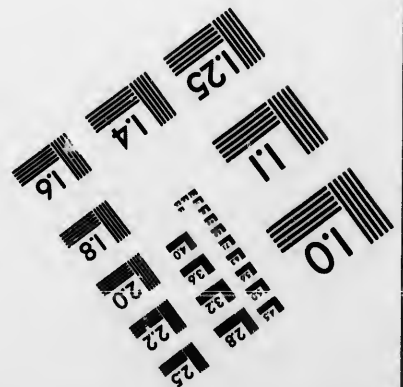
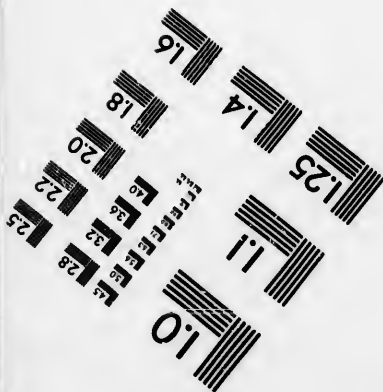
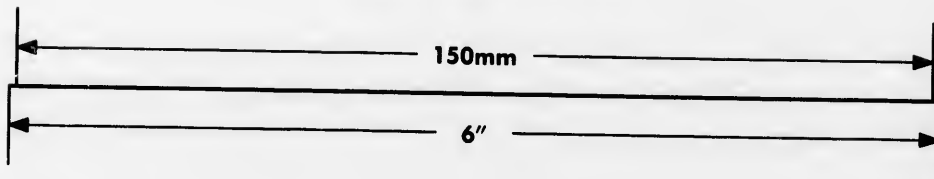
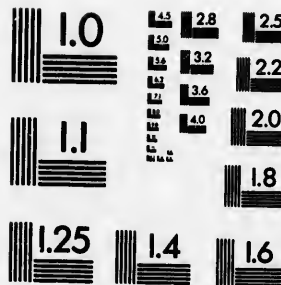
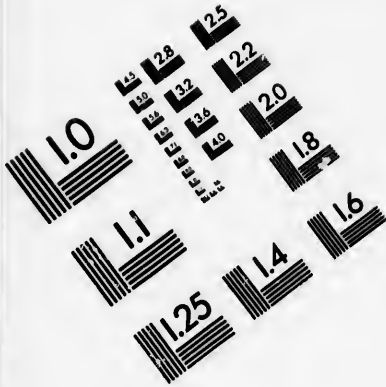


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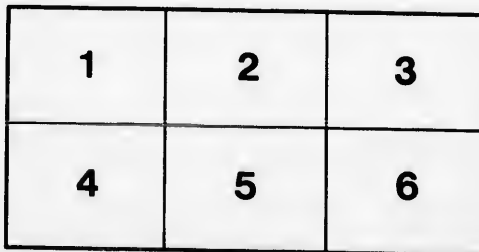
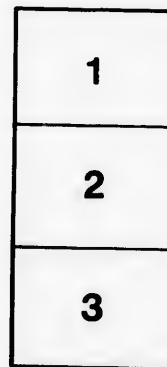
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The 
TREASURES
of the
SNOW



By
REV. THOMAS SIMS, D.D.

TORONTO: WILLIAM BRIGGS,
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1871

THE STATE OF

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IN SENATE

JANUARY 1871

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THE
Treasures of the Snow

BY
REV. THOMAS SIMS, D.D.

BEING
A SERMON PREACHED IN BOND STREET CONGREGATIONAL
CHURCH, TORONTO, SUNDAY MORNING, JAN. 26TH,
AFTER A WEEK OF STORM AND SNOW.

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THE TREASURES OF THE SNOW.

By Rev. Thomas Sims, D.D.

Being a sermon preached in Bond Street Congregational church, Toronto, Sunday morning, Jan. 26, 1896, after a week of storm and snow.

"Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow?"—
Job xxxviii. 22.

When Elijah was under the spell of a petulant and gloomy mood he fled away to scenes where his mood was reflected in nature. "Horeb, the Mount of God," the rugged and terrible Sinai, with lightnings playing on its brow, tempest roaring round its base, and earthquake heaving in its breast, was nature's counterpart of the despairing and angry prophet. Yet for some reason he found no solace in it. The Lord was not in the wind, in the earthquake, nor in the fire for him.

But if the truant Tishbite found no comfort in nature there are many saints of God who have. Job, sunk in depths of suffering astonishment, was recalled to sane and cheerful trust by the voice of God answering him out of the whirlwind, directing his thought to the wondrous panorama passing before him in the forms and processes of the natural world. In that epitome of duty which we call "the Sermon on the Mount," the Lord calls on men in their respon-

dencies to "consider the lilies of the field how they grow," and learn to trust God for raiment; and to behold how the "fowls of the air" are fed, and trust God for "daily bread."

Mr. Ruskin has said that the thirty-eighth to the forty-first chapters of Job, and the Sermon on the Mount, are among the choice things which God utters to those who love him, and whom he would bring to perfection. Isaiah maintains that the deepest gulf of sensuous men's infamy consists in the fact that "they regard not the work of the Lord, neither consider the operation of his hands." The Psalmist renders this sentiment only the more emphatic when he says, "Because they regard not the works of the Lord, nor the operation of his hands, he shall destroy them, and not build them up."

None of us, I trust, are falling into that condemnation, and if we are not we must have felt extraordinary provocation to consider the work of the Lord as it was displayed in last week's storm. As the snow mantle was being spread upon the earth, and the trees stood resplendent in jewellery, I think we must all have been feeling unspeakable things whether we can utter them or not. I do not see how any Christian heart can have refrained from exclaiming again and again, "O Lord, how manifold are thy works! In wisdom hast thou made them all. The earth is full of thy riches."

Believing that you are all in immediate sym-

pathy with the inquiry of my text, I wish to remind you that,

First, there are in the snow treasures of beauty which merit consideration. As we came to church last Sunday morning, all the slush and grime of the city was buried beneath a thick canopy of purest white. The air was soft and all the land was still. Earth and air and sky all spoke of purity and peace. Whether it was the sweet, fresh beauty of the scene, or some half-conscious reminiscence of early youth, I cannot tell, but, to me, that walk to church was a benediction. That was one aspect of the beauty of the snow. Yesterday, and the day before, we had another. I have gazed upon palaces of queen and noble, I have stood in awed admiration before the sculptured facade, and in the pillared aisles of gorgeous cathedrals, but I never saw in any work of man such stupendous magnificence as Jarvis Street presented on Friday and Saturday mornings. Beneath was the snow carpet, into whose deep pile one's feet sank in luxurious silence. Out of it rose the pillared splendor of chestnut, elm, and maple like columns of alabaster stained by time. Starting from their capitals was an exquisite elaborateness of tracery, which architecture at its best begins feebly to imitate. The double rows of trees, interlacing over the sidewalks and overarching the street, formed the gorgeous transept and glittering aisles of a cathedral worthy to be called celestial. When

the evening lights began to be reflected from that jewelled splendor, a vivid impression was created of the wealth of the New Jerusalem, whose foundations are laid in precious stones, and whose twelve gates are each carved out of one pearl. That was another aspect of the treasures of beauty in the snow.

Five years ago, after cruising through a long summer's day in sight of the Alaskan Alps, where mountains towered 16,000 feet into the blue, clothed with a mantle of snow down to the feet, we came at evening to the front of the Taku Glacier. It is not among the largest of Alaskan glaciers, but it presents a combination of bulk, form and color which is extraordinary, even in that land of glaciers. Here was snow that fell on the earth so far back in the forgotten centuries, that the imagination refuses to take in the figures. That snow had passed through processes of movement and pressure and atmospheric action, which had compacted it into ice, from which the last particle of air had been excluded. By that process it had taken on color, so that white granulated ice, clear, crystal ice, ice that was sea green, and exquisite cerulean blue mingled to form domes and spires and pinnacles and glacial mass that stretched away for unmeasured miles, and struck one dumb with an admiration that was closely akin to adoration. That is another aspect of the treasures of beauty that are in the snow.

From the unmeasured glacier to the microscopic snow-crystal is a long remove, but he who formed the glacier organized the crystal, and the last is as beautiful as the first. God has confined it within the limits of an hexagonal law, and every snow crystal conforms to that principle of six-sidedness, but within those seemingly narrow limits there is a permutation of beauty that is manifold. Stars, feathers, flowers, ferns, mosses, palms, leaves show themselves under the microscope in bewildering loveliness. The beauty of the snow! Is it not a gleam of the beauty of God? Is it not intended to suggest what he would have all his children be? Holiness is more than aesthetics, but holiness and beauty are indissolubly married. The law of beauty is a law of God, a law not simply of his will, but of his nature. The more implicitly we obey him, the more closely shall we be conformed to it without and within. The more intimate our fellowship with him the more surely shall we be transformed into the image of his wondrous beauty. Consider the beauty of the snow, today, and try to realize that there is in it an expression of God's will concerning you. And, if, harmonizing the outward and the inward, you put another touch of beauty and grace on your homes, on your speech, on your manners, and on your charities, after considering the treasures of the snow, many of you will be doing the Lord's will in that. Is not that one as,

pect of the grace—dwell a moment on the word—"the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ"?

Second, there are treasures of usefulness in the snow, that we may profitably consider. The Psalmist has compared snow to wool, and what wool is to the sheep, snow is to the wintry world. Like wool, it is a non-conductor of heat. Precipitated by the cold of early winter, and lying deep upon the ground, it allows the earth to retain its native heat, so that within the Arctic circle the soil is usually friable all winter long. Beneath its fleecy folds God tucks in flower and grass, herb and root of tree as snugly as a mother cradles her cherished babe. How green and thrifty a field of fall wheat emerges after a long, hard winter, when the snow has lain steadily upon it! In Ontario's early days, when the land was thickly wooded, and the snow lay still and late, potatoes were often left in the ground all winter, to be dug up sound and good in the spring. On Manitoulin Island, far to the north of us, the settlers failing to dig their roots early have secured them sound and good when the winter was over. Enscenced in his snow hut, the Esquimaux passes his Arctic winter in comfort, the only times when the cold seriously troubles him being when the weather has begun to grow mild, and the warmth of his snow dwelling makes it damp. Lost in the fierce blizzards of the northern prairie, many a settler has saved his life by creeping under his upturned sleigh, and

allowing the snow to drift over him. So does God ordain that snow, a product of the cold, shall be to herb and beast and man a protection from the cold that would otherwise destroy them.

But there are many other utilities in the snow. The farmer will tell you that it is one of his best fertilizers. A shower of soft snow covering the ground in spring after the wheat, or oats, or barley are in the ground is almost equal to a shower of silver. Its fertilizing properties mean silver to the husbandman. Snow stored on the summits of high mountains is as reservoirs to the world. Slowly melting through the long summer, it feeds the great rivers with a continuous supply of water, thus imparting steadiness to their volume. By cooling and moistening the air which rushes from mountain to super-heated plain, the snow becomes a source of cooling breeze and summer shower. The luxuriant tropics would be an intolerable desert but for the snow-clad equatorial mountains.

Such are some of the treasures of utility that are stored up in the snow. Is it not another expression of the character of its Giver, of whom our Lord said, "My Father worketh"? Is it not also nature's object-lesson to the child of God, teaching him to be about his Father's business? "By love serve one another." In Christian character beauty and utility are inseparably united, what, therefore, "God hath joined together let no man put asunder."

Thirdly, there are treasures of power in the snow we may profitably dwell upon. A snow flake; how insignificant! I could melt a thousand with the warmth of my hand. I could blow any of them out of its course with a puff of my breath. A snow shower! as its flocculent deposit lies upon the earth, how soft, how non-resistant it is! Who would think of it as a formidable power in the world? Yet, as it falls flake on flake, and accumulates on branches of trees, roofs of buildings, and lines of telegraph and railway, it becomes practically irresistible. And what power, and even terror, there is in a snow storm! What stories our fathers have told us of its majesty in their days, and in the times before them! In 1620 so fierce and long-continued a snow storm raged in the south of Scotland as to destroy nine-tenths of all the country's flocks. At Eskdale Moor, out of 20,000 sheep, only forty-five animals were left alive. In many places shepherds built up great semi-circular walls of the dead carcasses to afford shelter to the living until the storm should end. As late as 1827 a snow storm raged on the Steppes of Kirgheez, in Siberia, that destroyed over 280,000 horses, 30,000 cattle, 10,000 camels and 1,000,000 sheep. On January 9, 1886, the morning opened in my North Dakota parish calm and mild. About nine o'clock the atmosphere grew hazy, and soon snow began to fall. While observation was yet noting the sudden change, a howling,

blinding, bewildering blizzard was upon us, which continued to increase until long after sunset. The wind drove the snow in hurricane masses fine as powder, sharp as steel, and continuous as the flow of a river. It was impossible to distinguish people ten feet away. Houses were invisible across the space of a narrow street. Snow which had been packed in hard drifts was torn loose by the tempest, and driven in particles so fine, and with a force so terrible, that the smallest crevice in door or window became an aperture through which an indoor snow-drift was built up. Snow rose up about the windows, over the doors, in some cases as high as the eaves, and was packed by the wind into phenomenal solidity. To the south of us, where the storm broke later in the day, the loss of life was appalling. In South Dakota, in Nebraska, and in portions of Iowa, many hearts are sad to this day, because of that snow-hurricane. No eye that witnessed those dense masses, no ear that heard the thunder of the blast which drove them continually forward, will tolerate any incredulous question when I speak of the power and terror of the snow.

A few weeks ago the miners at Silver Bow Basin, near to Juneau, Alaska, had a display of the power of the snow, which has been considered worthy to be telegraphed round the continent. Above them are the great mountains, where the annual snow-fall is one of nature's marvels. The long slopes stretch away into the

blue to enormous altitudes. Down one of these majestic slides, from near the summit of the range, an avalanche began to shiver down. Each furlong of its journey increased its momentum, and added to its bulk until its very breath became terrible. Across the lower reaches of its awful path a spur of the mountain projected, but such was the power of the moving snow, that it tore great masses of the projection loose, adding millions of tons of granite and timber to the avalanche's weight. With another rush down the lower slopes this immense mass broke finally on the valley below, burying mines and camps, and, I fear, many miners also in one deep gulf of ruin.

The power of the snow! There is in it the hiding of Omnipotence. How it speaks to us of that aspect of the divine character which so impressed the counsellor of Job when he said, "With God is terrible majesty"! "The mountains quake at him, and the hills melt, and the earth is burned at his presence, yea, the world and all that dwell therein. Who can stand before his indignation? and who can abide in the fierceness of his anger? His fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down by him." "Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance; behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing."

Fourthly, there are in the snow treasures of poetic and spiritual suggestiveness. Whether the

theme of the snow or the theme of spring has inspired more poetry, I would not like to say, but the snow has always impressed sensitive minds with spiritual, and often beautiful, thoughts. Out of much literature of its kind, allow me to read the sweet, sad poem,

BEAUTIFUL SNOW.

O the snow, the beautiful snow,
 Filling the sky and the earth below.
 Over the house-tops, over the street,
 Over the heads of the people you meet,
 Dancing,

 Flirting,

 Skimming along.

Beautiful snow, it can do nothing wrong,
 Flying to kiss a fair lady's cheek ;
 Clinging to lips in a frolicsome freak.
 Beautiful snow, from the heavens above,
 Pure as an angel and fickle as love !

O the snow, the beautiful snow !
 How the flakes gather and laugh as they go !
 Whirling about in its maddening fun,
 It plays in its glee with every one.

 Chasing,

 Laughing,

 Hurrying by,

It lights up the face and it sparkles the eye ;
 And even the dogs, with a bark and a bound,

Snap at the crystals that eddy around.
 The town is alive, and its heart in a glow
 To welcome the coming of beautiful snow.

How the wild crowd goes swaying along,
 Hailing each other with humor and song !
 How the gay sledges like meteors flash by,
 Bright for a moment, then lost to the eye !

Ringing,

Swinging,

Dashing they go,

Over the crest of the beautiful snow.
 Snow so pure when it falls from the sky,
 To be trampled in mud by the crowd rushing
 by :

To be trampled and tracked by the thousands
 of feet

Till it blends with the horrible filth in the
 street.

Once I was pure as the snow—but I fell,
 Fell, like the snow-flakes, from heaven—to
 hell ;

Fell, to be tramped as the filth of the street,
 Fell, to be scoffed, to be spit on, and beat,

Pleading,

Cursing,

Dreading to die,

Selling my soul to whoever would buy ;
 Dealing in shame for a morsel of bread.
 Hating the living and fearing the dead.
 Merciful God ! have I fallen so low ?

And yet I was once like this beautiful snow !
 Once I was fair as the beautiful snow,
 With an eye like its crystals, a heart like its
 glow ;

Once I was loved for my innocent grace—
 Flattered and sought for the charm of my face.

Father,

Mother,

Sisters, all,

God, and myself, I have lost by my fall.
 The veriest wretch that goes shivering by
 Will take a wide sweep, lest I wander too
 nigh,

For of all that is on, or about me, I know
 There is nothing that's pure but the beautiful
 snow.

How strange it should be that this beautiful
 snow

Should fall on a sinner with nowhere to go !
 How strange it would be, when the night comes
 again,

If the snow and the ice struck my desperate
 brain,

Fainting,

Freezing,

Dying alone,

Too wicked for prayer, too weak for a moan
 To be heard in the crash of the crazy town,
 Gone mad in its joy at the snow's coming
 down :

To lie and to die in my terrible woe,
 With a bed and a shroud of the beautiful snow.

After falling into foul sin and realizing all the shame and stain of it, there was one who cried, "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean, wash me and I shall be whiter than snow." The hyssop branch dipped by the High Priest in the blood of atonement, and sprinkled on the waiting people, typified the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, and of that it is abundantly true it maketh "whiter than snow." Standing before the throne of God, clad in white robes, their outward adornment a symbol of their inward purity, the redeemed are declared to have "washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." Where they washed you and I may wash, as freely and effectually as they. God calls to us and cries, "Come, now, and let us reason together ; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow." "Go and wash." Let the soft purity of the snow as you look on it again today, and on other days of this winter, remind you of your unspeakable privilege, and let your prayer go up, in deep sincerity,

"I give up myself, and whatever I know,
Now wash me, and I shall be whiter than
snow."



