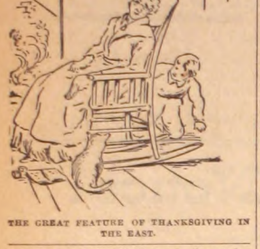
NOT A GRANDMOTHER

ONE THING THEY CAN'T HAVE IN THE FAR WEST.

A Serious Drawback to a New Country—One that Time Alone Can Remedy—Little Children Who Know "Grandma" Only by Hearsay.

Feast-Day on the Plains.

Can you imagine, in these closing days of the year, with Thanksgiving close upon us, a whole land without

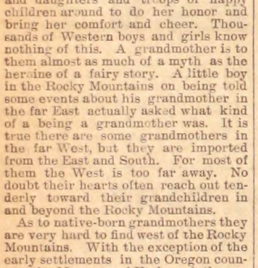


THE GREAT FEATURE OF THANKSGIVING IN THE EAST.

grandmothers? That seems almost incredible in the long-settled communities of the East and South, where no family reunion is complete without at least one venerable figure, so familiar and so dear to all in that household from the days of childhood's earliest recollection. Yet between the Rocky Mountains and the Pacific coast there are hundreds of thousands of homes where children are growing up without a glimpse of their own or any other child's grandmother. They know nothing of the dear old face, the soft gray hair, the quaint figure of that patient little woman who, day after day, sits in the quiet corner of the old home knitting, knitting, and still knitting, while her thoughts are wandering far away into the long ago of her childhood. They know nothing of her gentle chidings, nor can they appreciate the quiet and kindly amusement in the household at grandmother's expense when, after searching the house for her "specs," she is reminded, in response to her anxious inquiry, that they are under the frills of her cap.

Think of Thanksgiving without grandmothers! Why in the land of grandmothers it is time who on that day has first claim upon all our gallantry and chivalry. A white-haired belle, on that day at least, with gray-haired sons and daughters and troops of happy children around to do her honor and bring her comfort and cheer. Thousands of Western boys and girls know nothing of this. A grandmother is to them almost as much of a myth as the heroine of a fairy story. A little boy in the Rocky Mountains on being told some events about his grandmother in the far East actually asked what kind of a being a grandmother was. It is true there are some grandmothers in the far West, but they are imported from the East and South. For most of them the West is too far away. No doubt their hearts often reach out tenderly toward their grandchildren in and beyond the Rocky Mountains.

As to native-born grandmothers they are very hard to find west of the Rocky Mountains. With the exception of the early settlements in the Oregon country, the Mormons of Utah, and the occasional home of the earlier trapper in the mountains or ranchman in California, the civilization is too young for native-born grandmothers.



THANKSGIVING AND NO GRANDMOTHER.

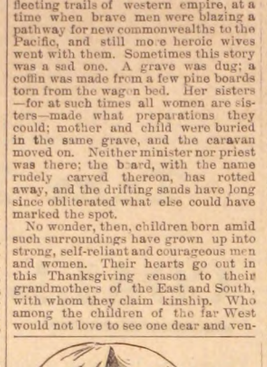
It was only forty years ago that the great rush was made to the gold fields of California, and not until ten years later did the tide of immigration start for Pike's Peak. Possibly, California may produce a few very youthful grandmothers, about, say, forty years of age, but you could scarcely find a native-born grandmother of even that early age in Colorado. Nevertheless the State has a population of nearly 2,000,000. Nebraska, too, has hardly a grandmother to the manor born. Those two States were a waste of prairie and plain thirty six years ago, the home of the buffalo and the Indian, where the face of a white man was hardly known. In the older "new West," consisting of Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, Arkansas, Louisiana and Texas, they have grandmothers of their own.

But you can look upon all that vast region west of the States bordering immediately on the west side of the Mississippi River, and Texas, as having scarcely a native-born American grandmother among millions of people. That region includes more than one-half of the land over which the flag of the Republic floats on Thanksgiving Day, yet a native grandmother can scarcely be found. Thanksgiving without grandmothers is dreary indeed, but the Western grandchildren forget them not. The grandmothers in the East, in far-away New England and in the Southern land, may rest assured that the hearts of their Western grandchildren go out to them as tenderly as if they had known them and been reared by them in the cradle. It is a kind of

desert spot in children's lives not to have seen a grandmother and felt her tender caresses.

The birthplace of some of those earlier grandchildren was, in the pioneer days of the far West, in the old freight wagons and prairie schooners. On the Oregon, California and Pike's Peak trails many a baby was born in an old canvas-covered wagon, and all honor to the mothers of the nation who centuries ago braved the dangers of the almost unknown seas to establish American homes from the New England coast to the Georgia shore. Then over the Alleghanies they came, and then across the Mississippi River. But American women stopped not there. They, too, braved the wilderness of plain and desert, and the storms and dangers of mid-mountain passes. The children whose first sight of the world was from a canvas wagon train, and who are now grown to manhood and womanhood, cannot look back to a mansion or a vine-clad cottage as their birthplace. There is no such sacred home for them to meet in for the happy reunion on Thanksgiving. But they are proud of their birthplace on the fleeting trails of western empire, at a time when brave men were blazing a pathway for new commonwealths to the Pacific, and still more heroic wives went with them. Sometimes this story was a sad one. A grave was dug; a coffin was made from a few pine boards torn from the wagon bed. Her sisters—for at such times all women are sisters—made what preparations they could; mother and child were buried in the same grave, and the caravan moved on. Neither minister nor priest was there; the board, with the name rudely carved thereon, has rotted away, and the drifting sands have long since obliterated what else could have marked the spot.

No wonder, then, children born amid such surroundings have grown up into strong, self-reliant and courageous men and women. Their hearts go out in this Thanksgiving season to their grandmothers of the East and South, with whom they claim kinship. Who among the children of the far West would not love to see one dear and ven-



THANKSGIVING ON THE PLAINS.

erable face in the old homestead on Thanksgiving Day?

AT THE OLD HOME.

Like the patient moss to the rifted hill
The wee brown house is clinging;
A last year's nest that is lone and still,
Though it erst was filled with singing.
Then fleet were the children's pattering feet,
And their thrilling childish laughter,
And merry voices were sweet, oh! sweet,
Ringing from floor to rafter.

The beautiful darlings one by one,
From the nest's safe shelter flying,
Went forth in the sheen of the morning sun,
Their fluttering pinions trying.
But oft, as the reaping time is o'er,
And the nest-fruit ripens the stubble,
They haste to the little home once more
From the great world's toil and trouble.

And the mother herself is at the pane,
With a hand the dim eyes shading,
And the flush of girlhood tints again
The cheek that is thin and fading.
For her boys and girls are coming home,
The mother's fireside cheering,
As they came ere yet they had learned to roam,
Or bowed to the task and burden.

Over the door's worn sill they troop,
The skies of youth above them,
The blessing of God on the happy group,
Whose mother left to love them,
They well may smile in the face of care,
To whom such grace is given;—
A mother's faith, and a mother's prayer,
Holding them close to heaven.

For her, as she clasps her bearded son,
With a heart that is brimming over,
She's tender mother there's room for one,
Her boy, and her boyish lover.
And half of her soul is left away,
So twine the dead and the living,
In the little home wherein to-day,
Her children keep Thanksgiving.

There are tiny hands that pull her gown,
And small heads bright and golden,
The childish laugh and the childish frown,
And the dimpled fingers folden.
That bring again to the mother's breast
The sweet of the sunny weather,
When she hushed her brood in the crowded nest,
And all were glad together.

A truce in the jarring notes of life,
The cries of pain and passion,
Over this lull in the eager strife,
Love hovers, Eden-fashion.
In the wee brown house were lessons taught
Of strong and sturdy living,
And ever where honest hands have wrought,
God hears the true Thanksgiving.
—Home-Maker.

What Is the Frontage of a Lot?

A decision of the Ohio Supreme Court has recently been filed in Cincinnati which refers to the taxation of property based on frontage. The court held it was unfair to a man to tax him for an entire length of his lot on a side of the property which was unused, and decided that where such a state of affairs existed the lot owner should only be taxed on a frontage averaging the frontage of the other lots of the same depth; or, in other words, he should pay on the improved street the frontage on the other street, which would require an increase of the assessment all along the improvement in order to compensate for the difference between the length and breadth of his lot.

It is left, however, to the city to determine which is the front of the lot, as a man may be using the length of his property as well as the width, or both.

THE least movement is of importance to all nature. The entire ocean is affected by a pebble.—Pascal.

THANKSGIVING DAY.

MANY writers have sought to make the observance of Thanksgiving Day an American institution, originating among the early settlers of New England, but historically this opinion cannot be sustained, for the idea was formulated many years before our continent was discovered. Many think it is simply a copy of the old Hebrew ordinance of the Feast of Tabernacles, or feast of ingathering at the end of the year. As early as the reign of Elizabeth of England it was expressly ordered that on Thanksgiving Day no servile work should be performed, while severe penalties were attached to violations of the order. In Holland the first anniversary of the deliverance of the city of Leyden from the siege, Oct. 3, 1575, was kept as a religious festival of thanksgiving and praise.

The earliest account we have of a regular Thanksgiving Day in this country locates the celebration at Mohegan, near the Kennebec River, Me., where on Aug. 9, 1607, old style, it is stated in an old chronicle, Chaplain Seymour, a minister of the Church of England, delivered a sermon "on gyving God thanks for happie meetynge and saffe arryval into the countrie." The example here set was followed by the Plymouth brethren in the autumn of 1621, when they had collected their first harvest, which consisted of twenty acres of corn and six of barley, oats and peas, enough to keep them supplied with food for the coming year. Governor Bradford appointed the day, and in order that the occasion should be observed with good cheer sent hunters out to forage the country to procure a plentiful supply of good things needful for a dinner. The men returned with water fowl, wild turkey and venison. The great Indian chief, Massasoit, and many of his warriors were invited to the feast, which lasted three days.

The next Thanksgiving celebration of which we have any authentic record was celebrated two years afterward, when, however, it was observed not in autumn but in July, and the occasion was manifestly furnished by the timely arrival of a ship from England laden with provisions, when the settlers were on the verge of starvation. During the same year a day of fasting and prayer in the midst of drought was changed to a day of thanksgiving by the coming of rain during the prayers.

In 1632 Gov. Winthrop, of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, commanded a day of thanksgiving on account of the favorable action toward the colonies of the British Privy Council. During the revolution a day of national thanksgiving was annually recommended to Congress, and at the adoption of the Constitution, 1789, Washington was strongly urged by Congress to appoint a day for thanksgiving. In 1795 a proclamation of thanksgiving was issued for the suppression of insurrection. President Madison in 1815 appointed a day for national thanksgiving.

It is only within the last thirty years that Thanksgiving Day has assumed the character of a fixed annual occurrence, its origin being traced to the proclamation of President Lincoln, dated July 15, 1863. The day chosen by President Lincoln on this occasion for "national thanksgiving, praise, and prayer" was August 6 of that year. In the two following years the date of the observance was left to the discretion of the President, but during the past twenty-five years the last Thursday in November has been set apart for the holiday.

With the Turkey.

TURKEYS are cheap this year. There's one thing to be thankful for.—Boston News.

THE Thanksgiving bird only lacks the bristles to be as proud a being as the American porker.—Philadelphia Record.

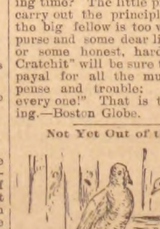
THANKSGIVING is no longer a fast; it is a feast. The average American likes to express his gratitude from the fullness of his blessings.—Baltimore American.

THE best sauce for the great feast is a consciousness that you have given some poor fellow or forlorn family special occasion to be thankful.—New York World.

MRS. EMMA EWING has come to the front again with an elaborate essay on "A Thanksgiving Dinner That Children Can Eat." Now, by the proud comb of the turkey, dinn anybody ever see a Thanksgiving dinner that the children cannot eat?—Kansas City Star.

LET'S see! Isn't there a "Bob Cratchit" or a "Tiny Tim" somewhere in our neighborhood this Thanksgiving time? The little prize Turkey will carry out the principle beautifully if the big fellow is too weighty for our purse and some dear little "Tiny Tim" or some honest, hard-working "Bob Cratchit" will be sure to observe in repayal for all the much or little expense and trouble: "God bless us, every one!" That is true Thanksgiving.—Boston Globe.

Not Yet Out of the Woods.



First Turkey (a youthful bird)—Well, thank goodness, we've escaped the Thanksgiving Scylla. Second Turkey (of mature experience)—Yes, but I tremble when I think of the Christmas Charybdis.

The Gorgeous Greeks.

The Greek garments were frequently woven in gorgeous patterns and embroidered with gold and silver.

LABOR may be a burden and a chastisement, but it is also an honor and glory. Without it nothing can be accomplished.

TALMAGE'S SERMON.

THE BROOKLYN PREACHER ON THE "IFS" OF THE BIBLE.

Two Letters the Pivot on Which Everything Turns—Only Four Steps Between Faith and Unbelief—The Gospel of Jesus Christ the Religion for Adversity.

The Tabernacle Pulpit.

In the Brooklyn Tabernacle Sunday morning Rev. Dr. Talmage delivered one of his most unique and useful sermons from a text never before preached from. Subject, The "Ifs" of the Bible. The text chosen was Exodus xxxii, 32, "If thou wilt forgive their sin—and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book."

There is in our English language a small conjunction which I propose, by God's help, to haul out of its present insignificancy and set upon the throne where it belongs, and that is the conjunction "if." Though made of only two letters, it is the pivot on which everything turns. All time and all eternity are at its disposal. We slure it in our utterance, we ignore it in our appreciation, and none of us recognizes it as the most tremendous word in all the vocabulary outside of those words which describe deity.

"If!" Why, that word we take as a tramp among words, now appearing here, now appearing there, but having no value of its own, when it really has a millionairedom of words, and in its train walk all planetary, stellar, lunar, solar destinies. If the boat of leaves made watertight, in which the infant Moses sailed the Nile, had sunk, who would have led Israel out of Egypt? If the Red Sea had not parted for the escape of one host and then come together for the submergence of another, would the book of Exodus ever have been written? If the ship on which Columbus sailed for America had gone down in an Atlantic cyclone, how much longer would it have taken for the discovery of this country?

If Grouchy had come up with re-enforcements in time to give the French the victory of Waterlo, what would have been the fate of Europe? If the Spanish armada had not been wrecked off the coast, how different would have been chapters in English history! If the battle of Hastings, or the battle of Tolbiac, or the battle of Valmy, or the battle of Mataurus, or the battle of Arbela, or the battle of Chalons, each one of which turned the world's destiny, had been decided the other way.

The Infinity of "If."

If Shakespeare had never been born for the drama, or Handel had never been born for music, or Titian had never been born for painting, or Thorwaldsen had never been born for sculpture, or Edmund Burke had never been born for eloquence, or Socrates had never been born for philosophy, or Blackstone had never been born for the law, or Copernicus had never been born for astronomy, or Luther had never been born for the reformation!

Oh, that conjunction "if!" How much has depended on it! The height of it, the depth of it, the length of it, the breadth of it, the immensity of it, the infinity of it—who can measure? It would swamp anything but omnipotence. But I must confine myself today to the "ifs" of the Bible, and in doing so I shall speak of the "if" of overpowering earnestness, the "if" of incredulity, the "if" of boat, the "if" of argumentation, the "if" of eternal significance, or so many of these "ifs" as I can compass in the time that may be reasonably allotted to pulpit discourse.

First, the "if" of overpowering earnestness. My text gives it. The Israelites have been worshiping an idol, notwithstanding all that God had done for them, and now Moses offers the most vehement prayer of all history, and it turns upon an "if." "If thou wilt forgive their sins—and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book." Oh, what an overwhelming "if!" It was as much as to say: "If thou wilt not pardon them, do not pardon me. If thou will not bring them to the promised land, let me never see the promised land. If they must perish, let me perish with them. In that book where thou recordest their doom record my doom. If they are shut out of heaven, let me be shut out of heaven. If they go down into darkness, let me go down into darkness.' What vehemence and holy recklessness of prayer!

A Mother's Agonies.

Yet there are those here who, I have no doubt, have, in their all absorbing desire to have others saved, risked the same prayer, for it is a risk. You must not make it unless you are willing to balance your eternal salvation on such an "if." Yet there have been cases where a mother has been so anxious for the recovery of a wayward son that her prayer has swung and trembled and poised on an "if" like that of the text. "If not, blot me, I pray Thee, out of Thy book. Write his name in the Lamb's Book of Life, or turn to the page where my name was written ten or twenty or forty or sixty years ago, and with the black ink of everlasting midnight erase my first name, and my last name, and all my name. If he will not go into shipwreck, let me be tossed amid the same breakers. If he cannot be a partner in my bliss, let me be a partner in his woe. I have for many years loved Thee, O God, and it has been my expectation to sit with Christ and all the redeemed at the banquet of the skies, but now I give up my promised place at the feast, and my promised robe, and my promised crown, and my promised throne unless John, unless George, unless Henry, unless my darling son can share them with me. Heaven will be no Heaven without him. O God, save my boy, or count me among the lost!"

That is a terrific prayer, and yet there is a young man sitting in the pew on the main floor, or in the lower gallery, or in the top gallery, who has already crushed such a prayer from his mother's heart. He hardly ever writes home, or, living at home, what does he care how much trouble he gives her? Her tears are not more to him than the rain that drops from the eaves of a house on a dark night. The fact that she does not sleep because of watching for his return late at night does not choke his laughter or hasten his step forward.

She has tried coaxing and kindness and self-sacrifices and all the ordinary prayers that mothers make for their children, and all have failed. She is coming toward the vivid and venturesome and terrific prayer of my text. She is going to lift her own eternity and set it upon that one "if," by which she expects to decide whether you will go up with her or she down with you. She may be this moment looking heavenward and saying, "O Lord, reclaim him by thy grace," and then adding that heart rendering "if" of my text, "if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book."

After three years of absence a son wrote his mother in one of the New England whaling villages that he was coming home in a certain ship. Motherlike, she stood watching, and the ship was in the offing, but a fearful storm struck it and dashed the ship on the rocks that night. All that night the mother prayed for the safety of the son, and just at dawn there was a knock at the cottage door, and the son entered, crying out, "Mother, I knew you would pray me home!" If I should ask all those in this assemblage who have been prayed home to God by pious mothers to stand up, there would be scores that would stand, and if I should ask them to give testimony it would be the testimony of that New England son coming ashore from the spile timbers of the whaling ship, "My mother prayed me home!"

The "If" of Incredulity.

Another Bible "if" is the "if" of incredulity. Satan used it when Christ's vitality was depressed by forty days' abstinence from food, and the tempter pointed to some stones, in color and shape like loaves of bread, and said, "If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread." That was appropriate, for satan is the father of that "if" of incredulity. Peter used the same "if" when, standing on the wet and slippery deck of a fishing smack off Lake Galilee, he saw Christ walking on the sea as though it were as solid as a pavement of basalt from the adjoining volcanic hills, and Peter cried, "If it be thou, let me come to thee on the water."

What a preposterous "if!" What human foot was ever so constructed as to walk on water? In what part of the earth did law of gravitation make an exception to the rule that a man will sink to the elbow when he touches the wave of river or lake and will sink still farther unless he can swim? But here Peter looks out upon the form in the shape of a man defying the mightiest law of the universe, the law of gravitation, and standing erect on the surface of the liquid. Yet the incredulous Peter cries out to the Lord, "If it be thou." Alas, for that incredulous "if!" It is working as powerfully in the latter part of this nineteenth Christian century as it did in the early part of the first Christian century.

Though a small conjunction, it is the biggest block to-day in the way of the gospel chariot. "If!" "If!" We have theological seminaries which spend most of their time and employ their learning and their genius in the manufacturing of "ifs." With that weaponry are assailed the Pentateuch, and the miracles, and the divinity of Jesus Christ. Almost everybody is chewing on a bit of "if." Here is a man bows for prayer, he puts his knee on an "if." The door through which people pass into infidelity and atheism and all immoralities has two doorposts, and the one is made of the letter "i" and the other of the letter "f."

Four Momentous Steps.

There are only four steps between strong faith and complete unbelief. First, surrender the idea of the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures and adopt the idea that they were all generally supervised by the Lord. Second, surrender the idea that they were all generally supervised by the Lord and adopt the theory that they were not all, but partly, supervised by the Lord. Third, believe that they are the result gradual evolution of the ages, and men wrote according to the wisdom of the times in which they lived. Fourth, believe that the Bible is a bad book and not only unworthy of credence, but pernicious and debasing and cruel.

Only four steps from the stout faith in which the martyrs died to the blatant caricature of Christianity as the greatest sham of the centuries. But the door to all that precipitation and horror is made out of an "if." The mother of unrests in the minds of Christian people and in those who regard sacred things is the "if" of incredulity. In 1879 in Scotland, I saw a letter which had been written many years ago by Thomas Carlyle to Thomas Chalmers. Carlyle at the time of writing the letter was a young man. The letter was not to be published until after the death of Carlyle. His death having taken place, the letter ought to be published.

It was a letter in which Thomas Carlyle expresses the tortures of his own mind while relaxing his faith in Christianity, while at the same time he expresses his admiration for Dr. Chalmers, and in which Carlyle wishes that he had the same faith that the great Scotch minister evidently exercised. Nothing that Thomas Carlyle ever wrote in "Sartor Resartus," or the "French Revolution," or his "Life of Cromwell," or his immortal "Essays," had in it more wondrous power than that letter which bewailed his own doubts and extolled the strong faith of another.

The Boy and His Bible.

Perhaps this sermon, finding its way into a Scottish home, may suggest its printing, for that letter shows more mightily than anything I have ever read the difference between the "I know" of Paul, and the "I know" of Job, and the "I know" of Thomas Chalmers, and the "I know" of all those who hold with a firm grip the Gospel, on the one hand, and the uncertainty, bestorming and torturing "if" of incredulity on the other. I like the positive faith of that sailor boy that Captain Judkins of the steamship Scotio picked up in a hurricane. "Go aloft," said Captain Judkins to his mate, "and look out for wrecks."

Before the mate had gone he came up the rattlines he shouted: "A wreck! A wreck!" "Where away?" said Captain Judkins. "Off the port bow," was the answer. Lifeboats were lowered, and forty men volunteered to put out across the angry sea for the wreck. They came back with a dozen shipwrecked, and among them a boy of seven years. "Where are your?" said Captain Judkins. The answer was: "I am a Scotch boy. My father and mother are dead, and I am on my way to America." "What have you here?" said Captain Judkins as he opened the boy's jacket and took hold of a rope around the boy's body. "It is a rope," said the boy. "But what is that tied by this rope under your arm?" "That, sir, is my mother's bible. She told me never to lose that." "Could you not have saved something else?" "Not and saved that." "Did you expect to go down?" "Yes, sir, but I meant to take my mother's bible down with me." "Bravo!" said Captain Judkins. "I will take care of you."

Another Bible "if" is the "if" of eternal significance. Solomon gives us that "if" twice in one sentence when he says, "If thou be wise, thou shalt be wise for thyself, but if thou scornest thou alone shalt bear it." Christ gives us that "if" when he says, "If thou hadst known in this thy day the things which belong unto thy peace, but now they are hidden from thine eyes." Paul gives us that "if" when he says, "If they shall enter into my rest." All those "ifs" and a score more that might recall put the whole responsibility of our salvation on ourselves Christ's willingness to pardon—no "if" about that. Realms of glory awaiting the righteous—no "if" about that.

The only "if" in all the case worth a moment's consideration is the "if" that attaches itself to the question as to whether we will accept, whether we will repent, whether we will believe, whether we will rise forever. Is it not time that we take our eternal future off that swivel? Is it not time that we extirpate that "if," that miscrable "if," that hazardous "if?" We would not allow this uncertain "if" to stay long in anything else of importance. Let some one say in regard to a railroad bridge, "I have reasons for asking if that bridge is safe," and you would not cross it. Let some one say, "I have reasons to ask if that steamer is trustworthy," and you would not take passage on it.

Let some one suggest in regard to a property that you are about to purchase, "I have reasons to ask if they can give a good title," and you would not pay a dollar down until you had some skillful real estate lawyer examine the title. But you allowed for years of my lifetime, and some of you have allowed for years of your lifetime, an "if" to stand tossing up and down questions of eternal destiny. Oh, decide! Perhaps your arrival here today may decide. Stranger things than that have put to flight forever the "if" of uncertainty.

The Miner's Moving Story.

A few Sabbath nights ago in this church a man passing at the foot of the pulpit said to me, "I am a miner from England," and then he pushed back his coat sleeve and said, "Do you see that scar on my arm?" I said, "Yes; you must have had an awful wound there some time." He said, "Yes; it nearly cost me my life. I was in a mine in England 600 feet underground and three miles from the shaft of the mine, and a rock fell on me, and my fellow laborer pried off the rock, and I was bleeding to death, and he took a newspaper from around his luncheon and bandaged my wound, and then helped me over the three miles underground to the shaft, where I was lifted to the top, and when the newspaper was taken off my wound I read in it something that saved my soul, and it was one of your sermons. Good night," he said as he passed on, leaving me transfixed with grateful emotion.

And who knows but the words I now speak, blessed of God, may reach some wounded soul deep down in the black mine of sin, and that these words may be blessed to the stanching of the wound and the eternal life of the soul? Settle this matter instantly, positively and forever, and throw the "if" bury deep the last "if." How to do it? Fling body, mind, and soul in a prayer as earnest as that of Moses in the text. Can you doubt the earnestness of this prayer of the text? It is so heavy with emotion that it breaks down in the middle. It was so earnst that the translators in the modern copies of the Bible have put in the place of it a straight line, a dash, for in omission that will never be filled up. Such an abrupt pause, such a sudden snapping off of the sentence!

A Great Explorer's Prayer Answered.

Between the first and last sentences of my text there was a paroxysm of earnestness that no mighty for words will take half of an eternity to tell of all the answers of earnest and faithful prayer. In his last journal David Livingstone, in Africa, records the prayer so soon to be answered: "10 March—birthday. My Jesus, my God, my life, my all, I again dedicate my whole self to thee. Accept me, and grant, O Gracious Father, that ere this year is gone I may finish my task. In Jesus' name I ask it. Amen."

When the dusky servant looked into Livingston's tent and found him dead on his knees, he saw that the prayer had been answered. But notwithstanding the earnestness of the prayer of Moses in the text, it was defeated and it was not answered. I think the two "ifs" in the prayer defeated it, and one "if" is enough to defeat any prayer, whatever other good characteristics it may have. "If thou wilt forgive their sins—and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book." God did neither. As the following verses show, he pardoned their sin, but he was sure did not blot out one letter of the name of Moses from the Book of Life.

The Six "Ifs" About Sodom.

Abraham's prayer for the rescue of Sodom was a grand prayer in some respects, but there were six "ifs" in it, or "peradventures," which mean the same thing—"peradventure, if there may be fifty righteous in the city, peradventure forty-five, peradventure forty, peradventure thirty, peradventure twenty, peradventure ten." Those six peradventures, those six "ifs" killed the prayer, and Sodom went down under. Nearly all the prayers that were answered had no "ifs" in them—the prayer of Elijah that changed dry weather to wet weather, the prayer that changed Hezekiah from a sick man to a well man, the prayer that halted sun and moon without shaking the universe to pieces.

Oh, rally your soul for a prayer with no "ifs" in it. Say at once to God: "Lord, Thou hast promised pardon, and I take it. Here are my wounds; heal them. Here is my blindness; irradiate it. Here are my chains of bondage; by the Gospel hammer strike them off. I am fleeing to the City of Refuge, and I am sure this is the right way. Thanks be to God, I am free!"

Once more: Many hopes were slain.

But now, in Christ, I live again.

With the Mosaic earnestness of my text and without its Mosaic "ifs" let us cry out to God. Aye, if words fail us, let us take the suggestion of that printer's dash and the heart and with a mighty throe implore pardon and comfort and life and Heaven. For this assemblage, all of whom I shall meet in the last judgment, I dare not offer the prayer of my text, and so I change it and say, "Lord God, forgive our sins and write our names in the book of Thy loving remembrance, from which they shall never be blotted out."