CHILDREN'S RIGHTS.

Dr. Talmage Preaches on a Timely Subject.

The Sacrifice of Children—Cramming at the Schools—Wrong Systems of Discipline—The Spirit of Worldliness.

In a late sermon at Brooklyn Rev. T. DeWitt Talmage chose for his topic "Children's Rights," the text being: Judges, xi., 36: "My father, if thou hast opened thy mouth unto the Lord, do to me according to that which hath proceeded out of thy mouth." Dr. Talmage said:

Jephthah was a freebooter. Early turned out from a home where he ought to have been cared for, he consorted with rough men, and went forth to earn his living as best he could. In those times it was considered right for a man to go out on independent military expeditions. Jephthah was a good man according to the light of his dark age, but through a wandering and predatory life he became reckless and precipitate. The grace of God changes a man's heart, but never reverses his natural temperament.

The Israelites wanted the Ammonites driven out of their country, so they sent a delegation to Jephthah asking him to become commander-in-chief of all the forces. Before going out to the war Jephtha makes a very solemn vow that if the Lord will give him the victory then, on his return home, whatsoever first comes out of his doorway he will offer in sacrifice as a burnt offering. In those old times opposing forces would fight until their swords were broken, and then each one would throttle his man until they both fell, teeth to teeth, grip to grip, death-stare to death-stare, until the plain was one tumbled mass of corpses, from which the last trace of manhood had been dashed out.

Jephthah wins the day. Twenty cities lay captured at his feet. Sound the victory all through the mountains of Gilead. Let the trumpeters call up the survivors. Homeward to your wives and children. Homeward with your glittering treasures. Homeward to have the applause of an admiring nation.

Huzza for Jephthah the conqueror! Jephthah, seated on a prancing steed, advances amid acclaiming multitudes, but his eye is not on the excited populace. Remembering that he had made a solemn vow that, returning from victorious battle, whatsoever first came out of the doorway of his home, that should be sacrificed as a burnt offering, he has his anxious look upon the door. Oh, horrors! Paleness of death blanches his cheek. Despair seizes his heart. His daughter, his only child, rushes out the doorway to throw herself in her father's arms and shower upon him more kisses than there were wounds on his breast or dents on his shield. All the triumphal splendor vanishes. Holding back this child from his heaving breast and pushing the locks back from the fair brow, and looking into the eyes of inextinguishable affection, with choked utterance he says: "Would God that I lay stark on the bloody plain. My daughter, my only child, joy of home, life of my life, thou art the sacrifice!"

The whole matter was explained to her. This was no whining, hollow-hearted girl into whose eyes the father looked. All the glory of the sword and shield vanished in the presence of the valor of that girl. With a self-sacrifice that man may not reach, and only woman's heart can compass, she surrenders herself to fire and to death. "My father, if thou hast opened thy mouth unto the Lord, do thou unto me whatsoever hath proceeded from thy mouth."

Of course this offering was not pleasant to the Lord; but before you hurl your denunciations at Jephthah's cruelty, remember that in olden times, when vows were made, men thought they must execute them, perform them, whether they were wicked or good. There were two wrong things about Jephthah's vow. First, he ought never to have made it. Next, having made it, it were better broken than kept. But do not take on pretentious airs and say: "I could not have done as Jephthah did." If to-day you were standing on the banks of the Ganges and you had been born in India, you might have been throwing your children to the crocodiles. It is not because we are naturally any better, but because we have more gospel light.

Now, I make very practical use of this question when I tell you that the sacrifice of Jephthah's daughter was a type of the physicial, mental and spiritual sacrifice of ten thousand children in this day. There are parents all unwittingly bringing to bear upon their children a class of influences which will as certainly ruin them as knife and torch destroyed Jephthah's daughter.

In the first place I remark that much of the system of education in our day is a system of sacrifice. When children spend six or seven hours a day in school and then must spend two or three hours in preparation for school the next day, will you tell me how much time they will have for sunshine and fresh air and the obtaining of that exuberance which is necessary for the duties of coming life?

No one can feel more thankful than I do for the advancement of common school education. But this herding of great multitudes of children in ill-ventilated school rooms and poorly equipped halls of instruction is making many of the places of knowledge in this country a huge holocaust.

Politics in many cities gets into educational affairs, and while the two political parties are scrabbling for the honors, Jephthah's daughter perishes. It is so much so that there are many schools in the country to-day which are preparing tens of thousands of invalid men and women for the future; so that, in many places, by the time the child's education is finished the child is finished!

In connection with this I mention what I might call the cramming system of the common schools and many of the academies; children of delicate brain compelled to tasks that might appall a mature intellect; children going down to school with a strap of books half as high as themselves. The fact is, in some of the cities parents do not allow their children to graduate, for the simple reason, they say: "We cannot afford to allow our children's health to be destroyed in order that they may gather the honors of an institution." Tens of thousands of children educated into imbecility; so, connected with many such literary establishments there ought to be asylums for the wrecked. It is push, and crowd, and cram, and stuff, and jam, until the child's intellect is bewildered, and the memory is wrecked and the health is gone.

Girls 10 years of age studying algebra! Boys 12 years of age racking their brain over trigonometry! Children unacquainted with their mother tongue crying over their Latin, French and German lessons! All the vivacity of their nature beaten out of them by the heavy beetle of a Greek lexicon! And you doctor them for this, and you give them a little medicine for that, and you wonder what is the matter with them. I will tell you what is the matter with them. They are finishing their education!

In my parish in Philadelphia a little child was so pushed at school that she was thrown into a fever, and in her dying delirium, all night long, she was trying to recite the multiplication table. In my boyhood I remember that in our class at school there was one lad who knew more than all of us put together. If we were fast in our arithmetic, he extricated us. When we stood up for the spelling class he was almost always the head of the class. Visitors came to his father's house, and he was almost always brought in as a prodigy. At 18 years of age he was an idiot. He lived ten years an idiot and died an idiot, not knowing his right hand from his left, or day from night. The parents and the teachers made him an idiot.

You may flatter your pride by forcing your children to know more than any other children, but you are making a sacrifice of that child, if by the additions to its intelligence you are making a subtraction from its future. The child will go away from such maltreatment with no exuberance to fight the battle of life. Such children may get along very well while you take care of them, but when you are old or dead, alas! for them, if, through the wrong system of education which you adopted, they have no swarthiness or force of character to take care of themselves. Be careful how you make the child's head ache or its heart flutter. I hear a great deal about black men's rights, and Chinamen's rights, and Indians' rights, and women's rights. Would God that somebody would rise to plead for the children's rights.

Again, there are many parents who are sacrificing their children with wrong systems of discipline—too great rigor and too great leniency. There are children in families who rule the household. They come to the authority. The high chair in which the infant sits is the throne, and the rattle is the scepter, and the other children make up the parliament where father and mother have no vote! Such children come up to be miscreants.

There is no chance in this world for a child that has never learned to mind. Some people become the botheration of the church of God and the pest of the world. Children that do not learn to obey human authority are unwilling to learn to obey divine authority. Children will not respect parents whose authority they do not respect. Who are these young men that swagger through the street, with their thumbs in their vest, talking about their father as "the old man," "the governor," "the squire," "the old chap," or their mother as "the old woman?" They are those who in youth, in childhood, never learned to respect authority.

There must be harmony between the father's government and the mother's government. The father will be tempted to too great rigor. The mother will be tempted too great leniency. Her tenderness will overcome her. Her voice is a little softer, her hand seems better fit to pull out a thorn and soothe a pang. Children wanting anything from the mother cry for it. They hope to dissolve her will with tears. But the mother must not interfere, must not coax off, must not beg for the child when the hour comes for the assertion of parental supremacy and the subjugation of a child's temper. There comes in the history of every child an hour when it is tested whether the parents shall rule or the child shall rule. This is the crucial hour. If the child triumphs in that hour, then he will some day make you crouch. It is a horrible scene. I have witnessed it: A mother come to old age, shivering with terror in the presence of a son who cursed her gray hairs and mocked her wrinkled face, and begrudged her the crust she munched with her toothless gums!

How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is
To have a thankless child!

But, on the other hand, too great rigor must be avoided. It is a sad thing when domestic government becomes cold military despotism. Trappers on the prairie fight fire with fire, but you cannot successfully fight your child's bad temper with your own bad temper. We must not be too minute in our inspection. We cannot expect our children to be perfect. We must not see everything. Since we have two or three faults of our own, we ought not to be too rough when we discover that our children have as many.

Again there are many who are sacrificing their children to a spirit of worldliness. Some one asked a mother whose children had turned out very well, what was the secret by which she prepared them for usefulness and for the Christian life, and she said: This was the secret: when, in the morning I washed the children I prayed that they might be washed in the fountain of a Saviour's mercy. When I put on their garments I prayed that they might be arrayed in the robe of a Saviour's righteousness. When I gave them food I prayed that they might be fed with manna from Heaven. When I started them on the road to school I prayed that their path might be as the shining light, brighter and brighter to the perfect day. When I put them to sleep I prayed that they might be enfolded in the Saviour's arms." "Oh," you say, "that was very old-fashioned." It was quite old-fashioned. But do you suppose that a child under such nurture as that ever turned out bad?

In our day most of the boys start out with no idea higher than the all-encompassing dollar. They start in an age which boasts it can scratch the Lord's Prayer on a ten cent piece, and the Ten Commandments on a ten cent piece. Children are taught to reduce morals and religion, time and eternity to vulgar fractions. It seems to be their chief attainment that ten cents make a dime, and ten dimes make a dollar. How to get money is only equaled by the other art, how to keep it.

Further on, thousands and tens of thousands of the daughters of America are sacrificed to worldliness. They are taught to be in sympathy with all the artificialities of society. They are inducted into all the hollowness of what if called fashionable life. They are taught to believe that history is dry, but that fifty-cent stories of adventurous love are delicious. With capacity that might have rivaled a Florence Nightingale in heavenly ministries, or made the father's house glad with filial and sisterly demeanor, their life is a waste, their beauty a curse, their eternity a demolition.

In the siege of Charleston, during the civil war, a lieutenant of the army stood on the floor beside the daughter of the ex-governor of the state of South Carolina. They were taking the vows of marriage. A bombshell struck the roof, dropped into the group, and nine were wounded and slain; among the wounded to death, the bride. While the bridegroom knelt on the carpet trying to stanch the wounds, the bride demanded that the ceremony be completed, that she might take the vows before her departure, and when the minister said, "Wilt thou be faithful unto death?" with her dying lips she said, "I will," and in two hours she had departed. That was the accidental slaughter and the sacrifice of the body, but at thousands of marriage altars there are daughters slain for time and slain for eternity. It is not a marriage, it is a sacrifice.

Affianced to some one who is only waiting until his father dies, so he can get the property; then a little while they swing around in the circles, brilliant circles; then the property is gone, and having no power to earn a livelihood, the twain sink into some corner of society, the husband an idler and a sot, the wife a drudge, a slave and a sacrifice. Ah! spare your denunciations from Jephthah's head, and expend them all on this wholesale modern martyrdom.

I lift up my voice to-day against the sacrifice of children. I look out of my window on a Sabbath, and I see a group of children, unwashed, uncombed, unchristianized. Who cares for them? Who prays for them? Who utters to them one kind word?

When the city missionary passing along the park in New York, saw a ragged lad and heard him swearing, he said to him: "My son, stop swearing! You ought to go to the house of God to-day. You ought to be good; you ought to be a Christian." The lad looked in his face and said: "Ah, it is easy for you to talk, well-clothed as you are, and well-fed; but we chaps hain't got no chance." Who lifts them to the altar for baptism? Who goes forth to snatch them up from crime and death and woe? Who to-day will go forth and bring them into schools and churches? No. Heap them up, great piles of rags and wretchedness and filth. Put underneath them the fires of sacrifice, stir up the blaze, put on more fagots, and while we sit in the churches with folded arms and indifferent, crime and disease and death will go on with the agonizing sacrifice.

During the early French revolution, at Bourges there was a company of boys who used to train every day as young soldiers; and they carried a flag, and they had on the flag this inscription: "Tremble, tyrants, tremble; we are growing up." Mightily suggestive! This generation is passing off, and a mightier generation is coming on. Will they be the foes of tyranny, the foes of sin and the foes of death, or will they be the foes of God? They are coming up!

I congratulate all parents who are doing their best to keep their children away from the altar of sacrifice. Your prayers are going to be answered. Your children may wander away from God, but they will come back again. A voice comes from the throne to-day, encouraging you: "I will be a God to thee, and to thy seed after thee." And though when you lay your head in death there may be some wanderer of the family far away from God, and you may be twenty years in Heaven before salvation shall come to his heart, he will be brought into the kingdom, and before the throne of God you will rejoice that you were faithful. Come at last, although so long postponed his coming. Come at last!

I congratulate all those who are toiling for the outcast and the wandering. Your work will soon be over, but the influence you are setting in motion will never stop. Long after you have been garnered for the skies your prayers, your teachings and your Christian influence will go on and help to people Heaven with bright inhabitants.

Which would you rather see?—which scene would you rather mingle in in the last day—being able to say, "I added house to house, and land to land, and manufactory to manufactory; I owned half the city; whatever my eyes saw I had; whatever I wanted I got;" or, on that day to have Christ look you full in the face and say, "I was hungry, and ye fed Me; I was naked, and ye clothed Me; I was sick and in prison, and ye visited Me; inasmuch as ye did to the least of My brethern, ye did it to Me?"

A SOUTH AFRICAN TRAGEDY.

How an American Paid a Penalty for Kissing a Missionary's Wife.

The coast of southeast Africa is one of the most dangerous in the world. Currents, constantly varying both in direction and intensity, carry the navigator far out of his course and often land him upon some reef or sand bar. The fact that the Robert Miller, from London for Bombay, should have been wrecked near the Bay of Port Natal was, therefore, not strange. But what was unusual was the great loss of life that attended the wreck. Only one man out of all those on board managed to reach the shore in safety.

This man, Charles Lee, an American by birth, but a citizen of the world by choice, belonged to that constantly increasing class who prefer to spend their lives wandering from clime to clime, picking up an often precarious livelihood, but seeing life in nearly every phase. Lee had made a lucky strike in London, and was on his way to India. He had taken passage in the Robert Miller, hoping that the long sea voyage would drive from his body some lingering seeds of fever picked up in South America.

Flung by the waves on the coast of Natal, with his money safe in a waterproof belt, he changed his plans with the readiness characteristic of his class and resolved upon a trading trip into the interior. Purchasing a wagon and span of oxen and hiring two native assistants he "treked" north into Zululand. In his wagon he carried numerous articles for trade with the natives. Among them, carefully concealed under the wagon seat, he carried ten kegs of powder, concealed because the law forbid the sale of powder to natives.

At the end of three months Lee considered that his trip had been a successful one and decided to return home, following another route to Natal. One morning he "outspanned" at a small village where there was a missionary station. The missionary himself was away, but his wife came down to the trader's wagon, expecting to find many articles needed to replenish her household stores. Lee sold what she wished, all the time looking at her in a puzzled manner. At last he exclaimed: "By George, I know you now! How under heaven did you get here, Mollie?"

"Sir," said the woman, deadly pale but drawing herself up proudly, "what do you mean by this insult?"

"O, stuff, Mollie, you can't fool me. As soon as I saw you I knew I had seen you before. But it seemed so queer that Mollie Flanders—Moll, of San Francisco—should have turned up here, of all places in the world. Pretty as ever, Moll, I see. Give us a kiss for old times' sake."

Grasping her suddenly in his arms he kissed her again and again. Finally she tore herself loose and fled, white with emotion.

Was she Mollie Flanders or was she not? Lee was sure of it, but mistakes of identification do sometimes happen. At any rate she acted as if innocent.

Sitting down, the woman wrote a letter to her husband, telling him how she had been insulted and demanding reparation. This letter she sent by a native to the neighboring village where her husband was visiting.

That night the trader took advantage of the moonlight to pursue his journey, and, as fate would have it, he and the letter reached the village and the missionary at the same time.

The missionary was a man of sudden and violent temper. He loved his wife dearly, and the news of an insult to her broke down all the barriers he had built up by constant training. Urged by him the chief of the village sent men to seize the trader. Surprised without arms Lee was made a captive after a desperate struggle and was carried before the chief and the missionary. The former was anxious not to go any further. The Zulu war was just over and the natives hardly liked to injure a white man so soon after the sharp lesson they had received. Still, urged by the missionary, the chief finally ordered that Lee receive 100 lashes on his bare back.

The trader heard his sentence calmly. He made no defense to the charges and begged no mercy. He merely asked that he be given an hour to put his affairs in order, in view of the possibility of a fatal result from so tremendous a beating. After a little hesitation the missionary agreed to this. The wagon was searched and all weapons were removed. Then Lee was hoisted upon the seat and his hands were freed, but his legs were still kept bound. The missionary warned him that any attempt to free them would result in the immediate execution of the sentence.

Once upon the box Lee took out his writing materials and wrote two letters, which he sealed and threw upon the ground. Then he reached down below the seat and quietly drew the plugs from the powder kegs. The powder flowed out into a black heap, with which each keg connected.

Lee then lighted his pipe and quietly leaned back to await the expiration of the hour. When it was nearly up he bent down and began to unfasten the bonds upon his legs. Instantly two natives sprang at him, but he raised his head and looked at them with so deadly a gleam in his eyes that they hesitated. Another moment and his feet would be free.

The missionary, seeing his prey about to escape, rushed upon him, followed by the whole assemblage of natives. Lee waited until they were nearly upon him and then emptied the glowing contents of his pipe upon the powder.

A sharp cry of horror from the missionary was lost in a burst of flame and a roar like thunder. Then the volume of heavy white smoke rolled and spread about the scene like a heavy fog. When it had cleared away trader and missionary had both gone to carry their disputes to a higher tribunal. Only two blackened masses, hardly human in form, remained to show that they had ever lived. Of the natives fifteen lay dead or dying upon the field.

To this day, if the traveler in that region is annoyed by too curious and intrusive natives, he has but to throw a handful of powder into the fire to secure absolute solitude. The last resource of the desperate white man has not been forgotten.—San Francisco Chronicle.

NOTES OF THE FASHIONS.

Fresh Suggestions Regarding the Arrangement of Feminine Costumes.

Low-necked linings, under high-waisted corsages of diaphanous fabrics, are seen at all fashionable summer resorts. The sleeves, as a rule, are unlined, but made excessively full.

Plain Chambray and French zephyr dresses for morning wear have seamless, shirred princess backs, with fronts pointed and finished either as a corselet with guimpe or in surplice form with folds coming from the shoulders.

Nearly all the pretty zephyrs, lawns and French batistes are finished on the skirt-hem with tiny ruches or small lapping frills made of the dress goods. Some of the ruffles have a tiny edge of Valenciennes or torchon lace, and the entire width of the three frills does not exceed three inches. A similar set is placed half way up the length of the skirt. Handsome toilets of silk, muslin, French organdy, etc., are trimmed on the bottom of the skirt with fan-plaited lace ruches, or lapped lace-edged frills of the goods, with lightly twisted ribbon and standing Empire bows as a heading.

Tea gowns for the summer are made of beautiful crepons of light ground, strewn with flowers, also of flowered dotted Swiss muslin, tambboured organdy and soft undressed India mulls. Most of the new gowns have blouse vests lightly girdled, Eton fronts beyond, and a rather narrowly plaited Watteau back. The popular Queen Anne sleeve, with fullness dropping to a lace frill at the elbow, is used for these dresses. On other gowns, picturesque bretelles of wide, beautiful lace extend over the shoulders from belt to belt, with a falling ruffle of the same around the slightly open neck.

English serge dresses for the beach are in colors of tan, brown, marine blue, and Neapolitan red, and a number of the red gowns are made up with a yoke of tan crepon gathered quite full above the corselet. The bishop sleeves are of red serge with very deep forearm portion of tan color. Seaside and mountain suits are made of alpaca combined with striped wash-silk in cream and pink, ecru and green, violet and reseda, etc. Plain brown and dove-colored alpacas for traveling and morning dresses have Eton jackets open over cherry-red silk blouses, with capes en suite lined with red surah.—N. Y. Post.

SETTLERS IN NEW ENGLAND.

Weight of the French-Canadian Vote in Our Politics.

It is clear that the mass of the Canadians who are settled in New England are not rapidly becoming proprietors of the soil, their holdings, according to their own reports, being very much below the average per capita assessed valuations in the six states, as appears from the census of 1890. They remain operatives in the mills and factories. A few of them are storekeepers; fewer still are physicians and lawyers. Recently the French-Canadian press in the United States, and especially in New England, has rapidly developed. This is a pretty sure sign that the active politicians are taking a decided interest in the French-Canadian vote, and are prepared to avail themselves of the customary electioneering methods for the purpose of securing it.

In 1887 there were in New England 16,806 French-Canadian voters; in 1889 the number had increased to 28,465; in 1891 it had grown to be 33,663. In every one of the six states, except Vermont, votes equal in number to the solid French-Canadian vote would suffice to reverse the political supremacy if they should be transferred from the prevailing party to the minority. In the presidential election just held this vote played an important part, especially in Massachusetts. It is said that most of the French Canadians voted for the democratic candidate because of the injuries inflicted on the farmers of Quebec by the McKinley tariff. However that may be, it is the fact that the French-Canadian vote was a matter of much solicitude to the politicians of both parties, and it is its growing importance in American politics that makes the immigration of interest in this country.—Henry Loomis Nelson, in Harper's Magazine.

A Salutary Object Lesson.

In many ways the United States have educated the world in politics, and I, for one, do not hesitate to say that their scheme of government is the best that has ever been established by a nation. But in nothing do we owe more to the Americans than for their having afforded us the great object lesson of a state pursuing the even current of its way without that meddling in the affairs of other states which has been the bane of European powers. Here we have a country, rich, powerful, industrial and commercial, yet never troubling itself with what happens outside its frontiers, or annexing foreign lands on the plea of philanthropy, or on the ground that in some centuries its area will be too small for its population, or in order to create markets for its goods. And what is the result? No one dreams of attacking the United States or of picking a quarrel with them.—London Truth.

In a Circle.

"It is interesting," he said to the lyspeptic young man, "to observe the different names we have for the same thing."

"Is it?"

"Of course it is," he went on with the persistence of the man of research. "Take 'lamb,' for instance. When it gets old it is called 'sheep.'"

"Anybody knows that."

"And the sheep, after it is killed, is called 'mutton.'"

"You're getting right around to where you started from."

"How?"

"When your mutton is cooked and served in our boarding-house it becomes 'lamb' again."—Washington Star.

He Had to Be.

Judge Duffy—Who was present when the defendant knocked you down?

Accused—I was.—Texas Siftings.

THE young stereotyper's first impressions of the business are seldom his best ones.—Troy Times.

"I'M better off," buzzed the fly as he tried to break away from the fly paper.—Philadelphia Record.

NO MAN can be a real king who does not rule himself.—Ram's Horn.

"DON'T say I seen him. That is not correct." "What shall I say?" "I sore him."