MEL TROTTER
A Biography By
Fred C. Zarfas
Superintendent, Mel Trotter Mission
Grand Rapids, Michigan

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INSIDE-FRONT BOOK-JACKET TEXT

This thrilling life story of Melvin E. Trotter is an amazing account of the redeeming grace of God. Dr. Bob Jones, Sr. in his introduction to this splendid volume, enthusiastically declares, "God knew what He was doing when the Holy Spirit pulled Mel Trotter, a drunken bum, into that Chicago mission (Pacific Garden)
one night and made him see a way out if his drunkenness and sin and then called him to preach to other poor, helpless sinners."

Such was the astounding career of this effective soul winner, probably best known as the beloved Mel Trotter who founded and was superintendent for more than forty years of the mission named for him in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

"My friend, the Rev. Fred Zarfas, Mel Trotter's successor in Grand Rapids, is to be congratulated on giving us this book. The book will do a great deal of good to many people, and I am sure it will be an honor to the Lord Jesus Christ," is Dr. Jones’ concluding comment in his recommendatory introduction to this heartwarming volume.

Senator Arthur H. Vandenberg says, "Mel Trotter was my precious friend. He put spiritual stimulation into every life he touched. He marched for God and in His name he richly served his fellowmen. Countless souls have good reason to bless his memory."

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INSIDE-BACK BOOK-JACKET TEXT

Fred C. Zarfas was born in Brighton, England; received his education in Hamilton and Toronto, Canada. Following graduation from Bible Seminary served two years as a missionary on Bermuda Islands, B.W.I... Served in Canadian Salvation Army for a number of years. Also held pastorates in Toronto, Winnipeg and Vancouver... Has served as superintendent of Mel Trotter Rescue Mission in Grand Rapids for six years. Conducts daily Mission radio broadcast... Is a frequent speaker at Bible conference and evangelistic meetings... Has conducted preaching ministry in England and Scotland.

* * * * * * *

DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to all of Mr. Trotter's friends, associates and helpers through the years -- to all, great or small, who in any way helped him in the great work he accomplished as God's Soldier, and to Rescue Mission superintendents, their wives and helpers throughout the world, by whose faithfulness and loyalty to Christ the portals of mercy are kept everlastingly open.

* * * * * * *

PREFACE
This book has been written after several years of careful research. To the best of the author's knowledge the facts contained in this book are authentic.

The purpose of this book is to tell the life story of Melvin E. Trotter, and not to deal in personalities. Names of people influenced by his life and ministry are not mentioned here. There are, however, one or two exceptions when it was necessary to carry the continuity of the story. Mr. Trotter in his own autobiography, "These Forty Years," tells the story of his outstanding converts, and also paid tribute to his associates.

That an official biography should be published and sent out by the Mission he founded is a foregone conclusion. It has been my honor and humble privilege under God to write this book. To all who have assisted me in any way, both in furnishing material or in the construction of the book, I offer my sincere appreciation.

May the life story of this great missionary, a powerful saga of divine grace, be an inspiration to all.

Grand Rapids, Michigan
Fred C. Zarfas

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INTRODUCTION

I seriously doubt that any man during Mel Trotter's day excelled him in force of personality, in native ability, or in spiritual power.

I have had the opportunity to know most of the great preachers in America and many from other lands who have lived during the past fifty years. I never marveled at the ministerial technique or gifts of any man more than I marveled when I heard Mel Trotter preach. The first time I ever saw him was in Northfield, Massachusetts, when I was very young. A number of greatly anointed and gifted preachers stood on the platform and played upon the heart strings of hundreds of Christians, both ministers and laymen, who had come many miles to attend that annual Bible conference.

I have forgotten what all of these men said and do not even remember the themes that these preachers discussed. But I do remember what Mel Trotter said. He said what he had to say in a way that I cannot forget. He painted on his canvas of natural eloquence the most wonderful picture of Jesus Christ as the up-to-date miracle-working Son of God that I have ever known any man to paint.

An old country preacher told me one time that he believed in election. "And here is what I mean," he said. "If I wanted to build a house, I would go out into the
forest and elect the best type of tree I could find to get as nearly as possible the sort of lumber I wanted out of which to build my house. I might not be able to get a perfect tree, but I would do the best I could. That is the way God does. He gets the best man He can find to do the job He wants done."** [See my comments below. -- DVM] God knew what He was doing when the Holy Spirit pulled Mel Trotter, a drunken bum, into that Chicago mission one night and made him see a way out of his drunkenness and sin and then called him to preach to other poor, helpless sinners.

"While God does call those to a particular work whom He knows are best fitted for that work, the fact is that election to salvation is not based on such a Divine "hand-picking" of only the "finest timber". Indeed, "base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are" (1 Cor. 1:28). Election to salvation is NOT the result of God choosing only the finest. It is, rather, the result of unworthy and unfit sinners repenting of their sins and turning to Christ, and far from being the "finest" specimens from the world's forest of humanity, many of those thus elected to salvation are some of the worst trees in those woods! -- DVM]

A few years after Mel Trotter's conversion, nobody would have ever known that Mel had been a bum unless he told them. I have seen him in all sorts of places under all sorts of circumstances. I have sat with him at the table when there were distinguished and cultured guests present. Mel was always a gentleman. I never saw him ill at ease. At Bob Jones University he stood one day with a group of very distinguished men and I, who at that time was president of the institution, conferred upon him the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity. It was a wonderful occasion. Great men were present. But no man on that platform was more at ease or seemed to be more at home than Mel Trotter. Mel was no ordinary man. He was born into this world a sinner. He was born again and made a child of God, and God took the native ability that He had given Mel when he was born the first time and used him as few men have ever been used.

I have often thought that I would like to have been in heaven when Mel walked in. If he was anything in heaven as he was down here, I can imagine he said, "Jesus, it was wonderful of You to save' me. I am sorry I wasn't a better Christian and a better preacher, but, Jesus, I sure do love You." I imagine he was soon greeting friends whom he had led to Jesus and some of them had been mission workers in this world and had gone to heaven ahead of Mel.

My friend, the Rev. Fred Zarfas, Mel Trotter's successor in Grand Rapids is to be congratulated on giving us this book. The book will do a great deal of good to many people, and I am sure it will be an honor to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Bob Jones Sr.
Greenville, S. C.
I knew Mr. Trotter for more than thirty years. For five years I was his assistant. He is my most unforgettable character. It was this man whom God raised from a drunkard's hell to change the destiny of my life, as well as that of my family. He led us into a life of service for Christ which has continued for more than a quarter of a century.

My first memory of him was in old Lockerby Hall in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Dr. D. B. Towner and Charles Gabriel, two noted hymn writers, were doing the singing. Mr. Trotter was the speaker; the hall was packed. As he spoke, he impressed me as having a great passion to tell us of a Friend of his, to present Jesus in all His beauty; and believe me, he did a great job of it!

Later, when I became his assistant, I noticed he was always looking for an opportunity to speak to someone about Christ. Often when approached on the street by men seeking help, he would say, "Yes, I think I can help you, but first I want to talk to you." Then he would tell them of Jesus, and give his testimony. I have often heard him say, "I was hungry and helpless too."

When he thought the proper time had come, he would say: "Let us pray. Repeat this little prayer after me."

The man would bow his head and say, "God, be merciful to me a sinner, and save me now for Jesus' sake." When Trotter had finished talking to the man, he would put money in the chap's hand and exact a promise from him to attend the Mission that night.

Mr. Trotter used to say, "Art, I expect to meet a lot of these fellows in heaven, and if they will let me give them my testimony, I will give them a piece of money any time."

Mr. Trotter was a tireless worker. During the years I was with him his ministry was blessed with a continuous revival. He was always planning something to glorify his Lord and to lead men to Christ. Mr. Trotter was as successful with the "up-and-out" as he was with the "down-and-out." He seemed to be a universal character. I believe that much of his power was in his absolute loyalty to Jesus. He possessed an undying passion to please and honor Him.
One night we were a little late for the meeting. The singing had begun. We hurried in, and when we were back of the platform, he said, "You take the meeting for about fifteen minutes while I go and pray."

I replied, "What do you wish me to do, sing or speak?"

He said: "Oh, go in there and rave about Jesus for about fifteen minutes."

He meant just that. Nothing pleased him more than to hear someone with a passion to exalt Jesus. This, I think, well describes his preaching—he was the man who "Raved about Jesus."

His leadership was outstanding. He always knew what to do, and he was always master of every circumstance and problem. His vision was large. He could see no limit to what Jesus could do. He never seemed worried about opposition.

Mel Trotter was a humble man, and this was a great power in his life and testimony. Melvin E. Trotter was truly a great man of God!

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01 -- MEL TROTTER'S FIRST PRAYER

"Let us make the home the threshold
Of the city bright and fair;
Each the other’s joy possessing,
Each the other’s burden share.
In the storm of deep affliction
Let us seek the heavenly balm;
In life’s tempest just remember
Prayer will make the storm a calm."

The life story of Melvin E. Trotter is a story of the redeeming grace of God. The record of his remarkable conversion and great ministry cannot be understood or explained without taking into account the transforming and transcending power of the Holy Spirit.

Mel Trotter was like the Apostle Paul, whose spectacular experience on the Damascus road led to his unconditional surrender to Christ so that straightway he went out and preached that Jesus was the Christ. Mel Trotter rose to his feet in the Pacific Garden Mission in Chicago, Illinois, and immediately preached Christ and did it with a passion which continued unabated for forty-three years.

If Mr. Trotter’s life was a miracle of divine grace, it was also the answer to an anxious mother’s prayers. It was a reward for faithfulness and the crowning result
of a mother’s faith that Mel was converted amid all the evil influences he fought against unsuccessfully for twenty years.

Mr. Trotter’s first prayer was the simple childhood prayer he learned at his mother’s knee:

"Now I lay me down to sleep;  
I pray the Lord my soul to keep..."

He had the choicest gift that any new-born babe on this earth can have. The first face that he looked up into was that of a saintly, praying, loving mother. God, in His infinite wisdom, entrusted the laying of the foundation of this great man’s life into the hands of his mother.

Emily Jane Lorch was born in Springfield, Illinois, on October 30, 1842. Her early childhood was spent in the days when a new and heroic chapter was being written into the history of these United States. She knew Abraham Lincoln and was a playmate and neighbor of Anna Herdon, whose father was Lincoln’s law partner in Springfield.

Those were days of strange restlessness. The railroads were gradually pushing their shiny ribbons of steel through the land. Unprecedented signs of progress were to be seen everywhere. Then came the Civil War and the opening up of the Great West. The cry of the day was, "Go West, young man, go West." Stories about the daring deeds of the frontiersmen drifted back into the Middle West. All this had its repercussions upon the home and business life of the people.

Emily Jane met William Trotter at the close of the Civil War. In 1865 they were married and moved into northern Illinois, when that part of the country was still new. They made their home in Orangeville, Illinois, and it was in that town that Mel Trotter was born on May 16, 1870.

Five years after Mel was born the Trotters moved to Polo, Illinois, which is situated about 165 miles west of Chicago and is the center of a vast farming community. Here Mel grew up.

There have been some changes in Polo during the past seventy years. Most of the dirt roads have given way to paved streets, while the little red school house on Division Street where Mel went to school has been replaced by a business block. A modern elementary school and a high school are there now. The old Trotter homestead, a large rambling country-style house, remains to this day. Mr. Trotter visited his childhood home many times during his great career.

The town hall still stands, and inside one finds the town clerk's musty office. The old town clerk is even yet on the job, and proudly remembers the days when Mel ran the streets as a boy.
William Trotter was an alcoholic. For years he was an habitual drunkard. Not only did he himself drink, but he served it to others. In Polo he earned his living as a bartender. His wife Emily was a good wife and mother, but her lot in life was not easy. Married to a drunkard and the mother of seven children, she had a hard task to do all she wanted to do for her family. But although Mother Trotter was unable to achieve her aims under the circumstances which beset her path and disturbed her home, she did for the children what no one else could have done. She taught them that prayer:

"Now I lay me down to sleep;  
I pray the Lord my soul to keep..."

During the terrible years Mel spent in the depths of utter blackness and despair, these lines were the pin-point lights faintly seen, but divinely set, in the dismal background of his early life:  
In life's tempest just remember: "Prayer will make the storm a calm."

In his youth Mel considered an education unnecessary to success. His parents did their best to get him to go to school, but he was more interested in his father's saloon and the gambling den down the street. He skipped school more often than he attended it.

Mel followed in his father's footsteps. Early in life he learned the taste of liquor and like his father became a drunkard, and his brothers with him.

Twelve years after the Trotters moved to Polo, Illinois, they made another change. This time they went to Freeport, Illinois, to live. Melvin was seventeen years of age at the time, and this move gave him the chance he had been waiting for. For a long time he had been chafing under the restraints of home. It was time, he thought, to get out and shift for himself. He had some well-defined plans, chiefly for playing the horses. He used to say, "I followed the horses for a time and knew the pedigree of every race horse in the country. One day I would be flat broke and maybe the next I would have a roll big enough to choke a cow. I have also seen the time when I sold my shoes to buy whiskey. One day I would be rolling in money, but the next day I'd be panhandling for a flop." What he did not know then was that ten horrible years of sin and failure lay ahead.

Mel left home after living for seventeen years under the best tutor any boy ever had—a saintly mother. Whatever the structure, she had laid an eternal foundation. She had taught her boy to pray. Perhaps he thought he had left everything behind him when he left home. At last he could go where he pleased, do what he liked, and have a good time. But he did not leave everything behind. He carried a prayer in his heart. He did not know it was there until one day in the midst of life's tempest and in an hour of extremity it welled up in his soul, and in his distress he repeated it like a little child.
Thirty-four years after he had left home, when he was in his prime as an evangelist and when God had made him a mighty soul-winner, he paid a following affectionate tribute to his mother as he told of that awful hour of need when Mother's prayers followed all the way through:

"There were seven of us," he said, "three boys and four girls. My dear mother, now eighty years of age, has lived to see her three boys ministers of the Gospel and her four daughters, Christian woman. In my drunken, sinful days all the seven had to cling to was the prayer my mother taught me as a little child:

'Now I lay me down to sleep;  
I pray the Lord my soul to keep...'

And that prayer often came to me in the darkest moments of my life."

"I recall so vividly once I was thrown out of a box car and I landed under a water-tank. Drunken and sore, yet with a prayer in my heart, I had the manhood left to repeat it, and there under that old water-tank a drunkard's prayer was the prayer his mother taught him. My mother never was satisfied, never felt satisfied that her work was done, until her boys and girls were all saved."

The story of Mel Trotter is a story for mothers the world over. Mother Trotter watched her son sinking down to a drunkard's hell. Each time she heard of him he was lower down the scale. Finally her Melvin became a drunken hum, a down-and-outer. In her helplessness and with a broken heart she lifted her tear-stained face toward heaven and prayed. Alone in her grief, for her own husband was a drunkard, she had only one hope: she knew God and had faith to believe. Then one day God answered her prayers and her boy was saved. The Lord spared her to see her boy become one of the greatest soul-winners of his generation. Not only that, but she saw all her children saved, and her husband as well.

Paying a tribute to his mother on another occasion, Mel said, "I never got so drunk, or so far away, that I could not always feel the hand of my mother. One of the prettiest things I ever looked at was an old, old hand, all twisted up with rheumatism-the hand of my mother. When my mother lay dying, she turned to me and said, 'You win all the souls you can for Jesus, and I will see you over there.'"

"Faith of our mothers, guiding faith,  
For youthful longing, youthful doubt,  
How blurred our vision, blind our way,  
Thy providential care without:  
Faith of our mothers, guiding faith,  
We will be true to thee till death."
02 -- THE MISSING OBITUARY

"RAGGED BUM FISHED OUT OF LAKE MICHIGAN; body of drunken suicide lies in morgue awaiting identification." If Satan had had his way, this notice would have been printed in the Chicago papers on January 20, 1897 and Mel Trotter would have been that suicide. When Mel left home he had no more intention of sinking to such depths and throwing himself into the lake than he had of becoming a hopeless drunken bum.

After he was saved, Mr. Trotter many times made the following statement in his messages: "I didn't get a very good start in the first place, for my job was tending bar in my father's saloon. Booze got the best of me pretty early in life, and before I was twenty years old I was the common drunkard of our town.

"I've been nearer hell than any other living man. I was born to drink whiskey, and my sin born in me was a disease.

"It is the first drink that makes drunkards, not the last. The hundreds of thousands of young men and women who are drinking just for fun today will be a great army of helpless drunkards tomorrow. Of course, if they were told this, every one would laugh at the idea that they would ever be drunkards; but, allow the question, where else do the drunkards come from?

"Many say they can drink or they can leave it alone. Every drunkard in the world has been able to say the same thing sometime, but that time passes for nearly every one. Men who say they can drink or leave it alone, invariably drink. The same thing is true with the poor fallen girl. Never did a girl start out with the intention of going into the very depths of sin, but Charles N. Crittenden tells us that three hundred thousand women are living in houses of ill-fame in the United States alone. Their average life is only five years, and it takes six thousand girls every thirty days to keep the ranks filled. Seventy-two thousand girls enter upon a life of shame every year. Again, allow the question, where do they come from?

"No man starts out to be a drunkard; no girl starts out to be a harlot. Why are there so many? Unconsciously they become slaves to sin, and the result is, our country is reeking with this class of people. One thing is certain, they all come from our homes. Nearly all would gladly leave the awful life they are living if they could, but they are bound hand and foot by sin. Nothing but the power of God can save the fallen."

Well-dressed, and holding down his trade as a barber, Trotter was well able to carry his drinks and bet on the horses without getting himself into too much trouble. After he severed his ties with home, it seemed as if things got better day by
day. He even moved over to Pearl City, Iowa, thinking to get out of the town where his parents lived in order to have an even better time.

Satan was cleverly grooming his slave for the kind of life he wanted him to live. He had this boy in his grasp. Since he had acquired the taste for drink back in his father's saloon, it was easy for the devil to lead him for ten hideous years into the depths of drunken hopelessness and stupidity.

This modern seventeen-year-old prodigal went out to have a good time. He made many friends, for he was a friendly, good-natured chap. His contagious smile and Irish humor made him a popular young man of the day. His new friends showed him new tricks.

However, it wasn't long before he was unable to carry his drinks. After a while they called him the "drunken barber." He braced up many times, but each time he ended up by going lower than he was before.

About this time Mel met and married a fine girl, and Lottie Trotter thought she had married a fine man. When Mel was sober he was a lovable and considerate husband. Before long, however, Lottie found out, to her dismay, that she had married a drunkard.

Mel despised himself for his weakness and again and again begged his wife's forgiveness and promised never to touch liquor again. But each promise was followed by another drunken spree. She did her best to help him, as did their friends, and Mel did his utmost to help himself; but he was a victim of the drink habit and each attempt to reform ended in dismal failure.

To make matters worse he lost his job and finally had to give up barbering, being unable to stay sober long enough to do his work. Mel tried a hand at selling insurance, but he was fast getting past the place where he could do a decent day's work. All he could think about was drink, gambling and more drink.

After the birth of their only child, a boy, the Trotters with the aid of friends moved away from the city into the country. This attempt to get away from the city with its saloons, gambling dens, and race tracks seemed to be just the thing Mel needed. It seemed as if a miracle had happened, for he stayed sober for three months!

The Trotter home was on the upgrade. Mel was working every day now, while his wife Lottie went happily about her household duties and cared for their baby boy. They even bought a horse and buggy. And to help matters as far as Mel was concerned, the nearest saloon was eleven miles away in a small country town. Mrs. Trotter watched her husband carefully and prayed for him often, and to all appearances he seemed to have conquered his desire for drink. What she did not know was that her husband was fighting a terrible craving for liquor, a thirst that
gnawed at his very vitals. Desperately he tried to fight off the awful craving. With all his heart he did not want to return to the evil habits which had dogged his life, but he could not help himself.

Disaster struck at the little Trotter homestead one wintry, snowy night. They had been out visiting neighbors and had just returned home. Mrs. Trotter went into the house while her husband put the horse up in the barn for the night. After a while, when he did not come in, she became anxious and went out to see where he was. When she got to the barn she discovered that Mel had left, taking the horse and buggy with him. Where could he have gone? A dreadful fear gripped her heart, but she went back into the house hopeful that he would soon come back.

When Lottie Trotter had gone into the house that night to get her baby off to bed and had left her husband to put the horse away, Mel was suddenly possessed with an uncontrollable and burning desire for liquor. Every good intention was forgotten as he fought unsuccessfully against this overwhelming urge to go and get drunk. Frantically he drove down the road toward town, and when he arrived he drove straight to the saloon and hitched the horse in the shed at the rear.

Years after, when telling about this experience, he said, "I would have given my life to have stayed sober, but it wasn't in me. I was nothing but imbecile. I tried my level best. I wasn't the type of man to go down without fighting. I loathed the life I was living. Then came the climax.

"Going out one day following a fine period of several weeks of sober living, I drove the horse and buggy to town, put them in the shed behind the saloon, and going into the saloon I said to the gang gathered there, 'There's the old nag and buggy out there. The drinks are on me. Everyone have something to drink. Drink up the horse! Hours later I staggered the eleven miles home drunk-and minus the horse and buggy."

Continuing the story, he said, "When I got home and saw my wife, remorse filled my heart. I vowed never to touch another drop."

Unable to keep his promises to his heartbroken wife and unable to keep the home, he moved his family into the city of Davenport, Iowa. Back in the city the drunken spells became more frequent. Friends came to their help again. This time it was the gold cure. About this period in his life Mel had this to say: "They tried to turn me off whisky; I tried everything in the book; the gold cure, hypodermic syringes, medicine. I sold the whole outfit in a few minutes for three whiskies."

One day Mel went home after an absence of ten days. He was getting into the habit of staying away from home more and more on these drunken sprees. He found Mrs. Trotter in their cold bare home with the baby dead in her arms. She was all alone in the house when the little two-year-old boy died. Laying him down on the
bed, she fell on her knees and prayed: "Father, God, I've had my thoughts on my baby more than on You. I want to turn to You. You are all I have left."

A more faithful wife and mother never lived. She had never left her baby boy a single hour for the two years he lived. He was her joy, her hope and consolation. For his sake she endured her husband's many broken promises. And God reached down that day and comforted that brokenhearted mother. That day she found "balm in Gilead." In her deepest grief a loving Heavenly Father heard her prayer.

"Come ye disconsolate, where'er ye languish;  
Come to the mercy seat, fervently kneel;  
Here bring your wounded hearts, here tell your anguish;  
Earth has no sorrow that Heav'n cannot heal."

It was always hard for Mr. Trotter to tell this part of his testimony. Usually it was with a tear-stained face and a sob in his voice that he related this experience. He told it only that he might help others to Jesus. He called it "opening the old sore." Many thousands heard him tell what is now recorded here:

"I got home," he said, "to find my wife in our cold bare home, if you could call it a home, with our boy dead in her arms. I'll never forget that day. I looked at that little fellow and then at his heartbroken mother and could think of only one thing: I am a murderer!"

What a tragic scene this is! With his cup of misery full and overflowing, utter helplessness, despair, and grief welled up within Mel. Once again he was repentant. He would never touch another drop. How the fiends in hell laughed! The drama going on in the bare room that day was to their liking. Satan was playing his cards skillfully. Temporary remorse and grief does not cure the drink habit. God pity the alcoholic!

A could bare room, a dead baby boy, a heartbroken mother, a trembling, anguish-filled, drunken husband and father; these the evil results of the liquor traffic.

When Mel got home a little later in the day, his wife took him into the little room. Leading him over to the small white casket, she asked him to promise never to take another drink. Mel put his arms around her and promised. Two hours after the funeral he arrived home blindly drunk!

Mrs. Trotter looked at her husband and wondered how long she could continue to endure such faithlessness. Would it not be better to leave him and start life on her own? Could a wife be expected to put up with this sort of thing year after year? As great as the temptation was to leave her husband, she did not yield; instead, she dropped on her knees, turning once again to her heavenly Father. This time the burden of her prayer was for her husband lying drunk in the next room.
Lottie prayed, "Lord, I am your child. From this day I am going to serve You, and others. I shall try to aid those in trouble. I still have my husband. By Thy grace I shall pray for him and believe for his salvation."

The first tremor of uncertainty swept through hell. The demons of the pit had powerful opposition. Two people were now praying earnestly for Mel's salvation: his wife, and Mother Trotter back home. The sad news of the baby's death had reached the old homestead and a mother's prayers went up in behalf of her wandering son.

Neglecting prayer, we cease to fight;
Prayer makes the soldier's armor bright;
And Satan trembles when he sees
The weakest saint upon his knees.

Nightmare Alley or Skid Row will not be found anywhere in the street directory of any modern city today, but to thousands of men, women, and children these places actually exist. Slum conditions prevail in spite of all slum clearance schemes. Most of us hear about slums, and it used to be quite the thing for the upper classes to "go slumming," but few people know the real meaning of the term "slums," nor the people who dwell in them. More often than not the slum district lies within the shadow of the throbbing center of our large cities. Within a stone's throw of gigantic skyscrapers and immense office buildings a veritable no-man's land exists—a land of crime, depravity and sickness.

They do not always follow the same pattern. The character of the slums varies, sometimes to an enormous degree, but always they are a tangle of human lives. Here the flotsam and jetsam of human wreckage litter the place. Men exist like rats in the dismal alleys and streets. The slums can only be named a nightmare of human depression and hopelessness.

Into this land of forgotten men came Mel Trotter. Skid Row swallowed him up and took no notice. He drank more and more; he rode the rods; he became a denizen of a city jungle where human beasts prey upon the weak and helpless. Unable to work, and not sober long enough to hold down a job if he could, he was reduced to a place where respectability and decency fled and he was left an abject specimen of manhood; ragged, shoeless and penniless. To make his plight worse he was somewhat heavily built, and his dirt-begrimed body filled him with disgust. But what could he do about it? He resorted to burglary to get enough money to buy another whiskey.

Describing those days, Mr. Trotter said, "I have lived under conditions that to you may seem impossible. For many nights I have slept with many of my kind in rooms where there have been no furniture, and beds were provided on the sawdust-covered floor at so much a 'flop.' I used to ride on the running gear of railway coaches. Once I fell off and nearly killed myself."
Since that awful day when he went home and found his boy dead, Satan had haunted and taunted him with one continuous thought. Mel blamed himself for his boy's death. He called himself a murderer. He tried to escape from this terrible thing hanging over his head, but he was in the clutches of a relentless enemy. And now Satan was ready to make his final bid for Mel's soul. Convinced that he was really a murderer, his mind too befuddled to think clearly, a prey to his own sense of failure to use his own expression, "a drunken bum" -- the thought of suicide entered his mind. It was winter and snow lay on the ground. Not long since he had sold his shoes to get another drink. His feet seemed like lumps of lead, and with every step rapier-like pains pierced his body.

A few hours before Mel had dropped off a boxcar as it rolled into the yards at Chicago. It was January 19, 1897, and a bitter cold wind was sweeping in from Lake Michigan. Wearily he dragged himself along the streets. Passers-by scarcely gave him a glance. They were too anxious to get off the cold streets into the warmth of their homes. But there was no comfort nor warmth for Mel. There! It flashed into his drink-sodden mind again. End it all tonight—jump in the lake—jump-in-the-lake. It pounded in his brain now, and he was too numb with the cold and too lonely and sick to care. Without God and hope in this world! And who was there to care? He was one among thousands.

When Mel was telling the story of his conversion, he would say, "It was on the nineteenth of January, 1897, that I was kicked out of a Clark Street (Chicago) saloon dead drunk, broke, no shoes on my feet, and almost no clothes on my back. I was headed for Lake Michigan, intending to end it all on the advice of the bartender who had kicked me out. Police have told me since that more than 2,300 people committed suicide in the same way that winter!"

This is the sort of drama hell delights in. This is a true life story. No imagination here. It is impossible to describe the terrible state of a man in Mel's condition. The dark, murky waters of Lake Michigan waited to swallow another victim. Some newspaper reporter doing his rounds would soon be looking into the face of a man staring sightlessly toward the ceiling of the morgue. He would make out his report and it would be in the next day's papers, a short obituary: "Drunken bum jumps into Lake; body at _____." This is the story of Mel Trotter's night of despair, darkness and doom! It is also the story of the "Missing Obituary."

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03 -- "THE GREATEST DAY OF MY LIFE!"

Tom Mackey, ex-jockey and former faro-dealer (card sharp), was on the job outside the Pacific Garden Mission on old Van Buren Street, Chicago, that momentous night. Tom was glorying in his new-found salvation. Deep in his heart he had heard the Macedonian call; and, persuaded that God was calling him to the
foreign mission field, he was doing the most fitting thing, learning to be a good missionary at home.

When Tom took his stand outside the mission the night of January 19, 1897, he was tempted to go inside where it was warm. It had been cold all day, with a blizzard raging. Now that night had fallen, the wind blowing off the lake pierced to the marrow, but Tom's heart was warm and his eye keen. At that moment a few blocks away a ragged bum staggered up the street on his way to the lake. Tom Mackey was to hear the rhythm of native drums in later years, but that night Mel Trotter's mind was filled with the beat of death!

Death! Mel did die that night, but not in Lake Michigan. He plunged into the crimson stream that washes white as snow.

The ex-jockey soul-winner saw him coming. Never did he have a stronger urge to leave his post of duty and get off the cold street into the warm mission where a Gospel service was in progress. Thank God for the Tom Mackeys everywhere who faithfully stay at their post of duty!

"Where duty calls, or danger,  
Be never wanting there."

The slouching form came to an abrupt stop. A friendly hand was placed upon his shoulder; a cheery voice sounded in his ear. Stupidly drunk, Mel was unable to comprehend anything. Tom pushed him through the doors into the mission. A vacant chair stood over by the chimney. Tom shoved him onto it, whereupon the poor wretch leaned his head against the wall and went to sleep. Tom Mackey had steered the future Pacific Garden Mission's superintendent into the mission that night! (For several years Mr. Trotter had the oversight of the Pacific Garden Mission.)

"God moves in a mysterious way  
His wonders to perform:  
He plants His footsteps in the sea,  
And rides upon the storm..."

The scene briefly changes to a federal courtroom in Detroit, Michigan. A bunch of counterfeiters stood before the judge. A young lad named Harry Monroe stood among the crowd. For a moment the judge's eye rested upon him. In that second he reached a decision, the result of which was to move the hearts of people on two continents toward a loving Saviour.

The judge called this young Irish lad to the bench and gave him a few kindly words of advice: "Boy," he said, "You do not belong with this crowd."
Harry always considered himself hard-boiled, but when the judge spoke so kindly to him, he broke down and cried. It was the first kind word he could remember having heard spoken to him since he left home. Sobbing, the boy said, "Your honor, I believe if I had a chance, I would go straight. I am so tired of it all." And that magnanimous federal judge in Detroit gave Irish Harry his chance. He put his hand on Harry's shoulder and said, "I am going to trust God and you to carry on."

Harry caught the next train for Chicago. He found himself in the great city with only a few cents in his pocket. Finding the first saloon, he went in and ordered a glass of beer. Then he paused. He remembered the judge in Detroit and said to himself, "If I drink that, I am right back where I was!" He left it standing on the bar and walked out. As he turned the corner onto Van Buren Street, a door swung open and the sound of singing floated out on the air. He stopped and then walked in. He was in the Pacific Garden Mission.

The Pacific Garden Mission is one of the most famous missions in the whole world. For over seventy years P.G.M., as it is fondly called, has been a spiritual lighthouse in the windy city of Chicago.

That city has had a rugged history. Following its mushroom growth, it became the synonym for crime throughout the world. In definite contrast is the Pacific Garden Mission, so suitably called "The Doorway to Heaven." Since its founding P.G.M. has always been in the heart of Chicago's cesspool. Although many a poor soul has met a violent death in its vicinity, thousands of storm-tossed souls have seen the beacon flashing out of the old lighthouse and have been gloriously saved.

That night Harry Monroe, the young booze fighter, was saved. Going to the altar, he cried to God for mercy, and his prayer was answered. Rising to his feet, he said, "I quit booze from this minute on!" And he did! When Colonel Clarke, founder of P.G.M., died in 1892 Harry Monroe became the superintendent. For twenty years he directed the work, during which time he saw thousands accept Christ.

On January 19, 1897, while Harry Monroe was leading the usual night meeting, he saw the doors of the Mission open. In came Tom Mackey pushing the most dejected-looking human wreck he ever saw toward a vacant chair by the wall. Harry stopped the singing and asked the crowd to pray. "Oh God," he prayed, "save that poor boy!" Mel Trotter was fast asleep.

Later in the service Mel stirred, then opened his eyes. Where was he? The last he remembered he was on his way to drown himself in Lake Michigan. It finally dawned on him that he was in a religious meeting.

Something pierced his heart and mind. He brushed his ragged sleeves across his brow. He shook his head in a vain attempt to blot out the memory there, but to
no avail. Once again he saw a little white casket. Once again he could hear his wife praying, "Lord, save Mel. He's all I've got." Just then Harry Monroe began to speak, "I was twenty-seven years old when I wandered into this Mission."

"So that's it," said Mel to himself. "I'm in a mission. What was that he said? Twenty-seven years old." Perhaps it was a simple statement like that which cleared Mel's drink-befuddled mind!

Perhaps we shall never know this side of heaven just what Monroe said that night to stir Mel's soul. It may be when he heard Harry say he was saved when he was twenty-seven years of age that Mel aroused himself and listened more intently, for he also was twenty-seven. Be that as it may, when at the close of the service Mr. Monroe said, "Jesus loves you, and so do I, put up your hand for prayer, let God know you want to make room for Him in your heart," Mel Trotter raised his hand, rose to his feet, and staggered to the altar.

Harry Monroe got down on his knees beside that human derelict, and putting his arm around his shoulders, told him the story of God's redeeming love. When Harry finished telling him the way of hope and salvation, Mel cried out for mercy and forgiveness, and God for Christ's sake saved his soul. When God heard drunken Trotter's cry for help and salvation that night, He not only saved him, but He also broke the fetters which bound him. He never touched another drop of liquor from that time. He never wanted to.

A little later a man stood to his feet, still clothed in rags, penniless, dirty and disheveled, but a heavenly light shone on his face, and a smile that thousands saw in the years that followed. One of heaven's great-hearts stood there that night, one of America's leading evangelists, one of the most used and successful mission men of all time. That man was Mel Trotter.

Forty years later, when writing his autobiography, "These Forty Years," Mr. Trotter said: "There is no question in my mind that the greatest day I ever lived was the nineteenth day of January, 1897, when the Lord Jesus came into my life and saved me from my sin. It was only after repeated failures; in fact, so many that hope was gone. I am positively sure that: was my day: that God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Ghost planned it, and the stage was completely set for me to be saved that night.

"The old things passed away so thoroughly that I have never once wanted the things which dominated my life. I did not know how to pray, but I found that I was talking, with my Lord day and night. And the little Testament that Mrs. T. Clarke gave me made Jesus so real that He just naturally became my 'Friend that sticketh closer than a brother,' my 'Everlasting Father,' my 'Prince of Peace,' my one topic of conversation."
"For nearly two years I never read a newspaper. Finally, my father took me off to one side and told me of many he knew who had lost their minds over religion. My boyish answer, because I had become as a little child although I was twenty-seven years old, was that I could not understand how religion could make anybody crazy, that 'Jesus has not given us again the spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.' I guess I made it rather vivid, because my father accepted the same Christ as his Savior not long afterwards."

So it was so soon after his conversion that a magnificent obsession gripped Mel's breast. He was fast becoming the one who is best described as "The Man Who Raved about Jesus."

Mel found a job barbering and was soon able to send for his wife. This time Mel did not make any promises to her. It was not necessary, nor did she ask for any. Her prayers had been wonderfully answered. Her joy knew no bounds. For the first time since she married Mel Trotter she felt secure and a deep peace filled her soul. They had only a small room to start with, but no couple was happier than Melvin and Lottie Trotter in those days.

When Mel was saved he sat down and wrote his mother and said, "Your God has entered my soul!" His brother says she was sitting in her old red rocking chair when the letter came. She pulled the spectacles down from her forehead to her eyes and perused the lines. Then she fell to the floor in tears, crying, "Thank God! I knew he would come to Jesus!"

In his new-found joy Mel had to tell practically everyone he met about it: every drunkard he met on the streets, old or young, white or black, and strange as it may seem, many believed him and followed him on the Jesus way. He started going to different churches with Harry Monroe to tell his story.

The erstwhile drunkard and bum still walked along Skid Row, but it no longer held any terrors for him. Nightmare Alley became Sunshine Lane. The legion of the lost had a new champion; the colony of doomed souls, a real guy who knew their language through many bitter years of personal failure and anguish. He was able to give them hope.

Three years after his miraculous conversion in the Pacific Garden Mission an urgent appeal arrived at the Mission from the business men of the city of Grand Rapids, Michigan. The call from Grand Rapids changed the whole course of Mel Trotter's life, and gave that city one of its best-known citizens.

*     *     *     *     *     *     *

04 -- MEL STARTS HIS LIFE WORK
Fifty years ago, on February 24, 1900, Melvin E. Trotter opened a mission at old 95 Canal Street, Grand Rapids, Michigan. In those days "four car tracks and much liquor ran down Canal Street. There were more horse cars than automobiles, and you could buy a suit of clothes for twelve dollars."

Great groups of men, among them many lumberjacks and women of all ages, frequented Redmond's opera house and the many saloons. Old Waterloo Street was then in her glory, while the resorts in the Market Street district, which was at that time segregated, were in full sway.

The houses in this section were the most dilapidated in the city. Many of them had been moved from the better residence portions of the town and set down along the river front.

Such was the ramshackle "red light" district that was eating at the vitals of Grand Rapids.

Mel Trotter found his destiny on the border of Bucktown in this city, having answered the call of God that came to him through a few Grand Rapids citizens who wanted to help the outcasts among them. Mel Trotter founded a mission which not only grew to be one of the largest of its kind in the world, but it also begat sixty-seven other missions across the United States. Its founder also organized a hundred other missions, putting them on their feet, both spiritually and financially.

The story of the City Rescue Mission of Grand Rapids is a romance. It all started when a group of Christian business men and women decided it was time to do something about the conditions existing downtown and across the river in Bucktown.

They knew very little about rescue missions and were somewhat undecided at first as to what should be done. However, after one or two meetings and some discussion about the matter, they decided to rent a room somewhere and start some Gospel meetings. A few women, mostly the wives or relatives of these business men, formed themselves into a committee and appointed a visitor to go down into the segregated district to see what could be done. Miss Jenny V. Smith was appointed to do the calling.

In the meanwhile, the group of business men, among whom were R. B. Loomis, Thomas Peck and W. D. Patton, secured a room down on Ellsworth Avenue, which at that time ran into Bucktown. They started this little mission in the early part of 1899. The results were so encouraging that they called a special meeting to discuss ways and means of enlarging the work, getting a more suitable meeting place, and a full-time missionary to supervise the work.
The meeting was held on December 21, 1899. Miss Emma Loomis took down the minutes for the women's committee and W. D. Patton, for the men. Miss Loomis made the following notes:

Meeting of December 21, 1899. Meeting was called to order by Mr. Lillie. It was a special meeting of the ladies' board and all men and women entrusted in broadening the work of the present Ellsworth Avenue Mission.

The committee appointed on Dec. 4 to present plans and to suggest homes for a possible Board of Control were asked to report, but as the chairman, Mr. Peck, had not come in at the beginning of the meeting, an informal discussion of plans preceded the report of the committee. Mr. Lillie spoke of the plan of holding a three day meeting and asked Mr. Patton to give a little more definite plan of the work. Mr. Patton then spoke enthusiastically of the plan of asking Mr. Harry Monroe of the Pacific Garden Mission, Chicago, to come to our city some time in the near future to tell of the plan of work carried on in the Pacific Garden Mission in Chicago, and to conduct a series of meetings to arouse public interest in the general work of a City Rescue Mission, and perhaps bring over some singers with him. (Signed) Emma Loomis, Secretary

The committee wrote to Harry Monroe on January 9, 1900, and received the following reply:

Gentlemen:

Permit me to thank you for your kind invitation. I shall be at liberty the first Sunday in February I think. May the Lord bless you and prosper your good work.

In His service
Harry Monroe

The Grand Rapids committee was overjoyed at receiving this letter from Mr. Monroe, and immediately proceeded to lay plans for a series of meetings. Further correspondence with Monroe brought a very interesting reply, and it is given here as originally worded:

Pacific Garden Mission 100 E. Van Buren St.
Chicago Jan. 12, 1900 My dear Mr. Walker:

You have doubtless received my telegram. Will he on hand with my helpers Friday February 2nd to begin what I trust will prove a grand uplift to the people of God and the beginning of better days for the poor and sinful who need the encouragement that a live wide awake Rescue Mission can impart. Mr. Walker, the success of this undertaking will be assured only by much Prayer and Faith in God.

Let all the people begin to pray on this line and I believe Grand Rapids will witness a mighty wave of blessing and salvation such as it has never seen. Now let
me suggest a few things. I will send you some of our Reports. Call on your leading and most influential newspapers and have them write up the work-in that way it will call the attention of the people and acquaint them with the magnitude of the work. You will find this an important factor. I will have printed some square cards announcing our coming (which I use with profit). These cards are to be hung in Drug Stores and other public places. It would be wise to have them put in the street cars also. Do not begin to make public the advertising too soon. The best results will be obtained by having everything ready to spring on the people one week before the meetings. Once more, be careful regarding the program, do not crowd too many speakers into the service. The singing is very important. I will send you 2500 song sheets with say 10 song books containing music. I think a cornet would be a great help in the singing. Be sure and have some live man lead the singing. Confidentially Have the people you expect to help you business men and others meet the men I shall have with me in a social way. They are fine fellows and they will inspire confidence in the possibilities of Rescue Mission work in your city.

Pay strict attention to details and we will do our best as God shall help us.

In His Service
Harry Monroe

Acting on the advice given by Mr. Monroe, the committee in charge of arrangements prepared and sent out this notice:

Myron H. Walker, Pres.
R. B. Loomis
Thos. M. Peck, Com.
Rev. J. H. Randall
Rev. F. P. Arthur
W. D. Patton, Secy.

Grand Rapids Jan 30th 1900

Dear Sir:--

As the appointed time draws near we find a deepening interest is being manifested by many of our people in the coming of Mr. Monroe and his helpers, of Chicago. We learn that a noble lot of men will accompany him, men whose testimonies will inspire and bless every man who desires a better life or who may desire to live closer in touch with the power of God.

Will you not urge your people to be present at all of these meetings so far as it may be in their power? Also please urge all of your young people to attend, as their voices will add much to the singing.
We believe that you are praying for the work, and the workers that come.
Shall we not all join with Mr. Monroe in the following...."Let us be much in prayer,
and undertake this crusade with but one thought and prayer, i.e., the Glory of God
and the welfare of the unfortunate."

Friday, Feb. 2nd, 7:30 P. M. -- Park Congregational (Church.
Saturday .. 3rd 7:30 P. M. Division St. M. E.
Sunday .. 4th 3:00 P. M. Auditorium Bldg.
Sunday .. 4th 7:30 P. M. Auditorium Bldg.
Signed on behalf of the Committee

Myron H. Walker, Pres.
W. D. Patton, Sec'y

P.S.

Dear Sir: -- In sending you this notice it is hoped that you will give the same
unusual attention in your various church meetings, Sunday School and Young
People's societies.

We also desire to ask that so far as it may seem wise to you that you adjourn
your Sunday Evening services and urge your people to attend this Union Service.

The Committee

At last the day arrived, and on Friday, February 2, 1900, Harry Monroe,
accompanied by four ex-drunkards, ex-bums, and ex-gamblers, arrived in Grand
Rapids. The names of these four "trophies of Grace" were Charles Palmer, Tom
Sullivan, Frank Williams and Mel Trotter. They stayed at the Eagle Hotel on Market
Street, a hotel that was owned and operated by old Deacon Johnson, a man with a
flowing white beard and a face like a patriarch. He later became president of the
mission's board of directors.

A great opening service was held that night in the Park Congregational
Church. The next day the committee sent out this message:

Grand Rapids, Feb. 3, 1900
Dear Sir:

You doubtless have observed by the Press that Mr. Harry Monroe and his
Rescue Mission Band of Pacific Garden Mission, Chicago, are here conducting
services in the interest of Rescue Mission work in our city.

They conducted the first of these meetings last evening. A large and
enthusiastic audience greeted them.
The Committee desires to go on record by saying that they are a most exemplary lot of men, able, earnest, enthusiastic and filled with the Holy Ghost.

A Conference for the discussion of Rescue Mission work will be conducted in the Parlors of the Fountain St. Baptist Church this afternoon, five to seven o'clock. Your presence is desired at this conference to meet these gentlemen from Chicago.

(A light lunch will be served)

Service will be conducted this evening in the Division St. Methodist Church at 7:30.

Yours very truly,
Signed by the Committee

At the conclusion of the week-end meetings, Mr. Trotter was asked by the Committee to stay over an extra day, and it was at that time the committee invited him to become the superintendent of the mission.

The committee's request came as a great surprise to Trotter, for he had never conducted a mission meeting in his life. It is true he had been used in many meetings to relate his testimony, but as for conducting a meeting himself, he had not clone such a thing, to say nothing of becoming a superintendent! This would require some consideration and prayer. It was too soon to give a definite answer then and so he returned to Chicago to seek the face of God in the matter, and to talk over matters with his wife and Harry Monroe.

Evidently he received much encouragement from his friends in Chicago, and the people in Grand Rapids seemed eager to have him. Therefore, a few weeks later, he accepted the call, and on February 24, 1900, arrived in Grand Rapids to begin what proved to be his life's work.

A week later the Board of Directors sent a letter to representative ministers and business men, giving their impressions of the new superintendent:

City Rescue Mission
Grand Rapids, Mich., March 3, 1900
Dear Sir:

The Executive Committee of the "City Rescue Mission," 95 Canal Street, desire to advise pastors and Christian Workers of Grand Rapids that our Supt. Mr. Melvin Trotter, is now on the field and in full charge of the work.

(Mr. Trotter comes to us from Pacific Garden Mission, Chicago, and the work here will be conducted along the same harmonious lines.)
We have closed the first week’s work and with most satisfactory results to all.

The Committee desires to bespeak for Mr. Trotter the warmest co-operation from our pastors and their people. He needs your help and your prayers in the conducting of this most important work in our midst. He is a man of God and here for the glory of God and the salvation of Souls.

We believe that all we ask you will gladly accord. Will you be kind enough to advise Mr. Trotter if he is at liberty to call upon you for a short Gospel talk, as dates may be arranged for during the year, and by so doing greatly oblige?

Yours very truly,

R. B. Loomis, Pres.
Thos. Peck, Treas.
W. D. Patton, Sec'y

From the beginning God’s hand was upon this young convert from Chicago. God prospered him and raised him up to be one of the great evangelists of his day and one of the best-known and most-loved mission men in the world!

When Mel went to 95 Canal Street to conduct his first meeting as superintendent, the room was packed and many were unable to get in. Jerry, the policeman who was on his beat down there then tells about the opening night:

"I was on the beat the night they opened, and boy, you never saw so many folks trying to get in one little building, and when Mel finally came up from the old Eagle Hotel and found more women there than men, he was scared stiff. He never had worked with women there and you should have heard the language! He got up and told them what he was there for, told it in slang and he didn't seem to know he was using it. It was just the most natural thing in the world. I am afraid I was a poor officer that night, because I stood in the doorway or out on the sidewalk, but I would never miss a word and I only had to ring in once during the meeting and was it ever new to Grand Rapids when he gave the invitation to come to Jesus and be saved! Three young women responded. One of them became a missionary! The other married a preacher! The other stuck to the mission for years. I can't tell you fellows what a funny feeling I had during and after that meeting. I thought I was a pretty good fellow. I said my prayers and paid my debts, but I knew there was somebody there beside that man. Just looking at him, I said, 'Jesus is running this thing,' and believe me, He has been running it ever since."

Dan Bush, one of the Mission's earliest converts, gives his impressions of the opening night:

"The night the Mission opened the crowd was four times too big for the place, and it was a funny bunch. The rich and poor, drunken and sober, washed and
unwashed, young and old, all in the same room and singin' the same songs and prayin' to the same God. Three gifts were saved on the first invitation, and that's going some.

"We were a hard bunch to handle. Some of us wanted to be working out trial beats in two ten before we were halter broke! A good trainer never allows a colt to have his own way, as that would ruin 'em, but in spite of all the Old Man could do, some of us would shy at a street car and upset the wagon, kick over the traces and spoil our chance for the free for all. Then others would get to steppin' high, looking for applause from the grand stand, and you know that the proudest pride in the world is spiritual pride. Well, they soon stepped into a hole, and had to be led back to the stable for repairs. Runnin' a rescue mission don't consist of gettin' colts alone, but breakin' 'em so they will be useful to God.

"Then the money gave out, and the struggle to keep the doors open began. Folks kept saying, 'It won't last. It's just a flash in the pan. Only excitement. They'll all get drunk again. The crowds will all quit coming. New brooms sweep clean,' and a lot of these encouraging things that so many Christians take to hand a feller strugglin' under a load. They wouldn't give us a cent for fear their prophecy would not come true. Crowds kept gettin' bigger and bigger!"

It was easy to see that the little store room like 95 Canal Street would never begin to serve the purpose intended. Something had to be done, and thus early in his life as a mission superintendent Mr. Trotter revealed those qualities of leadership and foresight that would have made him a great success in any other business, also.

Very soon he had his eye on a vacant lot right across from the old Eagle Hotel on Market Street. A lease was secured and a mission building constructed in forty-four days. Suddenly Mel found himself in a new building seating seven hundred and fifty, easily the largest mission auditorium in the country in those days.

A year after the work began on Canal Street the mission was in its new building. Surely now they had sufficient space. But no, soon the new place was filled to overflowing and souls were being saved every night. A Sunday school had been started and was up to two hundred-it later reached six hundred! Mother's meetings were organized. Then came the famous Friday night Bible classes, to which the finest Bible teachers in the country came.

Four years later, in spite of the addition of a two-story part, it became apparent to all that a drastic move would be necessary to cope with the ever-increasing crowds and activities of the Mission. Grand Rapids had asked for a City Rescue Mission to be started, and they had one.
One day Mr. Trotter looked to the corner of the street opposite from the Mission. There stood Smith's Opera House. As he looked at it, God seemed to say to him, "There's your future building." What a challenge this was! Smith's Opera House seated 3,000. But the directions from above seemed very definite. So in a noonday prayer meeting Smith's Opera House was claimed for God!

Dan Bush tells about that:

"The Ole Man got it into his head that Smith's Opera House was the place for the mission. And you well remember the fight, don't you? My! oh, my! No more of that for me! Decker and Jean got an option for sixty days. The Empire Circuit had a four-year contract with the owner of the House, and they were bound to make it appear that it was with the House and not the owner. Now everyone wanted to help, but they did not want to give money for a building to run a leg show in for four years, and the struggle for funds was fierce. The Ole Man had friends that believed in him and his board stood pat, and when the last day came the money was there, but the trouble had just begun.

"The Council was asked for a license to run a show, and it mighty near went through. Finally, the mayor, Deacon Ellis, said, 'Where is Smith's Opera House? The building on Market and Louis Street is a rescue mission.' And that held it up for a while. The former owner went before the Council and commented on the Ole Man's religion in a warm way, but he only sawed wood and said nothin'. The lawyer for the show folks said to go and take possession and that will hold 'em for a while, but two men with guns went in ahead of 'em and lived there, and when 'Cherry Blossoms' came to bloom, they did not even bud! That was the first show booked for the House.

"Then some of the papers said the Ole Man was all right as sky pilot, but didn't know any more about business and deeds and options and shows than a crow, and the majority of folks agreed with them. Even the board gave up and said they were beat. Not so the Ole Man. He was at Winona Lake, Indiana, when he heard the watchmen had been taken off and the doors left open for the Empire Circuit to go in and show. It was Saturday night, and every train but the Limited had gone through. The Limited didn't stop at Winona Lake. What did he do? He got Dr. Scott of Pittsburgh, secretary to the president of the Pennsylvania railway, to stop the Limited and hold the fast train at Fort Wayne for Grand Rapids, and before five o'clock Sunday he had all the doors barred and his two men were inside again. Then there came an attempt to fire the House, and that was stopped by nearly scaring a fellow to death. One thing after another came up, and he would knock it down because he was sure the Lord had given him orders to buy, and he knew he was right.

"The day came for the dedication, and Henry Ostrom preached the sermon. That was the happiest day in the Ole Man's life. I guess it must have been the strain,
because it's the first time he couldn't talk and just bawled, and blamed if we didn't all bawl with him!

"There in the boxes and in the House were the best folks in town, and that was the best meeting I ever was in. Pure women and good men were in the same boxes where the very worst used to sit and drink until drunken. The Ole Man couldn't stand it, and he went down into one of the dressing rooms and cried it out, while Ostrom preached. My! What a day. It proved right as the crowds fill this big house and more are bein' saved than ever.

"Other towns wanted missions, and now the Old Man helps to run twenty-six of 'em and several precincts to hear from. This is the biggest thing in the world now. When it's done, what will it be? What! 3,200 seats, you don't say! Well, if that ain't goin' some!"

The conversion of Smith's Opera House from a cheap burlesque show into a house of prayer captured the interest and enthusiasm of the entire city. Throngs filled the place night after night. Souls were being saved.

Mr. Trotter was disturbed, however, by the presence of a saloon next door to the mission. It had flourished in connection with the burlesque shows formerly held in the mission building when it was an opera house. An evil-tempered man was the proprietor; and his wife, a regular Jezebel. The brawls and noise going on there every night were a nuisance to the whole community. In addition to this, fourteen houses of prostitution surrounded the mission.

Mr. Trotter, telling the story of his mission, used to describe the district in vivid language:

"Old-timers," he said, "will tell you what Market street was like in those days. I used to leave my song leader in charge and go out and patrol the street myself to make it safe for women to come to the mission; and I remember one night when I knocked five men down. It was a triumph when we got the saloons on the street to close from seven to nine Sunday night, while our meeting was in progress."

An even greater triumph was achieved when the O'Donnel property housing the saloon next to the mission had to give up business through lack of customers. One by one the "clients" were saved in the mission. Finally, Mr. Trotter bought the property, saloon and contents. It was a great day when they poured the liquor down the sewers and dedicated the new section to the glory of God. Mel kept the original bar with its brass foot rail and the large mirror and cupboards and incorporated them into the office.

Until this clay visitors never cease to marvel at the old bar, now used as a reception counter completely surrounding the office desks and cabinets. Business
for the Lord has been transacted over this bar-counter for forty years, where once the liquor poured and the drunks rested.

Five years after he started his life work in Grand Rapids, Mr. Trotter was specially honored by being ordained a minister of the Presbyterian Church. The account of his ordination is as unique as it is wonderful:

"Yes, I am an ordained Presbyterian minister. In 1905 the Presbytery of Grand Rapids, Michigan, ordained me, and it came about in this fashion. I was constantly calling on ministers to baptize, marry, and do things that I could not do, being a layman. One night I called Dr. Davis of the First Church about two o'clock in the morning to baptize a young woman who had taken carbolic acid, and was on the verge of death. After that ceremony, Dr. Davis said to me, 'Why don't you become ordained?' I had never thought of such a thing. He said, 'We can ordain you as an evangelist, and it will carry all these privileges.'

"I went before the Presbytery, and there found out that being ordained as an evangelist did not carry the privilege of baptizing, marrying, etc., but one of the ministers suggested they ordain me as a minister. It seemed to appeal to the other men, and at once three or four were on their feet, saying, 'Let's do it now.'

"My examination started with 'Christian Evidences.' I said, 'What's that?' They said, 'Are you saved?' And I said, 'You bet.' They said, 'How do you know?' And I said, 'I was there when it happened, in the Pacific Garden Mission, January 19th, 1897, ten minutes past nine, central time, Chicago, Illinois, U. S. A.'

"They all laughed, but that was the truth. Then they asked me what I knew about church history. I said, 'You know more about that than I do.' They said, 'Are you Calvinist or Arminian?' I said, 'You can search me; my father was Irish!' And in just seven minutes I had finished my theology course. It takes some ministers seven years, but there is a good advantage in being a 'Trotter.' It is faster!

"Dr. French, a marvelous old minister, but a real stickler for Church Law, and always afraid of establishing a dangerous precedent, slowly rose to his feet, before the vote was taken, and to the surprise of everyone, he seconded the motion that I become a full-fledged minister, ordained by the Presbytery of Grand Rapids. He referred to the dangerous precedent by saying, 'Find us another Mel Trotter, and we will ordain him.' I can see that old, full-bearded man now, standing there, saying, 'Who are we to refuse ordination to one whom God has ordained? God has put His hands on this man; the Presbytery of Grand Rapids will follow our Lord!' That was a wonderful day in my life, and it has enabled me to carry on in all branches of the work."

* * * * * * *

05 -- THE INVASION OF BUCKTOWN
Bucktown with its body and soul-destroying forces is civic history. Its replacement by the great market, freight depots, manufacturing plants, and business establishments truly is a monument to the power of the Gospel of Christ.

Bucktown was a real section of the city of Grand Rapids, Michigan, situated just over the "tracks" and nestling beside the Grand River. It started only a stone's throw from the heart of the downtown district and sprawled out for several blocks along the river.

Once a year at the spring thaw the river overflowed its banks and most of Bucktown was inundated. People compelled to flee their homes found temporary housing on higher ground. The houses in Bucktown were the oldest in the city, and some of them in their day had been the residences of the best citizens. Some of the houses had been erected where they now continued to stand; but many others had been moved to make room for the rapidly growing business district. They had been set clown here because land was cheap and nowhere else could such worn-out, dilapidated structures find tenants.

Unlike the slums of larger and older cities, such as London, New York, or Chicago, Bucktown was largely peopled by men and women who, like its houses, had come from happier and more elegant surroundings. Few of its older inhabitants were born in the slums, and among its people were to be found many whose careers in life were begun under really favorable circumstances. Like driftwood, they had been crowded out of the busy stream of human effort into this pool of stagnant humanity. Bucktown became the dumping ground of everything undesirable in a population of more than one hundred thousand souls.

Saloons and houses of ill-fame abounded everywhere, while sin and wickedness stalked forth even in the daytime with a boldness that knew no hindrance.

One third of the population was colored, and the whites were made up of every, known nationality. No effort was made to draw the color line. Negroes and whites lived in the same or adjoining houses, and in some families the husband was of one color and the wife another.

Notorious at that time was the celebrated "Dolly" resort, known everywhere as the most dangerous place of its kind in the city. It was luxuriously furnished and was famous for its pretty girls and its dances.

One of the characters in Bucktown was "Yellow Liz," a monstrously hideous woman, whose husband was doing a long term in prison for murderous assault. "Yellow Liz" had a wart as large as an acorn in the middle of her forehead, and woolly red and black whiskers on her chin and lower jaw. She was one of the
features of the neighborhood, and slumming parties from "uptown" never failed to visit her domicile.

Dave Beach, the horse trader, was more often called the "Mayor of Bucktown." His joint was frequented by all the toughs and criminals in town. Beach was a bad man; but he had brains, and everybody paid court to his throne. It was said he could deliver the vote of Bucktown intact at election time, and there could be no doubt about his "pull" with the authorities.

This was the slum or segregated district of Grand Rapids a half century ago. A slough of despair, a ghostly conglomeration of cast-offs, a veritable Dante’s hell!

The spiritual invasion of Bucktown spearheaded by Mel Trotter with the heart-rending struggles, the bloodshed and ultimate triumph, is a chapter in the life of Superintendent Trotter and his workers that has never been fully appreciated by the city in which it was enacted, nor by the world at large. The conquest of Bucktown and the capitulation of most of Satan’s slaves there is an epic in Christian enterprise.

Like Nehemiah of old going out by night to examine the broken walls, so this modern Prophet of the Slums went out to find ways and means to establish a beachhead on Bucktown’s territory.

Mel Trotter came to Grand Rapids in 1900 and six years later invaded Bucktown. He went out by day and night and found in this city in which he had come to live a morass, trampled underfoot by beasts of prey in human form—a veritable no man’s land of poverty and vice.

He walked the streets of Bucktown with a bleeding heart. His own bitter experience on Skid Row had taught him many lessons. He had many advantages over other men who might have attempted the well-nigh hopeless task. Mel knew the language of the "jungle." He knew only too well what it meant to live under such horrible conditions as existed there. He went back to his mission down on Market Street and called upon the name of the Lord.

Dramatically the answer came—but Bucktown was a place of drama.

The office door suddenly burst open and in rushed a ragged urchin. "Please, kin yet tell me where is de boss of dis mission?"

Mr. Trotter turned around and saw a boy who, judging by his stature, would be ten or twelve years old, but with the face of an old man. His eyes were set far back in his head. The nose was pointed and pinched, the cheeks hollow, and the glint in his eyes, at once appealing and defiant.
The lad held a ragged cap which he turned nervously in his hands; on his feet he wore a large pair of sharp-pointed ladies' shoes. Every garment was a misfit. A rent in his jacket disclosed the fact that he wore no underclothing. It was a cold day, and he looked half frozen. The mission superintendent took in all these details at a glance, but did not overlook the impression that here was no ordinary character. Down deep in the dark gray eyes that never wavered under his steady gaze he saw the makings of a man, mighty for good or evil.

Jimmie Moore, for that was the lad's name, and the hero of "Jimmie Moore of Bucktown," Mr. Trotter's classic of slum life and conditions, soon lost his nervousness under the kindly smile of the superintendent. No longer was he afraid the mission man would phone for the "Bulls" and turn him over to the police for begging.

Jimmie started talking: "Me pa said yer was a good guy. He heard yer talk on de Gospel wagon down at de square. He don't talk about nothin' else, and he wants yer ter come an' see him."

Further inquiry on the part of the superintendent revealed the fact that Jim's father was very sick. He had gotten drunk and had been found lying half frozen in the snow. A doctor had been summoned, who had diagnosed the man's illness as pneumonia. The neighbors came in and did all they could, but there had been no fire or fuel in the house for two days.

"Ma sets down and cries," said Jimmie, "'cause der's nothin' for de kids to eat. Pa set up in bed and said, 'Go to de mission man and tell him I mus' see him.' Ma sent me up ter see if yer won't come down ter see Pa."

On the way to the Moores Mr. Trotter took Jimmie by the hand and told him the story of Jesus and how He loved little boys and their mothers and fathers. "If you believe in Him," said the superintendent, "you can ask for anything in His name and get it." It was a seed sown in this slum boy's heart, the results of which ultimately brought an end to Bucktown, long a festering sore in the otherwise conservative and progressive city of Grand Rapids.

The Moore house was one of the most disreputable-looking places in the neighborhood. It consisted of a lean-to portion of a house, from which the original building had been moved away. There was no wall beneath: the building stood on four posts, one at each corner, the wind having a clean sweep beneath the floor in every direction. Within there were two rooms. The one in front contained a bed upon which the sick man lay; an old table, two chairs, and a box to sit on. In the next room an old wood-burning cook stove, a big box for table and cupboard combined, and a broken mirror constituted its complete furnishings. The roof leaked, and most of the spaces in the window sashes were filled with rags and paper instead of glass.
"Dis is de man from de mission." said Jimmie proudly, still clasping the hand of the superintendent. "And he says dat Jesus loves every bloomin' one of us, and'll be our friend and owns de whole business. If we lives fer Him, He lives fer us."

Moore broke into tears when he saw the mission man. When the sweet story of the third chapter of the Gospel of John was read and explained by this big, warm-hearted superintendent, who pointed him to the One who saves to the uttermost, Moore and his wife accepted the Lord as their Savior. (Mr. Trotter called the experience in the Moore home one of the great events of his life.)

Then the superintendent sang a hymn and little Jimmie, standing close by his side, grasped his hand and, looking up into his face, said, "If Jesus will love me, I'll love Him and be His boy."

Mr. Trotter took him to the grocery and market. When he left him on the corner with a basket well-filled with good things to eat, he said, "Now, Jimmie, I'll see you in the morning. You tell your ma and every one that Jesus is your friend and sent you this basket."

I'll do it, yer bet; and I'll tank Him fer dis lot of stuff. We'll eat till we bust!"

The invasion of Bucktown was on. True, there were no dive bombers. There were no signs of a "blitz," but "V-B" day had begun and a few "prisoners" had been taken already. The broken down Moore house was advance headquarters, and Jimmie Moore was spreading the propaganda of the heavenly kingdom.

The Bucktown gang were gathered in Dave Beech's barn the day following the events which had taken place in the Moore house. Dave Beech himself was there, also Jewey Martin, ex-convict, and many other denizens of no man's land. Jimmie stopped in and told the crowd present what had happened: "Der main squeeze of de Rescue Mission was down to our house last night," said Jimmie, "and he tol' Pa dat Jesus loves us and will give us anything we wants. Pa tol' de mission guy he believed, and now he's saved. He ain't goin' ter drink no more booze er nothin'. We all belongs ter Jesus now, and He's goin' ter take care of us. Yer kin ast Him fer anything yer wants, and if yer love Him and confesses Him, you'll git it. Dat's war der mission guy tol' Pa."

This little speech provoked a derisive laugh, and Jewey Martin caught Jimmie by the collar and started to throw him out. Before he had taken three steps, however, Dave Beech put his big hands around Jewey's throat and threw him into the corner.

This unexpected friend in Dave Beech made little Jimmie all the bolder, and he did not hesitate to repeat his story.. He had "protection," and from no less a
character than the top tough of Bucktown! It was not long before every one about
the market place had heard the story of Jimmie's conversion.

When Jimmie's father died, the mission superintendent conducted the
funeral. It was held in the Moore home. The old bed had been taken down and the
casket placed between two windows. The whole "gang" was there. Bill Cook sat by
the door, so that he might be free to spit without getting up. "Yellow Liz" sat next to
him, smoking her pipe, but at the sight of the superintendent she put it under her
old apron.

The gang heard the Gospel that day as they had never heard it before. They
heard it presented in the language they readily understood. They also knew that the
preacher talking to them had but a few short years before been saved out of a living
hell, with which their own circumstances did not even begin to compare. As the
missionary pictured the glories of heaven and contrasted them with the awful
condition of the lost in sin and hell, everyone trembled. The gang were visibly
shaken. Bill Cook's eves were fastened on Mr. Trotter as be spoke of hell and
judgment.

"Yellow Liz" had forgette n the pipe in her lap. It had fallen over and the
contents had set her dress on fire! The smell of smoke caused by the burning
cotton, wool, and dirt together did not make a pleasing accompaniment for the
speaker's words. When the odor reached Bill, he leaped into the middle of the room
and started to shout.

Just at that moment "Yellow Liz" felt the heat from the fire, and jumped to
Bill's side, so frightened she couldn't speak.

But goings on like this did not fluster the mission man. The opportunity that
he had prayed for so long, to reach the people of Bucktown with the gospel, had
come.

It was true that the unfortunate incident had ruined his chance to make an
appeal, and he felt heartbroken and disappointed. Still it was a start. Just then little
Jimmie slipped up to him and Dressing his hand, said, "Don't yer care, we'll git 'em
all yet!"

And get them all he did—or most of them. One by one the gang yielded and
became marvelous trophies of God's Grace. But the prize of all in Bucktown still
evaded "capture." Dave Beech, the worst of sinners and self-styled "Mayor of
Bucktown," was still as wild as ever. If only he could be saved, it would be the end
of Bucktown.

Already changes were taking place in the district as the following
conversation indicated. "Don't it beat the Dutch, Fagin, the way things is goin' in
Bucktown?" said Mike, the bartender, to Fagin one afternoon. "The gang all seem to
be on the bum. When I went home for dinner this noon, my old lady said she was
goin' ter the mission with Mrs. Cook and Bill ter-night."
"Has Bill Cook been down to the Mission?" asked Fagin. "Yes, and I guess they've
got him, too. His woman says he's converted, er whatever they calls it; and he told
me this mornin' that he wasn't drinkin'. I ast him to have one, but he said he'd loller
the water wagon the rest of his
life. I give him the laugh, but he wouldn't stand fer it." "This is pension day, isn't it?"
asked Fagin. "I think so," said Mike.

"Well, if Bill stays sober after he gets his money, then I'll think there's
somethin' ter this mission business," said Fagin.

The women of Bucktown were talking the same way about Bill and his wife.

I'll bet Bill'll be drunk when he gits his money," said Mrs. Kinney. "You git his
wife mad, and she'll swear like she always did. Where der yer suppose she got that
hat she's wearin'? When I ast her, she said the Lord give it to 'er, and she says
she's goin' ter have a carpet and curtains. I wish Bill would git drunk and just teach
her a good lesson. She's gittin' too smart."

The winter had passed and the weather had become warm enough for a street
meeting. One day Mr. Trotter had his big white stallions hitched to the Gospel
wagon, which was also white. The team had wintered well and weighed 3400
pounds. As they stood champing their bits outside the mission, Jimmie watched
them for a few minutes and then, turning to Mr. Trotter, said, "Please, kin I go
erlong, Mr. Trotter?"

"Where shall we go, Jimmie) We want to have about three meetings this
afternoon if the weather stays warm, as it is now."

"Have all t'ree of 'em in Bucktown," said Jimmie. "I bet I kin git Dave Beech
ter come over ter de corner ter see dem dere horses, and I'll bet Fagin and Mike'll
come over ter hear Bill Cook make his speel."

They had gone into the center of Bucktown where they had started a street
meeting.

"The City Rescue Mission stands for the old Gospel of Christ, to save from
sin," Trotter announced. "And on this wagon today are those who were once far in
sin, but who are now happy in Him. Everyone here knows Mr. Cook. He is your
neighbor and, I believe, your friend. You all knew him in his old life, and most of you
know how God has kept him these past weeks. I know that you will all want to hear
from him. I take great pleasure in introducing to you Mr. William Cook."

As Bill stood up to speak, the door of Fagin's saloon opened and out came
Jimmie.
"Go on, Bill," said Jimmie, "tell 'em what yer told 'em in der mission last night."

"It's this way," said Bill, great drops of perspiration standing on his forehead. "It's this way. In the army I learned to drink. After I came home I took up my old trade and have always worked when I could keep sober. Since I have lived in this part of town, I've been drunk more than I have been at work. I tried to stop, but couldn't handle myself at all.

When my old pal, Bob Moore, died, I was in bad shape; but I never got away from what God did fer him before he died. When I got out of bed, Jimmie took me to the mission and Jesus saved me the first night I went there. My wife was saved the night before, and I tell you we're havin' different times at our house nowadays."

The testimonies really caused a sensation in Bucktown that day, but the crowning victory, came when Dave Beech got saved. It came about this way:

It was at the close of the annual mission picnic. Jimmie had taken a crowd of cripples along from Bucktown. He had asked Mr. Trotter for a loan of the Gospel wagon, and he drove the gang to the picnic.

On the way home, Jimmie attempted to get his load of cripples to accept Christ; and the argument they had about "ligion," as mose called it, would make splendid reading for preachers; but we will pass most of it by. Jimmie told them that Jesus loved them all and was able to help them.

"In der picture I see'd of Him, He's got long hair and wears long dresses like a woman and looks jus' like he's goin' ter cry. What's He know erbout guys like us? I can't walk er no thin' and kin a womany man help me?" asked Hop.

"Don't care erbout no pictures," said Jimmie. "He ain't no womany man. He built houses and barns and was a carpenter when He was here. He was born in a barn and slep' in a barn same's I do, and' He didn't have no more home an' I got. He jus' knows what I'm doin' and' what I need an' kin rake care of me, 'cause He's been there."

While they were in the midst of their argument the wagon stopped in front of Dave's barn. Dave's opinion on any subject was final in Bucktown.

"Say, Dave, come here, will yer?" cried Jimmie. "Dese pikers are trying' ter say that Jesus don't love 'em and can't save em and sech like and I want yet ter prove dat I'm right. Don't Jesus love everybody?""Yes, everybody," said Dave.
"Ain't He got der power ter save everybody?" "Yes, everybody," answered Dave. "Cripples an' all?" asked Jimmie. "Yes, cripples and all."

"Won't He fergive 'em all der mean tings dey done?" "Yes, all of them."

"An' won't He take care of 'em all der time?"

"Yes, all the time."


"Say, Dave, why don't yer git it if yer believe it?" Dave was dumfounded.

"Oh, it's not for me, boys," he said. 'You see, it's . . ." "Den it's not fer us neider," Hop ejaculated. "So yer see, yer don't believe a word yer say. We're goin'. So-long, Dave."

Jimmie's eyes filled with tears as he watched Dave stand there with his head down. Never had he known Dave to get the worst of an argument before. As the team started, Dave looked up at Jimmie; their eyes met for an instant. The pain and sorrow on Jimmie's face pierced Dave to the heart.

A few hours later, after Jimmie had sold his evening papers, he started for Dave's barn. His heart was heavy. Dave had a remarkable influence over this boy. Jimmie loved him and believed him to be a wonderful man. He found Dave in his office.

"Dave, I want ter talk ter yet erbout what Hop said ter yer. He said 'at if it wasn't fer you, it wasn't fer him either. Yer didn't say nothin' and I've been thinkin' maybe yet didn't have nothin' ter say. If yer sure it's not fer yer, how kin it be fer me? I don't know what ter do. I pray fer yer every day, but if God don't want yer I might as well give yer up."He buried his face in his hands and began to weep.

"It's me that's been wrong, Jimmie, not you. I've fought God ever since I've known you. After you went away today I hated myself for my cowardice. I know what is right, and I'll do it or die."

Jimmie looked up and said, "Der yer mean yet are goin' ter get saved?"

"That's just what I mean, Jimmie, I am..." But before he could finish his sentence Jimmie jumped into his lap and hugged him.

"Dear old Dave, I knewed you'd come. Let's go to der mission right away, it's time fer de singin' already."
Dave walked so fast that Jimmie had to run to keep up. The song service was in progress when they reached the mission. They sat down in the front row of seats and after a few songs, Dave jumped to his feet and said, "Excuse me, I want to get saved and I want to get saved bad. I can't wait for the word. I want to get off now. I've scored at will, I've scored by the pole horse and I've laid up a heat or two; but I want to get on my steed and face the wire going square. I'm done jockeying and with everything else that's crooked, and I'm going into this race teaming for first money. I'll win by the help of God."

After the meeting the superintendent and Mrs. Trotter, Jimmie and others, went with Dave to Bucktown. He invited them to visit him at his barn; but his office was so small they could not all get in, so they went to the Cook residence. Dave excused himself and in five minutes returned with Fagin. Fagin was surprised when he saw the crowd, but he did not seem displeased. Dave was the first to speak.

"Fagin, I let Jesus into my life tonight and I want you to do the same thing. We're going to start a Sunday school and have meetings in the old barn besides. You know, Fagin, tide other day when Fred Hanks tried to kill himself, you told me you were tired of your business and wished you could be a Christian. You told me how sorry you were you boozed him up six times after Trotter had got hold of him. Now, Fred has given himself to God and is doing good work in the mission, and we want you to join us."

Mrs. Fagin was sent for and it took very little persuasion to bring her to a decision for the right.

"Mr. Trotter and myself will take the lease for the building off your hands, and we'll pay you for what stock you have," Dave told them. "You can get into the factory where you used to work and live like a man."

Very little remains to be said. Dave, Bill and Fagin used their influence and elected aldermen who closed every stall saloon and house of ill-fame in Bucktown. For eight months Fagin's place was used for a kindergarten during the week and a Sunday school on Sunday. The railroad company bought the old houses on Poverty Row and razed them; a side track running to the market has taken their place.

Jimmie stood on the corner of the Market one day and said, "Dis don't look like old Bucktown. Dis is quieter'n a Quaker meetin'. Why, we don't need a policeman down here, no more than a settin' hen needs crane's legs."

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06 -- LETTERS TO A SPIRITUAL SON
"Paul, An Apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus, To Timothy, my dearly beloved son: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

"I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day; Greatly desiring to see thee, being mindful of thy tears, that I may be filled with joy..."

"Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands. For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

"Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner . . " (II Timothy 1:1-4; 6-8 a).

Harry Monroe and Mel Trotter became fast buddies. Harry fondly referred to Mel as "my Timothy," while Mel used to call Harry "Paul." The friendship lasted for many years, until the Lord took this warm-hearted Irishman Home.

When Mel moved to Grand Rapids to superintend the City Rescue Mission in that city, the men felt the separation keenly. For two years they had worked together in the mission in Chicago and many surrounding churches. People never wearied of listening to their testimonies. So it is we have on record the letters of a spiritual father to his spiritual son begotten in the Lord.

Harry Monroe wrote Mel:

March 4, 1900
My Beloved:

Yours to hand. Delighted to hear from you. Am so hopeful regarding your work. We thank God with you for what His grace has done up to date, and let us expect big things for He is a Wonder Working Jesus. Dear boy, you must let up a little. Take at least one day and night to rest. 'Six days shalt thou labour.' Not law but Grace. Well, you are often in my thoughts and prayers. Well good boy, remember me to all.

Lovingly,
Harry Monroe

On March 26, 1900, Mel received another letter from his "Paul":

March 26, 1900
My Beloved:
As you are in my thoughts today I just want you to know you are not forgotten. Well Mel, I wish I could see you for just a minute and sing 'Hide Me' or some other song. I miss you but it is all right. You are just where He wants you, bless His Name. Yesterday was a big day with us. Last night it was grand. I know you will be glad to hear the dear old mission is doing business. I was delighted to see your grand report. Thank God. I believe the Lord will show the kickers of G. R. that there is power in Jesus blood to save. May the good Lord make you a great blessing.

Very truly,
Harry Monroe

Subsequent letters not only reveal the deep love between the two men, but also the sense of good humor which existed between them. In letters from Chicago Mr. Monroe wrote:

September 12, 1900
My Beloved:

Glad to hear from you. Say, I thought you had forgotten we were on earth. You may not care to hear from me, but if you knew how much good you do me and how much I am encouraged you would give me at least one injection of G.R. hot air once a week. Mel, I have a hope that some day the dear Lord will permit you and I to do some special work together. It may be a long time off but it will come to pass. Glad to hear you are going to move. It does me good to think that our meetings in G. R. are still kindly remembered. You are in my thoughts and prayers every day. I trust you will hold me up also, Mel.

Lovingly,
'PA'

Two years later Monroe wrote to Mel, using the Term:

May 1908
My Dear Tim:

It would have been a real delight to have seen you and Mrs. Trotter. Hope however to have a good visit with you soon. Just returned from Charlestown Sunday. Had a fine work. My Son, your Dad is still praying and smiling his way through. Love to all, DAD

Mrs. Sarah D. Clarke was one of God's noblewomen. For thirty-one years she labored incessantly among the outcasts and downcasts of Chicago with that love shed abroad in her heart which only the Holy Spirit can give. During the early years of the P. G. M. her husband Colonel Clarke was with her, and when he died she bravely took up the burden where he laid it down.
She achieved something that few women have equaled. It is possible she holds an all-time record. For over six thousand successive nights she never missed a night meeting in the old Mission! During this time she also visited the county jail two and three times a week, going from cell to cell and talking to prisoners.

Her power and influence over drunken and unruly men was remarkable. One night in particular a poor fellow on crutches came in very drunk and almost crazy. He disturbed the meeting incessantly until two of the ushers remonstrated with him, and soon there was trouble and all three fell to the floor together. When the drunken man in a frenzied rage reached for his crutch and would have done serious injury to those around, he felt the touch of a small hand upon his arm and looked up into the face of "Mother Clarke." The man suddenly became quiet and the meeting went on.

Her life was simple and humble. She was visiting in a hospital one clay and stopped to talk with a poor sick girl who was unsaved and hardened in heart. She seemed unmoved by all Mrs. Clarke could say to her. In the next bed lay a piteous outcast, wasted and worn, and this rebellious girl said to herself, "If that woman gives that girl a kiss, I will believe in her religion." Mrs. Clarke passed on to the next bed, spoke a few comforting words to the poor girl and as she was leaving, stooped and kissed her on the forehead.

That kiss led to the other girl's salvation. She wrote to Mrs. Clarke and said: "That kiss was the means of my conversion, for I afterwards gave my life to Christ and have a happy home, and shall never cease to thank God for your visit to the hospital."

Hundreds of men and women date their entrance into the new life to the time when Mrs. Clarke with a few chosen words induced them to take a stand for Christ.

Mrs. Clarke became Mel Trotter's mother in the Lord. To the glory of God he found himself surrounded by loving hearts. Among all of his friends, Mrs. Clarke proved to be a "mother in Israel." Her letters to her spiritual boy reveal a depth of love and understanding for the one who so narrowly escaped a drunkard's grave. In her letter from Chicago she said:

March 6, 1900
My Dear Beloved Boy:

Nearly one whole month and not a peep from you, but my dear Bro. you are faithfully remembered as I promised every day, and some times I feel led to remember you often. I know the Lord must be blessing you for He has promised.

As usual I am on the rush every day, hardly know when or where to stop. We are having wonderful meetings, The tide is rising higher and higher. Well, we all miss you so much but know the Lord needs you there, or He would not have sent
you. Therefore you can depend upon His promise that His wisdom, grace, and strength will be sufficient for you. In sweetest love, kind remembrance to dear Mrs. T. and with Christian fellowship,

S. D. Clarke

Mr. Trotter received many letters from Mrs. Clarke over the years. The passing of time only enriched the fellowship between them.

The following letter written from Chicago, is a beautiful one, expressing heartfelt love for Jesus and containing her personal testimony:

April 15, 1908
My Dear Boy Mel:

Seldom do I get time to whisper a word in your ear, but always time to ask the dear Lord to fill you to overflowing with wisdom and power that you may present the riches of His grace to a perishing world. How my heart goes out in fidelity to all the dear ones that have radiated from this humble spot where thousands have received a divine touch to go forth to be a blessing to the world. Think of Mackey, (the man who pushed Mel into the Mission) and Rice, the 'whirlwind evangelist.' This is truly a day of miracles.

I am treading the same path, always happy and content to know I can be the 'little tack' in the great structure that will one day be completed. Yes, more, I begin to appreciate what it meant when the Lord called for my time and asked what I was doing to decorate my heavenly home. I then and there gave Him a mortgage on my time never to be redeemed, and ever since have felt that time was not my own. That call was the laying of the corner stone of P. G. M. As Mr. Clarke used to say, there was no peace until the mission was started, and if it hadn't been for his wife, there never would have been a P. G. M. So where might you and thousands of others have been? He moves in a mysterious way His wonders to perform.

Well, I realize the going is almost over. I sometimes wonder who my next-door neighbor will be, and I am already preparing for a banquet up there where there will be a reunion such as no pen can describe. Aren't you glad you are to be one of the reception committee?

God Bless you is my daily prayer.
May you long be spared for His glory.
With much love to both yourself and Mrs. T.
I am ever your foster Mother,
S. D. Clarke

In 1912 Mother Clarke was hurt in an accident that brought her excellent attendance record to an end. The last years of her life she was a shut-in and an
invalid. On January 29, 1918, just over twenty years after her beloved son in the
Lord, Mel Trotter, went into the old mission, she went to be with the Lord. She was
eighty-three years of age.

Writing to a friend, Mr. Trotter said: "Her Home-going is a sad blow to me. All
these years she faithfully prayed for me. Her letters were always a source of
tremendous encouragement to me."

Mel Trotter became a great man. His influence was international. He was
doubly blessed in having such spiritual foster parents. Only death brought to an
earthly end the love, advice, and fellowship of Mother Clarke and Pa Monroe.

It was natural that Mel Trotter should become the spiritual son of those two
Great-hearts at the Pacific Garden Mission. He was begotten of the Lord, and the
tenderness and love that flowed out from their hearts reveals the bond that existed
between them. Christians reading this biography will understand the affection they
held for one another.

Somebody once put it this way: "How sacred and beautiful is the feeling of
affection in the pure and guileless soul! The proud may sneer at it, the fashionable
call it a fable, the selfish and dissipated affect to despise it, but the holy passion is
surely from heaven and is made evil only by the corruptions of those it was sent to
preserve and bless."

It was not long, however, before Trotter himself became a spiritual father.
Soon he was surrounded by converts who loved him for Jesus' sake; and he loved
them. Many of his converts became associates of his, and later they became
mission superintendents also. Dipping into Mr. Trotter's mailbag, we find a
relationship existing between him and his spiritual sons similar to the one between
him, Mrs. S. Clarke, and Harry Monroe. A number of these letters, fortunately, have
been preserved. They are an example of Christian affinity. Mr. Trotter was a wise
and loving leader, who fathered his flock and nurtured them until they were weaned
away from the terrible habits which ruined their lives. When the "boys" got away on
their own, they constantly wrote to him for counsel and advice:

Wesley Rescue Hall
293 Bowery
New York, March 3, 1906
Dear Bro. Mel,

Your good letter received and was glad to hear of the good time you had at
Atlanta. We enjoyed your visit here very much and hope you can come again before
long.

Torrey & Alexander will be with us next week for one day. They have made
me Supt. of this work here at the last board meeting.
Mel, Pray for me as I do for you.
Phil. 1:3
Your Bro. in Christ,
Joan Callahan

St. Louis City Mission
St. Louis, Sept. 5th, 1906
Dear Bro. Trotter:

Glory to Jesus, He saves to the uttermost all who come to Him. Well Glory. Am in the work. My Father is leading, and souls are being saved in St. Louis. Never shall forget your love to me Melvin, hope I did not disgrace you while at Winona. Blessed days of sweet fellowship. Jesus was lifted up in our lives, and a wonderful impression made upon the hearts of thousands at Winona. Glory to His blessed Name. What did you decide upon in regards to the farm across the Lake? Am anxious to know. God bless you. When you need me "Call." Kindest love to Mrs. Trotter.

Yours In Jesus Name
Edward Card, Supt.

105 Alpine St. Dubuque, Iowa.
Dear Mel,

The Lord bless you and all the fellows. Give them my love. I often pray for you about 7:15 p.m. My work is hard, but blessed already in results. I want to use you here some time. My love to all the girls. God bless 'em.

Now two things you can do for me.

1st. I need the address of Miss Sina Welling.

2nd. Could you find Mrs. Berger's long gloves? She is weeping for the old gloves. She can't bear to lose those; besides, she was married in them and expects to keep them until next time. They are mascots.

Now write me you old horse and give my love to Mrs. Trotter.

Truly
J. T. Berger
Oct. 5th, '06

Now follows a letter from a fifteen-year-old girl:

Grand Rapids, Michigan
Aug. 12th, 1915
Mr. M. Trotter
My Dad in the Gospel,

As my spiritual birthday is the 20th of this month, seeing in the paper, you will be going away, I am writing this letter ahead of time. I remember the night well when you told me the story of the Cross, how God loved me, how you loved me, so anxious was you to see me get saved that you said, if you had a daughter of your own, you could not be more anxious about her, than you was about me.

After I accepted Christ, how I looked up to you as my Father in the Gospel, a real true Dad. I do love both you and Mrs. Trotter.

From
Tillie

At this period in Mr. Trotter's life he was stricken with a cancer which threatened five times to take his life. When the news about this terrible affliction spread around, letters poured in from all over the nation. Forced to cancel his engagements and compelled to give up his work temporarily, Mr. Trotter received solace from his brothers in Christ.

It will be well to record here some of the comfort and assurance he received. In those days came the following message from Harry Monroe. It is reproduced here to show the tenderness this modern "Paul" had for his son "Timothy."

My dear Mel:

I can only say with you "Thy will be done." My boy, do not get discouraged. Our Jesus lives and I believe He is going to heal you and make your last days the best of all your life. This poor old world needs men with a real message from God, so let us trust and not be afraid. With love from all

Your loving
Dad

From Charles M. Alexander came the following message:

East Northfield, Mass.
Dear Trotter:

My love and sympathy go out to you in a new way. You looked so big and strong and good when you were here. Now you are on the anxious seat about the length of time you are to stay on this old earth where you have helped so many thousands to love the Lord Jesus Christ more than they ever could have loved Him here if you had not been here-my wife and I are of them.
You know how much I have loved you by the way I have always wanted you
there when there was something to be done for the Lord.

Bless your old heart, I wish I could see you or do something to lift this heavy
load. Helen and I are praying for you and your wife.

Affectionately,
Charles M. Alexander
2 Tim. 2:15

P.S. Do you remember that verse from the good Book my wife quotes so much?
"What time I am afraid, I will trust in THEE."

Dr. James Gray wrote from the Moody Bible Institute:

Dear Trotter:

I have just heard, to my great sorrow, of the personal affliction that has come
upon you, and both Mrs. Gray and myself have gone to the Lord in prayer for you. If
it were your desire I would bring the matter before the whole student body for
prayer, and also write a personal letter to our prayer circle including thousands of
intercessors all over the world. I do not wish to give such publicity without your
consent, however. Could I be of comfort to you, I will gladly go down to Grand
Rapids to see you. Command me in that respect.

In the meantime, my I ask if you have heard of the researches in regard to
cancer which have been made by the Michael Reese hospital in this city? They hold
out real hope, I am told, in cases where the disease is not advanced. I feel like
urging you to investigate what I have heard.

God bless you and your wife in your new trial and give you courage and hope
and deliverance for Christ's sake.

Faithfully yours,
James M. Gray

The Lord directed Mr. Trotter to put himself in the hands of Dr. Howard A.
Kelly, the doctor himself being a wonderful servant of the Lord. It was after Mr.
Trotter returned to Grand Rapids and was on the road to recovery that he received
the following letter from Dr. Kelly:

Dear Mr. Trotter:

I give thanks that that dreadful trouble is better. I am sure it was in answer to
prayer, both here and that of your many friends. I give hearty thanks for your relief.
With sincere affection,
Howard A. Kelly

His old pal, "Billy" Sunday, wrote him from Trenton New Jersey, where he was in the midst of a great campaign:

Dear Mel,

By all means use the money to take a rest and build up. I didn't give it for use in the mission. The people of Grand Rapids should do that. I believe you would like Florida, still old Catalina looks good to me. Florida is warmer, Miami is fine... I am tired. Old Trenton is going fast for God now, simply wonderful...

I believe you will greatly benefit by going away. Use the money for yourself and Mrs. T., not for the mission.

Love from all,
W. A. Sunday

The Boss had a new lease on life. God spared him, and he rededicated himself to Christ. This sickness was perhaps the turning point in his life. From that day until the day the Lord called him home he neither faltered nor turned back from following his Lord. Although Mel Trotter was a broken vessel, God used him mightily to the pulling down of Satan’s strongholds.

*     *     *     *     *     *     *

07 -- THE GLOBETROTTER

For twenty years following his conversion Mel Trotter concentrated his energies on building up the work he founded in Grand Rapids and on establishing rescue missions in sixty seven other centers from coast to coast in the United States.

During this period his ministry spread far beyond the city in which he lived. Before long Mr. Trotter's name and the power of his testimony together with his magnetic personality became known far and wide. As was to be expected, calls soon began coming from outside the field of rescue missions. He was as eminently successful as an evangelist as he was as a mission man.

In a few short years he began to preach in other cities in churches, missions, tabernacles and Bible conferences. Finally, in 1917, when the United States declared war on Germany and entered the conflict on the side of Great Britain and France, Mel moved into the army camps and for twenty months toured every camp of any size and importance with remarkable success. It was during this time that he
came to see the importance of city-wide efforts, and soon after the war ended he started out as an evangelist and became one of the foremost evangels of his generation.

When America declared war on Germany and entered the fight on the side of Great Britain and Belgium, millions of men were called to the colors. Old Glory waved over dozens of army camps.

At Moody Bible Institute in Chicago four young students had banded themselves into a male quartet. They had done a little practicing and had appeared in a few meetings. Mel asked the Institute authorities if they had a quartet they could recommend and they replied that four young fellows had clone some singing together. Mr. Trotter asked to have them come to Grand Rapids to assist in a service so that he could hear them. They came and sang for Mel, and God's hand was upon the American Four, as they were named, from the very beginning.

Writing about his army camp meetings in "These Forty Years" Mr. Trotter said: "When the war broke out, I offered" myself to the Y.M.C.A. to work in the camps. That was a wonderful experience; more than fifteen thousand men professed salvation. I was in fifty-four camps in twenty months.

"The work at first was hard because there was a clause in the contract between the Allies and the Y.M.C.A. which compelled them to amuse as well as minister to the soldiers. That meant that we would have a prize fight or a wrestling match or a movie before I could speak, and then another match or a movie afterwards. I went down to New York and arranged with the International Committee to carry a quartet which would cover the entertainment clause and give us the whole evening for our evangelistic work.

"We took the American Four, a quartet composed of Joe Overmeyer, Warner Gale, George McLeod and Tom Hinkin. Homer Hammontree was with me from the beginning. C. O. Alexander of Philadelphia furnished the quartet, spending forty thousand dollars in the twenty months. We began at Oglethorpe and Chattanooga and went from coast to coast, from the Gulf of Mexico to the Lakes, ending at Camp Merritt when the flu closed the camp. After that calls came from everywhere for meetings, and since that time I have had many more calls than I was able to take and they still come."

The Grand Rapids Herald, dated January 12, 1919, carried the story of Mr. Trotter's experiences in the army camps of America. This report is worthy of recording here:

It was at Camp Merritt, New Jersey, that Mr. Trotter's wonderful embarkation work was done. There three thousand American boys went to the altar and solemnly obligated themselves to follow the teachings of their mothers and of the
Good Book. As many as ninety thousand soldiers embarked from this place some weeks, and Mr. Trotter frequently talked to as many as nineteen thousand in a single night during his six weeks' stay there.

"We ministered to them in every way," explained the evangelist. "We wrote and mailed letters for them and gave them counsel. After six weeks the influenza came and we had to leave.

"There were sixty-six coffins on the station platform at Camp Merritt when we left there on October 12 and everyone of them contained a mother's boy. I followed the soldiers from the time they arrived at their first camp until they embarked and I'll be on the dock when they get back.

"I was at camp sites all over the country before the buildings were erected. I saw trainloads of boys arrive in cities, as many of them hanging out of the windows as the size of the openings allowed. They were waving their arms and shouting words of comradeship to all the Janes, as they called them. When they arrived in camp they were only boys.

"I have seen them change in ninety days from careless, irresponsible youths to serious men. I have seen them develop as they pondered over the dangers of submarines and no man's land and considered the probabilities of not seeing their loved ones again. I stayed with them until they sailed and sent them away men, every one. I said au revoir to all knowing it meant good-bye for many, and I'll be there to clasp the hands of those who return. This I do not in myself but in the name of Him who sent me."

Mr. Trotter was a link that bound the boys with home. Anxious mothers wrote to him and his reply was, "Don't worry. He's better off here than at home." Many Grand Rapids boys were found in hospitals and accorded sympathy and many mothers saw or telephoned the evangelist after he arrived home.

All through his hard days and nights in the cantonments, Mr. Trotter kept in touch with the Grand Rapids Mission and the one in Chicago, in spite of his steadfast faithfulness to his work with the soldiers.

The response from the boys was marvelous. They came clear. They held nothing back. Problems ranging from trivial worries to portentous love affairs were brought to him. One man who confessed to having been twice a murderer was led to the Light. He wanted to renew his hope and he did. One senior student in a great university told Mel that both his mother and father were suing for a divorce. Would he try to reconcile them?

There was hardly another man who had the freedom which was willingly accorded to Mr. Trotter by the soldiers to probe their innermost hearts. Nor was there ever a man who put across what he did.
To show how his work was received the following instance is given: "I might say I registered for service at Englewood, New Jersey, which is near Camp Merritt where we were working at the time. A member of the draft board came to me and said they could not afford to send me away because I was doing the greatest possible good at my present work."

Mel Trotter's work among the boys in the camps during the first World War was epochal.

No less notable was the work of the American Four Quartet and the leading and singing of Homer Hammontree. The time spent thus was another way God used to prepare this man of God for the great union meetings he afterwards conducted throughout America. From the start Mel made a tremendous hit with the soldiers. They flocked to his meetings, and when the Trotter-Hammontree combination and the Quartet invaded the camps, they had little trouble convincing the authorities they had something that attracted the men, held their interests, and won their hearts to a greater degree than all other attractions thrown together.

Mel Trotter could not be called a showman. He certainly never entertained, but his meetings were lively and inspiring. His humor often started the rafters ringing with gales of laughter. The quartet sang very well. When they started they put on a program surpassed by none in quality and spiritual fervor.

Mel’s Bible talks to these men went right to their hearts. They knew a man’s man when they saw and heard one. Here was a man who came up out of the depths. This man knew the ropes. Few, if any, of the soldiers in the cantonments could match the experiences of the speaker. Here was one place where his life story really moved men. They realized they were looking into the face of a man who had gone down into sin and drunkenness, down into the abyss of despair and hopelessness. They were listening to the story of a man whose darkness was so thick he could have cut it with a knife.

They listened breathlessly as he told them about the bitter cold night in Chicago when he almost ended his life in the chilly waves of Lake Michigan. When he ended the story of his marvelous conversion in the Pacific Garden Mission, many of these men sat with tears in their eyes and a lump in their throat. They remembered something of their own bitter experiences in a life of sin, and then realized they were going over to Flander’s Field, to the trenches, and to no man’s land. Many of them would never come back.

Mr. Trotter tenderly and wonderfully faced the men with these things. When the altar call was given the soldiers started to come, until after twenty months of such work over fifteen thousand of them made profession of salvation.
Another feature contributing to Mr. Trotter's international reputation was his annual Bible conference held in January of each year at his mission in Grand Rapids, Michigan. This conference became, and still is, one of the most important and successful conferences of its kind in America. The dates always center around his spiritual birthday, the nineteenth of January. This was always a red-letter day in the history of the mission. On that day Mel always gave his life story, and he never failed to draw a full house as he told in vivid language the story of his conversion. As he spoke the people could see him staggering down the streets of Chicago, a lonely, hopeless outcast headed for the lake, and the crowd would thrill to the stirring account of his conversion in the old Pacific Garden Mission. No matter how many times he told the story he moved the crowds to tears and then to laughter and finally to rejoicing as he boasted in the Lord. Today, years after his homegoing, January 19 is observed as Founder's Day, and others tell the story of this great missioner, evangelist, Bible teacher, and conference Speaker. It is always the feature night of the annual conference and never fails to bring the crowds.

To Mel's Bible conference came leading Bible teachers from all parts of the world. He spared neither time nor money to bring the best to Grand Rapids. Consequently Grand Rapids has probably had the opportunity to hear more outstanding Bible teachers and Christian leaders than any other city in America. A long list of spiritual giants came to minister at the Mission. Hundreds of people in Grand Rapids, who today are active workers and leaders in dozens of churches throughout the city, profited from the teaching received at the annual Bible conferences.

This was part of Mel's formula for missions, and this method never failed. Other missions he founded or helped to establish financially follow this pattern with similar success. The Grand Rapids Bible conference carries the earmark of a master much, for Mr. Trotter's ability to organize and select the best speakers was remarkable indeed. He never failed to be at the conference himself. His enthusiastic leadership always sparked the meetings to success. He was a genial host and a unique master of ceremonies.

Equally popular and renowned were the Friday-night Bible classes. For years on end over 1,500 people attended the weekly gatherings. Such men as James M. Gray, William A. McCarrell, P. W. Philpott, and others came each Friday to teach the class. The impact of these Friday-night Bible classes upon Grand Rapids and vicinity was tremendous. The Mission became a center of evangelism and fundamental Bible teaching and remains such to this day.

One might suppose that the main reason for the Mission's existence might be overshadowed or overlooked by the great program sponsored from year to year. This was not so. Mr. Trotter never lost his first love. He remained always the "Apostle to the Slums" until the day he died. His program for "boosting the busted" was not hindered, but greatly enhanced by the program he organized. Such gatherings produced for him more workers, men and women who rightly divided the
Word of Truth. He put them to work on the streets, on the Gospel wagon, in the jail, in hospitals, factories; in every place where the opportunity presented itself he thrust his workers. Through the conferences and the Bible classes he stirred many idle Christians to become soul-winners.

The teaching of the "glorious hope of His appearing" became a strong factor at the Bible classes. Mel, under God, built a rescue mission which not only rescued those sinking in the morass of sin, but he also rescued hundreds of Christians from falling into the deadly sleep of inactivity, and sent them as fiery evangels back into their churches to set the torch of flaming Christianity into many a lifeless congregation.

Just as the Youth for Christ movement has awakened so many young people to a personal sense of responsibility, and has been so successful in bringing life into dead churches, so back in those days Mel was the guiding light to many a local revival. Ministers and Sunday school workers received a new vision. Old Smith's Opera House, once a den of iniquity, was now a house of prayer.

Whatever his critics may say about him or the mission he founded, the fact remains that for fifty years the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ has been preached in this downtown center, and not once in all the years has there been the slightest suggestion of a blot upon its ministry and the fine testimony it has borne for half a century. Neither has the main purpose of the mission been neglected. The poor and homeless, the drunkard and the harlot, the churchless and the sinner are all being reached today with the same zest and zeal which has characterized the mission all these years!

That Mr. Trotter was divinely guided in this is clearly acknowledged in the fact that, now after ten years without him, his mission is still "everlastingly at it," following the pattern set by its founder fifty years ago.

Evangelist Mel Trotter toured America and other lands for twenty years. His Christian life falls easily into two sections. These two sections are clearly defined in the records on file. From 1900 to 1920 he was mission man par excellence. In the days when missions were comparatively unknown nationally, he made the nation conscious of their worth. In this he was for many years championed by one of the greatest evangelists of all time, Billy Sunday. Mr. Sunday himself was saved in the Pacific Garden Mission four or five years before Mr. Trotter was saved there.

Sunday and Trotter were close friends. If any two men loved and understood each other, they did. Mr. Sunday gave generously to Mel's work in Grand Rapids. Mr. Sunday was a great evangels; he was also a leading mission man. Billy was always anxious about the converts who walked the saw-dust trail in his meetings. Because of this he fostered the work of rescue missions in scores of cities. In this aspect of the work he and Mel made an unequaled team. When Mr. Trotter was
going to Chester, Pennsylvania, in 1921 for a campaign, Mr. Sunday wrote to a
friend about him as follows:

Sioux City, la.
Oct. 21st 1921
My dear Friend:

I have just heard that Mel Trotter is to conduct a meeting in Chester. That is a
fine prospect for any city, big or little. Mel knows the Lord and he has the pep and
enthusiasm to move others. There are enough dare-devils in the country. I wish
there were more dare-saints who are willing to put up a knock down, drag out fight
against the forces of sin and evil like Mel will do. The Lord bless you and the
Christian forces in Chester as you unite in a campaign for righteousness. My
prayers will be with you.

Sincerely yours,
W. A. Sunday

Section two of Mr. Trotter's Christian life also covered a period of some
twenty years. From 1920 until September 1940, when he finally laid down the cross
to take up the crown, he moved the hearts of people on two continents as few men
have done in the twentieth century. The world knew that Grand Rapids made the
best furniture, but during those twenty years people in many lands also knew that
the city of Grand Rapids was the home of one of the leading evangelists of all time,
The "man who raved about Jesus" was embarked upon a stirring crusade against
sin and Satan. He had his own way and manner of doing it, and God blessed his
ministry with a continual revival for forty years.

Mr. Trotter's large campaigns actually started in 1921. Going to Danville,
Virginia, for two weeks in September of that year, he held a series of meetings in
the Ridge Street Tabernacle, seating approximately three thousand. Over eleven
hundred were saved in this campaign. The sign of God's approval was upon his
servant. This was but the beginning. Before he died he was to leave behind him a
record of soul-saving of which any man might well be pleased. Before going into
the details of some of these great campaigns, it is well to pause here to give
mention to some of those who served with him for so many years.

The American Four Quartet whom he engaged from the Moody Bible Institute,
seemed to be God's provision for one of the new tasks Mel had undertaken. They
toured the camps with him with mounting success. A few months after the quartet
had been with Mr. Trotter, they were joined by Mr. Homer Hammontree and finally
by Mr. Howard Hermansen, pianist. Following the war days and after the quartet had
disbanded, when Trotter started his union campaigns, Mr. Hammontree became his
song-leader and soloist and Mr. Hermansen accompanied at the piano. A new
member joined the party in the person of Mr. Howard Meinardi, who acted as
advance man and organizer for the Trotter-Hammontree campaigns.
For years they worked together until the Trotter-Hammontree combination became as widely known as other duos such as Torrey-Alexander, Moody-Sankey, Sunday-Rodeheaver, and others. On the road or at home in Grand Rapids they stayed together. The loyalty of these men went on unabated until Mr. Trotter's death caused the separation of this magnificent team.

Concerning the Danville, Virginia, meetings the newspapers had this to say:

The revival was unique in many respects. In the opinion of many the magnetism and personality of Mr. Trotter and his aide Mr. Hammontree dissipated that 'reserve' which is often seen in religious revivals. Few people of this city who followed the revivals of Gypsy Smith, Sam Jones, and others who have been here for the past twenty or thirty years recall the hand-clapping as was evidenced at the recent revival. On one occasion there was a burst of applause when a man came forward to take his stand from the distant rear of the building. The choir was frequently applauded on sheer merit of its performances and last night Mr. Hammontree, after concluding the moving message in the Gospel song of the lost sheep, was roundly applauded.

An unusual number of children took a definite stand and the evangelistic party soon endeared themselves to city's children generally.

At Chester, Pennsylvania, in the Third Presbyterian Church the party held a two-week meeting with four hundred professed conversions. A reporter who covered the meetings reported:

Mel Trotter, the whirlwind western evangelist, brought his meeting to a close last evening at the Third Presbyterian Church. It was one of the most successful church campaigns ever conducted in Chester, according to the Christian folk of this community who attended the meeting, with a harvest of nearly four hundred converts. Trotter lived up to his reputation of being a powerful preacher, an earnest and sincere soul-winner, and a real whole-hearted fellow, who made a deep impression on everyone with whom he came in contact.

As Dave Beech, one of Mel's earliest converts in Grand Rapids, would say: "No, he's not a pacer; he's a trotter -- Mel Trotter."

The "Globe-trotter" was setting a fast pace. More requests for meetings came than he could possibly handle, and the end was not yet!

Mr. Trotter was a fearless preacher. Such men have enemies. Satan never takes an attack on his domain sitting down. While Trotter was preaching in Houston, Texas, one of the newspapers attacked him over the issue of dancing.
Such a write-up was a sure indication that this evangelist was "on the beam." No man can attack the evils of this world as Mel Trotter did without being criticized. The natural man discerneth not the things of the Spirit.

The tragedy of our day lies in the terrible mixture of religion and the world. The two are so interwoven into the texture of the church that it is difficult and well nigh impossible to find a line of demarcation. It just isn't there. Few men are prepared to preach against the union of church and politics. Those who do are finding it to be a lonely and unpopular battle.

Many will stand on the side lines and cheer and applaud the courageous evangelist in the center of the arena. They will often voice their opinions and declare that the evangelist is saying the things that ought to be said, but precious few are willing to roll up their sleeves and get into the fight themselves.

When the religious history of the present generation is written, the abject failure of the church to remain separate from the world will be clearly revealed. Mr. Trotter, Billy Sunday, D. L. Moody, Finney, and the noble galaxy of heroic champions of the faith once delivered to the saints would be shocked to see the terrible state of Christendom today. There are too few men who speak out against this co-mingling with apostates. Any man who does will be a marked man. The church is too often silent on the great moral issues of our generation. Too often this silence indicates the church's compromise with the world.

During 1922 the Trotter party moved into Evansville, Indiana, for a three-week campaign. Rev. Ernest Reveal, a mighty man of faith, one of God's gentlemen, was in charge there. He still is. Handicapped physically, he is not impaired spiritually. He talks to God in prayer much like 'Praying Hyde' or Billy Bray. Some day his biography will be written and when it is, it will be a remarkable epic of faith in these times. With the groundwork prepared by such a man of God they had a remarkable series of meetings and many converts.

A few years after starting his evangelistic career Mr. Trotter took a page out of Billy Sunday's book and commenced to build tabernacles of sufficient size to hold the crowds. He was having the same trouble as other leaders of his day. He was finding it increasingly difficult to find auditoriums large enough to hold the people who came to hear him.

In Fairfield, Iowa, the newspaper ran a front page headline:

Up Goes The Big Tabernacle

With a clatter of hammers and swish of saws volunteer workers from every trade and profession almost, made quick work of the erection of the big tabernacle today. It looked this afternoon as if the roof might be on before the laborers knocked off for the day.
The rush of work was stilled at the noon hour while the tired and aching carpenters enthusiastically devoured the free meal at the Baptist Church, served by the ladies of that congregation. There was an abundance of "hearty" food, and a bit of a program, Gus V. Scott leading in the singing and Dr. E. B. Turner chairman of the general committee of arrangements making a clever speech, followed by other short talks.

Despite overcast skies, a bustle of activity prevailed at the Trotter tabernacle site corner of Broadway and Second Street early this morning. While volunteers were not as numerous as was hoped, yet what were there were extremely busy.

By 8 o'clock some thirty husky men were on the job and the work of framing the big center trusses was going merrily along. The first one was raised at 8:30, and an hour later the entire string of main trusses was in place and the work was going on on the side framing. By this evening the site will present an entirely different appearance as about fifty men were on the job at 9:30 and a large delegation from the College were scheduled to be on the job this afternoon. While the entire structure will not be finished as hoped, yet it will probably he almost enclosed by quitting time.

Some delay was occasioned this morning by the framing of the tresses as it was expected to have had them ready by last night, but the inclement weather would not permit work yesterday afternoon. All classes of local citizenry were on the job this morning including the postmaster, merchants, farmers, factory men, real estate folks, builders, and lumber men. In fact, almost every line of business was represented in today's laborers.

The delay already occasioned in the work causes the committee to make another appeal for volunteer help for tomorrow. It is hoped that a number who have not responded today will find time to donate a day's work in the good cause. If you desire to help, be on the grounds tomorrow morning at 8 o'clock with saw and hammer.

The big shed, which rose in two days on the new post office site Second and Broadway streets as the result of volunteer labor of many citizens, will be complete and ready for the services. The finishing touches to the building and furnishings are being given today, and everything from the sawdust on the floor to the big trap door in the roof for ventilation has been arranged.

The building will seat 1,800 people, and the seats which are strong and staunch are more or less comfortable.

The building of such a tabernacle was a big undertaking in itself, but from the newspaper report one can gather that there existed a wonderful spirit of team work. It must have been with a feeling of pride and satisfaction that the tired workers put
down their tools and realized the job was done. Alas, their hopes were short-lived, for following the first meeting led by Mr. Trotter and his party another headline appeared in the paper:

Overflow Big Tabernacle
First Night Proves Shed Too Small
Scribe Ben Franklin reported:

Hammers and saws are playing a merry tune again today down on the tabernacle lot. It was definitely proven last night that the big shed was wholly inadequate to hold the large crowds that taxed its capacity by the time the service started. Scores stood about the walls in the rear while hundreds were turned away. A twenty foot wing is being added to the east side and it is expected it will be ready for duty by the time for the afternoon service arrives.

A week later it became necessary to add another wing to this old 'gloryshed.' They were crowding 2,500 into the place now, and still hundreds were being turned away. This time they pushed the west wall of the tabernacle out and added another section giving them a capacity of three thousand. However, before the campaign ended, despite the two additions to the original building, the place still proved too small.

The people in Fairfield, Iowa, have never forgotten the Trotter meetings. To this day old timers talk about the hundreds who walked down the sawdust trail to begin a new life in Christ; and they still talk of the old shed.

There is no question that the erection of such a tabernacle in the heart of any city would be a great attraction. Today's evangelists and committees sponsoring campaigns might do well to try some of the proved methods of a generation ago. It is true that the majority of places do have spacious auditoriums in these days. However, in most cases the novelty of them has worn off. To see a hundred men engaged in building a big shed on a prominent site might do more to focus the attention of the people upon a campaign than a thousand dollars' worth of advertising spent in other ways. It would also be a central and neutral place for all churches to unite and concentrate upon a few weeks' revival effort.

Knoxville, Tennessee was the scene of another of Mr. Trotter's campaigns. Starting at the First Presbyterian Church, they were compelled to move to Jefferson Hall by the end of the first week to accommodate the crowds. An interesting report appears in the daily paper about the progress of the meetings:

With steady increasing power the Mel Trotter revival is swinging into its second week today. Those sponsoring the meetings have been much gratified with the large crowds that have been attending. Mr. Trotter is one of the best known city mission workers in the United States today. For years he has conducted a large city mission, and through his work thousands have heard of salvation from sin. In the
North and East, where Mr. Trotter is better known, his services are much sought. He has assisted in opening scores of missions in the large cities of the country.

However, the work of Mel Trotter is not confined to this type of work by any means. While he does not claim to be, he is recognized as one of the great evangelists of the day. His straight from the shoulder messages that come from a life rich and full of experiences reach the masses with unusual power. His messages to the church people are most splendid. Mr. Trotter is a man who was wonderfully saved from a life of sin. His testimony concerning the power of God to save a man from sin and put him on his feet where he will not want to sin has been a great blessing to thousands who have heard it.

Mr. Trotter says that he was for years "down and out," living in open sin; that since the day Jesus Christ came into his life he has not wanted a drink of liquor, and that Christ living in him has kept him from wanting to sin.

Mel Trotter's methods are unique. He works like no other man and has won the hearts of his hearers in Knoxville by his direct appeals to the Christian life.

In 1937 Mr. Trotter spent four months overseas in England, Scotland and Ireland in connection with the Moody Centenary. In fact, he preached around the world, and everywhere he went God blessed his ministry and many souls were added unto the Lord.

Concerning his trip to England Dr. H. A. Ironside, who was his companion on the trip, makes the following interesting observation: "During the celebration of the D. L. Moody Centenary in Great Britain it was my privilege to cross over with Mel Trotter as two of the American representatives invited to participate in the celebrations arranged by the London Centenary committee. It was one of the happiest experiences of my life to be associated with this devoted and decidedly unique missioner. We shared the same cabin together on the Aquitania. The voyage was a stormy one and Mel was far from well, so that one wondered if he were wise in going over. But his faith was strong and despite physical weakness he looked forward with eager anticipation to preaching the Gospel to British audiences. We enjoyed some sacred hours together as we knelt in prayer before God, looking to Him for guidance and blessing.

"We were welcomed by the committee in London and appeared on the platform at a great celebration of Moody’s birthday in the Royal Albert Hall, where over eight thousand people were gathered to honor him. The Marquis of Aberdeen and Temair presided, and many leaders in Church and State participated.

"During the week meetings were held in the Central Hall, Westminster. Each night some outstanding British preacher gave an address, followed by Mel or myself on alternate nights. At first Mr. Trotter was nervous, I thought, because of English punctiliousness as to correct diction, and a warning on the part of some
that American colloquialisms might not be acceptable. This made for a rather stilted, unnatural approach the first time Mel preached, until he really got going, when he forgot the advice and the suggestions and launched out in his own inimitable way. He declared he had lost three-fourths of his vocabulary the night he was converted, so had to do the best he could with what was left.

So earnestly and tenderly did Mel preach and plead that the people forgot about his Americanisms and saw and heard only the man redeemed from a drunkard's doom, and recognized in him a magnificent trophy of the grace of God. When the invitation was given for those who wanted to know Christ to come forward for prayer and personal dealing, nearly forty responded. It was the same thing over again each time he preached. When I spoke, while there seemed to be a gratifying interest, I never saw nearly so many come to the front. I realized as never before that Mel was an evangelist, gifted above many in bringing men and women to decision.

"After London we separated, each taking part in different meetings in three countries, England, Scotland, and Ireland, until we came together again in Edinburgh. There, on the Lord's day, Mel preached in Charlotte Chapel in the morning, in the South Leith Parish Church in the afternoon, and in the historic Free Church Assembly Hall in the evening. I was in St. George's West in the morning, St. Giles Cathedral in the afternoon, and the Leith Town Hall at night. Between us, we had the joy of preaching Christ to many thousands of people, and when we returned to our hotel that night we thanked God for the opportunities given.

"On Monday night we began a week's series in the Assembly Hall. Mel preached the first night, then had to leave for Dundee, and I carried on alone the rest of the time. That first night's meeting was a memorable one.

"Some of the ministers warned against any dividing the meeting or emotional appeals, such as asking anxious ones to indicate their desire to be saved in some public way like standing or going into an inquiry room. But nothing was said to Mel, and after a whirlwind address, pointed, pithy and abounding with homely illustrations, he invited all who were troubled to go into a small room across the hall, where Christian workers could help by counsel and prayer. Over thirty responded and there were some happy scenes enacted as one after another were brought into peace with God. One dear lady of ninety-two was saved and her joy was infectious.

"Mel went to Dundee, where there was perhaps the greatest blessing of all, and then on to Newcastle and Ireland. We met again in London a few days before I sailed for home. But the hard work and certain climatic and dietary difficulties had wrought havoc and I realized he was a very sick man. With difficulty I persuaded him to give up temporarily and go into a hospital for proper treatment. Fortunately, I had relatives in the city who were glad to help make him comfortable. Dr. and Mrs. Houghton arrived from America the day I had to leave, so I parted with Mel after a
season of prayer together, feeling relieved in mind to know he would have proper care and rest.

As a result of this rest he was soon able to get back into harness. When I returned to Britain the following year, I met many who told me they had been saved through his ministry, and who asked me to convey to him their affectionate regards."

Mr. Trotter traveled to other parts of the world during the course of the years and in every place took the opportunity to preach Jesus to the multitudes. Globe-trotting was his very life for the greater part of twenty years and he left behind him a sweet fragrance of the Lord he loved and served so well.

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08 -- RUNS BATTED IN

In baseball, America's national pastime, one of the most valuable players on the team is the one in the clean-up spot, the man who can hit consistently with men on bases. Runs batted in means a winning team.

The purpose of this chapter is to tell the story of a little-known side of this man of many parts. Few people living today know anything about the versatility of this man Trotter. He was a spiritual pinch hitter. He was a modern Titus, a heavenly trouble shooter. When an emergency arose the first cry was, "Send for Trotter!"

This happened first when Torrey and Alexander were engaged in a great campaign in Toronto, Canada, in what was at that time its largest auditorium, seating 3,000. Since the place was filled to overflowing, the evangelists were forced to take over the near-by St. James Methodist Church. They hastily wired Mr. Trotter, asking him to help them in this emergency and to take charge of the overflow meetings. As it turned out, the Christians usually filled Massey Hall by half-past six each evening! Mel was in his element. He had the sinners, and the result was that many were saved, in fact, more than in the bigger meeting!

Dr. Torrey was so pleased that when he went to Philadelphia and was confronted again with overflow meetings, he wired Mr. Trotter. Again many souls were won and saved in Mel's meetings, and from that time onward he was sent for again and again. With the bases loaded a clean-up man was needed, and in the parlance of baseball, many runs were batted in, with Mel Trotter at bat!

Then Billy Sunday started to use Mel in his campaigns. Billy would have Mel come the last Monday night of each campaign. That was Mr. Sunday's rest night, but he did not want to miss a meeting as he was coming to the close. Again great numbers were saved in these Monday night meetings.
At Bloomington, Illinois, Mr. Sunday’s voice broke in the midst of his campaign. Two weeks remained to go, but Billy was out of action. Mel Trotter was sent for, and he continued the meetings for two whole weeks while Mr. Sunday was recuperating. The crowds grew larger each night, and scores hit the saw-dust trail under Mel’s powerful preaching. Again, at Spokane, Washington, he took over Mr. Sunday’s meetings for sixteen days, while Billy stumped through Olympia, the capital of the state, to carry it in those days of prohibition.

Those who knew the extent of the Billy Sunday meetings and the tremendous campaigns he held will realize how great a task it would be to go in to substitute for him in times of emergency. The fact that Mr. Trotter did it is a great tribute not only to his own power as an evangelist, but is an illustration of his hearty willingness to cooperate with other evangelists and serve them in a time of need.

In May, 1924, Billy Sunday and his party opened a tremendous campaign in Memphis, Tennessee. It was a typical Sunday meeting. The gigantic Billy Sunday tabernacle was erected and everything was in readiness for the conquest of Memphis. The meetings had hardly started when Mr. Sunday was taken ill and had to be rushed to Rochester, Minnesota, for treatment. A hasty call was sent to Pinch-hitter Trotter, and the following newspaper account tells of his coming. In inch-deep letters the paper carried the headline:

Billy’s Pal Takes Up Revival!

"I do not know what else could have induced me to come to Memphis for a religious campaign at this busy time. Only to substitute for my old friend and pal, Billy Sunday," said Mel Trotter, famous Michigan evangelist who arrived in the city this morning from Chicago to hold a series of meetings in the Front Street Tabernacle.

"Yet," said Trotter, who is heavy in bulk but genial in manner and with the fighting face of his Irish ancestry, "It is a kind of regular thing for me to be taking the place of Bill. I have been doing it for years up and down the land. In scores of cities I have been on hand to take his place and preach on Monday nights when he takes his rest.

"God bless old Bill—he is a prince among men and the dearest friend I have. He is the greatest preacher in the world today—by the side of him I am just a plodder but I do the best I can when I help him out. I feel like it is almost a sacrilege to come here and try to take his place, when he has done such splendid work for the religious uplift of this people.

"I had a message from Bill yesterday sent from Rochester, and he assured me that he would soon be all right for the work ahead. He said there was nothing organically wrong with him and that Bill Mayo and his helpers would not get to
carve his carcass with a knife after all. And he said 'Ma' was coming along all right, too."

Another reporter writing to his paper about Mr. Trotter's coming to Memphis gives the following description of Mel:

Mel Trotter of Grand Rapids, Michigan, called the "Rescue Mission King of America," is scheduled to reach Memphis today in time to conduct the noon revival service at the tabernacle. Thus he will be continuing the campaign started by Billy Sunday which was given such a big push by Gypsy Smith. The Michigan evangelist has founded sixty-seven missions in the largest cities of America. He has been for years a personal friend of Billy Sunday, having been converted in the Pacific Garden Mission where Sunday made profession of faith. His presence in Christian work illustrates a marvelous conversion from a life of drunkenness. When the Light was revealed to him he was on his way to Lake Michigan to take his life as the best way open to him then to end his troubles.

He was a barber by trade before his conversion and continued this vocation for a year after his conversion until he opened his first mission in Grand Rapids. Eight years ago he was given up by five specialists to die from cancer. Today he is said to be well. An examination last fall revealed no trace of the cancer he once had. He weighs two hundred pounds and is a rapid speaker. On the platform he uses the vernacular of the street where he used to live.

Mr. Trotter finished out the Memphis campaign, and it was estimated that over seventy thousand people heard him preach and over one thousand hit the saw-dust trail!

Mel helped Dr. Wilbur Chapman in his campaign in Minneapolis and was again with Dr. Torrey in Buffalo. Mr. Trotter in this unique capacity as a pinch bitter proved to be a most successful substitute. Few men could equal him in his ability to become master of such situations. He was no copyist. He was original in the deepest meaning of the word. When called to these meetings, he knew that one thing and one thing alone would bring the victory. He went in and "raved about Jesus," and when he got through they saw Jesus only.

In this way hundreds were born into the kingdom as this big-bodied, big-hearted, genial man took over the platform in other men's campaigns. He looked for no self-praise. He never sought to take the glory from any of these men. When Mel finished his share of a series, it was still a Billy Sunday, or Torrey, or Chapman campaign. He looked to the Lord to help him during these special experiences in his life. Mel was having too many big campaigns of his own to envy the work of his contemporaries.

God honored his labors and gave him many souls while he aided in these extra campaigns. It is doubtful that any man could have done what Mel Trotter did in
his gracious manner and humble life, together with his genial disposition and his loyalty to the men who entrusted him with their campaigns, won for him the love and admiration of thousands.

Not only did the leading evangelists call on him for help, but scores of communities asked him to come to show them how to do the job. In this way he was a specialist in his line. "Send for Mel" was the familiar cry from all points in the land. Times without number other cities tried to woo him away from his work in Grand Rapids. They would increase his salary and do this and that for him if he would only move to their city. But he refused to leave his mission in Grand Rapids.

In the early years of the twentieth century many spiritual giants moved about the land, including Billy Sunday, J. Wilbur Chapman, Bob Jones, Sr., R. A. Torrey, Charles M. Alexander, Gypsy Smith, P. W. Philpott and Paul Rader. Mel Trotter was contemporary with them all. During these years there also were great Bible teachers, among whom were G. Campbell Morgan, James M. Gray, Stuart Holden, G. R. Stuart, Lewis Sperry Chafer, C. I. Scofield, F. B. Meyer, Harris Gregg, Henry Ostrom, A. C. Dixon, and many others too numerous to record. All of these men stirred great audiences in their day.

Mel Trotter moved among these men, himself a spiritual giant, a man who swayed thousands, a man whose teaching of the book of Romans gained for him a place at the chief Bible conferences in America and placed his name along with those of great Christian leaders of his day. It was a common thing to find him on the same program with Dr. G. Campbell Morgan, Dr. Harry A. Ironside, and many other leaders.

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09 -- THE WORLD'S MOST NOVEL REVIVAL

"A prophet is not without honor, save in his own country, and in his own house" (Matthew 13:57).

Grand Rapids, Michigan, is the world's furniture center. Moving about the city, one soon becomes conscious of the immense furniture factories to be found everywhere. A walk up East Fulton Street brings the visitor to the Furniture Museum, a unique institution among museums throughout the world. Here are famous names in furniture. The citizens who live and work amid these surroundings give little indication of their concern or interest in the factors which have made their city famous. These things are taken for granted.

Outside Grand Rapids, however, manufacturers and business concerns, together with their employees, think more often in terms of furniture, the commodity which made the city so well known in all parts of the world.
As with furniture, so with men. Great men, generally, are acclaimed as such only by succeeding generations. Frequently, it is only after such a man leaves this earthly scene that his neighbors discover that they have been living close to a great man.

It is to be expected that a man like Mel Trotter would become a beloved figure and a successful missioner and evangelist outside his own city, and he was. Newspapers in other cities gave him broad headlines—often on the front page. Reporters took down his messages verbatim and transcribed them for their papers. Several columns were devoted each day to his campaigns. His meetings became a campaign of the press as well as of the churches. He received an amazing amount of newspaper publicity during his lifetime, not as a sensationalist, but as a soul winner.

Two outstanding experiences in his career are rather remarkable. The one occurred when he erected a large temporary tabernacle in Grand Rapids, his home city, and proceeded to conduct a campaign for several weeks. The other happened when he went back to the little town of Polo, Illinois, where he spent his boyhood, to hold a three week series of meetings under the auspices of the local churches.

This prophet courageously and in the power and demonstration of the Holy Ghost invaded Grand Rapids and Polo as he had a hundred other cities in America. Would he succeed at home as he did away from home? Let us examine the record.

Mr. Trotter had been praying about holding a big campaign in Grand Rapids and had been seeking the services of several well-known evangelists. The time seemed ripe for Grand Rapids, but all the evangelists were booked far ahead. More prayer only strengthened the conviction that a campaign should be held without further delay. It was God's time and souls were going to hell. It was then that Trotter received this letter from a Grand Rapids Christian business man:

Sept. 9, 1916
Friend Trotter:

Mel, Grand Rapids needs stirring up and it needs it badly. There is no use of our laying down here waiting for Billy Sunday or Billy Friday or any other day in the week. I am satisfied that we can put up a tabernacle in Grand Rapids and under your leadership can tear this old town to pieces. You have it in you. You can hold a crowd as good as any other man living on earth today. You talk where people live and I have confidence that the thing can be done. It has occurred to Peterson and myself and one or two others that it might be a fine thing if for instance this thing had to run for three months and then bring Rader here for a month, Truett for a month and yourself for a month. Now this is just a suggestion. You may know of others that are better than the names mentioned. That I would leave to you. Under your leadership you can get a crowd, and there are many who will stand back of you.
I am writing this to you so that you can have it on your mind and heart. We have waited long for this thing.

Our fellows are in earnest about this thing.

Yours very truly,
Peter W. Decker

A friend writing from out of town said:

Some one told me you were starting some tabernacle meetings in Grand Rapids and I take from what was said that you are going to take some of the boys and go round in different parts of the city and hold tabernacle meetings. I know if you get started that you are going to have a great time. And you can count on this end of the line praying for you constantly that God will marvelously bless and give you the desire of your heart which is a great host of souls for Him.

In reply to this fine letter Mel wrote as follows:

Mighty glad to get your nice letter. There is no use talking, we have got a funny game on up here. We built a little Tabernacle that looks mighty small compared with Billy Sunday's. It seats two thousand instead of ten thousand. Just the same we fill it and that is something. Sunday we packed it to the doors and our overflows were filled and everything else is going at high speed and the best of it is we are getting results that are pleasing our Lord.

It is a cinch that this is the way to hit them. It is hard to tell what future evangelism is going to be, but just the same this looks like something to me. Now think of it: for $1,700 or $1,800 we are going to pay all our lumber bills, building, electric lights, and everything imaginable. Our collections so far are $600. Before we quit we will have it all. Mr. 'Tom Smith furnished Hammontree to me. Mr. C. O. Alexander furnishes the quartet, and the Mission, me, so there are no collections for the evangelists, taking away that awful objection we have met wherever we have gone and, boy, you know what that has been around here.

Best of all the people are coming. The church is getting in line. That has been the big job up here -- whipping the church into line. I have not touched the unsaved yet, although we have had some conversions talking to Christians as is always the case. There is one thing about it, the town is talking about it. The Herald has offered me a column a day for the duration of the campaign and the Press is doing fine. There has not been an issue of these papers since the campaign opened that I know of that has not had something about our meetings. We are getting folks who have not been in church for years.
You see the preachers cannot object to this. They have no kick coming; we are not asking them for anything. The mission underwrites the whole proposition and pays the bills. If there is any money left we get it. If there is not enough we pay it, and, believe me, every church is with us."

Your old friend
Mel Trotter

The newspapers gave the venture splendid coverage in their columns. One headline read:
REVIVAL MINUS CASH REGISTER IN FULL SWING.

Carried on the wings of a northwest wind an echo of winter invaded Grand Rapids Friday night, but it failed to dampen the ardor of some 1,800 persons who flocked to Mel Trotter's tabernacle at Division Ave. and Dickinson St. for the opening of the world's most novel revival—a revival minus a cash register. And besides, it was evangelist Trotter's physical birthday, for just 49 years ago last night he added one more to be counted by the census taker.

The inaugural revival meeting served as a prologue, so to speak, for the work which it is hoped to accomplish during the campaign that will just continue for a month in Burton Heights and eventually take in all of Grand Rapids. The tabernacle will be moved to different sections of the city until every nook and corner has been reached with the message of old fashioned religion.

"Pray without being a crab at home[" shouted Trotter after he had explained that he would not make a sermon out of his first night's talk. "You women will have to be right at home if you would know Jesus Christ. I remember one woman who could never get along with her husband. Her children were worse than anybody's, her friends were not true, and she just had a terrific time because everybody and everything seemed below par.

"But one day she met Jesus Christ. She went home and when her husband came home a little late from work she did not reproach him. She had his supper all ready for him and the husband began to wonder what she wanted. The children began to have better care and in their lunch boxes were the things that their little hearts had prayed for instead of the terrible things that their mamma had always put into their lunch boxes to eat at school. The kiddies couldn't help but wonder if their mamma was going to die. There was one son who was a big fellow of awkward age, whom she prayed for incessantly, but never had the nerve to speak to him about his life. One day she called him to her and told him she was trying to live for Christ's sake and then that mother urged the need of living right until she began to cry.

"Pretty soon the boy began to cry too, and he said, 'Mother, I want you to come upstairs to my room and look out the window. On the ground are all my belongings. I had determined that you had asked all the rest of the kids and dad to
do right and that you didn't care about me. I said to myself that you didn't love me, and that I was going away and that you could go to the devil.'

"That mother saw her whole family join the church. But some of you say: 'What's the use? People won't listen!' Live Christ and they'll listen to you. Smile through it all and trust God.

"I don't believe," continued Mr. Trotter, "that the world doesn't love Jesus. I believe that everybody does: I never met a man in my work in the army camps who didn't want to know Jesus, and I never knew an infidel but that he wanted to know God.

"The whole trouble with religion, as most of us view it, is that we don't make Jesus Christ attractive enough. I don't like the image of Him that a great many accept and I'll tell you that if you don't have an image of Christ that you like, you don't know him and you'd better change cars and get another.

"I won't let you pay me for it; I just want to talk Jesus," Evangelist Trotter said in conclusion. "You can't join reel You can join the church and that's what I want you to do."

Ministers whose churches are participating in the drive in several instances addressed the crowds last night.

Rev. C. E. Pilgrim of the United Brethren church said in part: "We are about to attempt great things for God, and we expect great things from God. This is only the beginning of a movement which we hope to see spread throughout all Grand Rapids. This is the thing I have prayed for and have been looking for, for years, but never knew how or when it was coming. When I heard that Mel Trotter had this plan in his heart I said: 'Thank God it has arrived. We must clear the right of way for these meetings and bring about a revival that will shake the whole city.'

"The people in this section of Grand Rapids need the guidance of Jesus Christ," he said, "We must look up and lift, and when we have clone these two things we are in a position to lift up others. Thank God for a real revival."

The Rev. Harry Walker, pastor of St. Paul's Methodist Episcopal Church, said: "This revival is an answer to a prayer I have uttered for many months. I hoped for that day when it would be answered. The number outside of Jesus Christ greatly outnumber those within the church, and I don't care how many people come to know Him just so they do. We've got to forget denominational differences and lead people into the belief of God.

"This is the greatest opportunity we have ever experienced in this city. It is the answer to our prayer. God knew that there was no other man who could reach
Grand Rapids like our own Mel Trotter, and He has prompted him to carry His message to our people."

No effort was made last night for converts, but a man asked that he be admitted into the church. There was six feet of him.

Dick Oliver, the seventeen year old pianist of Chicago was at the piano last night and Homer Hammontree, also of Chicago, led the chorus and congregation in a delightful song service.

Some of Mr. Trotter's well known humor shows up in a letter he wrote at this time to a friend in California:

I am building a tabernacle upon the corner of Dickinson and Division Ave. where we are going to hold a revival meeting for four weeks. I'm altogether too busy to write to ordinary folks who do not know how to hold tabernacle meetings, yourself included. Just want to take this much time to tell you that Joe is on the roof pounding nails. He looks good in overalls and the architect says that he can drive nails as well as he can sing, which, by the way, is stepping a bit. Hammontree is master of ceremonies; that is, he carries the lumber. Mac is trying to work. It's not in the wood, he is not made of that kind of stuff. He is married anyhow and that is about all he ought to do.

Tom came through his operation in fine shape, but of course dare not drive nails so we are using him to teach personal work each night in the mission. Between that and holding his girl's mitt he is about as busy as a one armed man with prickly heat.

Building the tabernacle is going to do away with my summer resorting altogether, but I hope I will have souls instead to make up the difference.

The building of this tabernacle caught the fancy of the entire city: One of the newspapers came out with this heading: HELP WANTED: YOU DON'T HAVE TO BELONG TO THE UNION

Mel Trotter's revival tabernacle is growing and although now but an infant, is expected to reach full maturity by Friday of this week. It is located at Dickinson and Division Ave., is 54 x 112 feet, and when completed will accommodate 2,000 people. The lumber cost between $1,000 and $2,000.

Nearly half a hundred workers were on the job Monday to inaugurate the work of construction. Rev. Will S. Colegrove measured off the lumber, Rev. Merriam and Ralph Stuit wielded hammers, Mel Trotter proved a first class carpenter, Homer Hammontree aided in moving the lumber, and L. P. Oltman, a prominent Grand Rapids contractor, supervised the work.
Monday the framework was completed and nearly all the weather boarding was nailed into place. This morning the workers will be on the job early and will start construction of the roof. More volunteer workers are needed. Anyone who can drive a nail and who will furnish his own hammer will be accepted, and is urged by Mr. Trotter to present himself on the job this morning or put in a full day when convenient.

Evangelism minus a cash register attachment seems to be popular in Grand Rapids, and every class is represented in the workers who are giving their time in constructing the tabernacle.

Bankers, laborers, business men, and even women were on the job Monday with saws and hammers. Everybody seemed enthused in the task set before him and the initial day's work ended with the Trotter "church," which will be built in a week, well on its way toward completion.

Mel Trotter said last night when asked by the Herald whether the tabernacle would be ready by Friday: "Just tell the people to be on hand Friday night for we're going to have everything ready for a real old-fashioned religious revival."

The first two weeks in May, 1920, Mr. Trotter went back for a two-week meeting in Polo, Illinois. Mel grew up in this small town. Years before his father ran a saloon there and it was there also that Mel started sowing the wild oats that yielded such a fearful harvest-before God saved him. Many of the old gang were still there. Would this prophet be accepted in his home town? Again writing to a friend about the Polo campaign he said:

Things broke down there last week and we had more than 300 conversions including practically all the young men in town. Out of 185 in the High School we got 120 of them and that means the next generation will be Christians.

In a letter to his brother, Mr. George Trotter, we have this account:

We finally came through and we had a fine meeting, some wonderful cases: some of those old desert rats, men who had turned away from God for years. It looked mighty good for a real work down there after we left as all the churches were up on their toes.

Polo turned out fine. We had hundreds of conversions and got right into the best families. Practically all of the coming generation are in the kingdom of God.

The tabernacle meetings in Grand Rapids, the meeting in Polo, plus one or two other meetings, proved to be the turning point in Mr. Trotter's ministry. For the next twenty years he was to move throughout these United States in mass meetings. Thousands heard his voice and hundreds were converted in his meetings. God had prepared his servant well. For twenty years he had him in
training before turning him foot-loose. Looking back over his life during the second twenty years, there is no question but that he was a man wholly surrendered to God. During these triumphant years he truly earned the title that all might do well to merit: "The Man Who Raved About Jesus."

Realizing that God was calling him unto greater things than ever before he wrote to his long-time friend, Mr. G. O. Alexander of Philadelphia, telling him about the definite turn:

My dear Charlie:

It was a great delight to see you in Chicago. I am sorry that we could not have time to visit regarding our work because we have had a wonderful time with the Lord since the day He guided us to hitch up together. Little did we think that day in Northfield that we would ever go on to do this sort of thing. But the Lord leads in mysterious ways His wonders to perform.

Of course, the great work in the army where we covered fifty-seven camps, preached to more than half a million men, and fully fifteen thousand accepted Jesus Christ as their Savior, was in itself a great piece of work from the kingdom standpoint. We are hearing great things as the result of these meetings every day or two. Men come to us in almost every city we visit and tell us that they heard the quartet and myself in the army camps.

But I am confident that we have done a bigger work since then. At least more permanent by putting other folks to work. In the army, under God, we did it all ourselves. In the work we are doing now we are getting the church to work. We have had union meetings in many of the larger cities and some of the smaller cities and in leaving instead of taking offerings for the evangelist we are leaving the money to carry on the Gospel center work, which makes a constant revival in the city.

Mr. Hammontree and I sat down the other day and we figured roughly that more than twenty-five thousand people are making a stand for Christ in our work."

Then we have our mission plan on where we are interested in helping in some sixty-seven missions and God is working there every night. As you know, we are changing the work around from the bum to the mass. While he is still welcome in all the work we do, yet we are going after the whole city. In Grand Rapids, for instance, we have forty-three shops open for noon meetings where we formerly had one; covered every hospital with personal workers and tracts and music, went to the jail, Soldiers Home, Children's Home and police court. In fact, we covered the entire city with the Gospel of Jesus Christ, made possible by your kindness.

Our future plans, Charlie, are more elaborate than ever. I am now taking Mr. Meinardi, an organizer, and sending him ahead into the cities and getting things opened up, committees formed and the church to working and I can do in two
weeks what I used to have to take four weeks to do. This week he goes to Evansville, Indiana. The hall we will have meetings in beginning the 26th will seat five thousand. We are going to try and swing a big revival and at the close of it take an offering for that great work and raise enough money for it to run a year.

That is the system we are working. We have Toledo and Detroit both clamoring for dates before the first of the year. After that we have our big Bible Conference with G. Campbell Morgan, Bob Jones St., and other great speakers in Grand Rapids. Then on to Tucson by the way of New Orleans; Birmingham, Alabama; Houston, Texas; San Antonio, and then we go on to the coast through Los Angeles. San Francisco, Seattle, Portland and Spokane are also flirting with us so you see we have got something awful mapped out for the year when it comes to work.

With love and very best,
I am Your old Friend

Yes, God had big things mapped out for his servant, bigger than he ever could dream of just then. Mel Trotter had embarked on a course destined to make him one of the greatest evangelists of his generation.

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10 -- LEADERSHIP QUALITIES

"There was one thing that was troublin' the Old Man a mighty lot," said Dave Beech, one of Trotter's earliest converts, "and that was the lack of order in the meetin'. The young folks would talk and laugh and sometimes make fun; and all the coaxin' and pleadin' that he did only seemed to make it worse, and one night it busted.

"Mel said: 'This is the house of God and you must treat it as such or I'll show you I can do somethin' besides pray. I'm called to be superintendent here, and if I can't superintend, I'll resign, but not until I'm sure I can't. Now you have cut a starter and I'll show you the fastest finishin' you've seen around these parts since Corbett got his'n in the solar plexus.'

"What happened? Well, he is still superintendent, isn't he? That ain't all. You never find better order anywhere than in the mission, and they never call a policeman either. It's easy when muscular Christianity and prayer travel in double harness. Well, soon as order was restored a mighty revival broke out. I was one of the first men saved and every night from two to twenty-five went forward."

In a very real way he was "Boss"! Mel ran his mission and ordered his affairs in a businesslike manner. He was no easy target for the wily ones. He knew men, he knew how to handle them, and it was mighty hard to pull the wool over his eyes.
In "These Forty Years" Mr. Trotter refers to a critical period, involving leadership, the Mission passed through after the purchase of Smith's Opera House, and he tells how Dan put an end to this in his own quaint way. "One day Dan said: 'Look a-here, sonny. Don't you know that when a horse stops to kick he ain't pulling? The procession's goin' on and you are loosin' ground every time you get to kickin', and you'll discover afore you're much older that ground is property. Take old Bob out there he can't go a mile better'n four minutes, but he's peggin' at it all the time, and there ain't a horse in the country that can go further in a day than Bob. The thing for you to do is to hit your stride and get to goin' square. Keep your mind on the race and never mind the grand stand. You're apt to step in a hole and bust your belly band or else you'll do all your trottin' in the air. Now you know that no colt can ever get back his gait alone. If they go crooked when you break 'em straight, their heart is wrong and it takes power and strength that a horse ain't got to change his heart.

"'Now a good trainer never allows a colt to bring him to his way of thinkin', but brings the colt to his'n. It works better for the colt and the trainer both. God wants to use you but you must work His way. Well, the young feller just did what he was told and went where he was sent. The mission folks began to find out they could trust him anywhere and that he'd stand without hitchin'. Folks were gettin' saved through his testimony, and that caused the other folks to knock and kick some, but he never stopped. He worked hard all day and went to the mission every night. When Grand Rapids wanted a man to do mission work for them, they picked this fellow and he has made good. If he had stopped to kick he'd still be shavin' chins, but see who got me! He did a mighty lot of others, too. I'll tell you about 'em some time. No, he's not a pacer, he's a Trotter. Now that's goin' some. So long. Giddap Bob!'"

Another example of how the Boss handled men is on record and told by a man who is an outstanding evangelist in America today. His conversion and subsequent life are an example of the miracle-working grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. Dr. Bob Ingersoll, who affectionately called Mel Trotter "Boss," had the following experience: "Just a word or two in reference to Mr. Trotter, who was superintendent of the mission while I was converted here in Grand Rapids. I remember when I was converted Mel came to me and said, 'Bob, how about the debts that you owe here in the city?'

"'Well,' I said to him, 'they're many. They'll probably go up into three figures, way up nearly to four figures.'

"'Well,' he said, 'I'll tell you what you do, Bob. You take a piece of paper and write down every dollar you owe everybody in the city or any other place that you know of. What we want to do is to clear up this whole thing and give you a clear slate.'
"So I sat down and wrote and started to figure it out just how much I owed, even the saloon bill and the whole business. After we looked at it he said, 'Well, Bob, is that all you owe?'
"I said, 'I think it is.'

"I'll go to the bank and deposit this much money in the bank and then I'll give you some checks, and you and Mr. Bird go around and meet these men and tell them just what you did and tell them about how you were converted. Give your testimony. It will be a chance there to meet these business men and give a word for Jesus Christ.'

He deposited about $870 and we went around, and we talked to the men and told them just the thing I wanted to do, and some of them looked at me and said: 'Well, Bob, if that's the thing you've done, you're willing to do this thing, why, we'll cut the bill in half.'

"Some said, 'We'll take off ten per cent.'

"One said, 'We'll cancel the bill. I want you to know we're for you.'

"So we went around and paid every dollar that I owed here in Grand Rapids that I knew of. I thank God for that. Not only that, but when I was converted and came out of the jail, there was a heavy fine and bond over my head, and yet Trotter went over and paid it all. When I thought of that and what he did for me that time and started me out with a clean slate here in Grand Rapids, it just brought me to my knees, and I thought that Jesus Christ also paid it all-cleared up the debt of my sin when he died on Calvary. Thank God for it.

"Now, another time I remember was when I was assistant superintendent here with Mel and we were moving from Ransom over to Barclay Street. He let me take the mission truck and said: "'Now Bob, you take some of the men from the mission and go over there and move. There is one thing only I ask you not to do, and that is not to take that big stove and put it on the truck. I think it will be too heavy for you men. I'll send somebody up there to disconnect it, take it up, and put it in your new home.'

"I said, 'All right, Boss. It will be all right with me.' So we went up and loaded up the truck and right there on the truck was just space enough for the stove. So I said to the fellows, to save the Mission money, 'Let's put that stove on there.'

"So we disconnected it and put it on. Everything was all right and just about noon, as we were driving away, a fellow came by that was connected with the Mission at that time -- yet he didn't know what Mel had told me. So he went back and said to the Boss, 'Why, I see Bob got the whole truck loaded ready to pull away when I was there, and he even put the stove on.'
"Mel said, 'Did Bob put on the stove?'

"Yes, everything is fine.' And that was all that was said. "So we drove away and up to the new place where we were moving and unloaded it and came back to the mission very happy, and just as I came in the door, I said: 'Well Boss, everything is okay and even the stove we put on. We thought we could save the mission money, and we thought it would be fine.'

"So he said, 'Bob, come into the office, will you?'

"I walked into the office and he looked at me and said, 'Well, you didn't do just what I told you, did you?' "'No. You're referring to the stove?' "That's it.'

"I thought I could save some money for the Mission to help out that much.'

"It isn't that I told you not to put the stove on.'

"I know, Boss, but we put it on thinking that it would help.'

"He said: 'That isn't it at all, Bob. I don't want anybody that isn't loyal to me, and when I tell a man to do a thing, I expect him to do just as I say. Give me your keys. You're through.' "So I said, 'All right, Boss. I'll give you your keys.'

"He said: 'Well, I'm sorry this had to happen, but I won't have anybody work for me that isn't loyal. Loyalty is a virtue of God. I must have that, and I demand that from every man or woman that works for me here.'

"So I thanked him and started out the door. Looking back, I said, 'Well, Boss, anytime I can do something for you I'll be glad to do it, and I'll go back and get a job on the railroad. I'll get my old job back again and anytime I can help, I'll be glad to help.'

"As I started away, Boss came to the door and said, 'Bob, come back into the office. Let us have a little further talk about this.'

"I went back, and as I did so, he put his arms around me and drew me kind of close to him and said:

"'Bob, I believe you'll thank me a hundred times for this when you get out into the mission work yourself, and you'll know what I mean by loyalty of the people that will work for you. I did this to teach you a lesson. Loyalty means to be faithful and true to the one you're working for. Loyalty is a virtue of God. Let's pray together.'

"Again we got down on our knees and he drew himself close to me and said, 'Always remember that when I tell you to do a thing you'll do it, won't you?'
"I said, 'From this time on, whatever you say, God helping me and God supplying the grace, I'll be faithful and loyal to you.'

"And Mel said: 'God bless you! You continue in the work and remember, be loyal to the one you are serving.'"

Mr. Trotter's outstanding leadership came to the fore in the organization of the Mission Men's Fellowship, of which he was national president.

In a few years after he started in Grand Rapids he was able to establish missions far beyond his own city. Calls came from all sections of the country, even as far away as California. In opening the different missions he was able as a rule to place a convert of his in charge as superintendent.

Recording this in his book, "These Forty Years," he wrote: "As our Grand Rapids mission grew, naturally the converts spread out throughout the state and beyond. Other cities asked for the establishment of a mission. First, in Saginaw we took a bunch of fellows over there and held meetings in the Auditorium. We raised enough money to start a mission. I put my brother, George Trotter, in there and that mission was a 'hummer' from the beginning. Next, when we opened in Chattanooga and sent Ray Bird down there and later on when we opened South Bend, Indiana, Ray went there and has been there ever since.

"Muskegon was the next place. From the start things began to move. Bill Van Domelen went there to run the mission and stayed until he died. Then came Kalamazoo. Bill Colegrove took charge there. We could not find a building, so we bought out a saloon, whisky and all. The day of the dedication that whisky was all poured into the gutters. The Kalamazoo papers on the next morning estimated that more than ten thousand people attended the dedication, singing hymns and praising God."

As mission after mission started up, the Boss found it necessary to be away from home. God was preparing his servant for the time when he would head up larger union campaigns in the big cities of America. In after years he divided his time between Grand Rapids and the urgent calls to conduct campaigns elsewhere. Six months of each year he spent away from Grand Rapids, and the Lord used him mightily everywhere he went.

The work at home did not suffer. Mel laid the foundation well. He was a very able organizer and asked for and received one hundred per cent loyalty from the many men who assisted him over the years.

In all, some sixty-seven missions were opened by Mel Trotter in various sections of the United States. Other centers by the score called upon him to help raise their annual budget. In all these years, while raising thousands of dollars to help other missions who appealed to him for help, his own work did not suffer. It
was his joy that not once in the forty years when he directed the work did he fail to raise the budget. The worth of this great man's work and influence is shown in the fact that now, years after his home-going, the mission he founded still carries on the work he inaugurated and has always raised the money necessary to carry forward its manifold activities.

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11 -- MEL TROTTER -- A PORTRAIT

Charles Haddon Spurgeon, speaking about humility, once said: "Humility is to have a right estimate of one's self not to think more of himself than he ought. The higher a man is in grace, the lower will he be in his own esteem."

L'Estrange made this statement about man: "Men are not to be judged by their looks, habits and appearances; but by the character of their lives and conversations, and by their works. 'Tis better that a man's own works than that another man's words should praise him."

Jesus, the blessed Redeemer and only begotten Son of God, said, "Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?" (Matt. 6:7)

In this chapter we have a pen portrait of a man: Melvin E. Trotter, God's plenipotentiary, heaven's agent invested with full power! The fullness of his stature was the measure of his humility, and Mel Trotter's portrait is etched in the very essence of humility. He was a lamp shining in the dark places where shame and crime and wrong have birth. Many whose lamp had almost gone out and who were groping vainly to find their way saw the brilliant light from the torch he carried and became torchbearers themselves.

If you saw Mel Trotter, you saw a man who was powerful, built close to the ground, whose massive shoulders looked as if he could relieve Atlas of his world-holding job. As a leader he combined to a marked degree the qualities of Dwight L. Moody, famed preacher, and Will Rogers, contemporary humorist and philosopher.

Mel Trotter was called one of the most arresting personalities in the evangelistic world of his day. He was also known far and wide as "King of Mission Men." Somebody writing about him said: "He is the voice of disquiet and challenge; he is the disturber of our comfortable peace; he hurries with breathless eagerness from point to point, a human dynamo, always in action; and he carries the lighted torch ever in his hand, the trail of conflagration ever in his wake.

"He follows no lead except that of his own urgent, unquiet spirit, unquiet because he has the whole burden of humanity's salvation on his heart and mind."
"He drives straight forward, deaf to the appeals from the right hand or the left; friends cannot persuade him; enemies cannot molest him; parties cannot limit him; he is like the wind that "bloweth where it listeth" (John 3: 8).

"He flings his bombs right into the stagnant parlors of our thought and fills the air with the spirit of unrest; acquiescence and content vanish at his challenge; the sleeper rubs his eyes, he is awake; the vision is before him, the air is filled with the murmur of many voices; he, too, must be up and doing.

"He tarries in a trail of fire, burning at a white heat and flashing through the inscrutable night to its unknown goal.

"Throughout the 'slums' of America, for this is his pet 'hobby,' the name of Mel Trotter is loved and adored; for in nearly every place of this sort it has been heard that Mel Trotter, the once wild, harum-scarum man of the world who turned preacher, is now trying to take the name of Jesus Christ, which has done so much for him, to the slums, instead of attempting to harpoon or trap the slums and drag them into church.

"Even so, a pen picture of Mel Trotter does not carry with it a description of the upward slant of his eyes, nor the quiverings of his voice, nor the ecclesiastical cut of his coat; he is just a plain everyday human being with the sweetest, gentlest face you ever looked into in all your life, with the biggest, kindest heart in the world, filled with the love of God and his fellow men, who are yet struggling for the light, without cant or unction or borrowing theological lore—but just the sort of person that men love."

A friend, who caught him as it were "off guard," found him placid, passive, and a bit relaxed after the strenuous duties of a noonday service, and there was a quiet and a serene calm over-spreading his gentle nature that was at once like the reaction after the storm—a calm after the tempest.

One of Mr. Trotter's earliest associates, the Reverend Art Blackmore of Erie, Pennsylvania, describes his impressions of Mr. Trotter:

"I was impressed with his strong and winsome personality. I was gripped by his sincerity. I was fascinated by his humor, which was not planned, but came forth in a most spontaneous fashion. I noticed he was always looking for an opportunity to speak to someone about Christ.

"In those days," said Mr. Blackmore, "the ladies wore merry-widow hats. They were a large and wide creation and considered very beautiful, although it seemed to me the lady herself was often hidden from view. One night Mel was having a lot of trouble getting the ladies to remove their hats. After a while a man handed me a note and asked me to hand it to Mr. Trotter, which I did. He stood up smiling and said, 'Listen, ladies, to this poem which has just been handed me.' It read:
My dear Mr. Trotter, if you could sit here
And see what I see in the shape of head gear,
I'm sure that your wrath would pour down like rain;
For the hat in front of me would give you a pain.
It's a young umbrella, all covered with leaves.
Do something, Mr. Trotter, do, Mr. Trotter, please!

"The hats came off in the midst of a hearty laugh. I have never been quite
sure that Mel did not write that poem himself. In any event, it got results!"

Mr. Trotter was a strong, fearless preacher. The powerful influence of his life
was felt wherever he went. He was a heavy-set man, not too tall, but robust. As one
observer said: "He is clean and dignified in dress. He might be taken for a
successful lawyer. He looks the part of a politician. One thing he has with him
always, a smile of good fellowship upon his face which invites confidence. Another,
a strong right arm and hand, which goes out to every man who is down, no matter
who or what he is. He is modest despite success and one of the most self-
sacrificing men."

The story of a little boy illustrates the measure of Mr. Trotter's humility. It was
a Sunday afternoon, and some boys were not behaving very well. Mr. Trotter took
them to task. He was giving them a severe talking to just as a little fellow of ten
years of age joined the group. Since the child was unaware of the cause of the
reprimand, he was heartbroken, and went away crying. That evening the great
mission auditorium was filled to capacity, but Mr. Trotter did not come to the
platform. Instead, he was looking for the little boy of ten, and he finally found him in
the office. He sat down by the little fellow's side and pulled him up close to him, and
said, "Carl, I wronged you this afternoon. At first I thought you were one of those
boys, and when I learned you were not, I could not preach tonight until I had your
forgiveness. Will you forgive and forget that it ever happened?"

The little fellow's lips began to quiver; hot tears began coursing down his
cheeks, as he said he would forgive him. Mr. Trotter prayed, "Lord Jesus, Carl has
forgiven me; now you forgive me. Blot from little Carl's mind and heart my
unkindness. May he love me as he always has." When that prayer was ended,
Trotter came to the pulpit and moved a great audience to tears as he spoke of the
love of his precious Lord. That night the altar was filled with seekers.

From an English magazine we get more lights and shadows in this pen
portrait of this humble man of God:

A short and true accounting is that God's creative power thirty-five years ago
touched the life of a man in the depths of despair; and ever since, God has been
renewing that power.
Contributory sources may be observed as you see him in action on the platform. He wastes no time in getting started on his sermon, beginning to speak as he approaches the pulpit, Bible in hand. The voice is mellow, yet penetrating to distant corners; the gestures are in keeping with the man and the message. As he speaks, you realize that he has not only looked into the Book, but into human hearts, hungry or self-satisfied, proud or stricken, broken, despairing. Every week he has come to close grips with human need.

He has learned that laughter lies very close to tears, that wholesome humor will relieve the strain of the pathos and tragedy that must be portrayed in any true presentation of life.

But of all the expressions one gathers from those who knew him, perhaps the man himself gives to us the deepest secret of his life. A ready smile, tenderness, compassion, which often reminded one of the face of a saint, was but the reflection of what was in his great heart. Towards the end of his life, when he wrote his autobiography, "These Forty Years," he gave a pen portrait of himself that was so characteristic of the man. This is what he wrote:

"After twenty months of work in the army, I returned home to find everything gone that is dear to the heart of man, and it seemed to me it was my first quarrel with God. The heavens seemed brass when I attempted to pray it through. I wanted Him to tell me 'why,' but there seemed no answer. The devil told me I was perfectly justified in ending it all; that God had gone completely back on me. Even a minister wrote to me advising me to suicide. Friends who had been very intimate refused to speak to me on the streets. I was taken through court on the most horrible charge, and the trial, which began with taking depositions in January of 1922, closed in September. While I was thoroughly vindicated by the decree, I became a marked man, literally around the world.

Going to the room in the big mission building, the darkness seemed so great I could almost cut it with a knife. It grew so terrible that I threw myself full length on the floor and asked God to take me home. Will I ever forget that night! He came to me in all the tenderness of a mother, a father and lover—how can I tell it! Anyhow, this is it—when God draws His hand to one side and lets a thing like this hit a child of His, there is a controversy on, and that night I learned of the 'permissive will of God.' God permits things of which He is not the author. But He never allows you to be tempted above that which you are able, but will with every temptation provide a way of escape, that ye may be able to bear it. (I Cor. 10:13).

"All through that short night, because the time is short when you spend it with Him, there are no long nights when He is present, I learned that if I would reign with Him, I must suffer with Him. 'The servant is not greater than His Lord' (John 13:16). He revealed to me that through those darkest hours He was the nearest to me. But He could not show me that until I was absolutely dependent upon Him. When Mr. Hammontree was compelled to leave to fill a conference engagement,
Jesus became my all in all. Before that it was Jesus and he. And how I did lean on dear old Ham! 'Our God is a jealous God.' 'Thou shalt have no other gods before Me' (Exodus 20:3).

"I dare not trust myself to tell you what I know about the 'Companionship of Jesus.' 'I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee' (Hebrews 13:5). 'When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee' (Isaiah 43:2). And this wonderful night I began practicing His presence. When I am inclined to loneliness, I only have to stand still and remember that 'Thou art with me,' (Psalm 23:4) and at once I know He is.

"I am saying all this at practically the end of days, because I feel you dear ones who are coming along the way of life should know that it is better further on. These are days of the keenest fellowship and friendship, communion, and companionship, and I would not exchange them for all the world. All the sore spots are healed. Love has taken their place. In fact, just a few weeks ago I went to those who I felt had wronged me and asked them to forgive me. Now I have peace with the world, as well as with my wonderful Savior.

"I am not unmindful, however, that, Now we see through a glass darkly, when in a few days it will be face to face. (I Corinthians 13:12). Now we know in part, then shall we know even as also we are known.

'Turn your eyes upon Jesus,
Look full in His wonderful face,
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim,
In the light of His glory and grace.'

"God bless you all. I will meet you over there 'in the morning.'"

Mr. Trotter ended his autobiography under the spell of divine inspiration. Under that heavenly influence he put the finishing touches on the pen portrait of his wonderful life. His very life's blood was in the words he wrote, so that they stand forever, the choicest memory of a man whom God brought up out of the depths.

A further evidence of Mr. Trotter's humility is revealed in "These Forty Years." He had received the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity from Bob Jones University: "In 1935 The Bob Jones College, of Cleveland, Tennessee conferred the degree of Doctor of Divinity upon me, and I appreciate it all so very much, yet to the gang downtown I am still just plain Mel Trotter by the grace of God."

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12 -- SPARKS FROM THE ANVIL
"Rapid-fire speaker and whirlwind evangelist arrives in town!" Thus the newspapers used to announce Trotter. One description of him was given this way: "Mr. Trotter leaped out of his chair and into his story of Elijah and almost immediately the Temple echoed with laughter."

Those who heard him said his addresses were marked by "tender and forceful applications of the truth, with barbed points thrust home by native wit."

He was a thoughtful and devout exponent of evangelical Christianity and at the same time possessed of a sense of humor that enabled him to present his messages in such a way that they were irresistible. Trotter owed his ready humor and quick wit to his Irish ancestry. He was the soul of good humor. His sermons were full of witty sayings, and many times he would have his audience rocking with laughter. Isaac Barrow, the English divine who lived in the sixteenth century gave a definition of wit, saying:

Wit is proper and commendable when it enlightens the intellect by good sense, conveyed in jocular expression; when it infringes neither on religion, charity, and justice, nor on peace; when it maintains good humor, sweetens conversation, and makes the endearments of society more captivating; when it exposes what is vile and base to contempt; when it replies to obloquy; when it counterbalances the fashion of error and vice, playing off their own weapons of ridicule against them; when it is not used upon subjects improper for it, or in a manner unbecoming, in measure intemperate, at an undue season or to a dangerous end.

In this chapter we record many of the "barbed points" and humorous witticisms; or as one reporter put it, "Trotter Toastwiches."

Telling the story of a special Thanksgiving dinner, Mel moved the audience to tears and laughter as he related it:

"Listen to me! The day before last Thanksgiving I said to my good wife: 'We are going to have company tomorrow, and I want you to make the affair a little extra. If you haven't got the right table linen for the best bang-up kind of a dinner, go out and borrow it. Let us make it the best we ever had.' And she said, 'All right, honey!' I had no fear of her cooking—she is a wonder!

"She went out and bought two twelve-pound turkeys, and she certainly looked after all the fixings. Well, the next day everything was elegant. I have dined at some of the wealthiest tables in the country, but I never saw a more beautiful table than was set there right in my own home. Oh, it was lovely! I sat at one end and my wife at the other. On one side between us, sat three men, and three more faced them on the other side of the snow-white cloth. Three of these six men had eaten the last two Thanksgiving dinners in prison. One of them had eaten the last two Thanksgiving dinners in jail. The other two had been two of the most notorious 'barrel house' men in Chicago.
"My, how they did eat! Every one of them was a sword swallower, and the way they manipulated knives in their faces while eating without cutting their throats was a marvel to see. And they all had some more, and some more. There wasn't any peptonized pocket triturates at that dinner. Some time before I had brought everyone of these men to Christ. They are men of the world now, with good jobs, and they are living honestly for the first time. One of them had a roll of bills in his pocket so big that it would choke an elephant.

"'Where did you get it Bill?' I asked him.

"'Jesus gave it to me,' he answered with a big tear rolling down his cheek. And Jesus had given it to him. And then each one of them told how they fared since giving themselves to Christ. Their stories were wonderful. We roared with laughter and then cried like babies. When it was all done my wife said, 'Now, I'm going to give a bit of testimony,' and she launched into the story of that awful Christmas when my baby died and when Christ came into my heart to stay for all time."

Cleverly evangelist Trotter moved the heart strings of the people as an harpist moves across the strings on his harp. But it was not all sweet and humorous. Again and again his utterances landed with the stunning blow of reality, or like the meteor, streaking across the black draping of night. They pierced like a surgeon's knife until one by one his hearers hung their heads and at the invitation walked down the aisle to Jesus. The best of these have been selected for this biography. May the Holy Spirit use them today as in the days Mr. Trotter used them. Being dead, yet he liveth -- through his sayings and the memory of his God-honored life.

"That poor old beggar had been there for thirty-eight years with his back on his bed but after he met Jesus, he went away with his bed on his back!"

"They talk about Billy Sunday. Say, unless you catch as big a string of fish as Old Bill you'd better keep your mouth shut and dig bait!"

"Somebody asked French, 'Why don't God kill the devil?' To which French replied, 'Because he'd leave so many orphans if he killed your daddy.'"

"There's no joke about death. This business of patting you in the face with a spade, you tell me it's a joke? You know its no joke!"

"There's one thing that God never remembers and that is a confessed sin, and there's one thing God never forgets and that is an unconfessed sin."

"The devil can never head me in on a blind siding, for God has blotted out all my sins. The hand that wrote my sentence has also written my pardon."
"That fellow hit that bum so hard that he landed right into the Pacific Garden Mission, and Jesus saved him. Oh, yes, folks get saved in some funny ways."

"The Lord is my Shepherd-why should I worry?"

"Say, ladies, take off your hats, please. There's a short waisted fellow sitting back there trying to see me and he's stretching his neck something fierce. Give him a chance, please."

"There's a remarkable thing about those sixty-seven missions of mine. They are always the other fellow's mission so long as everything is going all right, but just as soon as something goes wrong, they send for me and say, 'Come and take care of your old mission!'"

"I ride thousands of miles yearly in sleepers now, but I used to ride them on top or underneath."

"The fellow that never makes any mistakes never makes anything else."

"I came up this afternoon on one of the dangerous, tedious, monotonous, tri-weekly railroads that try all the rest of the week to get back."

"Character is what you are when you are alone in the dark. Gossiping old hens make a dent in your reputation, but, thank God, they can never destroy your character."

"If you dance to the music, you've got to pay the fiddler, and don't you forget it."

"It's not your will that keeps you out of heaven-it's your won't."

"The world is full of church members who will build tabernacles, but there are few who will carry a cross."

"I never apologize for being a Christian or for being a Christian worker. If I wasn't selling the best goods on earth, I'd sell some other."

"No nation will rise higher than its homes."

"They say, between two evils choose the lesser, but let me tell you when you strike two evils, don't take either one."

"No one wants to be a drunk, but while the hog is there we carry swill to it."

"Don't mistake God for your meal ticket, or a fire escape from hell."
"Lots of people go bugs on religion, but nobody ever went crazy on Christianity."

"I would have given two years of my life for two drinks of whisky in the old days. But the same passion for whiskey then is my passion for Jesus Christ now. I have never wanted any whisky since my conversion."

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13 -- GOD'S SOLDIER GOES HOME

"Servant of God, well done!
Rest from thy loved employ;
The battle fought, the victory won,
Enter thy Master's joy.

"The Heavenly summons came,
He started up to hear;
And death's sharp arrow pierced his frame--
He fell -- but felt no fear.

"Soldier of Christ, well done!
Praise be thy new employ,
And while eternal ages run,
Rest in Thy Saviour's joy."

Soldier Of God And Mission Founder Dies

Such was the caption in the Grand Rapids Morning Herald upon news of his passing.

Melvin E. Trotter, a soul-winner who fought the world, the flesh and the devil up and down the United States and the foreign lands for decades, founder of the City Rescue Mission here and its successful superintendent for more than forty years, died Wednesday morning, September 11th, 1940, at his summer home at Macatawa Park.

An editorial appearing in the same paper Thursday, September 12, carried the following tribute:

A True Man Of God

Many a man has served God from the pulpit and in other ways. None ever served God more as God would be served than Mel Trotter, who after long illness and suffering, has passed on. If we understand God's word correctly, He would be
served by helpfulness to others to see the way of righteousness. He would rejoice that one had turned from the downward path and sought the light.

Mel Trotter devoted his life in service to those who had fallen by the wayside. He had given all in him in order to bring the sinner to repentance and to help the downtrodden up the steep grade and into the sunshine of God's presence. Mel Trotter could do this perhaps better than most men. He had known the way of the transgressor, he had wallowed in the slough of sin and corruption. One day a small voice whispered to him, and he heard. From that day on, Mel Trotter gave his life to the service of God and God's children.

How many men and women Mel Trotter brought to repentance none ever can know. They numbered many thousands without doubt. How many lives he had saved, how many hungry stomachs he had appeased, how many bodies he had clothed, how many souls he had brought to God is a secret of God alone.

In his mission, which Mel Trotter established in Grand Rapids, there will be profound sorrow at his passing. So, too, in many another similar haven which Mel Trotter inspired in various cities of the nation, there will be tears and grief.

Mel Trotter was a friend of the downtrodden man and woman, the comforter of him who was in distress, the inspiration to him who was discouraged, the help of him who had drunk of the dregs.

And so now Mel Trotter has gone to his reward; and that it is a reward we are certain. We know that today there is joy in heaven as Mel Trotter enters the gate, for does not the word of God say: There shall be greater joy in heaven over one sinner who repenteth than over the ninety and nine who need no repentance? (Luke 15:7)

Mr. Trotter had suffered a rather serious set back while touring Britain in 1937 as one of the Moody Centenary speakers; he rallied, however, and was able to finish his engagements over there. Upon his return to America his friends urged him to take more rest. He yielded to their entreaties for a while, but Mel Trotter was a fighting soldier and it was impossible for him to rest with the din of battle in his ears. However, in August, 1939, he left for Florida and on the way stopped at Kannapolis, North Carolina, to visit some friends. A year previous to this time he had conducted a successful evangelistic campaign in that city and he wanted to stop over to satisfy himself concerning the converts made at that time.

In Kannapolis he was stricken with a severe heart attack and the doctors gave little hope for his recovery. Upon leaving a hospital in Ashville, North Carolina, he returned to his summer cottage at Macatawa Park and seemed to be getting better; he was able to take care of correspondence and also to take some drives in the car. The morning he died he had just taken breakfast, but a few minutes later, when his secretary entered the room with the morning mail, he was dead.
The great warrior spirit had taken its flight. God's soldier had fought his last battle. The summons for higher service had come from the Great Commander-in-Chief, he had been called to headquarters from whence he had received his great commission forty-three years before.

The funeral service was held in his beloved Mission, the place he founded and directed for so many years. His body was laid to rest in Grand Rapids, the city in which he was not only mission leader and evangelist, but also builder.

Mel Trotter helped to build this great city. When he came here to live fifty years ago in 1900, there were less than a hundred thousand inhabitants. Mud streets, board walks and horse-drawn cars were considered up to date. He lived to see Grand Rapids become a flourishing city of some 175,000 people, modern in every respect and one of the most beautiful cities in America. He was one of its most distinguished builders. He built human lives. He reconstructed broken homes. He cleared out the slums and the segregated district. While other men were busy making Grand Rapids famous for its furniture and constructing buildings, roads, street cars, homes and hotels, he was making broken men and women into useful citizens. This spiritual architect built immortal structures which will stand long after all material buildings have been destroyed.

Perhaps the greatest memorial of all is the fine downtown building he left situated in the center of the business life of the city. Mel Trotter coined an expression early in his mission days which became famous throughout America, "EVERLASTINGLY AT IT." Since the opening night back in 1900, the proud boast of the Mission is that not one single night has it failed to hold a Gospel service in the downtown area of this fine city. The Mission edifice itself is an imposing place. It has one of the finest auditoriums of its kind in the country, and on the platform stands one of the most famous pulpits, to which have come the best Bible teachers and preachers from all over the world. The life of this great warrior is perpetuated not only in the brick and mortar, but the very essence of his spirit and life is exemplified every day in the lives of those who succeeded him in the task of administration.

The funeral service was held on Saturday September 14, 1940. The Mission was filled to capacity and many hundreds failed to get in. The simple but profound service was conducted by Mr. Homer Hammontree with Dr. H. A. Ironside, renowned Bible teacher and author, bringing the message. Included in the service were the following tributes, which are given in part as recorded in sequence on that day:

Dr. Hammontree: "Friends, we are gathered here in the Mel Trotter Rescue Mission this afternoon to pay our last respects to our dear friend and brother, Dr. Melvin E. Trotter. It could be a very sad occasion for many of us. We tell others not to weep, and we feel like weeping ourselves.
"I was with Mr. Trotter for a long time, out in the Lord's work, and I have known him to hold such a service as this, time after time, and he always wanted the service to be victorious rather than sad. I know he would want it so this afternoon if he were here. Though we rejoice with him, in that he has finished his course and kept the faith, and won the goal, it is a great loss for us, and for the Mission. It is a great gain for him, and so we would rejoice with him.

"The service is to be opened with a duet sung by Mr. Hermansen and myself. Howard Hermansen, who now is pastor of the Edgewater Baptist Church, in Chicago, and I, worked with Mr. Trotter in evangelistic work. We three were together for six years, and I am sure 'Herm' would like to say a few words to you friends, and give a testimony before we sing -- if you will 'Herm,' please."

Mr. Hermansen: "I thank God, friends, for the day when it became my privilege to be associated with Mr. Trotter. He was the first man, together with Mr. Hammontree, with whom I had the privilege of working after I completed my training at the Moody Bible Institute, and I shall, as long as I live and throughout all eternity, too, thank God for our dear 'Boss.' How many things I learned from him in those six years we were together! Words are inadequate to express all the love that is within my heart this afternoon for dear Mr. Trotter, but truly I can say that I thank God upon every remembrance of him. To me, he really was a father, and I told him so many times after my own father died fourteen years ago. We had wonderful fellowship together, and I just want to bear this tribute to him this afternoon before we sing."

Dr. Hammontree: "Back during the World War, we were in war work together for twenty months, doing Christian work in fifty-seven camps in this country. Mr. Trotter was preaching to the soldier boys. While we did not keep a strict account, I think about fifteen thousand of the soldiers professed to accept the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour during those months. There also was a quartet with Mr. Trotter in that work. One member of the quartet is here today-Joe Overmeyer, whom many of you friends will remember. Joe was the first tenor. He came in today from Charleston, West Virginia, where he is pastor of Bream Memorial Presbyterian Church. I have asked him if he would like to say a few words. He said he didn't believe he could, but he may, if he so wishes. And now Joe, will you read the Scripture for us?"

Mr. Overmeyer: "I have only these words to say with regard to Mr. Trotter: The happiest days of my Christian experience were spent with him, and Mr. Hammontree, and the other boys of the quartet, whom many of you know. After coming out of the Moody Bible Institute, I had learned a great many things, but I really wasn't founded in the faith like I should have been and, during the time I spent with Mr. Trotter, Mr. Hammontree and the other members of the quartet, I came into a Christian experience that has meant so much to me. Through the instrumentality of Mr. Trotter, many of us (who are here today) came into a richer knowledge and a richer fellowship and communion with our Lord and Saviour."
Dr. William. A. McCarrel, pastor of the Bible Church, Cicero, Illinois, was the next speaker.

"Mel Trotter came into my life, leaving an impression never to be forgotten. It occurred while I was a student at the Moody Bible Institute. Since then I never have been able to think of him without having a desire to work more earnestly for souls. Present this afternoon are others who were fellow students in the Institute, and I am sure they also would testify that whenever he came to the Institute he seemed to go through it like a ball of spiritual fire. We have seen God's power rest upon him in a remarkable way. I never shall forget God's use of him one afternoon during Moody Institute Founder's Conference. Walking to my room after that meeting I could hear students in their rooms crying to God for greater spiritual power in their lives.

"On this sad, sacred and triumphant occasion I feel, and I trust all of you feel, that we should, as never before, endeavor to dedicate our lives to the Lord; then, trusting in His enabling grace, pick up the torch that our Brother Trotter has laid down, and carry it on for Christ. If we do, our lives will center and focus on one great objective, namely, the leading of souls to the Lord Jesus Christ. When I received the wire announcing his going on, I said: 'What a reception he has had in glory with Christian workers and souls whom he led to Christ, and who have preceded him to heaven.' This reception will grow more blessed by many who will follow later."

Dr. Hammontree: "Mr. Trotter carried on the work here at the Mission in Grand Rapids for more than forty years. If you were here at the Bible Conference this past winter, you will remember that he celebrated his fortieth anniversary as superintendent. What a great occasion it was! We were all so glad that Mr. Trotter was able to attend the service that evening.

"Many ministers have come and gone in Grand Rapids since Mr. Trotter first came. Many have gone to be with the Lord. One minister came the same year that Mr. Trotter did—Dr. Henry Beets. Dr. Beets has been a pastor in Grand Rapids all these years, and a close friend of Mr. Trotter. And so, representing the local Ministers' Association, Dr. Beets is going to bring us a tribute at this time."

Dr. Beets: "Dr. Hammontree, and friends: In the prophecy of Zechariah, (3:2) we read about Joshua, the high priest. The Lord asks: Is this not a brand from the burning?" God, in His mercy, saves some people from the burning. He did so in the case of Joshua. He did so for the man we later on came to know as St. Augustine.

"And He also saved, as a brand from the burning, our beloved Mel Trotter. Those of us who have heard his story, the story of his conversion, which he has told time and time again, never will forget what he was until our Lord sovereignly, graciously, lovingly plucked him as a brand out of the burning.
"These brands oftentimes are used to do great things, so that God may get the glory. He made great use of this man of God, Melvin E. Trotter, a sinner saved by grace and plucked as a brand from the burning.

"He became a national figure, among God's people in particular. Later he became an international figure. I think there has been only one Grand Rapids man who became well-known in practically every continent throughout the world (at least in English-speaking lands) and that man was Mel Trotter, of whom Grand Rapids has been proud during these many years as being one of its great religious leaders. Oh friends, let us remember especially what a soul-winner he was. 'Everlastingly at it.'

"I was at his sickbed about three weeks ago, and I said: 'Mel, let us thank God that He has used us at all to save souls from the wrath to come, and to pluck some as brands out of the burning. My brother.' I continued, 'you especially ought to be thankful that God has used you to bring countless souls to the feet of our blessed Redeemer. Mel, if we don't meet again here below, we hope to meet at Jesus' feet, and that 'saved by grace.'

"To this our brother replied with a hearty 'Amen!'"

Rev. John Shy, Mr. Trotter's assistant for seventeen years, continued: "Nearly seventeen years ago, I was converted at this very altar, one night when Mr. Trotter gave his life story, and I have celebrated every spiritual birthday with him since that time. Shortly after my conversion, Mr. Trotter asked me if I would like to become a member of the Mission staff, and I gladly accepted his invitation. I soon found that I had not only a friend, but a clad in Mr. Trotter. We had many blessed times of fellowship together here in the work. Many times after the services I would go up to his room, he lived here in the Mission, and there again we would have blessed fellowship, and our fellowship and our conversation always was around the Lord Jesus Christ, the One Whom Mr. Trotter loved and adored. I soon learned the one thing that seemed to be so outstanding in Mr. Trotter's life, namely, soul-winning, and I have marveled, time and time again, that his passion for souls continued until the very day the Lord took him home. I often have heard him say: 'John, let the Spirit of God fill you; there is plenty of room at the top of the ladder.'

"His main objective with Christians was getting others to catch the vision of lost men and women. Last year Mr. Trotter said to me, 'If God will let me live to finish the book I have started, 'These Forty Years,' and allow me to conduct the great union services in Kannapolis, North Carolina, and then bring me back to my Fortieth Anniversary, I think I shall ask God for no more.' How we thank God that He permitted Mr. Trotter to do every, one of these."

The next tribute was given by Mr. Blackmore:
"There is a verse of Scripture that has been very precious to me—it is this: 'Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints' (Psalm 116:15). Someone has translated it like this (and I like it better): 'Precious in the sight of the Lord is the coming home of His children.' I find in my heart today that I am sort of stricken betwixt the two. My better self tells me that this is a great day of victory, that this is more than a day of victory. But somehow, there is a pain way down in my heart that just will not have it so; and yet, I know that it is a day of victory.

"We Mission boys loved Mel more than Tips can tell. We loved him first because he was God's instrument in bringing us to Christ. Many of us here today, and many scattered throughout the land, owe our place in life to this man.

"Mel had a passion. It was a passion to win men and women to God. Another thing I want to tell you is that he not only won us to Christ, but he gave of himself to us. He not only gave us his time and kind words, but there wasn't anything he would not do for us, or give us. I have seen him pray with a poor helpless drunkard, then stand him on his feet and say: 'Now go home and get the wife and kiddies and come down to the Mission tonight.' Then, as they parted, he would slip a dollar bill, or a silver dollar in the poor drunkard's hand.

"I heard one of those men say, as he stood outside the Mission door, after such a parting, 'I will die before I spend this dollar for booze.' One of those very fellows now is an honored evangelist in this country. I believe he is here in the audience today.

"But our old 'Boss' did more than that. He loved us and we loved him because he loved us. We never were too wicked, and never too unlovely, and we never were too far down in sin for him to put his arms about us and love us back to God. I have heard men stand up and say, 'Mel, I don't know what to do; this is wrong and that is wrong and I am in such trouble, and in debt.'

I have seen him go to the bank and borrow money, when he didn't have it, and pay the bills of these boys, and start them back on their way, saying to them: 'You pay this back when you can.' I doubt if he lost much. He went the limit.

"Just this in conclusion: I want to say to you mission fellows, Mel still belongs to us. We haven't lost him. He still lives in our hearts. We don't know just what we will do, but God knows, and we haven't lost Mel. He will live on in my heart and in my life. He will live on in the heart of my wife who also was converted here in the old Mission. He will live on in the hearts of my two sons who loved him like a dad. He will live on in the hearts of many mission folk, in this land, who are his spiritual children. When Dr. Lowry, the great song writer, was passing away, Fanny Crosby went to see him. She took his hand and said to him: 'Good night, Doctor, until we meet in the morning.' So that is all I can say to my old pal, the man I worked with on this platform, 'year after year, whom I loved more than I have lips to tell you. I can say: 'Good night, dear 'Boss,' till we meet in the morning.'"
Mr. Paul Beckwith: "I was in what I thought was evangelistic work before I came with Mr. Trotter, but I had no passion for the lost. I thought if I did secretarial work and played the piano, that would be all that would be required of me; but the Lord showed me, through Mr. Trotter's ministry, that the most important thing for a young man to do was to win souls to Christ, and it was under his ministry that I had the privilege of leading my first soul to Christ. Someone has said that the thing he loved best was to be present when the Lord saved a soul. That is the greatest joy that ever came to my heart.

"I would like to say a lot of things that I cannot say, but I do want to pay this tribute to Mr. Trotter for the vision that the Lord brought to me through him-the vision of a world lost in sin, and the opportunity that we, as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, have in winning them to Him."

Mr. Walter Clark, treasurer of the Mission, representing the board, was the next speaker: "Friends, I shall be very brief today, representing the official board of this Mission, of which I am very proud, indeed, to be a member.

"Speaking for the official board, in particular, I will say, as you might suspect, that we touched or contacted a side of Mel Trotter that was a bit different from that of conducting his regular services, which were held here in this sanctuary and elsewhere. It was a very different thing, more business about it, and a chance to get a different view of the man, and the things he did.

"We found that he never, in my time at least, diverged one iota from the wonderfully beautiful Christian spirit that he showed so plainly and emphatically in every service that I ever attended, and, I think, every one that you ever attended. As John Shy said, he was a 'straight shooter,' and everything had to be done just like that.

"Mr. Trotter possessed, to a marked degree, a keen business sense, very much so. His outlook always was progressive and generally correct, as evidenced by the fact that he started in a little old store-building down there on old Canal Street and then, a little later, in the building up on Market Street, and then on clown to this great building here in which services have been held for so many years. He could see it all, and, with the help of God, he was 'everlastingly at it,' as he used to say, until this great institution had been built up.

"We, as a Board, have felt the force of his ability in business affairs. In fact, I think we felt that he could have run a railroad if he had had the opportunity, and had wished to go into business. One of the biggest men in this town, who happens to be a member of our board, said to me the other day 'You know, if Mel had elected to go into business, normal business instead of taking up mission work, he could have put anything over that he might have undertaken.' Why? Because of his great personality, and his ability, and his 'all-around-ed-ness,' I don't know what else to
call it, in doing things in a business way. He might have saved more out of what he
did make, but he was everlastingly giving it away.

    He also was a marvelous character in the direction that most of us have seen
him-in his religious services. I want to say that we are proud of the glorious work
Mel has done. I, personally, can say, and say truthfully, that if I were a younger man,
and had his ability, I would like his mantle to fall on me."

    Dr. John A. Dykstra, Pastor of Central Reformed Church, represented the
Rotary Club: "It is an honor and privilege for me to bring a word of tribute from the
Rotary Club of Grand Rapids to our late esteemed and beloved fellow member, Mel
Trotter. For twenty-two years he was a member of the Rotary organization, devoted
to the advancement of the ideal of service and its application to personal, business,
community and international life. Our tribute cannot be better expressed than in
these words spoken of our friend's Saviour and Lord: 'Who went about doing
good... for God was with him' (Acts 10:38).

    Our brother ever had the attitude of love for all. His heart went out in
affection, not only to the least in the community, but to the most influential as well.

    "Think, now, of his activity. Grand Rapids was the center from which he went
in all directions. His activities were not confined to his own country; they reached
beyond the seas. His activity was most highly purposeful. He went about doing
good. He exemplified in his life the motto of Rotary, 'Service above Self.' If everyone
today to whom he did a good deed were to cast a bloom on his casket, he would
sleep beneath a wilderness of flowers.

    "God was with him. It was evident in the programs he gave us, in the prayers
he uttered as we rose for a blessing upon our meal together, and in the
conversations that ensued. We are grateful for his godly touch upon our lives.

    "Today he is with his God, and rich is his reward. His Lord said: 'He that
would be greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven, must be servant of all.' His place is
high in the heart of God, and in our hearts, too.

    "Surely, it is his deep desire that when you and I come to the end of the road
and face the King of kings and Lord of lords, that each of us may hear the same
words that came to him "Well done, thou good and faithful servant... enter thou into
the joy of thy Lord."

    The message was brought by Dr. H. A. Ironside, then pastor of Moody
Memorial Church, Chicago:

    "One thing that has been impressed particularly upon me is this: Mr. Trotter
had said he didn't want any long sermons at his funeral, just happy testimonies of
those who were saved by grace and knew what it meant to live for God.
"Some Scripture came home to me while I was listening to these messages, and that is found in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Philippians. It seems to me it expresses so fully the whole aim and object of Mel Trotter's life since God saved him and is expressive of his present blessing: 'For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.' Then the Scripture found in the ninth chapter of First Corinthians that tells us something of the life this man lived; the last part of verse twenty-two: 'I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.' And then the third passage that has been pressing itself upon my mind is: 'There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth' (Luke 15:7).

"Mel Trotter knew Christ. When he was a poor, lost sinner, he was introduced to Christ.

"He never tired of telling how the Lord saved him. One thing was very evident: he was not seeking the Lord, but the Good Shepherd was seeking the poor lost, wandering sheep. You remember the little boy to whom the minister said one time: 'My dear boy, have you found Jesus?' The little fellow looked up and said: 'Please sir, I didn't know He was lost, but I was, sir, and He found me.' That is it. Mel was lost, and he wasn't ashamed to tell people just that. He was a poor, lost sinner, and Jesus sought and found him, and having found him, Jesus won Mel's heart to Himself. Knowing Christ here on earth, Mel could face the great eternal future with rest, perfect rest of heart.

"Mel Trotter has the greatest desire of his heart. He is with Christ.

"Mr. Trotter's second greatest desire was to live to win souls, and I think these words could be well put into his mouth today: 'I am made all things to all men,' that I might by all means save some' (I Corinthians 9:23). I don't think I ever knew a more versatile soul-winner than Mr. Trotter. He was at home everywhere, and with everyone.

"It meant so much to him to present the Saviour Who had won his heart. And now he is gone. His voice never will be heard here on earth again, but I can tell you this: If he were able to speak to us today from that casket, he would have the same message as he had throughout the years. It seems to me as though I can almost hear him say: 'Don't take up all the time talking about me. There may be some unsaved people in this great auditorium. There may be some people here who don't know Christ today. Oh, don't, don't lose the opportunity. Tell them 'there is none other name under Heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved' (Acts 4:12). Tell them that Christ died for the ungodly, the unworthy; tell them that the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost. Don't lose the opportunity to tell them.' And so I pass the word along to you today.

"There are those here perhaps who never have yet trusted Mel Trotter's Saviour. Let me tell you something. Perhaps you will hardly think it true when I first
state it. It is possible for you today to give joy to the heart of this man whose body lies here before us. It is possible for you unsaved men and women who are here today, to send a thrill of gladness into the very spirit of this man who has gone from us to the Father's house. You will say: 'How can that be?' Well, the Word of God tells you this: 'There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth' (Luke 15:10). Joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over the ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance' (Luke 15:7).

"Oh, what a wonderful thing it would be if, at this service, precious souls would come to Jesus, and accept the Saviour Who meant so much to our dear brother."

After the singing of Mel Trotter's favorite hymn, "O That Will Be Glory," Mr. Thomas S. Smith, of Chicago, vice-president of the board of trustees of Moody Bible Institute, closed the service with prayer:

"Let us pray: O God, we thank Thee for the Lord Jesus Christ. We thank Thee for everything, and for saving each one of us, and O God, may the mantle of Thy grace, which fell upon Mr. Trotter, ever be on us in our daily lives. May we clearly represent the Lord Jesus Christ, and His power to save. O God, may we heed all that has been said here this afternoon. O Lord, shed Thy gracious compassion on every one in this work, and Thy gracious compassion on the friends here, and on those who do not know the Lord Jesus Christ. O Father, that Thou mayest increase this knowledge in each one of us; that we may be transparent to Christ, the only thing which is worthwhile.

"Father, we must thank Thee for the certainty of the Lord Jesus Christ, that He never will be indebted to any one of us, and O God, may Thy spirit rest upon each of us here this afternoon, that we may be Thy servants, and wilt Thou lead us through the deep waters. O Lord, let each one of us go to Thee in prayer in time of joy and in time of difficulty. Oh, that we may be burden bearers for others, as Thy servant Mel was. O God, grant that this great work, here in the Mission, may be carried on, and that each one of us may do the work he has been called upon to do. We realize the fields are white with harvest, but the laborers are few. Shield us with Thy grace, forever. In Thy blessed name we ask it. Amen."

A Christian writer summing up the world's spiritual resources at the turn of the twentieth century made this statement:

"The twentieth century opens with five hundred millions of nominal Christians, nearly one third of the entire population of the globe. If the Church grew in the first century from one individual to five millions, is it unreasonable to imagine that she can multiply herself three or four times? Most certainly not! But how is the task to be accomplished? In the first place, the Church must see in the task the embodiment of a duty and of a possibility. She must realize that it is a possibility because it is a duty. She must return to the primitive ideals of aggressive service
and of spiritual conquest. Jesus bade his disciples 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness' (Matthew 6:33). For the majority of disciples today that command is a dead letter. The kingdom of God is not made the supreme end of thought and effort in human life.

"Let five hundred millions of nominal Christians begin today to put the kingdom of God foremost in all their plans and labor; let them put the extension of the kingdom before making a living; before personal ease and comfort; before pleasure and wealth; before fame or ambition; and the whole life attitude of the Church in the world would be transformed."

Melvin E. Trotter, God's soldier and apostle to the slums, put on the whole armor of God at the start of the twentieth century. He was not one of the five hundred million nominal Christians—he was phenomenal! God plucked this man as a brand from the burning, lifting him from the gutter to the pulpit.

Books cannot contain the sum total of a man's life—if it be a life like Mel Trotter's. A decade has passed since he left this earthly scene, but the passing years cannot erase the testimony of this lovable character.

Could there be another Mel Trotter? No. God does not duplicate. Trotter was God's soldier. He had a task to do that no other man could have done. And when that job was finished God took him home.

Can God take drunkards and outcast men and women as bad or worse than Mel Trotter and save them? Yes! Therefore, this biography is not only a story of the matchless grace of God. It is the story of rescue missions. The question is often asked, "Are rescue missions worthwhile?" This book is the answer to that question. This story is written in order that the life of Mel Trotter may be a beacon light to storm tossed souls.

It is also a story to give incentive to personal work and to Christian workers the world over. Let the reader know without a shadow of doubt that God can do for him what he did for this man who came perilously near to a watery grave and to a Christless eternity!

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THE END