

WOMAN'S INFLUENCE.

Dr Talmage Discourses on a Favorite Subject.

A Biblical Model.—The Virtue of Hospitality.—Conquering Trouble.—Application to Domestic Duties.—Christian Faith.

In a late sermon at Brooklyn Rev. T. DeWitt Talmage chose for his subject one of special interest to the gentler sex, the topic being, "A Great Woman," and the text II. Kings, iv. 8: "And it fell on a day that Elisha passed to Shunem, where was a great woman."

The hotel of our time had no counterpart in any entertainment of olden time. The vast majority of travelers must then be entertained at private abode. Here comes Elisha, a servant of the Lord, on a divine mission, and he must find shelter. A balcony overlooking the Valley of Esdræton is offered him in a private house, and it is especially furnished for his occupancy—a chair to sit on, a table from which to eat, a candlestick by which to read, and a bed on which to slumber, the whole establishment belonging to a great and good woman.

Her husband, it seems, was a golly man, but he was entirely overshadowed by his wife's excellencies; just as now you sometimes find in a household the wife the center of dignity and influence and power, not by any arrogance or presumption, but by superior intellect and the force of moral nature wielding domestic affairs, and at the same time, superintending all financial and business affairs. The wife's hand on the shuttle, on the banking house, on the worldly business. You see hundreds of men who are successful only because there is a reason at home why they are successful.

If a man marry a good, honest soul, he makes his fortune. If he marry a fool, the Lord help him! The wife may be the silent partner in the firm, there may be only masculine voices down on exchange, but there oftentimes comes from the home circle a potential and elevating influence.

This woman of my text was the superior of her husband. He, as far as I can understand, was what we often see in our day, a man of large fortune and only a medium of brain, intensely quiet, sitting a long while in the same place without moving hand or foot—if you say "yes," responding "yes"—if you say "no," responding "no"—inane, eyes half shut, mouth wide open, maintaining his position in society only because he has a large patrimony. But his wife, my text says, was a great woman.

Her name has not come down to us. She belonged to that collection of people who need no name to distinguish them. What would title of duchess, or princess, or queen—what would escautcheon or gleaming diadem be to this woman of my text, who by her intelligence and her behavior challenges the admiration of all ages? Long after the brilliant women of the court of Louis XV. have been forgotten, and the brilliant women of the court of Spain have been forgotten, and the brilliant women who sat on the mighty thrones have been forgotten, some grandfather will put on his spectacles, and holding the book on the other side of the light, read to his grandchildren the story of this great woman of Shunem who was so kind and courteous and Christian to the good prophet Elisha. Yes, she was a great woman.

In the first place, she was great in her hospitalities. Uncivilized and barbarous nations honor this virtue. Jupiter had the surname of the Hospitable, and he was said to especially avenge the wrongs of strangers. Homer extolled it in his verse. The Arabs are punctilious upon the subject, and among some of their tribes it is not until the ninth day of tarrying that the occupant has a right to ask his guest: "Who, and whence art thou?" If this virtue is so honored even among barbarians, how ought it to be honored among those of us who believe in the Bible, which commands us to use hospitality one toward another without grudging?

Of course, I do not mean under this cover to give any idea that I approve of that vagrant class who go around from place to place ranging their whole lifetime, perhaps under the auspices of some benevolent or philanthropic society, quartering themselves on Christian families, with a great pile of trunks in the hall and a carpet-bag portmanteau of tarrying. There is many a country parsonage that looks out week by week upon the ominous arrival of wagon with creaking wheel and lank horse and dilapidated driver, come under the auspices of some charitable institution to spend a few weeks and canvass the neighborhood. Let no such religious tramps take advantage of this beautiful virtue of Christian hospitality.

Not so much the sumptuousness of your diet and the regality of your abode will impress the friend or the stranger that steps across your threshold, as the warmth of your greeting, the informality of your reception, the reiteration by grasp and by look and by a thousand attentions, insignificant attentions, of your earnestness of welcome. There will be high appreciation of your welcome, although you have nothing but a brazen candlestick and the plain chair to offer Elisha when he comes to Shunem.

Most beautiful is this grace of hospitality when shown in the house of God. I am thankful that I am pastor of a church where strangers are always welcome, and there is not a state of the union in which I have not heard the affability of the ushers of our church complimented. But I have entered churches where there was no hospitality. A stranger would stand in the vestibule for awhile and then make pilgrimage up the long aisle. No door opened to him, until flushed and excited and embarrassed he started back again, and coming to some half filled pew with apologetic air, entered

it, while the occupants glared on him with a look which seemed to say: "Well, if I must, I must." A way with such accursed indecency from the house of God. Let every church that would maintain large Christian influence in community, culture Sabbath by Sabbath this beautiful grace of Christian hospitality.

Again, this woman of my text was great in her kindness toward God's messenger. Elisha may have been a stranger in that household, but as she found out he had come on a divine mission, he was cordially welcomed. We have a great many books in our day about the hardships of ministers and the trials of Christian ministers. I wish somebody would write a book about the joys of the Christian minister, about the sympathies all around him, about the kindnesses, about the genial considerations of him. Does sorrow come to our home and is there a shadow on the cradle? There are hundreds of hands to help, and many who weary not through the long night watching, and hundreds of prayers going up that God would restore the sick. Is there a burning, blinding cup of calamity placed on the pastor's table, are there not many to help him drink of that cup and who will not be comforted because he is stricken? Oh, for somebody to write a book about the rewards of the Christian ministry—about his surroundings of Christian sympathy.

This woman of the text was only a type of thousands of men and women who come down from the mansion and from the cot to do kindness to the Lord's servants. I suppose the men of Shunem had to pay the bills, but it was the large-hearted, Christian sympathies of the women of Shunem that looked after the Lord's messenger.

Again, this woman in the text was great in her behavior under trouble. Her only son had died on her lap. A very bright light went out in that household. The sacred writer puts it very tersely when he says: "He sat on her knees until noon and then he died." Yet the writer goes on to say that she exclaimed: "It is well." Great in prosperity, this woman was great in trouble.

Navigators tell us about the rivers, and the Amazon and the Danube and the Mississippi have been explored, but who can tell the depth or length of the great river of sorrow made up of tears and blood rolling through all lands and all ages, bearing the wreck of families and communities and of empires—foaming, writhing, boiling with the agonies of 6,000 years. Etna and Cotopaxi and Vesuvius have been described, but who has ever sated the volcano of suffering retching up from its depths the lava and the scoria and pouring them down the sides to whelm the nations? Oh, if I could gather all the heart strings, the broken heart strings into a harp I would play on it a dirge such as was never sounded.

Mythologists tell us of Gorgon and Centaur and Titan, and geologists tell us of extinct species of monsters, but greater than Gorgon or Medusa, and not belonging to the realm of fables, and not of an extinct species, is a monster with iron jaw and iron hoofs walking across the nations, and history and poetry and sculptor in their attempts to sketch it and describe it have seemed to sweat great drops of blood.

But, thank God, there are those who can conquer as this woman of the text conquered, and say: "It is well!" though my property be gone, though my children be broken up, though my health be sacrificed, it is well, it is well! There is no storm on the sea but Christ is ready to rise in the hinder part of the ship and hush it. There is no darkness but the constellations of God's eternal love can illuminate it, and though the winter comes out of the northern sky, you have sometimes seen the northern sky all ablaze with auroras that seem to say: "Come up this way; up this way are thrones of light and seas of sapphire, and the splendor of an eternal heaven. Come up this way." We may like the ships, by tempest be tossed On perilous deeps, but wind and tide Though Satan enrage, the cannot be lost; The promise assures us, the Lord will provide.

Again, this woman of my text was great in her application to domestic duties. Every picture is a home picture, whether she is entertaining an Elisha, or whether she is giving careful attention to her sick boy, or whether she is appealing for the restoration of her property—every picture in her case is a home picture. Those are not disciples of this Shunemite woman who going out to attend to outside charities, neglect the duty of home—the duty of wife, of mother, of daughter. No faithfulness in public beneficence can ever atone for domestic negligence.

There has been many a mother who by infatigable toil has reared a large family of children, equipped them for the duties of life with good manners and large intelligence and Christian principle, starting them out, who has done more for the world than many another woman whose name has sounded through all the lands and through all centuries.

I remember when Kossuth was in this country there were some ladies who got reputation, honorable reputation, by presenting him very graciously with bouquets of flowers on public occasions; but what was all that compared with the work of the plain Hungarian mother who gave to truth and civilization and the cause of universal liberty a Kossuth? Yes, this woman of my text was great in her simplicity.

When this prophet wanted to reward her for her hospitality by asking some preferment from the king, what did she say? She said: "I dwell among my own people," as much as to say, "I am satisfied with my lot; all I want is my family and my friends around me. I dwell among my own people." Oh, what a rebuke to the strife for precedence in all ages.

How many there are who want to get great architecture, and homes furnished with all art, all painting, all statuary, who have not enough taste to distinguish between Gothic and Byzantine, and who could not tell a figure in plaster of Paris from Palmer's

"White Captive," and would not know a low's panning from Bierstadt's "Comanche." Men who buy large libraries when they have hardly enough education to pick out the dross of the almanac! Oh, how many there are striving to have things as well as their neighbors, or better than their neighbors, in the struggle with fortune, are exhausted and business firms hurled into bankruptcy, and men of reputed honesty rush into astounding forgeries.

Of course I say nothing against refinement of culture, splendor of abode, sumptuousness of diet, lavishness in art, neatness in apparel, these things are all good in the Bible or out of the Bible. God does not want us to prefer mud hovels to English cottages or untanned sheepskin to French brocade, or hanks to pin-apple, or the clumsiness of a bear to the manners of a gentleman. God, who strung the beach with tinted shells and the grass of the field with the dew of the night and hath exquisitely tinged morning cloud and robin rebreast, wants us to keep our eye open to all beautiful sights and our ear open to all elevating sentiments. But what I want to impress upon you is that you ought not to inventory your luxuries of life as among the indispensable, and you ought not to depreciate this woman of the text, who, when offered kind preferment, responded, "I dwell among my own people."

Yes, this woman of the text was great in her piety. Faith in God, and she was not ashamed to talk about it before idolaters. Ah, woman will never appreciate what she owes Christianity until she knows and sees the degradation of her sex under Paganism and Mohammedanism. Her very birth is considered a misfortune. Sold like cattle in the shambles, slave of all work, and at last, her body fuel for the funeral pyre of her husband. Above the shriek of the fire worshippers in India and above the rumbering of the juggernauts I hear the million-voiced groan of wronged, insulted, broken-hearted, down-trodden woman. Her tears have fallen in the Nile and Tigris and the La Plata and on the steppes of Tartary. She has been dishonored in Turkish garden and Persian palace and Spanish Alhambra. Her little ones have been sacrificed in the Ganges. There is not a groan, or a dungeon, or an island, or a mountain, or a river, or a lake, or a sea, but could tell a story of the outrages heaped upon her.

But, thanks to God, this glorious Christianity comes forth, and all the chains of this vassalage are snapped, and she rises up from ignominy to exalted sphere, and becomes the affectionate daughter, the gentle wife, the honored mother, the useful Christian. Oh, if Christianity has done so much for woman, surely woman will become its most ardent advocate and its sublimest exemplification.

When I come to speak of womanly influence, my mind always wanders off to one model—the aged one who, twenty-seven years ago, we put away for the resurrection. About eighty-seven years ago, and just before their marriage day, my father and mother stood up in the old meeting house at Somerville, N. J., and took upon them the vows of the Christian. Through a long life of vicissitude she lived harmlessly and usefully and came to her end in peace. No child of want ever came to her door and was turned away empty. No one in sorrow came to her but was comforted. No one asked her the way to be saved but she pointed him to the cross. When the angel of life came to a neighbor's dwelling she was there to rejoice at the starting of another immortal spirit. When the angel of death came to a neighbor's dwelling she was there to robe the departed for the burial.

We had often heard her, when leading family prayers in the absence of my father, say: "O Lord, I ask not for my children wealth or honor, but I do ask that they all may be subjects of Thy comforting grace." Her eleven children brought into the Kingdom of God, she had but one more wish, and that was that she might see her long-absent missionary son; and when the ship from China anchored in New York harbor, and the long-absent one passed over the threshold of the paternal home, she said: "Now, Lord, let Thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen the salvation." The prayer was soon answered.

It was an autumnal day when we gathered from afar and found only the house from which the soul had fled forever. She looked very natural, the hands very much as when they were employed in kindness for her children. Whatever else we forget, we never forget the look of mother's hands. As we stood there by the casket we could not help but say: "Don't she look beautiful!" It was a cloudless day when, with heavy hearts, we carried her out to the last resting place. The withered leaves crumbled under hoof and wheel as we passed, and the sun shone on the Italian river until it looked like fire; but more calm and beautiful and radiant was the setting sun of that aged pilgrim's life. No more toil, no more tears, no more sickness, no more death. Dear mother! Beautiful mother!

Sweet is the slumber beneath the sod, While the poor spirit rests with God. I need not go back and show you Zenobia, or Semiramis, or Isabella, or even the woman of the text, as wonders of womanly excellence or greatness, when I in this moment point to your picture gallery of memory, and show you the one face that you remember so well, and arouse all your holy reminiscences, and start you in new consecration to God, by the pronunciation of that tender, beautiful, glorious word, "Mother! Mother!"

—Too Familiar.—He—"Was he introduced to you last night?" She—"I thought so for a time, but he became so very familiar that I began to suspect that he was not introduced at all."—Truth.

—At two A. M.—First Citizen—"What is that noise?" Second Citizen—"That's a policeman rapping for assistance." First Citizen—"He must have struck a pretty large bottle."—Brooklyn Life.

RESIDE FRAGMENTS.

—Potato Hash.—Heat together in a stewpan a spoonful of butter and a beautiful of milk seasoned with salt and pepper, add cold hashed potatoes, cover closely, simmer gently until well ligated, and you will have excellent potato hash.—Boston Globe.

—Hatched Eggs.—Beat the yolks of fourteen eggs beaten to a cream and sweetened to the taste, allow a half-pound—the old way until it thickens.—Harper's Bazar.

—Orange Souffle.—Peel and slice six oranges; put in a glass a layer of oranges, then one of sugar and so until all the oranges are used. Let stand two hours; make a boiled custard of the yolks of three eggs, one pint of milk, sugar to taste, flavor with the grating of orange peel, and pour over the oranges when cool enough not to break the dish. Beat the whites of the eggs to a stiff froth, stir in sugar and put over the pudding.—Detroit Free Press.

—Roll Jelly Cake.—Stir together one cupful of sugar, three well beaten eggs, two or three tablespoonfuls of sweet cream, one cupful of flour, one teaspoonful of baking powder, half a teaspoonful of extract of lemon. Bake in a long flat pan; spread the cake with jelly as soon as it is done and roll at once. Spread a clean towel on the table, put the cake on this, proceed to roll with the towel over it and leave it wrapped in the towel until the cake is cool.—Prairie Farmer.

—Cucumber Chow-Chow.—Soak cucumbers just out of the brine until fresh. Scald in strong vinegar, drain and put in a stone jar, and cover with a gallon of vinegar scalding hot, to which has been added half a pint each of mustard-seed, black and white, two ounces of white ginger, one of pepper, two of ground mustard, one each of ground mustard, one each of onion, cloves and allspice, with two ounces of turmeric, a tablespoonful of grated horse-radish, a head of garlic, one tablespoonful of salt, two slices lemons and three pounds of brown sugar.—Ladies' Home Journal.

—Tomato Soup.—A cupful of minced carrot, turnip, onion, leek, celery, and parsley, in proportions, varied to suit the maker, can be first fried in two tablespoonfuls of butter and then cooked for an hour before adding a quart of fresh or canned tomatoes, which must be continued for another hour. Then thicken with two tablespoonfuls of flour and press through a sieve. Season to taste. Or, you may omit frying the vegetables and simply simmer them. Another way is to add a pint of hot milk to a quart of stewed, thickened and strained tomatoes in which you have dissolved half a teaspoonful of soda to keep the tomatoes from curdling the milk.—American Agriculturist.

THE NORTHERN VENICE.

In respect to domestic life, the Dutch are more like the English than the French. They are more, much more, clean and more simple than the French. From the Hague I traveled on to Amsterdam, the northern Venice, as it is so often called. Certainly there are a great many canals. The houses are very picturesque and possess, like those of Venice, considerable artistic merit. The canals are, however, very inferior, that is, from the artistic point of view. First and foremost, there are no gondolas, and secondly, the water, though far from clean at Venice, is abominably foul at Amsterdam. It is difficult to admire scenery while standing over an open sewer, and I have been inside many an underground sewer that did not smell as foul as the open canals of Amsterdam. Nevertheless from a little distance they are very beautiful.

Many of the canals have embankments wide enough to have on each side of the water a row of trees. Thus we have for the center of the thoroughfare, water people with bargemen and bearing barges and craft of all descriptions. Then, on either side, a handsome row of trees, the whole enclosed by lofty, quaint Dutch houses with their gabled roofs and varied shapes and designs. Undoubtedly, it is a town that would delight many an artist; and it has this great advantage over, for instance, Paris, that there is no monotony due to uniformity. The same may be said of the people in the street. In Holland, at least, national costumes have not yet been abolished. The Dutch women still dress with their brass headgear and strange and large jewelry. The fishermen from the Zuyder Zee still wear breeches of wonderful and appalling proportions. Though more than half a yard wide, these wonderful garments only reach just below the knee. Then the head is covered with such a strange cap. These dresses add much to the interest and picturesque aspect of the streets.

Some idea of the peculiar aspect of Amsterdam may be gathered from the fact that the numerous canals cut the town into no less than ninety islands, which are connected with each other by about 300 bridges. The ground on which the houses stand is composed of loam and loose mud, but there is so much water around that this ground offers no solid foundation for building. It is necessary to drive piles down sometimes to a depth of twenty feet to find a foundation sufficiently solid to build upon. But then the wood worms attack these piles, and they gradually give way. Thus many houses are out of perpendicular, a fact which, if it does not contribute to the comfort and safety of the inhabitants, further increases the peculiar and interesting aspect of the town.—Philadelphia Telegraph.

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"MA," said a discouraged stevedore, "I ain't going to school any more." "Why, dear?" tenderly inquired his mother. "Cause I ain't any use. I can never learn to spell. The teacher keeps changing the words every day."

"That," said the rapid young man, as he pointed to his steam yacht, "my shining property." "Washington?"

Love is blind; but its imagination is equipped with double-barreled telescopes.—Truth.

AN average record—the census.—Truth.

"The usurer takes 10% of interest in his business."—Philadelphia Record.

CHARITY begins at home; but it is a good thing to fall in love with a home.—Puck.

It quite often happens that the lover loses his heart to his wife's eyes, precious little of it after marriage.—Truth.

The way of the transgressor is to put in a general denial.

Some one has asked: "Where do flies go in winter?" We do not know, but we wish they would go there in summer.—Texas Siftings.

"How many servants do you keep?" "None; but we have no end of 'em as casual visitors."—Puck.

"Did Sluiger get day or week board at the last place?" "Well, I suppose it's the latter, for he's lost fifteen pounds since he's been there."—Inter Ocean.

Do NOT get angry because the street car conductor appears to you unnecessarily impatient. Brass is a good conductor.—Boston Transcript.

FIRST DRESS SUIT.—"What are you, a waiter or a gentleman?" Second Dress Suit (haughtily): "Sir, I endeavor to be both."—Vogue.

HARMONY is all right in its place, but the barber and his razor should never undertake to pull together.—Buffalo Courier.

FATHER.—"Our loeman is dead, papa." Daughter.—"What an awful change it will be for him!"

If you try to make sure your advice will be taken have it engraved on your umbrella handle.—Troy Press.



KNOWLEDGE

Brings comfort and improvement and tends to personal enjoyment when rightly used. The many who live better than others and enjoy life more, with less expenditure, by more promptly adapting the world's best products to the needs of physical being, will attest the value to health of the pure liquid laxative principles embraced in the remedy, Syrup of Figs. Its excellence is due to its presenting in the form most acceptable and pleasant to the taste, the refreshing and truly beneficial properties of a perfect laxative; effectually cleansing the system, dispelling colds, headaches and fevers and permanently curing constipation. It has given satisfaction to millions and met with the approval of the medical profession, because it acts on the Kidneys, Liver and Bowels without weakening them and it is perfectly free from every objectionable substance. Syrup of Figs is for sale by all druggists in 50c and \$1 bottles, but it is manufactured by the California Fig Syrup Co. only, whose name is printed on every package, also the name, Syrup of Figs, and being well informed, you will not accept any substitute if offered.

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