, with such force that it broke off the mast. Crashed went the timbers till the seas rushed through from side to side of the vessel. She parts amidships, and into a thousand fragments the vessel goes, and into the waves 276 mortals are precipitated. Some of them had been brought up on the seashore and had learned to swim with their chins just above the waves, and by the strokes of both arms and propulsion of both feet they put out for the beach and reached it. But alas for those others! They have never learned to swim, or they were wounded by the falling of the mast, or the nervous shock was too great for them. And others had been weakened by long sickness.

Oh, what will become of them? "Take that piece of a rubber," says Paul to one. "Take that fragment of a spar," says Paul to another. "Take that image of Castor and Pollux," says Paul to a third. "Take that plank from the lifeboat," says Paul to a fourth. "Take anything and head for the beach!" Oh, the merciless waters, how they sweep over the heads of men, women and children! Hold on there! Almost ashore. Keep up your courage. Remember what Paul told you. There the receding wave on the beach leaves in the sand a whole family. There another plank comes in, with a life clinging fast to it. There another piece of the shattered vessel, with its freightage of an immortal soul. They must by this time all be saved. Yes, there comes in last of all, for he had been overseeing the rest, the old missionary, who wrings the water from his gray beard and cries out, "Thank God, all are here!"

Gather around a fire and call the roll. Paul builds a fire, and when the bundle of sticks begins to crackle and standing and sitting around the blaze the passengers begin to recover from their chill, and the wet clothes begin to dry, and warmth comes to come into all the shivering passengers, let the purser of the vessel go round and see if any of the poor creatures are missing. Not one of the crowd that were plunged into the sea. How it relieves our anxiety as we read: "Some on broken pieces of the ship. And so it came to pass that they escaped all safe to land."

Having on previous occasions looked at the other passengers, I confine myself today to an examination of those who came in on broken pieces of the ship. There is something about them that excites in me an interest. I am not so much interested in those that could swim. They got ashore, as I expected. A mile of water is not a very great undertaking for a strong swimmer, or even two miles are not. But I cannot stop thinking about those on broken pieces of the ship. The great gospel ship is the finest of the universe and can carry more passengers than any craft ever constructed, and you could no more wreck it than you could wreck the throne of God Almighty. I wish all the people would come aboard of her. I could not promise a smooth voyage, for oftentimes it will be tempestuous or a choppy sea, but I could promise safe arrival for all who took passage on that Great Eastern, so called by me because its commander came out of the east, the star of the east a badge of his authority.

But a vast multitude do not take regular passage. Their theology is broken in pieces, and their life is broken in pieces, and their worldly and spiritual prospects are broken in pieces, and yet I believe they are going to reach the shining shore, and I am encouraged by the experience of those people who are spoken of in the text, "Some on broken pieces of the ship." One object in this sermon is to encourage all those who cannot take the whole system of religion as we believe it, but who really believe something, to come aboard of that big plank.

I do not underestimate the value of a great doctrinal system, but while in all the world there are some who believe in the Bible, and these shall be saved?

or, believe in Arminianism and then shall be saved? or, believe in spirit of Dost and then shall be saved? or, believe in the Thirty-nine Articles and then shall be saved? A man may be orthodox and go to hell or heterodox and go to heaven. The man who in the deep affection of his heart accepts Christ is saved, and the man who does not accept him is lost.

I believe in both the Heidelberg and Westminster catechisms, and I wish you all did, but you may believe in nothing they contain except the one idea that Christ came to save sinners, and that you are one of them, and you are instantly rescued. If you can come in on the grand old ship, I would rather have you get aboard, but if you can only find a piece of wood as long as the human body, or a piece as wide as the outspread human arms, and either of them is a piece of the cross, come in on that piece. Tens of thousands of people are to-day kept out of the kingdom of God because they cannot believe everything.

I am talking with a man thoughtful about his soul who has lately traveled through New England and passed the night at Andover. He says to me: "I cannot believe that in this life the destiny is irrevocably fixed. I think there will be another opportunity of repentance after death." I say to him: "My brother, what has that to do with you? Don't you realize that the man who waits for another chance after death when he has a good chance before death is a stark fool? Had not you better take the plank that is thrown to you now and head for shore rather than wait for a plank that may be invisible hands be thrown to you after you are dead? Do as you please, but as for myself, with pardon for all my sins offered me now, and all the joys of time and eternity offered me now, I instantly take them rather than run the risk of such other chance as wise men think they can peel off or twist out of a Scripture passage that has for all the Christian centuries been interpreted another way." You say, "I do not like Princeton theology, or New Haven theology, or Andover theology." I do not ask you on board either of these great men-of-war, their portholes filled with the great sledge guns of ecclesiastical battle, but I do ask you to take the one plank of the gospel that you do believe in and strike out for the pearl strung beach of heaven.

Says some other man, "I would attend to religion if I were quite sure about the doctrine of election and free agency, but that mixes me all up." Those things used to bother me, but I have no more perplexity about them, for I say to myself, "If I love Christ and live a good, honest, useful life, I am ejected to be saved, and if I do not love Christ and live a bad life I will be damned, and all the theological seminaries of the universe cannot make it any different." I pondered along while in the sea of sin and doubt, and it was as rough as the Mediterranean on the fourteenth night, when they threw the grain overboard, but I saw there was mercy for a sinner, and that plank I took, and I have been warning myself by the bright fire on the shore ever since.

While I am talking to another man about his soul he tells me, "I do not become a Christian because I do not believe there is any hell at all." Ah, don't you? Do all the people of all beliefs and no belief at all, of good morals and bad morals, go straight to a happy heaven? Do the holy and the debauched have the same destination? At midnight, in a hallway, the owner of a house and a burglar meet. They both fire, and both are wounded, but the burglar dies in five minutes, and the owner of the house lives a week after. Will the burglar be at the gate of heaven, waiting, when the house owner comes in? Will the debauchee and the libertine go right in among the families of heaven? I wonder if Herod is playing on the banks of the river of life with the children he massacred. I wonder if Charles Giteau and John Wilkes Booth are up there shooting at a mark. I do not now controvert it, although I must say that for such a miserable heaven I have no admiration. But the Bible does not say, "Believe in perdition and be saved." Because all are saved, according to your theory, that ought not to keep you from loving and serving Christ. Do not refuse to come ashore because all the others, according to your theory, are going to get ashore. You may have a different theory about chemistry, about astronomy, about the atmosphere, from that which others adopt, but you are not, therefore, hindered from action.

Because of your theory of light is different from others do not refuse to open your eyes. Because your theory of air is different you do not refuse to breathe. Because your theory about the stellar system is different you do not refuse to acknowledge the north star. Why should the fact that your theological theories are different hinder you from acting upon what you know? If you have not a whole ship fastened in the theological dry docks to bring you to wharfage, you have at least a plank. "Some on broken pieces of the ship."

"But I don't believe in revivals." Then go to your room, and all alone, with your door locked, give your heart to God and join some church where the thermometer never gets higher than 50 in the shade.

"But I do not believe in baptism." Come in without it and settle that matter afterward. "But there are so many inconsistent Christians." Then come in and show them by a good example how professors should act. "But I don't believe in the Old Testament." Then come in on the New. "But I don't like the book of Romans." Then come in on Matthew or Luke. Refusing to come to Christ, whom you admit to be the Saviour of the lost, because you cannot admit other things, you are like a man out there in that Mediterranean tempest and tossed in the Melita breakers, refusing to come ashore until he can mend the pieces of the broken ship. I hear him say: "I won't go in on any of these planks until I know in what part of the ship they belong. When I can get the windlass in the right place, and the sails set, and that keel piece where it belongs, and that floor timber right, and these ropes untangled, I will go ashore. I am an old sailor and know all about ships for forty years, and as soon as I can get the vessel aloft in good shape I will come in." A man drifting by on a piece of wood overhears him and says: "You will drown before you get that ship reconstructed. Better do as I am doing. I know nothing about ships and never saw one before I came on board this, and I cannot swim a stroke, but I am going ashore on this shivered timber." The man in the office, while trying to mend his ship, goes down. The man who trusted to the plank is saved. Oh, my brother, let your smashed up system of theology go to the bottom while you come in on a splintered spar. "Some on broken pieces of the ship."

I do not know how your theological system went to pieces. It may be that your parents started you with only one plank, and you believed little or nothing. Or they may have been too rigid and severe in religious discipline and cracked you over the head with a psalmbook. It may be that some partner in business who was a member of an evangelical church played on you a trick that disgusted you with religion. It may be that you have associates who have talked against Christianity in your presence until you are "all at sea," and you dwell more on things that you do not believe than on things you do believe. You are in one respect like Lord Nelson. When a signal was lifted that he wished to disengage, and he put his sea glass to his blind eye and said, "I really do not see the signal." Oh, my hearer, put this field glass of the gospel no longer to your blind eye and say I cannot see, but put it to your other eye, the eye of faith, and you will see Christ, and he is all you need to see.

If you believe nothing else, you certainly believe in vicarious suffering, for you see it almost every day in some shape. The steamship Knievelbocker of the Cromwell line, running between New Orleans and New York, was in great storms, and the captain and crew save the schooner Mary D. Cranmer of Philadelphia in distress. The weather cold, the waves mountain high, the first officer of the steamship and four men went out in a lifeboat to save the crew of the schooner and reached the vessel and towed it out of danger, the wind shifting so that the schooner was saved. But the five men of the steamship coming back, their boat capsized, yet righted again and came on, the sailors coated with ice. The boat capsized again, and three times upset and was righted, and a line was thrown the poor fellows, but their hands were frozen so they could not grasp it, and a great wave rolled over them, and they went down, never to rise again till the sea gives up its dead. Appreciate that heroism and self-sacrifice of the brave fellows all who can, and can we not appreciate the Christ who put out into a more biting cold and into a more overwhelming surge to bring us out of infinite peril into everlasting safety? The wave of human hate rolled over him from one side and the wave of selfish rivalry rolled over him on the other side. Oh, the thickness of the night and the thunder of the tempest into which Christ plunged for our rescue!

Come in on one narrow beam of the cross. Let all else go and cling to that. Put that under you, and with the earnestness of a swimmer struggling for his life put out for shore. There is a great warm fire of welcome already built, and already many who were as far out as you are are standing in its genial and heavenly glow. The angels of God's rescue are wading out into the surf to clutch your hand, and they know how exhausted you are, and all the redeemed prodigals of heaven are on the beach with new white robes to clothe all those who come in on broken pieces of the ship.

My sympathies are for such all the more because I was naturally skeptical, disposed to question everything about this life and the next to see than any of the 276 in the Mediterranean breakers, and I was sometimes the annoyance of my theological professor because I asked so many questions. But I came in on a plank. I knew Christ was the Saviour of sinners and that I was a sinner, and I got ashore, and I do not propose to go out on that sea again. I have not for thirty minutes discussed the controverted points of theology in thirty years, and during the rest of my life I do not propose to discuss them for thirty seconds.

I would rather in a mud scow try to weather the worst cyclone that ever swept up from the Caribbean than risk my immortal soul in useless and perilous discussions in which some of my brethren in the ministry are indulging. They remind me of a company of sailors standing on the Ramsgate pier head, from which the lifeboats are usually launched, and coolly discussing the different style of anchors and how deep a boat ought to set in the water, while a hurricane is in full blast and there are three steamers crowded with passengers going to pieces in the offing. An old tar, the muscles of his face worked with nervous excitement, cries out: "This is no time to discuss such things. Man, take life-boat! Who will volunteer? Out with her into the surf! Pull, my lad! pull for the wreck! Ha, ha! Now we have them. Lift them in and lay them down on the bottom of the boat. Jack, you try to bring them to. Put these flannels around their hands and feet, and I will pull for the shore. God help me! There! Landed! Huza!" When there are so many struggling in the waves of sin and sorrow and wretchedness, let all else go but salvation for time and salvation forever.

I think myself that there are some here whose opportunity or whose life is a mere wreck, and they have only a small piece left. You started in youth with all sails set, and everything promised a grand voyage, but you have sailed in the wrong direction or have foundered on a rock. You have only a fragment of time left. Then come in on that one plank. "Some on broken pieces of the ship."

You admit you are all broken up, one decade of your life gone by, four decades, three decades, four decades, a half century, perhaps three-quarters of a century gone. The hour hand and the minute hand of your clock of life are almost parallel, and soon it will be 12 and your day ended. Clear discouraged, are you? I admit it is a sad thing to give all of our lives that are worth anything to sin and the devil, and then at last make God a present of a first-rate corpse. But the past you cannot recover. Get on board that old ship you never will. Have you only one more year left, one more month, one more week, one more day, one more hour—come in on that. Perhaps if you get to heaven God may let you go out on some great mission to some other world, where you can somewhat atone for your lack of service in this.

From many a deathbed I have seen the hands thrown up in deprecation something like this: "My life has been wasted. I had good mental faculties and fine social position and great opportunity, but through worldliness and neglect all has gone to waste save these few remaining hours. Now accept of Christ and shall enter heaven through his mercy, but alas, alas, that when I might have entered the haven of eternal rest with a full cargo and been greeted by the waving hands of a multitude in whose salvation I had borne a blessed part I must confess, I now enter the harbor of heaven on broken pieces of the ship!"

Gum drops are made by letting fall from a mechanical device large drops of an already prepared syrup; the drops are permitted to fall upon starch where they dry without losing their plastic form.

With all due gratitude to Bill for his kindly interest in my affairs, and the painstaking way in which he imparted to me those plots of his upon which were so many bits of action were to be taken, it must be said that his efforts to assist me were fruitless. Neither Bill nor I forgot the principal features

THE FAMILY STORY

BILL, —= THE —= PLOTTER.

A NEWSPAPER MAN'S STORY.

It seems but yesterday that old Bill Jams lurched into the office, fell over a chair or two, sat himself down upon the edge of my table, and announced, with drunken gravity, that he was the best blank-dashed job-printer that hit the pike.

"Yes!" I said, briefly, glancing up from one of the pungent paragraphs that used to cause me so much amusement, yet were not appreciated by the exchange editors of the metropolitan papers.

"Didn't I say so, young feller?" he asked, in an aggrieved tone, as he reached for my box of smoking tobacco and stowed away a handful of it behind his wealth of bristling mustache and whiskers. "Gimme a job?" he added, closing one eye and viewing me critically with the other, the while he masticated the tobacco.

We needed a man, so I called the foreman.

"Give this man that bill-head job of Dudley's, Ed. and see what he can do," I said.

"I'll dern soon show ye what 'o' Bill 'e do, young feller," grumbled Mr. Jams, as he rolled off the table and followed Ed. "O' Bill 'e'n turn out artistic work fr'm a blacksmith shop—such 's I take this 'e be, sonny," with a contentuous glance at the interior of the press and composing room. Then he hung up his coat, filled his old cob pipe with my tobacco—grabbed a "stick," and went to work.

The proof of that one-horse bill-head job, when it was handed me, about three-quarters of an hour later, filled me with joy. It was a thing of beauty—a masterpiece.

"Do you want to stay here awhile?" I asked, having in mental view numerous orders for job-work on the strength of Mr. Jams's unquestionable ability in that line. Bill was stammering with folded arms, leaning at me with that one-eyed squint of his.

"Course—of ye 'e'n stand my price." "What is it?"

He named a figure about seven dollars a week higher than I felt we could afford; but as I pondered over it, he added, "But I 'e'n do more work 'n 'n two ordinary men—of I git it 'e do."

"All right," I said, finally, "we'll try it a week," and I turned again to my work.

"Hold on," he said, "I want 'e make 'n agreement with ye. Don't let me have any money. I can't stand prosperity, ye see. So, of ye'd jest's soon stake me out at some boardin'-house, an' git me a little eatin' and burnin' tobacco, I'll be fixed."

This was agreed to, as was also the request that I "stake" him for another drink to "steady his nerves." Then Bill settled down to work—and if ever there was a star of the first magnitude in the job-printing line, he was that same. I took samples of the first two or three jobs he turned out, and with these I sallied forth and booked more orders than we had received in months past; but old Bill, slow in his movements as he was, proved equal to the rush, and everything was done on time, as promised. Not only was he valuable in his working capacity, but he kept us all amused with a constant flow of anecdotes, related in his dry way in a drawing voice, rendered husky by years of dalliance with John Barleycorn and tobacco.

He claimed to be, and probably was, over 60 years of age, and was a walking encyclopedia of geographical information, having walked, he said, in every country on the face of the earth where the English language is printed. Of course he had worked on the New York Tribune in Greeley's time, and was one of the several thousand "only men" who could readily decipher "old Horace's" copy. Cairo, Egypt, was one of the out-of-the-way places he had "held cases" in, and accordingly the boys dubbed him "Africa," which sobriquet he did not resent in the least.

He had been with us about a week, when, one morning, he slouched into the office and dropped into a chair near me. For some time he puffed away at his vile old pipe without speaking, but finally remarked, apropos of nothing:

"Tell me ye write some fr magazines, an' so on."

I admitted that I possessed literary aspirations.

"'F ye want 'em rattlin' good plots," said Bill, with some diffidence, "I 'e'n fill ye full of 'em. Make 'em up when I'm drunk 'r on 'th' road. Good ones, too."

"Yes?" I said, wearily—for I had spent many a dull hour with that variety of bore with "a rattling good plot" to tell about. "Why don't you write 'em yourself?"

"Can't; ain't sober long enough," said Bill, frankly. "When I am sober, I have 't work 't th' trade, so's 't git quik 'r turns. But I'll tell you some of 'em. Stay awhile, after they go 't press, some night, an' we'll claw 't rag."

of the plots mapped out by Bill drunk, or his listener was singularly obtuse and failed to see things as Bill himself did. At any rate, I am not going to tell what became of the three or four manuscripts in which some of old Bill's ideas were embodied.

This saddened Bill and made him morose. The last straw came in the shape of a note from an editorial friend who had published a number of sketches of mine, in which he frankly stated his private opinion that I must have an awful nerve to expect him to read such rot, much less publish it. I handed the letter to Bill. He read it in silence, then, with some lurid profanity directed at editors in general, turned and left the office.

At 5 o'clock in the afternoon he came back, drunk and abusive, and wanted what money was due him. I tried to dissuade him, telling him we wanted him to stay with the office awhile.

"I 'e'n with you an' th' office!" he roared. "Gimme my time!"

"But the bank's closed, Bill," I pleaded. "Won't a few dollars do until tomorrow?"

"Give me—my—time—now!" I went out, cashed a check with some difficulty, and came back and gave Bill his money. He went out growling.

Next morning he came in, showing the effects of his debauch, and sat down by the stove.

"Ready to go to work, Bill?" I asked.

"No. I'm goin' 't hit 'th' road," he said, gruffly. "C'n ye let me have four bits?"

"Great Caesar, Bill! You won't quit us, with all those jobs on the book?" I cried, in dismay.

"Might as well. Won't be any good of 't stay," he replied, with considerable firmness. "Do I git 't four bits?"

He got it, and after shaking hands all round, he disappeared in the direction of the railway station.

About six months later Bill floated into the office again. If he had been sober during the interval, there certainly was nothing about his appearance to indicate it. I have seen all most every variety of bum and tramp, but in all my experience I cannot recall meeting one of such thoroughly wholesome appearance as old Bill presented that morning.

"We get's, sonny?" he hiccupped, cheerfully, holding out a dirty paw. "Know me?"

I surveyed him with ill-concealed disgust, as I remarked:

"It is possible that a bath and a barber might disclose the face and form of my old friend Bill. But now—great Scott, Bill! Go and get a bath and a haircut!"

He took the dollar I gave him, chucked his nose, and left to return in about an hour somewhat improved in appearance, and ready for work.

"Say," he remarked, as he took off his coat, "I've got 't best derned plot fr a short story ye ever heard of. I'll tell ye 't night."

But, alas! it was like all the others he had given me, and quite as valueless as those he subsequently imparted to me during his three weeks' sojourn with us. At the end of that time, he departed in much the same manner as before. He got drunk, "went broke," borrowed a half-dollar again, and walked out of town.

For the next three years he showed up at intervals of five or six months—departing as innocent of means as when he arrived, always, however, with a new suit of clothes. Never did he fail to announce, upon his arrival, that he had the "best derned plot" for a story I ever heard of. And never did one of his ideas avail me anything.

A year or so after the death of the always sickly Journal, of which I had been editor-in-chief from the beginning, I met Bill in Chicago. I was then "doing police" on one of the morning papers, and it was while attending the Monday "round-up" at the old Armory station that I became aware of his presence. As the police judge, after looking at the name on the sheet before him, remarked something about "Jim-Jams" being a more appropriate name than "Jams," I glanced up, and there, in the prisoners' dock, was old Bill, looking, eh? so tough!—but with a knowing leer on his face as he recognized me.

I whispered to the judge, who grinned. "Old friend, eh? William, the officer says you were drunk and disorderly, Saturday night. How about it?"

"Guilty, judge," said Bill, cheerfully. "M—hm. Ever been here before, William?"

"Not as many times 's I ought 't been."

"Coming again? No? Discharged. Your friend here wishes to see you, William."

Bill was entirely unabashed when I met him at the door, and seemed greatly amused as my suggestion that he ought to be ashamed of himself. "I never thought you'd come to this, Bill," I said, severely.

"Fiddle-de-dee, boy! Likewise. 'Rats!' replied Bill, with coarse disregard for the dignity of my official star. "Ef I had two bits fr every time that's happened, I wouldn't be tryin' 't borrow a dollar now," he continued, adroitly.

He got the dollar, and on the way uptown unfolded to me one of the "best

dermed plots" for a story he had ever evolved; but it was not good enough to consider, and my manager told him so.

"I'll leave ye here," he said abruptly, as we came to Van Buren street. "I look too tough 't go uptown with ye. But looky, sonny, nex' time I see ye, I'm sure goin' 't give ye a plot that'll make y'r hair curl. Understand?"

Of all the ubiquitous individuals I ever ran across in all sorts of out-of-the-way places and elsewhere, Bill Jams was the one foremost in evidence. The next time I saw him he was in New York; next, I found him officiating as foreman in a little newspaper office in a Nebraska prairie town; and a year later he turned up in San Francisco, and stumbled across my path. On each and every occasion he had "the best derned plot" all ready to give me; and, quite as regularly, nothing came of it.

A few months after seeing him in San Francisco, while chatting with the editor of a paper in Southern New Mexico, I heard a familiar voice from the door of the composing room asking some question about a "job." Behold our old friend Bill, stick in hand, with the same old familiar one-eyed leer on his grizzled countenance. After he went on I told the editor about him.

"Why don't you take the old villain out to the mine, and straighten him out, if you're going to be there awhile?" asked Sherman. "He's good for years if you can keep him sober; but he nearly died after his last jamboree, a few weeks ago. He's about 'due' again, by now."

Just then Bill's head emerged from the doorway. "Say, sonny," he remarked, "I've got somethin' 't tell ye, ef ye're 'round 't night. It's a corker, sure, this time."

"All right, Bill. Come over and take supper at the hotel with me."

Bill readily accepted the proposition I held out to him to go out to our camp and work. He liked the prospect of a change of employment, and also that of being out of reach of his old enemy when one of his "spells" came on. So when I drove out next day, I was accompanied by this cheerful old reprobate, who seemed happy as a boy over the outlook. He had one or two "plots" to unfold, too; but he did not seem hurt when I failed to enthuse over them.

Bill had been with us at White Hawk about three months, and during that time had succeeded not only in standing off "the enemy," but in making himself the most popular man in camp, besides. So it was with genuine regret that everybody heard that he was about to pull up stakes and move on. But the roving fever had him, and nothing we could say or do would induce him to reconsider.

Without his knowledge, "the boys" bestirred themselves in his behalf, and on the eve of his departure he was decoyed up to Higgins's boarding-house, where a "grand hall" was being held in his honor. And when they presented the old fellow with a handsome watch, "This is addin' insult 't injury," said Bill, with grateful tears in his bleary old eyes.

About midnight, when the hall was at its height, came startling news, brought in by a late arrival from the Arizona line. The notorious "Kid" and his cut-throat band of reds were out on the war-path, and it behooved those present—the men, at least—to get to their respective ranches and look after their buildings and stock.

A week later found us, a mere handful of men, hampered by the presence of half a hundred women and children, besieged in garrison by a hundred or more agency-fed redskins, who had obviously succeeded in heading off couriers going toward the military posts, and proposed to starve us out. And we were in a sad way. There was plenty of water, but provisions were getting distressingly low, and worse still, our supply of ammunition could not hold out much longer.

It was a very dejected lot of men that gathered together that August morning in Higgins's, which was our "fort," and discussed the situation. It had come to the pass that, unless help arrived very, very soon, we must manage to get a courier through to the fort—an undertaking that, more than likely, meant death to the man attempting it. In this emergency arose old Bill.

"I'll go, 't night," said he. "I got nobody 't keer fr me; no chick 'n' child. I'm nearly 70 years old, an' not long fr this world, anyhow. 'Course, I'm a tenderfoot, but I 'e'n try 't git through, anyhow."

It must be confessed, to our everlasting discredit, that we saw the logic of Bill's arguments, and the protests against his proposition were few and insincere. That night, mounted on the best horse in camp, and heavily armed, Bill Jams went out into the darkness, to give up what remained of his miserable, mistaken life for others.

He must have got lost in the hills that night; for when the reds sighted him, next day, he was only a few miles on his way. He gave them a running fight for several miles, but was finally hit by a stray shot and obliged to seek cover in the rocks. He made a good fight for his ebbing life, as the empty cartridge-shells around the rock where he had sought refuge amply proved. We found him the second day after he left us, stark naked and horribly mutilated. In his tightly clenched left hand was a scrap of paper, evidently overlooked by his murderers. On it was hastily written:

"Boys: They've got me, and I can see them crawling up. Good-by—Bill. P. S.—Just got one. Maybe Nibby can make a story out of this."

There was more, but it was undecipherable. I thought that, with his eye on the canopy, he had tried to outline another plot. —Lester Ketchum, in San Francisco Argonaut.