"A. D."

BY JESSE B. THOMAS, D. D.

To preach the acceptable year of the Lord. —Luke 4:19

"A. D."—the world writes the letters carelessly as it turns the page to record for the first time the new year, 1887; but in these letters is the "open secret" of the age; for this, too, is a "year of Our Lord," an "acceptable year," a "year of grace."

With the close of the old year a day of accounting comes. Letters and accounts are filed and housed away, having left their substance sifted into figures on the books. The stock in shelf and store room measured, counted and weighed, yields its quota to the reckoning, and the measure bearing the year's harvesting is even y stricken.

For some the heaped-up surplus falls into garners already well filled—it is a year of triumph—they say to their souls, "Take thine ease."

For others, it is a year of doom. Their shrunken resources fall far below the bri —they "have a thousand talents and have nothing to pay." A year of doom—for the secret will not lie silent on the page. Out of the figures, blurred in their anxious vision, seems to rise a hand which writes, not only on the record of the past, but on the white margin of the future, "Ramel" —a hand that, with "flaming sword," drives out wife and children from their inheritance, and keeps the door against them—a hand of iron, that lays manacles upon themselves, and brands them in the forehead with the mark of bondage. The vision is true. In a few days counting house and home are empty—the wife is hiding even from the gaze of pity that burns like fire—the children's life is dwarfed in the cold shadow of a grief they do not understand, and the father, too proud to serve, too old to begin life anew, lingers in the margin of his former haunts, waiting for a crumbs of fortune, until "heart and flesh fail."

Such are these are the parables of life, whose facts men see, but whose lessons they will not learn. They count failure a misfortune, and therefore not a fault; as though it were no fault to trust to the favor of fortune rather than the justice of law. The full-grown scholar, sitting side the lessons of his childhood, on his bigger slate, through all the problem persists in reckoning two and two as five, and "sells short," "lives fast," "over-trades" accordingly, and yet wonders at last that his figures are rubbed out as worthless. Doubtless there are exceptions, but as a rule the insolvent need not look to earthquake or tornado as the cause of falling walls, but to the carelessness of his own hand, that by uncounted expenditure or reckless venture has removed the first foundation stone.

The world as well as the individual forgets the lessons of its childhood. Lessons whose analogies reach into politics, morals and religion, as well as the social relations of men. From Agrarianism to Fourierism, from Plato to the blue-eyed dreamers of Brook Farm and the Susquehanna, there have been sentimentalists who attributed the misery of the race to the circumstances, rather than the character of men, and insisted that unchanged man in a changed world would find Paradise and keep it—that upon a redistribution of estates, the establishment of a just democracy, and the levelling of social distinctions, pauperism, crime and cruelty would finally cease, and the newly adjusted ranks of men keep elbow-touch together in the fraternal march of progress. In this view of the case no "year of the Lord" is needed, since nothing is required which is not possible to man alone; no "year of grace" (since there is nothing to be forgiven), but only a year of reason.

Just this experiment was tried more than three thousand years ago, and to that trial and its issue these words of Christ refer.

Israel, rescued from Egyptian bondage, were established in Canaan, a free people without caste, and equal in inheritance in the land. Every man dwelling among his kindred, the owner of an estate whose fertility was security against want, owing no man and second to none in rank; the highest conditions for the realization and permanence of a perfect human society existed. Yet the law which established this order made provision for its certain failure. It was foreseen that men unrestrained would mar the harmonious fabric, and within fifty years the land be filled on the one side with capitalists and aristocrats, and on the other with paupers, rag men and slaves. The history of this disruption of society is clearly indicated. Its first step is debt (not obligation simply, but in the narrower and more usual scriptural sense of the word, obligation beyond ability)—and debt is branded as sin

Thus, in Matthew's account of the Lord's Prayer, "debt is used as equivalent to "trespass," i. e., "transgress," going beyond. And in Luke we are taught to pray, "Forgive us our sins; for we also forgive everyone that is indebted to us." The Apostle also exhorts his brethren, "See that ye go not beyond, and defraud one another." The rich or accordingly is represented as "poor," not simply as diminished in poverty, but as having passed the line from positive to negative, from possession to want.

So long as every Israelite was content with the fruits of his estate, and limited his liabilities by his income, there could be neither pauper nor millionaire, landlord nor serf, the equilibrium of society must be unbroken. Disorganization came from no outward necessity, making men its victims, but from voluntary transgression by the covetous and extravagant.

Honest traffic is the interchange of actual values—it tends to frankness, maintains equality, and binds men in unity. It is within the law. Speculation abandons law to trust to fortune; dealing not in the actual but the possible, the gain of the one party is the other's loss. It leads to subtlety and strife, and widens the chasm between men. Debt is a kind of speculation, a presumptuous going beyond law, and therefore against law, safe only to a miracle-worker greater than law. Doubtless it is because of the specious form of this temptation in suretyship that Solomon so condemns it. The generosity which yields to it is too often unjust. From the lending of great names to lottery frauds, down to the commendation of patent medicines untested, and worthless books unread, men have thus made themselves hopeless debtors of the credulous people. There is no form of indebtedness more thoughtlessly incurred, and in the end more keenly resented as unjust than suretyship. If the debtor can pay, why is a surety needed? If the surety can pay, why does he not lend to the debtor? If neither can pay, the creditor is defrauded at last.

Tempted in whatever form, it is the step "beyond," which changes just dealings into debt, and plants the seed of the upas tree.

The step is irretrievable. It is going beyond his depth—his struggles help to drown him. Debt is an elastic band that tightens as it stretches. The want of the borrower measures the extortion of the lender. As deserts are rainless because they are so dry, so "the destruction of the poor is their poverty." Debt runs while men sleep, as well as when they wake, and they can not overtake it. The debtor Israelite sold parts with his inheritance. It was his co-worker, multiplying the seed he sowed, and returning it in harvests; it was his home, a perpetual fountain of youth to his weary body and burdened spirit. His resources thus dwindle as the debt grows. Without capital, he is like a bird without legs, and cannot start to fly. Without home, he is a vagabond, broken in spirit and irresolute.

The down-hill stride is swift. He is soon the bondsman of the creditor. It is the last plunge into despair—for not only the past but the future is now sold; the slave's earnings are not counted; the possibility of restoration is cut off.

This is the history of transgression. Debt turns to slavery. Seeking to add to gains, the creditor loses himself—reaching beyond the safe verge, he topples into the gulf.

There is no hope of relief from man. The enslaved debtor at length ceases to struggle with his chains, and resigns himself to apathy and sullenness. The creditor grows fierce with the taste of blood. The rugged mountains rise higher as the valleys deepen. The level "way" for the people seems less and less possible of realization. The tree will not lend its strength and height to the vine to lift it into sunlight, but rather uses its thick foliage to stifle it. Men's hands grow colder as they climb higher, and the care of great riches brings a perpetual frown—so the poor are chilled, and creep away. The land of freedom, equality and plenty has become a chaos, its families scattered, its freemen wearing the yoke, giants sucking the blood of dwarfs, and the bitter waters of poverty submerging the multitude. On the side of the oppressor there was power; but they had no comforter.

Therefore comes the year of the Lord. The shrill voice of the trumpet rings throughout the land. It is a kingly signal. Startling as the shout of the royal herald, or the flash of the scarlet robe, it tells that "the Lord is come," who "judgeth the poor with equity." No man might interfere between creditor and debtor, but "the oppressed and the oppressor are his." "The land is mine," he declares; "ye are but sojourners;" "it shall not be sold forever;" "the people are my servants;" "they shall not be sold as bondsmen;" "proclaim liberty throughout all the land, to all the inhabitants thereof." At the word, the gathered estates of the extortioner dissolve, the hands of the oppressor loosen; in clay-pit, and forest, and harvest-field, the bond-man shakes off his shackles and looks up, and from every quarter "the redeemed of the Lord come with songs" back to their long-lost homes.

It is a royal restoration. Whether the debt be large or small, the bondage long or short, there is no sordid calculation; every man is wholly free, and returns to his unbroken inheritance.

It is not without significance that this happy hour comes on the great day of atonement. The cancellation of debt is no arbitrary, reasonless act. Debt is an offence against the law, and the law is just, therefore the people, "rich and poor, high and low together," are reminded in the tabernacle of him, to whom they alike owe all things, and recognizing their forfeited life in the substituted victim and scattered blood, and the certainty of purchased forgiveness in the welcome return of the high priest from the Holy of Holies, they are ready to yield to the justice of the demand that they should forgive as they have been forgiven. Justice and mercy alike attend the coming of "the acceptable year of the Lord."

All this is a prophecy of Christ's coming and the world's year of grace—God taught the world "in divers parts," as we teach our children letters before words. Christ is "the Word" gathering these fragmentary truths of the Old Testament into himself, "the Truth." That the vision might be narrow, and the outline distinct, the history of the world's bondage and deliverance was thus epitomized in a single land and nation.

When Christ read these words in the synagogue at Nazareth, and declared their fulfilment, the world had fallen into disorder, as Palestine before the Jubilee. Nations oppressed and oppressing one another, society broken into castes full of mutual hatred, the rich surfeited, the poor famished, the rabble clinging to idols, philosophers despising them yet despairing of the truth, the earth "filled with thorns and briers," and the "whole creation groaning and travailing together." To such proportions, sweeping away the inheritance of the race, and bringing them into bondage, grew the first debt of disobedience, the first transgression—"going beyond." The trickling rill has swollen to a roaring tide of blood—sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." For a thousand years the "desire of all nations" had been awaited—some "Elias," who should "restore all things" —the Messiah of whom the Samaritan woman said, "He will tell us all things."

"In the fullness of time" Christ did come, the Redeemer and deliverer, and from his coming even the world which rejected him began to write "A. D.," "the year of our Lord;" not the year of the beginning of his power or love, but of his coming to us and more perfect manifestation.

Democracy, in Moses' time, thrust supernaturally into the soil of an unprepared age, took no root, and soon died, but now, in milder atmosphere, this thought of God appears again, unfolding this time from the earth, and coming to fruitage. God, in that day, must by a strong arm unlock the jaws of the sea, to let his people pass through, so delivering them from the "lion's mouth." But now the child taught of God "lays his hand upon the ocean's mane," and subdues the cruel forces of nature, making them his messengers. The lost crown of dominion over nature seems to be offered, ready to be restored, in fact, as it is in promise, to the ransomed, who "love his appearing."

But the year of jubilee was for Israel only. Others dwelt in the land, but the silver trumpet left them unredeemed, their debt uncancelled. The mere progress of time can save no man. Generations are not born into Christianity; the saints of the Old Testament were saved by the Gospel, and sinners of the New Testament are lost under the law. All the figures of astronomy, and the perfectness of its lenses, cannot reveal the stars to me, except as the heavens are ensphered in my eye, and repeated in its measures. So you, who have repeated in your experience the world's and history, and by transgression been "sold under sin," must also have a Bethelem and Calvary in your heart, ere you can rejoice in this year as a "year of grace." It is useless to inquire what and how heavy is the debt you owe to God. What if it be beyond your power of computation? The force of the blow does not always measure its destructiveness. The child's careless stroke may shatter the slender statue, which genius has patiently wrought. The thoughtlessness of the world does not measure the limits of wrong done, or the price of reparation. It has blighted an innocent spirit, and robbed the world of a happy life. No lingering remorse, no studious tenderness henceforth can pay the debt. How then shall we measure the blow that mars that delicate and wonderful fabric, God's perfect law! how, for example, comprehend the ruin wrought by a scalding oath dropped into the sensitive heart of a child!

It matters little whether the debt is great or small, if payment is hopeless. It is enough to know that, "made to have dominion" over God's works, you are a stranger in your inheritance, and a "servant of servants," instead of a "prince of God." Yet your hopelessness is your only ground of hope, for the message of mercy is to the "poor," the "captive," the "bruised." "As many as received him to them gave he power to become the Sons of God."

At length another trumpet will sound, whose shrill voice wakes the dead, announcing that "the year of his redeemed is come," and "the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads." The substance of the truth, which has cast so many shadows into the earth, will then be fully known, and "sorrow and sighing shall flee away."

Are you of Israel? Is this year of grace a year of grace to you? To the Christian as he writes "A. D." beside the numbered years it is the king's token of remembrance that the "year of release" is soon to come.

And to every man it is the king's seal, the still extended offer of a covenant of grace. Accept it and "set to" your "seal that God is true."

The Widow's Mite

BY KNOXONIAN.

Having learned that a number of people in his congregation are in the habit of excusing their small contributions by alluding to the widow's mite, Dr. Boanerges called them together for the purpose of explaining to them the exact nature of that scriptural incident. He also desired to show to them that the widow's mite could not be made a precedent for small giving, and to prove that the widow was one of the most liberal givers of whom we have any knowledge.

Like some of the meetings held by modern evangelists, the Doctor's meeting was "for men only." The congregation looked somewhat "hard," and its looks did not in any way betray its real character. The Doctor addressed him elf to his task in plucky style, and spoke as follows:

Dear friends,—I am creditably informed that when you give a cent apiece for Home Missions, and 2 cents for Foreign Missions, and two cents for Colleges, you strike an attitude, look solemn and say, "I give the widow's mite." My purpose in this address is to show you that men of property like you, who don't give perhaps the ten-thousandth part of your means for religious purposes, have no right to quote the example of that widow. I must pull you out from behind the widow and put your conduct under a true light.

In the first place, gentlemen, I say

YOU ARE NOT WIDOWS.

That is where your case breaks completely down. You are not widows. You are men. A widow often has hard work to keep the wolf from the door. She has often to fight a terrible battle to get bread for her children. She is often weak and helpless. You are men, strong stalwart men, and yet every time the collectors go around you try to palm yourselves off as widows! Some of you are bachelors. I have reason to believe that two or three of you are trying to induce some young ladies of the congregation to go to the marriage altar with you. That is right enough, but do you think any spirited young woman will give her hand to a young fellow who calls himself a widow? Do you think any decent man will give his daughter to a fellow who calls himself a widow every time the collector comes around? If you do you are much mistaken. Young ladies worth having don't marry widows. Respectable men don't bring up good daughters, and hand them over to sneaking fellows who call themselves widows when they are called upon to do their part like men in any good work. If this talk about the widow's mite cannot be stopped in any other way, I shall instruct the collectors to say to every man who drags in the widow to make his cent collection look religious,

MISTER, ARE YOU A WIDOW?

Notice again that this widow was *poor*. You are not poor. Heaven forbid that I should say one word that would hurt the feelings of God's poor. May my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth when I consciously utter a word that wounds the feelings of any of God's children who have little of this world's goods, but are rich in faith. I repeat you are *not* poor. Some of you grumble all season about poor crops, but if one of your barns should happen to burn down after harvest, somehow or another you always lose $2,000 or $3,000 worth of grain. Some of you never have any money, but I have noticed that when a bank breaks or a loan company goes to pieces you always lose a lot of money. That's queer, isn't it? Mere coincidence, I suppose.

Now, gentlemen, I have disposed of two points—you are not *widows*, and even if you were you are not *poor*.

Let us now turn a third point, and you will find your case breaks down again. This widow

GAVE ALL SHE HAD.

Do you give all you have when you give a cent or 5 cents, or even a dollar? Do you? If some of you gave as much as this widow you would give good farms with all your stock and implements and everything else you possess in the form of property. Others would give all their buildings and lots and property of that kind. Others would hand in their bank and other stocks. To give the widow's mite means that we give all. When a man has given the widow's mite he has no more property left than Job had after he met his severe losses. After a man has given the widow's mite he hasn't money enough left to pay toll or break the Scott Act. Gentlemen, let me tell you plainly you never gave the widow's mite. The Church wouldn't take the widow's mite from you. Even the Methodist would not take all a man has. Nobody gives the widow's mite now. Perhaps nobody ever did but the widow herself.

Now, gentlemen, allow me to ask you not to attempt again to make a cent collection decent by an allusion to that widow. That noble woman has suffered for nearly 2,000 years by being forced into company with close-fisted men. The poor woman gave all she had, and the reward she usually gets for it in this world is to have her conduct quoted as a cover for the meanest of collections. Gentlemen, that kind of work must stop in this congregation. Don't tell the collectors again that you are giving the widow's mite unless you are a poor widow, and are giving all you have.—*Canada Presbyterian.*

Bible-Searching Christians.

BY REV. C. P. DITMARS.

These are just what is needed in every part of the church to-day. Our life is a warfare against the world, the flesh, and the devil. God's Word is a most complete armory for the battle. But how shall we furnish ourselves with weapons, or how shall we wield them, if we are not fully acquainted with what the armory contains and how to use it? Paul, in his summing up of what the christian soldier needs, gives us last of all and as the only offensive weapon, "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." This we are to wield prayerfully and righteously against evil; with this we are to strike sturdy blows against *error*, superstition and wickedness; with this we are to thrust back the tempter and pierce the hards as of men's hearts. But how few really know how to use it! In some countries men carry a sword at their sides, even in most peaceful times. But unless they are watched and kept bright by polishing these unused swords will rust fast in their scabbards. Suppose a foe should spring upon one whose sword had been suffered to rust fast. Could he use it? Could he bring it forth? He might seize it with great energy, but alas! it is fast where it has so long rested—a useless weapon. How often is it so with the believer and his Bible? God has given into his hands "the sword of the Spirit," "the sharp, two edged sword of the word of God." How many have it ever ready for effective use? How few are skillful in using it aggressively against the sin which rises up all around. How few, when temptation comes, can press the keen edge of some ready command, or precept, or example against it. Alas, too often when the enemy comes upon many of us, we are overwhelmed because our minds are dull concerning the truth. We have not a ready grasp upon our weapon. The cutting power of the sword lies wholly in its edge and in the determination of him who wields it. So the piercing, heart touching power of the Word lies in the pointed, practical use of it. The great aim is to cut the soul loose from sin, or to pierce the soul's enemy to death. It is indeed a mighty weapon that God has put in our hands. It is "quick and powerful," "sharp," "piercing," if we wield it with prayer. And, above all, it is the Spirit's great instrument, and the Spirit is to help us in the use of it. By his help we shall learn the effective use of it for our soul's defense, and for advancing the Lord's kingdom. O then, how we ought to search more and more these Scriptures. How we ought to seek more and more the help of the divine Spirit. Ask him to apply the Word you read and think upon, to your own soul. Ask him to apply the Word you speak or teach to others, unto their souls. Seek the saving, quickening, enlightening power of this God-inspired truth. So search it that in darkness you may find its light; in weariness its rest; in trouble its comfort; and in affliction its rich consolation. Above all and through all, so search it that you may find Christ. Unless you find him you miss its very heart. Unless you know him you cannot know and understand God. Unless you receive him you cannot be saved. As he comes to you out of his Word, he is "the way, the truth, and the life."—*The Intelligencer.*

A Prayer-Answering God.

BY A MINISTER'S WIFE ON THE FRONTIER.

I remember a day during one winter that stands out like a boulder in my life.

The weather was unusually cold, our salary had not been regularly paid, and it did not meet our needs when it was. My husband was away travelling from one district to another much of the time.

Our boys were well, but my little Ruth was ailing, and at best none of us were decently clothed. I patched and repatched with spirits sinking to their lowest ebb. The water gave out in the well, and the wind blew through the cracks in the floor.

The people in the parish were kind and generous, too, but the settlement was new and each family was struggling for itself. Little by little, at the time when I needed most, my faith began to waver. Early in life I was taught to take God at his word, and I thought my lesson was well learned. I lived upon the promises in dark times, until I knew as David did, who was "my Fortress and Deliverer," Now a daily prayer for forgiveness was all that I could offer.

My husband's overcoat was hardly thick enough for October, and he was obliged to ride miles to attend some meetings or funerals. Many a time our breakfast was Indian cake and a cup of tea without sugar. Christmas was coming; the children always expected their presents. I remember the ice was thick and smooth, and the boys were each craving a pair of skates.

Ruth, in some unaccountable way, had taken a fancy that the dolls I had made were no longer suitable; she wanted a nice large one, and insisted on praying for it. I knew it was impossible; but oh, how I wanted to give each child its present. It seemed as if God had deserted us, but I did not tell my husband all this. He worked so earnestly and heartily I supposed him to be hopeful as ever.

I kept the sitting-room cheery with an open fire, and tried to serve our scanty meals as invitingly as I could. The morning before Christmas James was called to see a sick man. I put up a piece of bread for his lunch,—it was the best I could do,—wrapped a plaid shawl around his neck, and then tried to whisper a promise, as I often had, but the words died away on my lips. I let him go without it. That was a dark, hopeless day. I coaxed the children to bed early, for I could not hear their talk. When Ruth went I listened to her prayer; she asked for the last time most explicitly for her doll and for skates for her brothers. Her bright face looked so lovely when she whispered to me:—"You know I think they'll be here early to-morrow morning—early, mamma," that I thought I could move heaven and earth to save her from the disappointment.

I sat down alone and gave way to the bitterest tears.

Before long James returned, chilled and exhausted. He drew off his boots; the thin stockings slipped off with them, and his feet were red with cold. I wouldn't treat a dog that way, let alone a faithful servant. Then as I glanced up and noticed the hard lines in his face, and the look of despair, it flashed across me, James had let go, too! I brought him a cup of tea, feeling sick and dizzy at that very thought. He took my hand and we sat for an hour without a word. I wanted to die and meet God, and tell him his promise wasn't true; my soul was so full of rebellion and despair.

Then came a sound of bells, a quick stop, and a loud knock at the door. James sprang up to open it. There stood Deacon Pike. "A box came for you just before dark. I brought it around as soon as I could get away; reckoned it might be for Christmas, at any rate they shall have it to night. Here is a turkey my wife asked me to fetch along, and these other things I believe belong to you." There was a basket of potatoes and a bag of flour. Talking all the time, he hurried in the box, and then with a hearty good-night rode away. Still without speaking, James found a chisel and opened the box. I drew out at first a thick red blanket, and we saw that beneath was full of clothing. It seemed at the moment that Christ fastened upon me a look of reproach. James sat down and covered his face with his hands. "I can't touch them," he exclaimed, 'I haven't been true just when God was trying to see if I could hold out. Do you think I could not see how you were suffering, and I had no word of comfort to offer. I know now how to preach the awfulness of turning away from God." "James," I said, clinging to him, "don't take it to heart like this. I've been to blame; I ought to have helped you. We will ask him together to forgive us." "Wait a moment, dear, I cannot talk now," then he went into another room. I knelt down, and my heart broke; in an instant all the darkness, all the stubbornness rolled away. Jesus came again and stood before me, but now with the loving word, daughter! Sweet promises of tenderness and joy flooded my soul. I was so lost in praise and gratitude that I forgot everything else. I don't know how long it was before James came back, but I knew that he too had found peace.

"Now, dear wife," said he, "let us thank God together," and then he poured out words of praise; Bible words, for nothing else could express our thanksgiving. I was eleven o'clock, the fire was low, and there was the great box, and nothing touched but the warm blanket we needed so much. We piled on some fresh logs, lighted two candles, and, began to examine our treasures. We drew out an overcoat, I made James try it on, just the right size, and I danced awhile around him, for all my light-heartedness had returned. Then there was a cloak, and he insisted on seeing me in it. My spirits always infected him, and we both laughed like foolish children. There was a warm suit of clothes, also, and three pair of warm woollen hose. There was a dress for me, and yards of flannel, a pair of Arctic overshoes for each of us, and in mine was a slip of paper—I have it now and mean to hand it down to my children. It was Jacob's blessing to Asher, "Thy shoes shall be iron and brass, and as thy days, so shall thy strength be."

In the gloves, evidently for James, the same dear hand had written, "I the Lord thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not, I will help thee." It was a wonderful box, and packed with thoughtful care.

There was a suit of clothes for each of the boys, and a little red gown for Ruth. There were mittens, scarfs, and hoods; down in the centre, a box—we opened it, and there was a great wax doll. I burst into tears again, and James wept with me for joy. It was too much, and then we both exclaimed again, for close behind it came two pair of skates. There were books for us to read,—some of them I had wished to see,—stories for the children to read, aprons and underclothing, knots of ribbon, a gay little tidy, a lovely photograph, needles buttons, and thread, actually a muff, and an envelope containing a ten dollar gold piece. At last we cried over everything we took up. It was past midnight, and we were faint, and exhausted even with happiness.

I made a cup of tea, cut a fresh loaf of bread, and James boiled some eggs. We drew up the table before the fire; how we enjoyed our supper!—and then we sat talking all over our life, and how sure a help God had always proved.

You should have seen the children the next morning; the boys raised a shout at the sight of their skates. Ruth caught up her doll and hugged it tightly without a word, then she went into her room and knelt by her bed; when she came back she whispered to me, "I knew it would be here, mamma, but I wanted to thank God just the same, you know." "Long here, wife; see the difference." We went to the window, and there were the boys out of the house already and skating on the crust with all their might.

My husband and I both tried to return thanks to the church in the East that sent us the box, and have tried to return thanks unto God every day since.

Hard times have come again and again, but we have trusted in him, dreading nothing so much as a doubt of his protecting care. Over and over again we have proved that they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.—*Published by request from Woman's Home Missions*

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The First Sign

Of failing health, whether in the form of Night Sweats and Nervousness, or in a sense of General Weariness and Loss of Appetite, should suggest the use of Ayer's Sarsaparilla. This preparation is most effective for giving tone and strength to the enfeebled system, promoting the digestion and assimilation of food, restoring the nervous forces to their normal condition, and for purifying, enriching, and vitalizing the blood.

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I have used Ayer's Sarsaparilla, in my family, for Scrofula, and know, if it is taken faithfully, that it will thoroughly eradicate this terrible disease. I have also prescribed it as a tonic, as well as an alterative, and must say that I honestly believe it to be the best blood medicine ever compounded.—W. F. Fowler, D. D. S., M. D., Greenville, Tenn.

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It would be impossible for me to describe what I suffered from Indigestion and Headache up to the time I began taking Ayer's Sarsaparilla. I was under the care of various physicians and tried a great many kinds of medicines, but never obtained more than temporary relief. After taking Ayer's Sarsaparilla for a short time, my headache disappeared, and my stomach performed its duties more perfectly. To-day my health is completely restored.—Mary Harley, Springfield, Mass.

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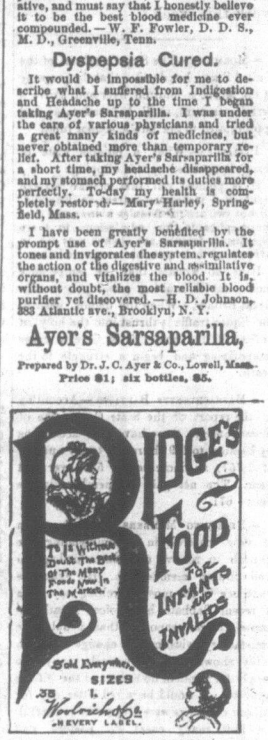

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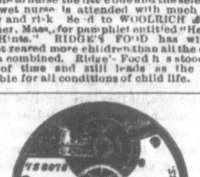

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