

TALMAGE'S SERMON.

Dr. Talmage's sermon is on "Baleful Amusements." The text was II. Sam. ii, 14: "Let the young man now arise and play before us."

There are two armies encamped by the pool of Gibeon. The time hangs heavily on their hands. One army proposes a game of sword fencing. Nothing could be more healthful and innocent. The other army accepts the challenge. Twelve men against twelve men, the sport opens. But something went awfully wrong. Perhaps one of the swordsmen got an unlucky clip, or in some way had his ire aroused, and that which opened in sportfulness ended in violence, each one taking his contestant by the hair, and then with the sword thrusting him in the side; so that that which opened innocent turned ended in the massacre of the twenty-four sportsmen. Was there ever a better illustration of what was there true then, and is true now, that that which is innocent may be made destructive?

What of a worldly nature is more important and strengthening and innocent than amusement, and yet what has counted more victims? I have no sympathy with a straight jacket religion. This is a very bright world to me, and I propose to do all I can to make it bright for others.

I never could keep step to a dead march. A book years ago issued says that a Christian man has a right to some amusements; for instance, if he comes home at night weary from his work, and, feeling the need of recreation, puts on his slippers and goes into his garret and walks lively round the floor several times, there can be no harm in it. I believe the church of God has made a tremendous mistake in trying to suppress the sportfulness of youth, and drive out from men their love of amusement. If God ever implanted this desire. But instead of providing for this demand of our nature, the church of God has, for the main part, ignored it. As in a riot, the mayor plants a battery at the end of the street and has it fired off, so that everything is cut down that happens to stand in the range, the good as well as the bad, as there are men in the church who plant their batteries of condemnation, and fire away indiscriminately. Everything is condemned. But my Bible commends those who use the world without abusing it, and in the natural world God has done everything to please and amuse us. In poetic figure we sometimes speak of natural objects as being in pain, but it is a mere fancy. Poets say the clouds weep, but they never yet shed a tear; and that the winds sigh, but they never did have any trouble, and that the storm howls, but it never lost its temper. The world is a rose and the universe a garland.

To help stay the plague now raging I project certain principles by which you may judge in regard to any amusement or recreation, finding out for yourself whether it is right, or whether it is wrong.

I remark, in the first place, that you can judge of the moral character of any amusement by its healthful result, or by its baleful reaction. There are people who seem made up of hard facts. They are a combination of multiplication tables and statistics. If you show them an exquisite picture they will begin to discuss the pigments involved in its coloring. If you show them a beautiful rose they will submit it to a botanical analysis, which is only a post mortem examination of a flower. They have no rebound in their nature. They never do anything more than smile. There is no great tides of feeling surging up from the depths of their soul, in billows of reverberating laughter. They seem as if nature had built them by contract and made a bungling job out of it. But blessed be God; there are people in the world who have bright faces, and whose life is a song, an anthem, a psalm of victory. Even their troubles are like the vines that crawl up the sides of a great tower, on the top of which the sunlight sits, and the soft airs of summer hold perpetual carnival. They are the people you like to have come to your house; they are the people you like to have come to my house; if you but touch the hem of their garments you are healed.

There is nothing more depraving than attendance upon amusements that are full of low suggestion. The young man enters. At first he sits far back, with his hat on and his collar down. The high of shame that first came to his cheek when anything indecent was enacted comes no more to his cheek. Farewell, young man! You have probably started on the wrong road which ends in consummate destruction. The stars of hope will go out one by one, until you will be left in utter darkness. How you not the rush of the maelstrom, in whose outer circle your boat now dangles, making merry with the whirling waters? But you are being drawn in, and the gentle motion will become terrific agitation. You cry for help. In vain! You will pull at the ear to get back, but the struggle will not avail. You will be tossed and dashed, and shipwrecked, and swallowed in the whirlpool that has already crushed in its wreck 10,000 boats.

Young man who had just come from another audience to my red dance will tell you to go on guard and let no one draw you into places of dangerous amusement. It is a bright shining star in a cloudy sky, how a certain class of people have drawn me on.

Still further these amusements are wrong which lead you into expenditure beyond your means. Money spent in recreation is not thrown away. It is all folly to come from a place of amusement feeling that we have wasted our money and time. You may by it have made an investment worth more than the transaction that yielded you hundreds of thousands of dollars. But how many properties have been riddled by costly amusements.

How bright the path of unrestrained amusement opens. The young man says: "Now I am off for a good time. Never mind economy. I'll get money somehow. What a fine road! What a beautiful day for a ride! Crack the whip, and over the turnpike! Come, boys, fill high your glasses, fill high your glasses. Drink! Long life, health, plenty of rides just like this!" Hard working men hear the clatter of the hoofs and look up and say, "Why, I wonder where those fellows get their money from! We have to toil and drudge. They do nothing." To these gay men life is a thrill and an excitement. They stare at other people and in turn, are stared at. The watch chain jingles. The cup foams. The cheeks flush. The eyes flash. The midnight hears their guffaw. They swagger. They jostle decent men off the sidewalk. They take the name of God in vain. They parody the hymn they learned at their mother's knee; and to all pictures of coming disaster they cry out, "Who cares!" and to the counsel of some Christian friend, "Who are you?" Fasting along the street some night you hear a shriek in a grog shop, they hear the clatter of the watchman's club, the rush of the police. What is the matter now? Oh, this reckless man has been killed in a grog shop fight. Carry him home to his father's house. Parents will come down and wash his wounds, and close his eyes in death. They forgive him all he ever did, although he cannot in his silence ask it. The prodigal has got home at last. Mother will go to her little garden and get the sweetest flowers, and twist them into a chaplet for the silent heart of the wayward boy, and push back from the bloated brow the long locks that were once her pride. And the air will be rent with the agony. The great dramatist says "how sharper than a serpent's tooth it is to have a thankless child."

Your sports are merely means to an end. They are alleviations and helps. The arc of toil is the only arm strong enough to bring up the bucket out of the deep well of pleasure. Amusement is only the bower where business and philanthropy rest while on their way to stirring achievements. Amusements are merely the vines that grow about the anvil of toil and the blossoming of the hammers. Alas for the man who spends his life in laboriously doing nothing, his days in hunting up lounging places and loungers, his nights in seeking out some gas lighted foery! The man who always has on his sporting jacket, ready to hunt for game in the mountain, or fish in the brook, with no time to pray, or work or read, is not so well off as the grey-hound that runs by his side or the fly ball with which he whips the stream.

A man who does not work does not know how to play. If God had intended us to do nothing but laugh, he would not have given us shoulders with which to lift, and hands with which to work, and brains with which to think. The amusements of life are merely the orchestra playing while the great tragedy of life plunges through its five acts—infancy, childhood, manhood, old age and death. Then exit the last earthly opportunity. Enter the overwhelming realities of an eternal world!

I had a friend in the west—a rare friend. He was one of the first to welcome me to my new home. To find personal appearance he added a generosity, frankness, and ardor of nature that made me love him like a brother. But I saw evil people gathering around him. They came up from the gambling halls. They piled him with a thousand arts. They seized upon his social nature, and he could not stand the charm. They drove him on the rocks, like a ship full winged, hovering on the breakers. I used to admonish him. I would say, "Now, I wish you would quit these bad habits, and become a Christian." "Oh," he would reply, "I would like to; but I have gone so far I don't think there is any way back." In his moments of repentance, he would go home and take his little girl of 8 years, and embrace her convulsively; and cover her with ornaments, and strew around her pictures and toys, and everything that could make her happy; and then, as though hounded by an evil spirit, he would go out to the enfolding cup and the house of shame, like a fool to the correction of the stocks.

I was summoned to his deathbed. I hastened. I entered the room. I found him, to my surprise, lying in full everyday dress on the top of the couch. I put out my hand. He grasped it excitedly, and said, "Sit down Mr. Talmage, right there." I sat down. He said, "Last night I saw my mother, who has been dead twenty years, and she sat just where you sit now. It was no dream. I was wide awake. There was no delusion in the matter. I saw her just as plainly as I see you. Well, I wish you would take those strings off of me. These are strings spun all

around my body. I wish you would take them off of me." I saw it was delirium. "Oh," replied his wife "my dear, there is nothing there, there is nothing there." He went on, and said, "just where you sit, Mr. Talmage, my mother sat. She said to me: 'Henry, I do wish you would do better. I got out of bed, put my arms around her and said, 'mother I want to do better. Won't you help me to do better? You used to help me.' No mistake about it no delusion. I saw her—the cap and the apron and the spectacles, just as she used to look twenty years ago, but I do wish you would take the strings away. They annoy me so. I can hardly talk. Won't you take them away.' I knelt down and prayed, conscious of the fact that he did not realize what I was saying. I got up. I said, 'Good bye; I hope you will be better soon.' He said, 'Good bye, good bye.'"

That night his soul went to the God who gave it. Arrangements were made for the obsequies. Some said, "Don't bring him in the church; he was too dissolute." "Oh," I said, "bring him. He was a good friend of mine while he was alive, and I shall stand by him now that he is dead. Bring him to the church."

As I sat in the pulpit and saw his body coming up through the aisle, I felt as if I could weep tears of blood. I told the people that day, "This man had his virtues and a good many of them. He had his faults and a good many of them. But if there is a man in this audience who is without sin, let him cast the first stone at this coffin lid." On one side the pulpit sat that little child, rosy, sweet-faced as beautiful as any little child that sat at your table this morning, I warrant you. She looked up wistfully, not knowing the full sorrow of an orphan child. Oh, her countenance haunts me today, like some sweet face looking upon us through some horrid dream. On the other side of the pulpit were the men who had destroyed him. There they sat, hard visaged, some of them pale from exhausting disease, some of them flushed until it seemed as if the fires of iniquity flamed through the cheek and crackled the lips. They were the men who had done the work. They were the men who had bound him hand and foot. They had kindled the fires. They had poured the worm wood and gall into the orphan's cup. Did they weep. No. Did they say repentingly? No. Did they say, "What a pity that such a brave man should be slain?" No, no; not a bloated hand was lifted to wipe a tear from a bloated cheek. They sat and looked at the coffin like vultures gazing at the carcass of a lamb whose heart they had ripped out! I cried in their ears as plainly as I could, "There is a God and a judgment day!" Did they tremble? Oh no, no. They went back from the house of God, and that night though their victim lay in Oakwood cemetery, I was told they drank and they gambled, and there was not one less customer in all the houses of iniquity. This destroyed man was a Samson in physical strength, but De Lillah sheared him, and the Philistines of evil companionship dug his eyes out an threw him into prison of evil habits. But in the hour of death he ree up and took hold of the two pillars of curses of God against drunkenness and uncleanness, and threw himself forward, until down upon him and his companions there came the thunders of an eternal catastrophe.

I saw a wayward husband standing, at the death bed of his Christian wife and I saw her point to a ring on her finger, and heard her say to her husband, "Do you see that ring?" He replied, "Yes, I see it." "Well," said she, "do you remember who put it there?" "Yes," said he, "I put it there," and all the past seemed to rush upon him. By the memory of that day when, in the presence of men and angels, you promised to be faithful in joy and sorrow, and in sickness and in health; by the memory of those pleasant hours when you sat together in your new home talking of a bright future; by the cradle and the joyful hour when one life was spared and another given; by that sick bed, when the little one lifted up the hands and called for help, and you knew he must die, and he put one arm around each of your necks and brought you very near together in that dying kiss; by the little grave in Greenwood you never think of without a rush of tears; by the family Bible, where amid stories of heavenly love, is the brief, but expressive record of births, and deaths; by the neglects of the past, and by the agonies of the future; by a judgment day when husbands and wives, parents and children, in immortal groups, will stand to be caught up in shining arrays or to shrink down into darkness; by all that, I beg you to give to home your best affections.

Ah, my friends, there is an hour coming when our past life will probably pass before us in review. It will be our last hour. If from our death pillow we have to look back and see a life spent in sinful amusement, there will be a dart that will strike through our soul sharper than the dagger with which Virginius slew his child. The memory of the past will make us quake like Macbeth. The iniquities and rioting through which we have passed will come upon us, weird and skeleton as Meg Merrilies. Death, the old shylock, will demand and take the remaining part of blood; and upon our last opportunity for repentance, and our last chance for heaven, the curtain will forever drop.

WOMEN'S DEPARTMENT.

The woman who finishes. "She knows just how to talk to all kinds and conditions of men." was the recommendation given for a bright woman who makes her living as much by her ability to please as by her actual labors.

Seeing that woman afterward, and observing her closely, one could not but be impressed with the truth of what had been said. She was gay with the gay, always good tempered, never too animated, and never visibly in pain nor in tears. She was always charming, bright, sympathetic and sweet. She was witty, too, but not scurrilously so. She kept her wit to illuminate conversation and to lighten dull spirits, not to burn hearts nor scorch sensitive feeling. Everybody went from her presence feeling comfortable in spirit and with reasonably satisfied hearts.

She was a peacemaker and a courage strengthener. There are two or three dozen of such women in the world, and when you find one she will tell that it is almost impossible for her to get an evening to herself, because so many dear, kind friends are apt to drop in of an evening. And she will add: "I'm glad it's so, for I should not be able to get through the day without the prospect of these pleasant evenings. I wish the days might be all evenings with a timetable that never crept beyond the limits of 3 to 11 p. m."—New York World.

Women's Superior Courage.

"Most people think that men are more courageous than women," said Dr. S. D. Black, of New York, "but the dentist knows that this is not true. As a rule a man will groan and swear when the dentist tries to fill his teeth, squirming, gripping the arms of the chair and making a big row about it. And the heavier the man the bigger coward he is. I've seen a strapping big athlete sit down to have a tooth pulled and almost faint when he was looking at it. On the other hand, a light, little bit of a woman will calmly close her eyes, lean her head back in the chair and submit to tortures that would make the Sphinx swoon into insensibility. No, sir; a woman can stand a dozen times the pain that a man will undergo."—Philadelphia Press.

Next Season's Buttons.

"Not worth a button" was an expression wont to carry much meaning. Next season, however, a button may be worth a great deal. Lately it has been the aim of well dressed women to dispense with any outward and visible fastening to their attire, merging the indispensable junction in much mystery. The inevitable reaction now threatens, and buttons are to be revived for ornament as well as for use. The more stylish will they be considered.

Consequently, to use the language of Hibernia, antique buttons are being manufactured in great variety. Miniatures of the beauties of different reigns set round with pearls, enamels studded with paste, old silver, and gold incrustated with jewels, are all to be in favor. The smartest will be of Wedgwood china or its best reproduction. The ground is to be the color of the dress or coat, and the figure or tracery upon each button is white, cream color, or delicate relief.—London Telegraph.

Shir Waists and Blouses or B. Wares.

Shirt waists, blouses and round waists without end appear again upon gowns of the very prettiest sort shown as models for the spring and summer seasons. Light wools and soft silks are used for present purposes, and among the useful garments are black satin blouses, embroidered collars and deep Cromwellian cuffs. Blouse waists, with belts all around, and basques with blouse fronts and girdles, are favorite bodies on imported dresses of light textures such as crepe, lace veiling, chaille, India silks and the soft, transparent, old fashioned lawns and muslins that are revived by leading French modistes.

The blouse basques are a compromise between plain and full waists, and they are found very generally becoming. They appear upon dresses both simple and ornate. Chinese silk waists to wear with skirts of various kinds are made with "coat skirts," which are applied to the edge or a round waist under a belt and streamers of ribbon. Twelve inch lace flouncing is finely plaited or scantily gathered and used in the same manner.—New York Post.

A Pretty Table Scarf.

A very pretty scarf for table or dresser came to my notice lately. Lined of rather fine quality was hemstitched on ends and sides, and grouped in twos and threes with some single flowers were dogwood blossoms without foliage. The edge of each panel was outlined in white silk and then closely darned across the same silk, a single thread of floss being used for the darning and two for the outline. The lines of darning were as close together as could be made and the stitch was taken as short as possible on the wrong side, so an almost solid silk flower in appearance was the result when finished, which was extremely pretty.—Washington Star.

How Pigeons Fly.

The power of pigeons on the wing is proverbial, says the Cornhill Magazine. All trained birds of this species have two qualifications in a marked degree. The first speed, the second long and sustained powers of flight. This proposition can be amply demonstrated, and the following are some of the most remarkable records: Oct. 6, 1850, Sir John Ross dispatched a pair of young pigeons from a distance bay, a little west of Wellington sound, and the 13th day a pigeon made "his appearance at the dovecot in Ayrshire, Scotland, whence Sir John had the pair taken out. The distance direct between the two places is 2,000 miles.

An instance is on record of a pigeon flying twenty-three miles in eleven minutes, and another flew from Rouen to Ghent, 150 miles in an hour and a half. An interesting incident of flight is the case of the pigeon which in 1845 fell wounded and exhausted at Vaux hall Station, then the terminus of the Southwestern railway. It bore a message to the effect that it was one of three dispatched to the Duke of Wellington from Ichaboe island, 2,000 miles away. The message was immediately sent onto his grace, and by him acknowledged. In a pigeon competition some years ago the winning bird flew from Vetro to Manchester, 208 miles, at the rate of fifty miles an hour. As an experiment a trained pigeon was recently dispatched from a northern newspaper office with a request that it might be liberated for its return journey at 9:42 a. m. It reached home at 1:10 p. m., having covered in the meantime 140 miles, flying at the rate of forty miles an hour.

In the north pigeons have long been used to convey messages between country houses and market towns, and in Russia they are now being employed to convey negatives of photographs taken in balloons. The first experiment of the kind was made from the cupola of the Cathedral of Isaac, and the subject matter was the winter palace. The plates were packed in envelopes impenetrable to light, and then tied to the feet of the pigeons, which safely and quickly carried them to the station at Volkovo. Here is another instance of speed and staying power. The pigeons in question flew from Bordeaux to Manchester, and not only beat all existing records but flew more than seventy miles further than anything previously attempted by English fliers. The winning bird flew at the rate of 1,879 yards a minute, or over sixty-four miles an hour, and that for a distance of 142 1/2 miles. The same club has birds flown distances of 613 and 625 miles. These latter, however, were several days returning, and in their case the only wonder is that they could accomplish the distance at all.

The following is still more interesting, as it entailed a race between birds and insects. A pigeon fancier of Hamme in Westphalia made a wager that a dozen bees liberated three miles from their hives would reach it in better time than a dozen pigeons would reach the root from the same distance. The competitors were given wing at Rhythern, a village nearly a league from Hamme, and the first bee finished a quarter of a minute in advance of the first pigeon; three other bees reached the main body of both detachments finishing almost simultaneously an instant or two later. The bees, too may be said to have been handicapped in the race, having been rolled in flour before starting for purpose of identification.

Showers of Blood.

Showers of blood from the sky are very rare in this day and age of the world, a fact which makes their comparatively common occurrence in the olden times only that much more extraordinary and unaccountable. In the "Annals of Remarkable Happenings in Rome" mention is made of fourteen different showers of blood and other substances mixed between the years 319 A. D. and 1170. Besides these there were two "showers of much intensity, of which the liquid resembled pure blood and was not intermixed with other matter as heretofore reported." In 1222 we find record of a shower of blood and dust over the larger part of Italy. In 1226 snow fell in Syria, "which presently turned into large pools of gore."

A monk who wrote in 1251 tells of a three days' shower of blood all over southern Europe. In the same year a loaf freshly taken from the oven "didd bleed like a new wound" when sliced at the table. In 1348 the great chasms made by the earthquake at Villach, Austria, "sent forth blood and a great pestilence followed." Burgundy had a bloody shower in 1361, and Dedfordshire, Eng'and, witnessed the same phenomenon in 1460. In 1696 hail stones fell in Wurtemberg which contained hollow cavities filled with blood. The last bloody shower on record occurred in Ham in 1808.—St. Louis Republic.

Spinster—I came very near being married several times, but there was always a slip.

Widow—Well, I became single on account of another kind of slip—a regular plant in fact.

Boston Traveler: There are some people who go to church and clasp their hands so tight in prayer that they can't get them apart when the collection box comes around.

OUR FARM DEPARTMENT.

The Sugar Beet notes are the best guarantees for the sugar beet plant at Grand Island that special arrangements have been made with the three railroad companies through that point to deliver from the surrounding country beet plants at a few cents per ton. This opens up competition to the farmers over a large area, and sure a good supply of the material, provided the manufacturer is willing to pay enough to induce farmers to undertake and cultivate of beets. This beet is one of the four in the United States capable of handling from 300 tons per twenty-four hours. 700 such factories would be able to meet our home demand for consumption of fifty-seven sugar per annum per capita. Factories would need to use 1000 tons of beets, grown on 2,000,000 acres, and require work of 2,000,000 men for the year in cultivating and harvesting, besides hundreds of thousands of vehicles and horses. The beet would use up 3,500,000 tons of iron, besides the iron, copper, belting, etc., required for the building of the plants, and the give employment to a large number of mechanics and other workers. The production of beets this year will not exceed 100,000 tons, but that will be six times the quantity manufactured in the year 1887. The present cost of beet sugar is placed at 3 1/2 cents per pound, but it is entirely impossible it will ere many years be reduced to about 1 1/4 cents, as cost in France and Germany. Tribune.

An Australian Dancer's Way of Good Horsemanship.

A correspondent of Town and Country, Australia, says: "I can't call what a good horse is, my own known dealer. 'They are as men. In buying a horse you look first at his head and eyes of intelligence, temper, honesty. Unless a horse is you can't teach him any more than you can a half-witted child that lay there, a fine animal, fifteen hands high. I teach that horse any thing. Well, I'll show you a different head, but have a care of the look at the brute's head, the full place below the eyes. I trust him."

"That's an awful good head added. 'She's as true as the sun can see breadth and fulness of the ears and eyes. You could teach that mare to act mean or body. The eye should be hazel is a good color. I like a thin ear, and want a horse to bear forward. Look out for that wants to listen to all the station going on behind him. That turns back his ears till he most meet at the points, take for it, is sure to do something. See that straight elegant face with a dishing face is cowardly cowardly brute is usually vicious like a square muzzle, with teeth, to let in plenty of air to the For the under side of the head, horse should be well cut jaw, with jawbones broad apart under the throatle.

"So much for the head," he said. "The next thing to consider is the building of the animal. Now long-legged, stilly horse. Let's a short, straight back, and a rump, and you've got a good horse. The withers should be and the shoulders well set broad; but don't get them too the chest. The foreleg should Give me a pretty straight leg with the hock low down, short joints, and a round, mulish feet are all kinds of horses; but the that has these points is almost be rightly, graceful, good-natured, serviceable."

Hints For Farmers.

The red spider is best kept by free syringing or washing with sponge.

See that the outside as well as side of your butter packages have them neat also.

While hogs do not require temperature, they should have a warm quarters in winter, by the young sows.

Farmers cannot afford to their business by gross margins of profit on their produce too small to admit of it.

In the experiments now being at the Ohio Experiment Station, seems to have no effect on whether used alone or in any combination.

Don't forget the growing while crowding the cows in that they have dry quarters, reasonably warm, and a dry oats or wheat bran.

Oats that are to be cut for cows may be sown thick and cut out green as possible and cured without mowing, in the case and "prettier" of a successful winter.