

# SUNDAY SERMON

A Scholarly Discourse By  
Rev. Lyman Abbott.

Brooklyn, N. Y. — At Plymouth Church, the Rev. Lyman Abbott, D. D., occupied his old pulpit in the absence of the present pastor, the Rev. N. B. Hillis. Dr. Abbott's subject was "The Essential Spirit of Christianity." He chose for his text the passage Matthew 23:23-28: "Whosoever will be chief among you let him be your servant, even as the Son of Man came, not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many;" and said:

What do we mean by Christianity? It is the spirit of the Christ who "came not to be ministered unto, but to minister." The spirit of the Christian is to be like the Christ. It is to get back of all that is injurious and all that is injurious and all the accretions that have been made in the growth of Christianity, doctrine, ritual and institutional; to get back to the time of Christ Himself, and, if we can, see what Christ actually meant then and there, in order that we may get at the essential spirit of it.

There appeared at the beginning of the so-called Christian era a religious teacher in a province of Palestine. He was certainly for that age and for all ages a singular man. The things we care for most He seemed to be indifferent to. He did not care for pleasure, but He was not ascetic. He did not hide Himself from the world. There is no instance in which He refused an invitation to a feast. He began His ministry by crossing wine to prolong the festivities at a marriage feast, and yet He did not care what man could do. He said Himself that He "had not where to lay His head." He often laid down to sleep with only the stars overhead. He lived on the simplest food. He did not care for wealth. He never called a man a fool but once, and that was the man who spent all his life in accumulating and then did not know what to do with the accumulations. He did not care for power, for when He was offered a crown He refused it. One day they gathered about Him, waved their branches and shouted "Hosannah" and amid all the joy and acclaim He stopped and wept as He remembered the sorrows which were to come upon Jerusalem.

Ambition did not appeal to Him. He was willing to preach to 5,000 or to 200 on every day. He was not afraid to go down with one poor wretched woman and talk to her by the well; and it did not make any difference. What did He care for? For service—to go about among men and make them happy. That was what He cared for. He cared for all sorts of people. He was willing to serve the Greek or the Jew. If He lived now, He would be as willing to serve the Jew as the Christian. He was willing to save the poor and the rich. He was not a poor man's prophet, nor was He a rich man's prophet. He was willing to minister to the ignorant, and just as willing to minister to the wise. He would talk with the peasant, or speak an evening with one of the great rabbis at Jerusalem. Character or past conduct did not separate men from His sympathy. It did not make any difference how badly a man had lived or how rotten was his character. He was ready to help him. He came into Jericho one day and the people crowded round Him. It was a city of priests and corrupt politicians. The politicians were more corrupt than in this day, and that is saying a great deal. It was a city of priests and politicians, and one of these latter, who had made money by squeezing the public, was a little man, who climbed into a tree, because he wanted to see this strange man pass. This strange man passed the priests and the orthodox religious people and looked up at the little man and said: "Come down; I am going to dine with you today." He sought out the bad man because He thought He could do something for him. He was equally ready to minister food to the hungry, healing to the sick, comfort to the afflicted, wisdom to the ignorant, inspiration to the depressed or sinner to the simple and the burdened.

The only question with Him was: "Is this man in trouble?" What kind of trouble? "It does not matter what kind of trouble, I want to help him." That was absolutely His only question. And yet this man said that the deepest troubles of men are the troubles that come upon them because of their wrong doing. In His first great sermon He gave the secret of happiness when He said: "Blessed are the pure in heart"; and "Blessed are the poor in spirit"; etc. The secret of happiness is what you are, not what you have. So the thing He wanted to do was to change men's characters, to get them out of sin and lead them in the paths of virtue and truth and good will. He wanted to lift off the burden of their sins and make them healthy. He wanted to help men and women. To this He gave His life. He did not do this incidentally, as it chanced Him; there was something more. He said: "That is what I am here for. That is what God put me into the world for; that is the mission He has given me." He belonged to a nation that had been taught to look forward for the golden age, not backward. They thought the good time was yet to come. Their prophets had told them so. They thought it was to be brought about, some said, by the nation; by a series of prophets; or by a single man; a conqueror. And this man Jesus said: "This kingdom of God is at hand. This good time is already here, and I am the one to bring it about." The Jews had been taught that He had given them this. Then He gathered a few disciples about Him and after a year with them He asked: "Whom do men say that I am?" They said: "There are many that say so." Some say a prophet; some a great teacher; some one thing and some another." And He said: "But whom say ye that I am?" One can imagine the moment of silence and hesitation and uncertainty that followed. And then one, an impulsive one, said: "You are the Messiah." He replied: "Yes, I am; that is right."

The mission of His life was to bring about the kingdom of God on the earth and He said: "The way to do it is to help every one in need. No matter what the character—to help one, another, that is the way." The Jews wanted it another way. Question: people, Jews; They thought they were the great people, which was very like the Anglo-Saxons of to-day. They thought there were no other people who were religious or ethical; or who had the secret of great progress. They said the kingdom would come; Jerusalem, not to Rome, and that not the Romans, but the Jews, would be dominant. But Christ said, "No, that is a mistake. The kingdom of God is not in Jerusalem or Rome or Athens. It is in the spirit of universal helpfulness." That is the kingdom of God, and the kingdom will come out of every man helps his fellow man out of every kind of

need, whatever it may be. His was finally arrested and put upon oath and asked: "Are You the Messiah?" "I am," He said. He claimed to be the Messiah and He claimed to bring about the kingdom of God by diffusing the spirit of hope and faith and good will. The apostles went forth and preached—what? Not the Ten Commandments or the Sermon on the Mount, but "This is the Messiah. The Deliverer is come." In the nature of the case He could not do it alone. If it were to be a sudden, upheaval, some cataclysm, some march of armies, it could be done in a single period, but if good will, peace and universal helpfulness were to be brought about, that would take generations. That must go from kingdom to kingdom, from city to city and nation to nation. And so He called a few men to carry the message—first twelve, then seventy. Then He died. Then, after His resurrection, He sent others. He sent them in the spirit of good will and helpfulness, to heal the sick, to comfort the sorrowing, to minister to every one, rich, poor, wise, ignorant, to the Jew and the Gentile.

There was something more. In all ages men have believed in some great occult power lying back of the phenomenon of nature. The Jews thought there was one great God who inexorably demanded righteousness of His people, and Jesus said, "God is such a one as I am, actuated by the same spirit." In My life and teachings I am interpreting this great Infinite Power, this just, wise God, this eternal Infinite Presence." And He illustrated His meaning by the parable of the king whose subjects rebelled against him; by the parable of the lost sheep; and the parable of the prodigal son. "That is the kind of Father that God is," said Jesus.

There is still more in Christ's message. In all ages men have been trying to get to this unknown God. They have said: "We have done wrong, we have sinned, we have disobeyed. How shall we appease His anger? How shall we sacrifice?" It is difficult in this twentieth century to realize what worship was twenty centuries ago. Picture the temple, the altar, the white-robed priests, the display of holocausts, the cooking of doves, the beating of sheep, and within, by this altar, a butcher's shop, a shambles. Priests cutting the throats of lambs and cattle and the blood flowing in great rivers on from under the altar. Why? Because the people thought God had a right to be angry—and they were right. He had a right to be angry—and they were right. He was angry—and they were half right in that—and they thought the way to peace was by sacrifice, and they were wrong in that. Jesus never offered a sacrifice, so far as we know, or sold anybody else to offer sacrifice.

This world is God's reformatory and what He has done is His Marshall has come for you and me. Has He come in power, with greatness of riches or wisdom or display of intellectual wisdom? No. Come how? In sympathy, in tenderness, in love, in purity and truth and righteousness. We can see no way to happiness save by endeavoring with truth and purity and righteousness. He has come to us—to you and me.

He says, "You can do the same thing." You say: "I have no power." "Neither had I." "I have no wealth." "Neither had I." "I was not an ecclesiast." "Neither was I." "Come to me, and My spirit will give life to you, and I will lay down your life for others, as I have for you."

I have tried this morning to get behind all definitions, all creedal statements, not because I think they are dead, but because I am sure the spirit of Christ transcends all definitions and creedal statements. Christianity: What is it? It is the new faith in God. It is the faith of God, who is in His world as He was in Jesus Christ, comforting the sorrowing, helping the troubled, and instructing the ignorant. It is the new hope, the hope of the kingdom of God that is coming. There is coming the time when men will give to their fellow men fair, honest, generous measures and will do unto others as they would be done unto. That is the consciousness. There is coming a time when there will be peace in every heart because it is at harmony with itself, and peace in the whole world between man and man, nation and nation. And it is a hope that Christianity brings when it says: "No, you can't work for the spirit of the Eternal, and it is the spirit of good will, of service, of sacrifice, of laying down our lives for others as He laid down His life for us."

Christianity: What is it? It is that God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him might not perish, but have everlasting life. That is the theology of Christianity. "The kingdom of God is at hand. That is the hope of Christianity." A new commandment: I give it unto you; that ye love one another as I have loved you. That is the law of Christianity.

Where Love Is, There God Is. Thoughts that disturb and trouble us seldom come from God. It is generally best to put them away, and throw ourselves with increased trust in Him and submerge self at His feet. And never forget, amid whatever may befall you—dryness, coldness, desolation and disappointment, consciousness of many faults, and of great weakness, and what of faith that where Love is, there God is sure to be. He never yet has suffered any soul to fall wholly from Him which, amid all its frailties and falls, clings to Him in love.—H. L. Sidney Lear.

God's Errands. Difficulties are God's errands, and when we are sent upon them we should esteem it a proof of God's confidence.—Becher.

Cape Cod Thrift. On the way from one town on Cape Cod to another a contributor came upon a charming house by the roadside, which immediately claimed his attention. It bore a fresh coat of white paint, which was well set off by green blinds. There was a smooth piece of lawn in front, a group of fine shade trees and hammocks, piazza chairs, brilliant sofa pillows and all the adjuncts of summer comfort in luxurious profusion.

"Whose place is this?" he demanded of the boy of 12 who accompanied him as guide and adviser in general. "That there," said the boy, "Oh, that's the poorhouse."

# THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

INTERNATIONAL LESSON COMMENTS  
FOR APRIL 8.

Subject: Jesus and the Sabbath, Matt. xii, 1-14—Golden Text, Exod. xx, 8—Memory Verses, 7, 8—Topic: The Lord's Day.

1. An act of necessity performed on the Sabbath (vs. 1-8). "At that time." It must have been in early autumn during the harvest season. "Through the corn." To an American reader the word corn suggests the idea of Indian corn or maize; but the word in the text has reference to grain, such as wheat, rye or barley. "Began to pluck." They rubbed it in their hands (Luke 6:3) to separate the grain from the chaff. This was allowable according to the law (Deut. 23:25). 2. "Pharisees saw it." The Pharisees, who were watching for an opportunity to catch him, object to the disciples doing this on the Sabbath day. They considered the plucking and rubbing in the hand sufficiently near to reaping and threshing to constitute them, secondary violations of the fourth commandment. "Not lawful." The Pharisees extended their Sabbath regulations beyond what Moses commanded in order to avoid the possibility of transgression. The worthless childlessness of the Sabbath rules Christ opposed may be judged from its being forbidden to go out with a needle or a pin when Friday was observed, as one might forget to lay them aside before the Sabbath began. Thirty-nine cases of work were forbidden, and each of these had endless subdivisions. These regulations tended to make void the law, and many of them were in direct opposition to the real design of the Sabbath. 3. "Have ye not read?" To vindicate His disciples Christ referred the Pharisees to a similar case recorded in their own Scriptures and will which they should have been familiar with. See 1 Sam. 21:4. "An hungry man here is not arguing for an excuse to break the law, but for its true construction."

4. "The house of God." The tabernacle. "Did eat." Ahimelech, the priest at Nob, gave David and his companions five loaves of the showbread. The law provided that twelve loaves of bread should be put in two piles upon the table in the sanctuary, to remain a week and then to be eaten by the priests only (Lev. 24:5-9). Now David, fleeing from Saul, weary and hungry, laid out on the bread contrary to the letter of the law. Christ's argument was that if David could do this without blame it must be right for the disciples to satisfy their hunger on the Sabbath day. "Shewbread." Literally bread of setting forth—that is, bread that was set forth in the sanctuary (Lev. 24:8). 5. "Printhe the Sabbath." Jesus continued His argument by showing that even the law under certain circumstances provided for the doing of that which had been expressly forbidden by the law. On the Sabbath the priests were engaged in other days the priests were engaged in killing, preparing and burning the sacrifices and in performing the whole temple service. It was one of the sayings of the rabbins that there was no Sabbath keeping in the temple. 6. "Greater than the temple." Inasmuch as the one who built the house is greater than the house, Christ refers there to His own authority and power. The law-giver is greater than the law. Christ was greater than the temple. 7. "My Father is God." A knowledge of the true meaning of God's word will prevent rash judgment. Jesus here charges His critics with ignorance of their own prophets.

8. Lord even of the Sabbath. Jesus now admits Himself greater than the statute law of Moses; may He is greater than the Sabbath law established by God at the creation. Thus does He maintain Himself to be the incarnate Legislator of the world. At the resurrection of Christ the Jewish Sabbath was abolished, and "the Lord's day" (Rev. 7:19), or the Christian Sabbath, was given us in its stead.

9. An act of mercy performed on the Sabbath (vs. 9-13). "Hand withered." A case of paralysis. Such cases were considered incurable. Luke said, "He said, 'Right hand.'" "They asked Him." From Luke we learn that they had been watching Him before they asked this question. "Might accuse." Might bring Him to trial for breaking the Sabbath.

10. He said, "Lute says He knew what he would do, and he would answer them by drawing an argument from their own conduct. 'If I fail,' etc. This was a self-evident proposition. Deeds of mercy and humanity did not infringe on the Sabbath day." "Put." Luke says, "Send him to go on his way." The purpose of healing him was to make which animals often fell. 12. "A man better than a sheep." Christ always puts an enormous value on man. A man is of infinitely more consequence and value than a brute. If they would show any regard for their souls, they would they not show mercy to a man? "It is lawful." This was universally allowed by the Jews themselves.

13. "Stretch forth." A remarkable command. The man might have reason that his hand was withered and that he could not obey, but being commanded it was his duty to make the effort; he did so and was healed. Faith disregards apparent impossibilities where there is a command and promise of God. "Restored whole." A little before this Christ had claimed divine authority; He now proves that He possesses it. These two cases determined what may be done on the Sabbath. The one was a case of necessity, the other of mercy.

14. "Held a council." Mark says they called in the Pharisees who were in the favor of the Roman dominion over Judea. Thus did these sticklers for the law of Moses unite with its bold, political subverters in order to accomplish their designs against Jesus.

Maimed Birds Did Well. "Maimed birds show remarkable intelligence in getting food for themselves," said a naturalist. "I once found in my garden a bluebird that a stone had wounded badly. The poor little creature could neither walk nor fly. I put it in a cucumber frame and fed it regularly, but I suppose I didn't give it enough, for it foraged industriously all the time. Lying on the earth, it would cover itself with leaves—only its small eyes would be visible. Then, when a fly alighted somewhere near—woop, the bird's head and neck would dart from the covering of leaves and the fly would be devoured."

"A fitch with a broken wing lived high all one summer in my garden at the expense of the spiders. It pillaged their webs. It made a round of some twenty webs a day and fattened on the contents of those dimy larders." Transcript.

# CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOR NOTES

APRIL EIGHTH.

Our Pledge, and How to Keep It.—Matt. 28: 20; Eccl. 5: 1-7; Ps. 51:6. No pledge could safely be made to an absent God; any pledge He asks may safely be made to a present God. If we know ourselves inwardly true to the pledge, we need never think about the appearance of pledge-keeping outside.

An ounce of explanation of the pledge before it is signed is worth a ton of exhortation to keep it after it is signed.

It is better not to vow than to vow and not pay; but far better than either is it to vow and to pay. Suggestions. We shall not keep our pledge if it is made to man, but only as it is made to Christ. It is quite as much a question of our pledge's keeping us as of our keeping our pledge.

A pledge is never broken so badly that it is not better to mend it than to throw it away. You keep the pledge in doing—not the part you find easy, but the part you find hard.

Illustrations. A pledge in the old days was a gage of battle; so in ours—battle against sin and sloth. The pledge is not a jailer's chain to bind you, but a survivor's chain to mark out the way. The world's business is based on a system of pledges—money, checks, bargains, deeds, notes, partnerships. So is our Father's business. A pledge is like articles of agreement in a business partnership; both parties are the gainers.

Questions. Is my pledge a burden or a help? Am I keeping my pledge in the spirit as well as the letter? Am I trying to keep the pledge in my own strength alone?

# EPWORTH LEAGUE LESSONS

SUNDAY, APRIL 8.

The Cost of Service.—Matt. 10: 37-39; 18: 24, 25.

No great service is given without suffering. But that is proof of the divinity of service. The world says, "Come and enjoy." God says, "Come and suffer." The more we love and serve the greater our liability to pain. There never was love like the love of Christ, nor more perfect service, and he was the Man of Sorrows. He was made perfect through suffering, and there is no other process of perfection for his disciples. He asks of us the service of our whole being, for others in his stead, and for his sake. He shows us how we may enter, through sorrow and humility, and service like his own, into the high place of his power and glory. Drudgery and pain and humiliation are part of the common lot. When we take them as we find them, as Christ did, they lift us into fellowship with him, and they are themselves transfigured. The angel who was sent to sweep a crossing was as greatly honored as the one who was sent to govern a kingdom. All service ranks alike with God. The Christian life feeds on service; without that it dies. Said Christ, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me." To do God's will is to be found in God's service. God himself is a servant, and that makes all right service great.

Love is greatest when it serves. This is the teaching of Christ's life. The more fully we enter into the mind of Christ the more eager we are to be redeemers of men. We are not only diseased, but we are stirred by a sense of fellowship with him in his work. Adversity is another way of spelling opportunity. Put your Christian in jail and he may write you a Pilgrim's Progress. Make him free for his life, and he may give a nation the Bible in the common tongue. Send him in exile, and you may get the jeweled coronal of Holy Writ—the vision of Patmos. Chain him to a Roman soldier, and the free spirit writes his letters to the Philippians, to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians.

Her Transient Cat Hotel. The mania for collecting things of some sort strikes almost everybody sooner or later, but there is one New York woman who has an odd fancy. She collects cats, and her family is in a chronic state of indecision as to whether it is philanthropy or a nuisance. She is an unusually tender-hearted person, and whenever she sees a forlorn or hungry pussy in the street she takes the cat home, feeds it, washes it, pets it up for a while, and then, when she has the former outcast in good shape, she brushes its hair, ties on a ribbon bow and takes it for a present to some friend on acquaintance who will give it a good home.

Farmer's Mechanical Figures. Charles Cox, who lives in Killingworth, has arranged a curious set of life-size mechanical figures, which are attached to a water wheel in a brook near Mr. Cox's farm. These figures all work on eccentrics attached to the water wheel. They are made to go through characteristic movements. There are eight of these figures and they cover a space of some twenty-five feet. There is an old negro mammy who is beating time to her husband's fiddle. This fiddle is strung with wires and is heard to some distance on a windy night. There are two pickaninnyes swinging, and there are two boys tearing on a hoard. There is also an old man sawing wood. These figures are made chiefly out of natural crooks of wood which Mr. Cox got from his woods, and they are all dressed in appropriate costumes and all work together with precision. They form a queer spectacle and many come to see them.—Clinton correspondence Hartford Courant.

# A TREE ON STILTS.

Lake County, to the north of San Francisco, is so named from Clear Lake, which is the largest body of fresh water in the State of California. In this region may be found much fine lake and mountain scenery, for which reason it has been called the "Switzerland of America." Clear Lake is about thirty miles long and ten miles wide in its broadest part. While on a visit there last summer the writer came across the remarkable tree shown in the photograph. It is an oak growing near the edge of the lake, the waters



A TREE ON STILTS.

of which have washed away the soil from the roots, and then, receding, have left the tree supported on stilts, as it were. Several other trees on the shore of the lake present a similar appearance, but the one shown was the handsomest and also the most free from surrounding trees or brush.—Scientific American.

# ROCKING BATHTUB.

The ordinary bathtub is amply sufficient for the average person, but any one who is more fastidious and desires something unique can have recourse to the bathtub illustrated below, the in-



ROCKS BACK AND FORTH.

vention of an Ohio man. The construction is such that the person sitting in the tub can rock it back and forth, causing the water to splash over him, and, if he possess a vivid imagination, he will think he is at the seashore taking a salt-water bath, with the waves dashing over him. The body of the bathtub is supported upon rockers by uprights at the front and back. Pivoted to the front of the rockers is an arm which extends to the top of the body. A pulley is attached to this arm, through which passes a rope, the latter being secured to the body of the tub, and passing through a second pulley, connects with a handle, which is operated by the person in the tub to rock the machine, causing the water to flow up into a back portion above the seat. It will be readily seen that by pushing the handle the upper part of the arm will be pulled forward, raising the front end of the tub. The lining of the tub is arranged somewhat in the form of the seat and back of a chair, with a deeper portion for the feet. A casing extends around the back and partially along the sides, at the

height of the shoulders of the occupant, when seated.

A covering can be placed over this back portion and be supported upon rods, the covering having an aperture for the head, and can be used for taking Turkish baths. When used for this purpose a box for holding a lamp is hung in the front end of the tub.

# NOVEL LIFE-PRESERVER.

A chair which serves in case of need as a life-preserver is shown herewith. In a moment's notice it can be quickly

converted into a raft. It is so constructed that it can be locked in the position of either a chair or a life-preserver. The back is similar to that of an ordinary chair, with the exception of a cork cushion covered with canvas instead of a hair cushion. The bottom frame of the chair has an opening in the centre, an auxiliary bottom having a cork cushion attached, fitting into position when the device is used as a chair. The chair is pivoted in such a manner that when the catches are disengaged the whole spreads out, with a cork cushion at each end, which gives buoyancy to the raft—the form it then assumes when it is thrown in the water.

The auxiliary bottom, being folded to the bottom of the raft, the opening remains in the centre, enabling a person

to sit on the edges, with the legs passed through the opening. Under normal conditions the chair can be used on deck as a steamer chair and in the cabin.—Philadelphia Record.

Adventurers' Rich Booty. When Drake sailed the South Sea in the Golden Hind upon his piratical voyage of circumnavigation in the year 1577-79, and when he captured the Nuestra Señora de Concepcion (surnamed the Cacafuego or Spitter) off Cape San Francisco, it took three days to transfer the treasure from the captured ship to his own. In that single haul there was realized a "purchase," as it was called, of over twenty-six tons of silver, besides eight pounds of pieces of eight containing over a million in money, and an enormous amount of jewels and plate.—Harper's Magazine.

Railroad in a Maine Wilderness. It is expected that by some date early in next December the State of Maine will have another new railroad, a road that is in some respects the most remarkable of any yet built. This is the extension of the Somerset Railroad from Bingham to Birch Point, Moosehead Lake, a distance of close to fifty miles. This road runs through the heart of the Maine wilderness for the greater part of its length, and the scenery to be found along the line is some of the finest in New England. Work on this extension was begun in the summer of 1904. Only about six miles of the road were built during the first summer. The second summer the work was continued, and up to the present time the road has been completed to a point on Moxie Pond, only eighteen miles from Bingham. The contract for the completion of the work has just been awarded and the contractors are given an incentive to hasten the construction in that they will receive a bonus of \$10,000 if the work is completed by December 1, 1906. Some thirty-odd miles remain to be built.—Lewiston (Me.) Journal.

People have been dying in Mexico of the cold, while up in Maine the oldest inhabitant confesses that he never knew of such a balmy winter.

THE WILLO-THE-WISP OF THIS DISMAL SWAMP.

—Drawn for the Witness.



There is an electric plant in California, on the Yuba River, that sends power 140 miles, driving trains in Oak land.

The average weight of a stationary gas engine, in proportion to its horse power, is only about one-fourth as great as that of a steam engine.

Professor Wilhelm Wundt, the creator of experimental psychology, was in his seventy-fourth year, recently celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of his graduation with the doctor's degree.

A faintly luminous mist in the built and on the fingers has been noted by Professor Sommers on rubbing electric light bulbs that has been long in use. No satisfactory explanation has been given.

Tests of the strength of wire rope, conducted for the French Government, show that the ultimate strength of a round rope is thirty-three per cent. less than the sum of the tensile strengths of its individual wires before being laid.

Palladium, a rare substance little used, is the active agent in automatic gas lighting devices. Flame is produced as soon as the illuminating gas strikes a pellet of asbestos covered with a mixture of palladium and finely divided platinum, known as platinum black.

It used to be that astronomy, with its stupendous magnitudes, incredible velocities and inconceivable distances, seemed to make the greatest demand on man's belief. To-day it is physics. We read, for instance, that Hertz's oscillations give rise to 500,000,000 oscillations per second. Where is the man who can conceive of anything happening in the five hundred millionth part of a second?

February, 1902, a great storm sweeping over the forests of the Vosges in France, destroyed an immense quantity of resinous trees. The trees that remained standing in the devastated district were more or less injured and weakened by the removal of soil from their roots through the upturning of their neighbors. Since then there has been an invasion of swarms of an insect called in France bostriche, belonging to the genus Curculio, which seems to have taken advantage of the weakened state of the trees, as certain microbes seize upon the human body when in an enfeebled condition. Healthy trees resist the ravages of these insects, but those that have been injured and weakened fall victims to the destruction caused by the storm has been greatly extended by the bostriches.

The Kiss in Other Lands. In many quarters of the world kissing is not in favor. Indeed, it is regarded as an outrage upon human nature. The Japanese, who have understood and adopted many of our Western practices, cannot accept our custom of kissing. We remember the startled look of the young Japanese at a German university when an enthusiastic Pole drank "Bruderschaft" with him—and kissed him! The South Sea Islanders do not kiss. They rub noses. A most inadequate substitute, one thinks.

When Erasmus was in England—and that was nearly four centuries ago—he noticed the pleasant custom of the English girls, who kissed you when you came, kissed you when you went, and kissed you while you stayed. And their lips, he added, "are soft, warm and delicious." In commenting upon this, Mr. Froude, in a famous essay, remarked, "Pretty good, this, for a priest!"

Possibly the formal kiss, which has nearly died out in England, received its death-blow when Queen Anne met the lady mayors on the important 9th of November. Until then the king had always kissed the lady mayors—as the chairman of the London County Council kissed the market queen. But when good Queen Anne reached the city—well, where would the fun come in? She didn't kiss the lady mayors. And an ancient custom seemed to have lapsed.

But with the accession of George I. hopes revived. There would be kissing again. And Lady Humpfrey, the wife of the new lord mayor, concluded, "from his known character for gallantry" that the king would pay the traditional tribute to beauty. The king took refuge behind the skirts of Queen Anne. He did not give the kiss. And the lady mayors' conduct at the sight was such that the rumor went round, "She was borrowed for the occasion!" The king discredited the report. "He would have borrowed a better," said George I.—London Modern Society.

It is expected that by some date early in next December the State of Maine will have another new railroad, a road that is in some respects the most remarkable of any yet built. This is the extension of the Somerset Railroad from Bingham to Birch Point, Moosehead Lake, a distance of close to fifty miles. This road runs through the heart of the Maine wilderness for the greater part of its length, and the scenery to be found along the line is some of the finest in New England. Work on this extension was begun in the summer of 1904. Only about six miles of the road were built during the first summer. The second summer the work was continued, and up to the present time the road has been completed to a point on Moxie Pond, only eighteen miles from Bingham. The contract for the completion of the work has just been awarded and the contractors are given an incentive to hasten the construction in that they will receive a bonus of \$10,000 if the work is completed by December 1, 1906. Some thirty-odd miles remain to be built.—Lewiston (Me.) Journal.

People have been dying in Mexico of the cold, while up in Maine the oldest inhabitant confesses that he never knew of such a balmy winter.