The Press and Banner.

By Hugh Wilson and H. T. Wardlaw.

Wednesday, April 7, 1880.

"Indecent Assault!"---A New Crime.

If you have not a heart of stone, it will be touched by reading the following very slight allusions to what would seem to be an infernal outrage, which was committed last Saturday upon the person of a defenceless little girl by a "prominent merchant of Columbia." The *News and Courier* which so recently justified the lynching of a one-armed defenceless negro, dismisses the subject of the Columbia affair in the following item:

A GRAVE CHARGE PREFERRED AGAINST A PROMINENT MERCHANT OF COLUMBIA.

COLUMBIA, April 3.—Considerable sensation was created here to-day by the arrest of Peter B. Glass, at one time a prominent merchant of this city, for an alleged assault upon a white girl about 11 years of age. The testimony before the trial justice shows that the girl was enticed into the house of the accused upon an invitation to accept some delicacies and that the assault was then committed upon her. She reported the facts to her mother who instituted proceedings against the assailant. Glass was arrested and gave bond for five hundred dollars to appear at the next term of the General Sessions to answer the charge of indecent assault.

The *Register* which has been usually level-headed, has a mere mention of the circumstance and incidentally speaks of the fact that "the mother of the little girl was committed to the lunatic asylum night before last in consequence of the distress of mind occasioned by the occurrence." We copy all that we find in the *Register*, as follows:

INDECENT ASSAULT.

Mr. P. B. Glass, formerly a prominent merchant of this city, was brought before Trial Justice Marshall and bound over yesterday, in the sum of $500, to answer to a charge of committing an indecent assault and battery on a little white girl, ten years old, on last Tuesday afternoon. The hearing was only a preliminary one, and the case will have a judicial examination and full trial in the Circuit Court. The mother of the little girl was committed to the Lunatic Asylum night before last, in consequence of the distress of mind occasioned by the occurrence.

The *Daily Mercury* a new paper in Columbia, has still a smaller notice of the affair. It is as follows:

INDECENT ASSAULT.

Mr. P. B. Glass, of this city, was yesterday taken before Trial Justice Marshall on the charge of indecent assault on a young white girl. After hearing testimony and counsel, Mr. Glass was bound over for trial at the next Court of General Sessions in the sum of $500.

If the *Yeoman* has made any mention of the affair, we have failed to see it.

When a negro assaults a white woman he is "a brute," "a black devil," and is beyond the "pale of the law," and is entitled to none of its protection, but when "a prominent merchant of Columbia" attacks the virtue of a little girl it is an "indecent assault," and the perpetrator of the deed is bound over to Court in the sum of five hundred dollars.

It may not be forgotten that a negro boy in Union attempted an "indecent assault" upon a little child in Union county last fall. If the circumstance is remembered, it will not be forgotten that it was with difficulty the Sheriff saved him from the hands of lynchers. The culprit was brought before the Court of General Sessions and promptly hung, as he should have been.

We are not in favor of lynching under any circumstances, and merely call attention to this occurrence to show that Judge Lynch may sometimes be partial in the administration of punishment. If the alleged crime had been committed by a defenceless and friendless creature, against the daughter of one of "the families," does anybody suppose that he would be at liberty to-day? If not, is the Democratic party carrying out its pledges to give "equal and exact justice" to all citizens of the State? The vilest criminal should be allowed a chance before the Courts of the State.

Political School Teachers Should be Dismissed.

By a wise provision of the Constitution of the United States, the Government of Church and State is kept separate. If there was a necessity of separating the government of Church and State, we think there is also a necessity for separating the government of State from the government of the political party which may be in power. The State Superintendent of Education should not be a political officer, neither should the different teachers under him be politicians. For our own part, we think whenever a teacher, be he Democrat or Republican, engages in politics he should be dismissed from the school. What right has a teacher to advance particular political doctrines, or to control or direct denominational issues? Is he employed by the Government for any such work? We think not, and in the future we shall most strenuously advocate the dismissal of politicians from our public schools. Let Democratic and Republican teachers abstain from politics as long as they are in the pay of the government. It is an outrage for the government to make pensioners of politicians, under the pretext that they teach schools. As a rule, the white teachers have bothered themselves very little with politics, but during the recent campaigns, in too many instances the colored teachers, at night and on Saturdays are traversing the country attending political meetings, to the injury of their usefulness as teachers. We ask the attention of the State officers to this great abuse of official power, and the improper expenditure of money in the employment of politicians instead of teachers. Let them adopt a rule to the effect that no man—white or black, who engages in politics shall be continued in the service. Such a course is absolutely necessary to insure faithful public services.

The Outlook.

The indications are that the negroes in South Carolina will run a full ticket against any ticket that may be put in the field by the Democratic party of the State. We notice from our exchanges that the negroes in various counties are showing signs of activity in their opposition to the whites. In Abbeville county a few of the dusky political leaders seem determined to renew the race issue with all the force they can bring to bear, but they receive very little sympathy from the more sober and reflecting masses whose attention at present seems to be directed mainly to agriculture and the production of the great staple. Any man or set of men who should disturb them in their peaceful and profitable pursuits deserves to be whipped through the land with a cat-o'-nine-tails. The people of this county have no idea of allowing the negroes to take charge of our political affairs, and the sooner they and their leaders understand this fact, the better for all parties. Under no circumstances are we going to elect corn-field negroes, or their dirty white allies, to fill the public offices of this county, and we hope that they may not attempt to disturb the peace and quiet of this county in an effort which will be as futile as it will be disastrous to the best interests of the public welfare. In no country in the world is the white man governed by the negro, and we are sure a precedent will not be furnished by Abbeville county.

A Munificent Provision for Solicitors—The Fall Court in Abbeville.

We resume the subject which we discussed in our last issue, and write another article reviewing the recently published "Acts and Joint Resolutions of the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina" for the regular session of '79 and the extra session of '80. As we said before, it is unnecessary to notice all and singular; and we, therefore, only cite some of those Acts which are of general interest.

Act, No. 248, is of great interest to Abbeville County, as it appoints the holding of the Court of General Sessions for this County for the first Monday in February and the third Monday in October, and the Court of Common Pleas for the "Wednesdays" following the first Monday in February and the third Monday in October. This change from September will be welcomed by everybody, public and lawyers and all. The word "Wednesdays" is not as clear as it might be. Of course it is supposed to mean "the Wednesday next following the first Monday in February, and the Wednesday next following the third Monday in October;" but it might mean any "Wednesdays following." According to the literal interpretation of this Act, the Court of Common Pleas can be held in Abbeville County on any Wednesday in the year.

Act, No. 249, requires the eight Circuit Solicitors of the State, "or so many as may be deemed necessary by the Attorney General," to attend the sessions of the General Assembly, "to assist the Attorney General in and supervise the engrossing and enrollment of all Acts passed during the session, and to see that the work is neatly, promptly and correctly done," and to assist "in drawing Bills" &c:—for all which they will "each" receive "the same per diem as the members of the General Assembly shall receive for the session." "Per diem" is supposed, of course, to mean "pay *per diem*"; but why not say so? And, then, is it really so that the Solicitors will "each receive" the same pay *per diem* as the "members" of the General Assembly shall receive "for the session";—not simply as *each* member shall receive, but as the "members," all of them, shall receive; and not simply what *each* member shall receive *per diem*, but what "the members" shall receive "for the session"? What does it all mean? Surely one of the eight Solicitors had a hand in drawing this Bill. For see how much it gives "each" of the eight Solicitors: There are 34 Senators, and 123 Representatives, in all 157 "members." These, at $5 each, receive *per diem* $785. If the session lasts 30 days, they cost the State $23,550. Now, if "each" of the eight Solicitors is to receive "the same *per diem*" as "the members" of the General Assembly receive "for the session," the Solicitors will "each" receive for a session of 30 days, $23,550,—in all, 188,400; and if an Extra Session of ten days is called to correct, for instance, a mistake of the engrossing clerks, the Solicitors will "each" receive $31,400,—in all, $251,200. This Act, No. 249, is either a splendid provision for "the eight Solicitors," or a splendid proof of the great need "the members" of the General Assembly have of the help of the Solicitors "in drawing Bills." Supposing one of the eight Solicitors were to prefer his claim for $785 *per diem*, how would the Court defeat his claim? Might we suggest that the Governor convoke the General Assembly for another extra session,—an extraordinary session, to repeal Act No. 249?

Incorrect.

Lexington Dispatch.

The *Abbeville Press and Banner* says: "The *Lexington Dispatch*, if we are not mistaken, a few weeks ago as leader of those favoring primary elections in that county, intimated that unless that plan was adopted, the Fall elections could not be carried by the Democratic party of this State. When such a sentiment is made, it means, when translated into plain English, about this: 'If we cannot have things our own way, we will allow the Republicans to win.'"

If instead of contenting itself with the saving clause "if we are not mistaken" the *Press and Banner* had exercised its usual journalistic diligence it would not have so widely departed from its usual journalistic correctness. Inasmuch as the *Dispatch* neither said or intimated anything of the kind, the column editorial which the *Press and Banner* devotes to the subject has no application so far as the *Dispatch* is concerned. We must add that we think the *Press and Banner* displayed a want of journalistic courtesy in not citing the article of the *Dispatch* to which it refers, when so serious a charge is made and so much of its valuable space is devoted to making it so prominent. The *Press and Banner* with its high sense of journalistic propriety will doubtless make the *amende honorable*.

We are sorry that we erred in the matter of the position of our friend, and regret that our language was such as to convey the impression that we "displayed a want of courtesy." In all statements which we may make we endeavor to be fair, and never under any circumstances do we intentionally place any one in a wrong position. In our intercourse with the brethren of the press it is our highest aim to be courteous. On no account would we knowingly "display a want of courtesy" by a failure to observe the amenities which should exist between journalists. The article to which reference was made by us as appearing in the *Lexington Dispatch* was published about three week's before we wrote the article to which the *Dispatch* takes exception, and was not before us at the time—the paper had been destroyed. We assure our friend that we did not intentionally misrepresent him. We are glad to put him right on the record and to know that our remarks did not apply to so good a paper as the *Dispatch*.

An Editor's Experience at Farming.

Mr. E. W. McLenna, editor of the *Edgefield Monitor*, has been elected honorary member of the Centre Springs Farmers Club, and has been invited to write an essay on the best method to make two thousand pounds of seed cotton to the acre. In acknowledging the compliment the editor of the *Monitor* says:

We take the occasion to return our thanks to the Centre Springs Farmers' Club for the honor they have conferred upon us, and to assure our good friend, who seems to have cotton on the brain—for he makes no allusion to corn—that we are the very man he is looking for. Yes, we will write an essay for you—sometime. We know just how it is done. We graduated in the cotton planting business several years ago. We wrote out our experience at the time and published it in the *Lexington Dispatch*; but as our space is quite limited, we can but briefly refer to it here. Our experience commenced in 1867. In writing it up, we alluded to the high price of cotton in 1866, and to the assurance of the poet that: "There is a tide in the affairs of men which taken at the flood leads on to fortune;" and that we saw, or thought we saw, the fortune looming up in the distance and had only to reach out our hand, or rather hand only to make a few bales of cotton and possess it. Well, we made cotton for two years and summed up the result as follows: "Two year's labor lost, seven hundred dollars in debt, religion gone, children ragged, their father disgusted, cotton consigned to its "own place" together with the author of the foolishness about the 'tide,' and cotton planting abandoned for more congenial pursuits."

Seven hundred dollars in two years! That was poor farming when compared to our experience. Several years ago we thought to make a fortune in one year on red oats. When the crop was gathered and sold we found that we had lost about five hundred dollars on that crop alone. There is no telling how much we would have lost if we had planted cotton.

If anybody supposes that the Hon. D. W. Aiken can be beaten for Congress in this County he is mistaken. In a primary election he can carry nine-tenths of the votes of Abbeville County. There is no doubt about this.

The Negro Caucus.

Last week we made some mention of the negro caucus which was supposed to have been held in the Colored Masons' Hall. It is now denied that they met in the lodge room, which is above stairs, but it is asserted that they met in the lower room of the lodge building, which is owned by the Colored Masons', but whether they met in the lodge room or not, the fact that the caucus was held has not been denied. Among the prominent negroes who took part in that meeting we failed to get the names of Tom Hatten of Ninety-Six, and Iverson Reynolds of Bordeaux. It is said an informal caucus of the "faithful" have chosen Lem Guffin, County Chairman.

It is now thought that the negroes do not intend to hold a Convention to elect delegates to Columbia, but that a few of the office-seekers will engineer the matter so that delegates to the State Convention will be appointed by the different local clubs.

Alfred Butler is now very bitter and exceedingly zealous. In a talk with country darkies a few days ago, he is reported to have said that the negroes would have guns at the next election. If the State didn't furnish them, that the United States would. He had it in writing that such would be the case, and urged the country negroes to be faithful and true to "the party;" and that the negroes were bound to win the next election; if they could not win in one way, they would in another."

We give the above rumors for what they are worth. We received the information from a source we believe to be reliable, and such being the case we think it well enough to inform the public as to who may be attempting to array the negroes against us. The negroes have no right to complain in this County. They are fairly treated, and in the matter of schools, they have more colored teachers in the pay of government than they had when the State was under the rule of the carpet-baggers.

Opposition to a Third Term.

The growing opposition to a third term is developing much strength with the Republicans in all sections of the North, and Grant's prospects are correspondingly woulng. Sherman has expressed a willingness to accept the nomination if Ohio goes for him with unanimity. In fact he may be considered as really on the anxious bench. Blaine is still prominent out it appears to us that Washburne at present has the inside track with prospects of winning. The *New York Tribune*, the King Radical paper of the North is strong against Grant, and charges him with the disintegration of the Republican party in the South, and thinks he would smash the whole machine if he were allowed to run it for another term. The *New York Herald* and the *Sun* each express strong opposition to him in nearly every issue of these papers. It now seems pretty certian that Grant will be defeated.

The Fence Law.

We think this is a matter that should be left entirely with the farmers, as they are the parties directly interested, and after a full and fair investigation, should they decide either for or against a change, we think all other classes should acquiesce in their decision.—*Elberton News.*

We think a newspaper should speak out and express its views on every important question that may be agitating the public mind. If the *News* favors the law, it should say so, and give the reasons for so doing. If it is opposed to its patrons receiving the benefits of the best law ever enacted, it should be equally candid.

THE COMING GREAT CROP.

A South Carolina Farmer who Talks of a Crop of 8,000,000 Bales this Year—The Reasons for his Faith.

(Letter to the New York Bulletin.)

BAMBERG, S. C., March 26.—Information regarding the area of land now being prepared for cotton may be of interest to those operating in the staple. The writer is a planter himself, and has no interest in the subject at this moment, and has carefully inquired from the farmers immediately around him the exact acreage prepared this year, in comparison with that of 1879. The following is the result:

NUMBER OF ACRES IN COTTON.

	1879.	1880.
Planter A	50	75
Planter B	60	140
Planter C	22	25
Planter D	100	145
Planter E	20	30
Planter F	18	30
Planter G	12	20
Planter H	100	150
Planter I	30	48
Planter J	60	65
Planter K	11	30
Total	483	765

—showing an increase in acreage this year of nearly 50 per cent. over that of last year in this immediate section. From the best information obtainable, I am disposed to think the increase in South Carolina at not less than 35 per cent. over that of 1879, and the increase is more likely to exceed this percentage than fall below it.

Now, the same impulses that are making planters here increase the area in cotton are operating with equal force throughout the entire south; and to these causes must be added the labor in our own hands and natural extension of cultivation in the Southwest. From these facts, it appears that with an ordinary season, no worse than last year, it is not improbable that the cotton crop of 1880 will be very large, and may approximate 8,000,000 bales, against a prospective result for 1879 of 5,000,000 bales.

It is a great mistake to suppose that the Southern people are not making money out of their cotton crops at present prices. The expense of making cotton and delivering it at the railway station is about five cents, and the average yield of the South is 191 lbs. per acre, showing the cost of cultivation to be about 5½c per lb. Now the prices obtained by the farmers at interior towns for last year's crop have averaged fully 11½c per lb., and thus there will have remained in the South a clear profit of not less than $120,000,000 as the result of last year's cotton plantings. This enormous profit annually made in cotton cultivation is just where the steady, rapid recuperation of the South comes from. Cotton is the only cash product of the United States, and its value to the country may be realized when it is known that the clear net profit of its cultivation amounts annually to more than the aggregate gross yields of all the gold and silver mines of the West. FARMER.

THE GREENVILLE RAILROAD.

It is to be Sold, But the Reported Purchase by the Wilmington Road Cannot be Traced.

[News and Courier.]

COLUMBIA, April 2.—The report that the Greenville and Columbia Railroad is to be purchased by the Wilmington, Columbia and Augusta Railroad Company cannot be traced to any responsible source here. The sale will take place on the 15th instant, and steps will be taken to protect the interest of the State in its guarantee of $2,500,000 on the bonded debt of the road.

Fifty-six convicts were sent from here to-day to work on the Delton, Easley and Williamston Railroad.

It is reported here that the creditors of the Greenville and Columbia Railroad will bid in the road at the ensuing sale at the minimum price fixed by the decree of the Court, if possible, and hold the State for its endorsement of $2,500,000 on the bonded debt of the road. The necessary steps will be taken to protect the interest of the State in the sale of the road.

The Fish Law.

"There shall be a close time in all the creeks streams and inland waters of this State from the setting of the sun each Tuesday until the rising of the sun on Tuesday, during which time all seines, nets or any plan or device for the stopping or collecting of fish which obstructs any portion of any creek, stream or inland waters, other than a dam for manufacturing purposes, shall be removed from said creeks, streams or waters; and the owner in whole or in part of any such obstruction, plan or device during the period aforesaid shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor, and upon conviction thereof before any Court of competent jurisdiction, shall be fined in the sum of two hundred dollars, one-half of which shall go to the informer and the other half to the County in which the case shall be tried, or imprisoned for a period of not less than three nor more than six months, or both, at the discretion of the Court trying the case."

Approved March 22, 1878.

ANNOUSCEMENT—BIRTHS.—In the latter part of February, to Mrs. Mary E. Gilfen, Missionary of the Associate Reformed Church in Egypt—a daughter. About the middle of March, to Mr. Rachel Pressley, wife of the Associate Reformed Missionary in Mexico—a son.—*A. R. Presbyterian.*

DEATHS IN MARCH IN DUE WEST.—The mortuary record for the month of March in the last eight or ten years for this place, seem fairly noticeable: Dr. R. C. Grier, Dr. James P. Pressley, Rev. Jonathan Galloway, and now Mrs. Bonner have all died in March, and all about the same day of the month.—*A. R. Presbyterian.*

Col. H. Tilman Wardlaw, of the *Abbeville Press and Banner* paid us a pleasant pop-call last evening. We found him an agreeable gentleman and a splendid representative of the fraternity. We were glad to meet him.—*Newberry News.*

The Prodigal Son.

SERMON BY HENRY WARD BEECHER.

Delivered in Plymouth Church, May 13, 1877.

(Christian Union.)

You will find my text in the 15th chapter of Luke's gospel. It is the parable of the prodigal son. I will read it:

"A certain man had two sons: And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living. And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living. And when he had spent all there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want. And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat; and no man gave unto him. And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son; make me as one of thy hired servants. And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat and be merry. For this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry. Now his elder son was in the field: and as he came and drew nigh to the house he heard music and dancing. And he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant. And he said unto him, Thy brother is come; and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound. And he was angry, and would not go in; therefore came his father out and entreated him. And he answering said to his father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment: and yet thou never gavest me a kid that I might make merry with my friends: but as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou killedst for him the fatted calf. And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine. It was meet that we should make merry and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found."

It is a little remarkable that in almost the whole of religious literature the point of emphasis in that exceedingly beautiful parable has been mistaken. We hear a great deal about the prodigal son. The narrative has been the foundation of infinite sermons. It has gone into poetry. It has become classic. And the prodigal son has been made to overlay the story. But it was not the younger brother that was the point of the story at all; it was the elder brother; and yet, we hear very little about the elder brother. A great deal is said about the prodigal son, and that which is made to give force and dramatic interest to the history is the wandering away of the younger brother, his wrong conduct, and his return to his father's house. In other words, the handle is celebrated, but that of which it is the handle is forgotten.

Now, what was the state of mind in which our Saviour was preaching? The parts of the Gospels we cannot understand; nor can we understand much of the Epistles, unless we are perfectly familiar with the public sentiment, the morals, the æsthetic or ethical views, of the times in which the events recorded in them occurred, and to which they were relative.

The Jews had intense scrupulosity concerning all manner of religious ceremony and external propriety. They were precisionally proper. Propriety was the law of their life. They measured everything. They measured their steps, their gestures, their prayers, their offerings. They did everything according to rule. All their actions were regimented and drilled to the last degree of regularity and precision.

But, on the other hand, they had a very feeble appreciation of the conditions of their dispositions. They substituted gifts, and observances, and services, and devotions; but when it was a matter of pride, or envy, or jealousy, or selfishness, or cruelty, they had very little conscience in the matter. In regard to these qualities they were indifferent.

More than that, and worse than that, their scrupulosity not only had brought in half-heathenism and superstition, and kindled in them positive animosity and hatred of those who differed from them in external ideas and character. They were High Church; and they had an abounding contempt not only for Low Church, but for no church. They despised unregulated Jews, and they despised with an inflammatory bigotry the whole gentile world.

They stood in this peculiar state of mind, that they were without sympathy for the race and were intensely sympathetic with themselves, regarding themselves as worthy on account of external punctilliousness more than on account of mild, sweet, rich dispositions. They looked upon all fellowship with those beneath them and outside of them as only without interest, but with positive indignation.

You will recall the familiar scenes which occurred both in the life of the apostles and in the life of the Master. You will remember that because our Saviour was social, and accepted social life as he found it; he was charged by the æsthetic Jews with absolute gluttonousness. Christ himself is a witness of this;

"John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a devil."

He was a reformer that refused to enter into the conventions of society, and stood outside in the wilderness. He was rigorous; he was like a wandering spirit; he was like one, possessed of a devil, as they supposed insane people were; and they thought he was crazy.

"The son of man came eating and drinking (as other people did) and they say, "Behold a man gluttonous, and a wine bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners."

That shows how he stood with the Pharisees theyselves because he showed a feeling of sympathy and brotherhood toward men he found them.

You will recollect an illustration of this where Christ dined with the rich man. He did not despise him because he was rich. He did not repay his hospitality by reading to him a long discourse about the sin of riches. He was not discourteous enough to criticise his table, the meat and drink, of his host. He sat down having a kindly feeling for the rich man, and for those who were in sympathy with him—the rulers.

But there came in from the street, as it were from the rabble, bad folks—*really* bad, they were—drawn by a secret yearning to him; and they sat down also; and outside of the rich Pharisees, who were simmering, boiling over, with criticism; and they said to Christ's disciples, "Why does your Master eat with publicans and sinners?" as much as to say, "Good Lord! he wouldn't do anything of the kind if he never caught us doing such a thing. We wouldn't eat with wicked people. We wouldn't touch them; nor would we allow them to touch us if we could help it; and if they did touch us, we would spend a whole day in ablutions before we went into ordinary life again. Yet your Master is sitting down with them, and they are leaning on him; and we know that they are. That woman is a harlot; that man is a recreant Jew, who is a hireling of the Roman government, and who wrings their hard-earned property from his own countrymen; and there is your Master sitting cheek by jowl with those despicable folks."

That interpreted the spirit, the sense of lofty pride, the consciousness of the observance of outward propriety on their part, which awoke in them a feeling of repugnance to men that were not like them, that were lower in outward life than they were, and internally on the one side is so admirable, and themselves, and which separated them from their kind. This was not the spirit of a single group of men simply, it was the spirit of the time. It was the spirit of the Church in that day. It was not the result of human nature extending itself out unawares. It was the spirit that was sedulously cultivated in men.

Now, to meet this coldness, this cruelty, this bigotry, this wickedness of a pretended religion, which makes a man inhuman, and turns him against his kind, and separates him far from them, is the point of this parable of the prodigal son. It is generally expounded as if the object was to show young men how dangerous it is to get drunk, to run into dissipation, and to break away from the restraints of home; but that was not the object at all. The aim of the parable was to take one wicked man, for whose wickedness there was no excuse, whose conduct was reprehensible in the extreme, but one who did not claim to be righteous, and who was not altogether bad; and to put over against him another wicked man whose wickedness was of a different sort—a wickedness that was oozing on the outside, but cankering and destroying the very structure of the inside. The purpose of the narrative was to hold these two men up, and in such a way that people should feel that vice is less vicious, that crime is less perilous, or that dissipation is less odious than it really is, but in such a way that they should feel that pride and selfishness and intolerance are even more culpable, more dangerous and and more hateful than those other things—and that is what was done in the parable of the prodigal son.

Look a moment at the structure of it. The younger brother represents inexperience, incautious youth, untrained and unrestrained passions. He has been under the tuition of a father who has an element of wise administration, and no thought of character as the end of life. He asks that he may receive immediately that portion of his father's property which is to come to him, that he may set up for himself; and receiving it he sets up for himself by wandering away, and going where he will not be hindered or restrained in the freedom of his lower life. He takes his share of the property, and goes into "a far country," and gathers about him boon companions, and they set up a drinking, and give themselves up to hilarity, and waste his substance—and it does not take long to waste a man's substance by such methods.

The course of the prodigal was reckless. It was not canker nor rust that destroyed him. It was hemorrhage that ailed him. He ruined himself on the run. The best that you can say about him is that the first part of his career he chose those things to destroy himself with which had in them the element of sociality. He connected himself with his kind, it is true; he connected himself with those who were on the lowest kind of people, such as they were; but nevertheless he was social and cordial. His very wickedness was in the channel of sympathy—poor as the channel was, and in the channels of kindness poor as the kindness was. That was the type of man; and he brought himself completely to ruin.

Then there is in the structure of the parable, without a word being uttered, a powerful representation and dramatic teaching of warning and of caution. How soon after transgression there comes remorse! How soon after sin there comes a famine! How soon after being a brilliant leader, as it were, of fashion, comes the companionship of swineherds and the contempt of men! Without being formally analyzed or stated, that is the effect produced by the exquisite drama on every thoughtful mind.

But now comes a more luminous and redeeming feature. When the prodigal came he was not cankered, obstinate, sullen, despairing. He did not say, "Well now die, and let that be the end of it." His memories were awakened; and the way that had gone away from home had not lost all affection for his kindred; and when he shivered at night, and hungered by day, he said, "I remember my father's house. Why, there the very servants fare better than I do. No man give me anything; they have an abundance; and I will go back. I have forfeited my sonship and my rights; but my father will hire me as a servant, in whose position I deserve to stand; and though I am humbled I shall have sustenance at the hand of my father. So I will say, 'Father, it is all plain; there is no disguising it; I have squandered everything; I have offended against the law of God; I have sinned against heaven openly; and I have sinned chiefly, father, against you; and I am not worthy to be called the child of such a father as you are: let me come back; and make me as a servant.'"

So far he was humbled. He was subdued. He had become rational. It is not every man that is made rational, and that is softened and subdued by trouble; but he was.

You will observe this exquisite touch in the narrative: that when he was soliloquizing, and thinking what he was going to say to his father, he thought of a great deal more than he said when he got back. He said to himself, "I will arise and go to my father, and say unto him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son; make me as one of thy hired servants;'" but when he went back he did not say it all. He said, "I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son;" but he had no chance to say, 'Make me as one of thy hired servants." There was no time for that. The old man was beforehand with him, and threw his arms about his neck, and checked that off. The paternal love was too quick for the child's confession and humble supplication; and so he only said, "I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son." He could not get out any more. It was the form of love that hindered him. And I am sure that nobody in whom there was the least throb of kindness, nobody who ever saw tired eyes wandering and shining, and afterward saw them come back clothed in their right mind, can fail to enter into sympathy the father's command, and the impetuousness of it, when he said, "Bring forth the best robe; nothing but the best would do; and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet; and bring hither the fatted calf (a token of the utmost hospitality to the most honored guest) and kill it; and let us eat and be merry." The house shook with merriment; and there was a week's merry-making in true oriental style.

Now comes the rest of the parable. It was the luck of this good father to have a son that was not profligate. He had one religious son. He had one son that never spent money in dissipation. This son was very careful of property. He was not inclined to wander away from home. He stayed under his father's roof. He was very exact and methodical in all home duties. And that was all right. It was beautiful. It was very much to be prized in him, as it would have been praiseworthy in anybody. And he felt so proud of his good boy that he was jealous that he did not know what to do with himself. While his brother was gone he occupied himself inwardly in saying, "Scapegrace! Thank God there is one virtuous man in this family." And whenever anybody spoke of his father's misfortune he would mysteriously shake his head, and say, "Yes, father has had some trouble; but it has been made up to him." He had such a sense of his own goodness, propriety and morality that he despised his brother. And so, when the sound of music and dancing caught his ear, he called a servant to him, and said, "What is all this that is going on in the house?" The servant, full of simplicity and eagerness, said, "Why, your brother has come back." Anybody's heart ought to be stirred to its very depths at the thought of a lost brother found; but his heart was not stirred—except with anger. "My brother returned?"—why, it would come like a tide sounding in from the sea, with all the power of the ocean behind it, to utmost impulse; but that was not the case with him. "My brother? No. Go tell my father that I won't go in." Those tidings were carried back to the father; and they marred the feast.

But see the greatness and the graciousness of the father's love. He was taking back the penitent. Here was the degraded elder brother, envious, hard, ugly; but the old man's heart was so large that he did not throw him out of his sympathy; and he went out and entreated him.

Now consider the colloquy. It was very striking. Consider the ground of the older brother's refusal to be glad. It was wholly founded on his own excellence. He was regular and strict and hated anybody who was irregular. He was so moral that he could not bear anybody that was immoral. He was such a *man* that he despised mankind. And in response to his father's entreaties he said, "Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment." It is as if he had said, "I am model; your finest, old man, on a single instance in which I have not been just right. And yet you never gave me a kid that I might make merry with my friends; but as soon as this son of yours had come, who has devoured your living with harlots, you killed for him the fatted calf. In other words, "I should like to know what sort of a fellow this is that you have got back, and that you are making such an ado over in the house? Why, he is that son of yours who devoured your living with harlots. A pretty character he is to make so much fuss over! And yet you have killed the fatted calf for him."

Now, stand at that point and ask yourself which you would rather be: the younger brother, carried about through the whole of his early career, or the elder brother, regular, moral, obedient, at home. There is no question as to the choice between the two sides. My old uncle is so admirable, and so full of immorality on the other side is so reprehensible to the last degree of emphasis, that no one could do other than choose the former.

But a change came, and the young man repented, and humbled himself, and returned to his home, and was received by paternal love and forgiveness; and now he bids fair to live a virtuous and noble life; and is here the contrast between the conduct of the younger brother, converted and returned, and the conduct of the elder brother, correct, but hard and cold, there is a marked contrast. The younger brother, though he has been a reprobate, has a manly and noble nature, and has entered upon the purpose of reconstructing his life; and he deserves and ought to receive the sympathy of every noble-minded man. The elder brother, although he has been moral and religious so far as his outward life is concerned, has been cold and hard and unlovely in his disposition, and has manifested, and manifests, a spirit which ought to be condemned by every noble-minded man.

It is a pitiable thing to see the ruins of Tadmor in the wilderness; it is a pitiable thing to see the magnificent temple of Greece and Rome lie prostrate; but to see a man who has been ruined by his own sinful conduct, and who is rich in imagination, and whose nature is noble, and whose heart is kind—to see such a man destroyed by evil habits is more pitiable still. It is one of the most pitiable things in the world. Yet such things are happening; and we do not need to go out of Brooklyn to see them. And when a man in his sin has reached the point that he should do the swine's work, who, when their father lay drunk, took a garment and went and covered him. To see a good man fall is enough to cause tears to run down the eyes of every man that has true and sympathetic heart. When a man falls is no time for aquafortis, for vitriol, for flaiting; it is no time for piercing swords and venomous words; it is a time for sympathy. It is a time for succor. It is a time when we should fulfil the command of the apostle, and remember those that are overtaken by faults, and wear the mind that we, too, are in the flesh, and are liable, like them, to fall headlong into ruin.

And it ought to be easy for a man to get back again when he has fallen into evil, provided there be any kind of sympathy. The stretched out to help him by ten thousand good men. There ought to be multitudes of generous hearts ready to medicate his wound, and smooth his way. And when I see that met with averted eyes, severe remarks, bitter criticisms, gibes and jeers, or the sneers of newspapers, I think I behold the scene of the parable enacted over again; and it is that prodigal that has run through a whole career of vice, but one who, by surprise, at one blow, is overthrown. Some sudden disaster, lightning, has sprung upon him, and he finds himself sliding down some unknown plane or falling over some unexpected abyss. Men being thus brought into trouble, a wall, as it were, is lifted up before them when they get back; the elder brother, so to speak, stands in their path, and discourages their recovery, and they are kept down; whereas, if a spirit of mercy and kindness and love were shown toward them, they would be inspired to make the strongest effort in their power to reform their demoralized life, and become worthy and honored members of society once more. It is sad to know that in the majority of cases where men depart from rectitude the hardness and unsympathy of morality and piety make their career hopeless in the future.

Now, although this is a historical occurrence, the history is one of that kind which never runs out. It is like the Amazon, which is never empty, because its waters evaporate, and go up into the sky, and condense, and come down again in the form of rain, and keep the river running forever. There are many histories of the Bible that are like a circular ball which rolls round and round, and which are as true now as they were in the Jews' time—a great deal more so; because there are great many more people now than there were then, and there are a great many more circumstances and conditions which lead to such events.

In the first place we ought to have it understood that man will go wrong in integrity, in purity, and in fidelity to domestic obligations, and who fulfill their duties toward society and property, are, so far as these things go, better men than those who disregard family relationships, and the proper moralities of society, and throw themselves away in swinish pleasure. We must not mar the beauty of integrity, of propriety, of honesty, of sobriety, or virtures like these. They are safeguards, they are honorable men; and no method of criticism, no mode of interpretation, nothing, should lower them; and the Pharisees, who are simmering, boiling over, with criticism; and they said to Christ's disciples, "Why does your Master eat with publicans and sinners?" as much as to say, "Good Lord! he wouldn't do anything of the kind if he never caught us doing such a thing. We wouldn't eat with wicked people. We wouldn't touch them; nor would we allow them to touch us if we could help it; and if they did touch us, we would spend a whole day in ablutions before we went into ordinary life again. Yet your Master is sitting down with them, and they are leaning on him; and we know that they are. That woman is a harlot; that man is a recreant Jew, who is a hireling of the Roman government, and who wrings their hard-earned property from his own countrymen; and there is your Master sitting cheek by jowl with those despicable folks."

That interpreted the spirit, the sense of lofty pride, the consciousness of the observance of outward propriety on their part, which awoke in them a feeling of repugnance to men that were not like them, that were lower in outward life than they were, and internally on the one side is so admirable, and themselves, and which separated them from their kind. This was not the spirit of a single group of men simply, it was the spirit of the time. It was the spirit of the Church in that day. It was not the result of human nature extending itself out unawares. It was the spirit that was sedulously cultivated in men.

Now, to meet this coldness, this cruelty, this bigotry, this wickedness of a pretended religion, which makes a man inhuman, and turns him against his kind, and separates him far from them, is the point of this parable of the prodigal son. It is generally expounded as if the object was to show young men how dangerous it is to get drunk, to run into dissipation, and to break away from the restraints of home; but that was not the object at all. The aim of the parable was to take one wicked man, for whose wickedness there was no excuse, whose conduct was reprehensible in the extreme, but one who did not claim to be righteous, and who was not altogether bad; and to put over against him another wicked man whose wickedness of a different sort—a wickedness that was oozing on the outside, but cankering and destroying the very structure of the inside. The purpose of the narrative was to hold these two men up, and in such a way that people should feel that vice is less vicious, that crime is less perilous, or that dissipation is less odious than it really is, but in such a way that they should feel that pride and selfishness and intolerance are even more culpable, more dangerous and and more hateful than those other things—and that is what was done in the parable of the prodigal son.

Look a moment at the structure of it. The younger brother represents inexperience, incautious youth, untrained and unrestrained passions. He has been under the tuition of a father who has an element of wise administration, and no thought of character as the end of life. He asks that he may receive immediately that portion of his father's property which is to come to him, that he may set up for himself; and receiving it he sets up for himself by wandering away, and going where he will not be hindered or restrained in the freedom of his lower life. He takes his share of the property, and goes into "a far country," and gathers about him boon companions, and they set up a drinking, and give themselves up to hilarity, and waste his substance—and it does not take long to waste a man's substance by such methods.

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