

TALMAGE'S SERMON.

Dr. Talmage's text, was Matt. 23:24: "Ye blind guides, who strain at a gnat and swallow a camel."

A proverb is compact wisdom, knowledge in chunks, a library in a sentence, the electricity of many clouds discharged in one bolt, a river put through a mill race. When Christ quotes the proverbs of the text, he means to set forth the ludicrous behavior of those who make a great bluster about small sins and have no appreciation of great ones.

In my text a small insect and a large quadruped are brought into comparison—a gnat and a camel. You have in museum or on the desert seen the latter, a great awkward, sprawling creature, with back two stories high, and stomach having a collection of reservoirs for desert travel, an animal forbidden to the Jews as food and in many literatures entitled "the ship of the desert." The gnat spoken of in the text is in the grub form. It is born in pool or pond, after a few weeks becomes a chrysalis, and then after a few days becomes the gnat as we recognize it. But the insect spoken of in the text is in its very smallest shape, and yet inhabits the water—for my text is a misprint and ought to read "strain out a gnat."

My text shows you the prince of inconsistencies. A man after long observation has formed the suspicion that in a cup of water he is about to drink, there is a grub or the grandparents of a gnat. He goes and gets a sieve or strainer. He takes the water and pours it through the sieve in the broad light. He says, "I would rather do anything almost than drink this water until this larva be extirpated." This water is brought under inspection. The experiment is successful. The water rushes through the sieve and leaves against the side of the sieve the grub or gnat. Then the man carefully removes the insect and drinks the water in placidity. But going out one day, and hungry, he devours a "ship of the desert," the camel, which the Jews were forbidden to eat. The gastronome has no compunctions of conscience. He suffers from no indigestion. He puts the lower jaw under the camel's forefoot and his upper jaw over the hump of the camel's back, and give one swallow and the dromedary disappears forever. He strained out a gnat, he swallowed a camel.

While Christ's audience were yet smiling at the appositeness and wit of his illustration—for smile they did in church, unless they were too stupid to understand the hyperbole—Christ practically said to them "That is you." Fanatical about small things, reckless about affairs of great magnitude. No subject ever withered under a surgeon's knife more bitterly than did the Pharisees under Christ's scalpel of truth. As an anatomist will take a human body to pieces and put them under a microscope for examination, so Christ finds his way to the hearts of the dead Pharisee and cuts it out and puts it under the glass of inspection of all generations to examine. Those Pharisees thought that Christ would flatter them and compliment them, and how they must have writhed under the red-hot words as he said: "Ye fools, ye white sepulchres, ye blind guides which strain out a gnat and swallow a camel."

I take down from my library the biographies of ministers and writers of past ages, inspired and uninspired, who have done the most to bring souls to Jesus Christ, and I find that without a single exception they consecrated their wit and their humor to Christ. Elijah used it when he advised the Baalites, as they could not make their god respond, telling them to call louder as their god might be sound asleep or gone a hunting. Job used it when he said to his self-conceited comforters, "wisdom will die with you." Christ not only used it in the text, but when he ironically complemented the purified Pharisees, saying, "the whole need not a physician," and when by one word he described the cunning of Herod, saying, "go ye, and tell that fox." Matthew Henry's commentaries from the first page to the last are consecrated with humor as summer clouds with heat lightning. John Bunyan's writings are full of humor as they are of saving truth, and there is not an aged man here who has ever read Pilgrim's Progress who does not remember that while reading it he smiled as often as he wept. Chrysostom, George Herbert, Robert Southy, John Wesley, George Whitefield, Jeremy Taylor, Rowland Hill, Nettleton, George G. Finney, and all the men of the past who greatly advanced the kingdom of God consecrated their wit and their humor to the cause of Christ. So it has been in all the ages, and I say to these young theological students, who cluster in these services Sabbath, sharpen your wits as keen as scimitars, and then take them into this holy war. It is a very short bridge between a smile and a tear, a suspension bridge from eye to lip, and it is soon crossed over, and a smile is sometimes just as sacred as a tear. There is as much religion and I think a little more, in a spring morning than in a starless midnight. Religious work without any humor or wit in it is a banquet with a side of beef and that raw, and no condiments and no desert succeeding. People will not sit down at such a banquet. By all

means remove all frivolity and all pathos and all lightness and all vulgarity—strain them out through the sieve of holy discrimination; but, on the other hand, beware of that monster which overshadows the Christian church today, conventionality, coming up from the Great Sahara desert of ecclesiasticism, having on its back a hump of sanctimonious gloom—and vehemently refuse to swallow that camel.

It is time that we learn in America that sin is not excusable in proportion as it declares large dividends and has outriders in equipage. Many a man riding to perdition position ahead and lackey behind. To steal a dollar is a gnat; to steal many thousands of dollars is a camel. There is many a fruit dealer who would not consent to steal a basket of peaches from a neighbor's stall, but who would not scruple to depress the fruit market; and as long as I can remember we have heard every summer the peach crop of Maryland is a failure, and by the time the crop comes in the misrepresentation makes a difference of millions of dollars. A man who would not steal one peach basket steals 50,000 peach baskets. Any summer go down into the Mercantile library in the reading rooms, and see the newspaper reports of the crops from all parts of the country, and their phraseology is very much the same, and the same men wrote them, methodically and infamously carrying out the huge lying about the grain crop from year to year and for a score of years.

After a while there is a "corner" in the wheat market, and men who had a contempt for a petty theft will burglarize the wheat bin of a nation and commit larceny upon the American corncrib. And men will sit in churches and in reformatory institutions trying to restrain out the small gnats of scoundrelism, while in their grain elevators and in their store houses they are fattening huge camels, which they expect after a while to swallow. Society has to be entirely reconstructed on this subject. We are to find that sin is inexcusable in proportion as it is great.

I know in our time the tendency is to charge religious frauds upon good men. They say "oh, what a class of frauds you have in the church of God in this day," and when an elder of a church, or a deacon, or minister of the gospel, or a superintendent of a sabbath school turns out a defaulter, what display heads there are in many of the newspapers, Great primer type. Five line pica. "Another Saint Absconded," "Clerical Scoundrelism," "Religion at a discount," "Name on the Churches," while there are a thousand scoundrels outside the church to where there is one inside the church, and the misbehavior of those who never see the inside of a church is so great it is enough to tempt a man to become a Christian to get out of their company. But in all circles religious and irreligious, the tendency is to excuse sin in proportion as it is mammoth.

Even John Milton in his Paradise Lost, while he condemns Satan, gives such a grand description of him you have hard work to suppress your admiration. Oh, this straining out of small sins like gnats, and this gulping down great iniquities like camels.

This subject does not give the picture for one or two persons, but is a gallery in which thousands of people may see their likeness. For instance, all those people who, while they would not rob their neighbor of a farthing appropriate the money and the treasure of the public. A man has a house to sell, and he tells his customer it is worth \$20,000. Next day the assessor comes around and the owner says it is worth \$15,000. The government of the United States took off the tax from personal income, among others reasons because so few people would tell the truth, and many a man with an income of hundreds of dollars a day made statements which seemed to imply he was about to be hauled over to the overseer of the poor. Careful to pay their passage from Liverpool to New York, yet smuggling in their Saratoga trunk ten silk dresses from Paris and a half dozen watches from Geneva, Switzerland, telling the customs house officer on the warf, "There is nothing in that trunk but wearing apparel" and putting a \$5 gold piece in his hand to punctuate the statement.

Such persons are also described in the text who are very much alarmed about the small faults of others, and have no alarm about their own great transgressions. There are in every community and in every church, watch dogs who feel called upon to keep their eyes on others and growl. They are full of suspicions. They wonder if that man is not dishonest, if that man is not unclean, if there is not something wrong about the other man. They are always the first to hear of anything wrong. Vultures are always the first to smell carrion. They are self-appointed detectives. I lay this down as a rule without any exception, that those people who have the most faults themselves are most merciless in their watching of others. From scalp of head to sole of foot they are full of jealousies and hypercriticisms. They spend their life in hunting for muskrats and mud turtles instead of hunting

for Rocky Mountain eagles' always for something mean instead of something grand. They look at their neighbors' imperfections through a microscope, and look at their own imperfections through a telescope upside down. Twenty faults of their own do not hurt them half so much as one fault of somebody else. Three neighbors' imperfections are like gnats and they strain them out; their own imperfections are like camels and they swallow them.

Literature Contagious.

Rudyard Kipling's whole family has broken into literature since that clever young man of 27 years has made himself famous with his pen. He has two sisters, both of whom have published novels, and his mother, whom he calls the "wittiest woman in India," has taken to writing verse. If any of his grandparents are alive they may discover a literary streak also. Rudyard is now on his way to Samoa to join Robert Louis Stevenson, and his wife and mother-in-law are with him. He is a short, stout, built and somewhat delicate-looking man of India birth, with a drooping, brown mustache, keen blue eyes and a resolute face on which time and incident have prematurely traced many tell-tale marks, though a boyish smile at times breaks through his almost melancholy expression. He wears a pair of spectacles with divided lens which, together with a scarlet fez, give him a somewhat cynical look, and calls himself "the man that came from nowhere." In manner he is somewhat sedate and even shy, but he converses with a calm assurance of knowledge that carries conviction. He does all his writing at night, and is so minute in his elaboration that he speaks every word aloud in order that he may better judge of its fitness. He now asks fancy prices for stories, and gets them; yet it is not yet quite three years ago, when passing through New York, that he called on a leading publishing firm and offered them for reprinting "Soldiers Three" and other pieces of them, now famous. He was speedily shown the door, and told that a firm devoted to the publication of literature of a high class could not trouble itself with such writings. Mrs. Kipling, who is described as a "clever young woman of fairly good looks," is a Vermonter by birth. She is a sister of the lamented Wolcott Balestier, who was joint author with Kipling of "Naulahka," and is the same age as her husband. They were married only a few weeks since.

The Paradise of The Turks.

The paradise of Mahomet, according to Paul Perret in La Liberté of Paris is a fairy land. The true believer who has succeeded in crossing the seven bridges, where he has to undergo the ordeals of cross-examinations and trials is first given a bath, which rejuvenates him. The walls are constructed of golden and silver bricks. There is eternal spring time. There are four seas, one of water, one of milk, one of honey, one of wine. The atmosphere is full of perfumes so intense that each can be smelled at a distance that would require a wanderer to walk 50 years before arriving at the end.

Every true believer is given a mansion of his own. A mansion is cut out of one gigantic pearl and contains seventy suites of seventy rooms each, every room being fitted with seventy beds and seventy tables always served. Each mansion contains 1,680,700,000 hours for the service and entertainment of one man. Besides, he has sixty-eight legitimate wives, and both his wives and the hours remain virgins forever. In order to appear always in fine state in the presence of the innumerable hosts of his carousing charmers, he has a wardrobe of seventy gowns of green silk—green being the sacred color of the prophet—trimmed with a profusion of rubies and topazes.

The hours are made of saffron from foot to knee, of musk from knee to bosom; of ambergris from bosom to neck, the neck is made of white camphor. Their complexion has the tint of an ostrich egg on the sands of the desert; their eyebrows "resemble a blank line drawn upon the light." There is not a fair girl among the army of hours; evidently this paradise was not intended for the white skinned people of the west.

Widowhood in China.

It is a law of good society in china that young widows never marry again. Widowhood is therefore held in the highest esteem, and the older the widow grows the more agreeable does her position become with the people. Should she reach fifty years, she may, by applying to the emperor, get a sum of money with which to buy a tablet on which is engraved the sum of her virtues. The tablet is placed over the principle entrance to her house.

Almost Fire-proof.

The fact that many of the houses of Portland, Oregon, and San Francisco are built of redwood is given as a reason for the few destructive fires that occur in those cities. The wood is almost inflammable, and, though a fire will smolder in it, it never blazes. The great objection to the use of this wood in the eastern states is that it will not stand the alternations of heat and cold.

"Yes," said Mrs. Heaconstreet, "my father made his fortune by the preparation of his forehead."—Harvard Lampoon.

THE STORY OF A PICTURE.

It is about 10 o'clock p. m., the hour when life in its lightest and most frivolous form is on parade in the upper part of the city's great artery of traffic—Broadway.

Madison Square is brilliant with a thousand lights; the great hotels are thronged with idle groups, while up and down the side-walks continues the steady stream of foot passengers which will not diminish much before midnight. The crowd upon the pavements and in the hotels is frequently augmented for a few moments by persons leaving theatres in the vicinity during the entracte for an airing, refreshments or cigars.

The crowd on promenade is a motley one, composed for the most part of well-dressed men and women, and from the animated tones and gestures, the gay jests and light laughter, distinguishable above the steady tramp of feet, the rattling of cab wheels and the jingling of car bells, one might think that care rested lightly on the shoulders of the most who are here.

Among the crowd of busy talkers, thoughtless idlers and devotees of pleasure walking at a leisurely pace and with a thoughtful air, comes a man whose genius has already made his name a household word in many lands. It is Geoffrey Vail the artist. The handsome, scholarly face, with its delicate white complexion, its large, soft, black eyes and sweeping black moustache which fringes his sensitive mouth, his graceful carriage and the plain but faultless style of his attire, stamp him easily as a man of superior type even to those who do not recognize in the lone individual the well-known figure of metropolitan life.

Above the jargon of sounds in the streets rise occasionally from a side street the tones of a piano-organ accompanied by the voice of a person singing some Italian songs. The artist pauses for a moment to listen to the pathetic ring of this voice, and as he approaches is struck by the appearance of the singer. It is a young girl, about sixteen years of age, with a Madonna-like face touched with a look of most exquisite sorrow. Is it possible that the coarse-looking Italian yonder can have any connection with this lovely child? It is not of this the artist thinks as he lingers, throwing coins into the old man's hat. It is of how that lovely face would look on canvas.

Suddenly the girl sees his ardent gaze and her eyes droop to the ground, and a color like the first blush of sunrise mantles her cheek. The artist is yet more charmed, although he diverts his gaze, still following the couple from street to street.

Finally the organ is closed up, and the two performers prepare to go home. Geoffrey Vail approaches the Italian as he is about to go home and touches him on the shoulder.

"Is it your daughter?" he asks pointing to the girl.

The man nods his head.

"I am an artist and would like to paint her picture," said Geoffrey.

The man shook his head in disapproval.

"If you will allow her to come to my studio everyday for a month I will pay you liberally."

"How much?" asked the man, gruffly.

"One hundred dollars," answered the artist, after a moment's hesitation.

"She will earn more than that with the organ."

"Then we will say two hundred."

The man's greed was satisfied, and he consented to the terms.

"When shall we commence?"

"To-morrow, if it suits you," said the artist.

"Very well," answered the man, and Geoffrey handed him his card.

Geoffrey turned homeward, pleased with his discovery. For a long time he had meditated painting a series of pictures representing the emotions.

"Here is my 'Angel of Sorrow' idealized already," he said to himself, as he pursued his way through the still crowded thorough-fare home.

The pretty Italian found Geoffrey Vail in his studio awaiting her visit on the following day.

The strong light in the studio, where the curtains were purposely drawn back, revealed to the artist that he had not been deceived with regard to her appearance. The face was delicate, refined and indescribably sad.

She had evidently put on her best clothes—a dress of some soft black stuff and a shawl of the sameable hue wrapped round her head and shoulders.

"You have posed as a model before?" asked Geoffrey, noting the artistic effect of this simple costume.

"No," said the girl, "never before."

"What is your name?" asked the artist.

"Consuelo,"

"Consuelo," repeated the artist, "and you look inconsolable."

The girl did not understand his remark, but her large dark eyes were turned upon him wonderly.

"Well, Consuelo, we must make the best of our time," said the artist. "Come I will arrange you as I wish you to sit," and he placed a chair for her, arranging with some care her attitude and drapery.

"You do not feel timid, do you?" asked Geoffrey, kindly.

"Oh no," answered the girl, looking

at him with wonder again. It was inconceivable to her that she should feel timid in his presence.

The grave gentle face of the artist had won her confidence completely. Accustomed to rough looks and sometimes blows, the chill seemed in the atmosphere of this elegant studio to breathe the air of paradise. But the look of sorrow did not leave her face; it was too deeply imprinted there.

Geoffrey was soon busy with his pencil. An artist, his soul was in his art. To him the animate beauty was only a stepping stone to the inanimate, everything lovely created that it might be copied on the canvas and immortalized.

Consuelo's sitting was not a long one. He thought it best not to tire her too much the first day, and at the end of the third hour rose from his easel and thanking her, dismissed her till the morrow.

"You will come again, won't you?" said Geoffrey.

The girl's look answered him.

For the first that she could remember Consuelo went to her miserable home happy. A new vista had been opened to her. She had caught the glimpse of another world, with which she seemed to feel a strange kinship.

How gladly those days glided by while the "Angel of Sorrow," half real and half the creation of the artist's superb fancy, grew upon the canvas.

The last sitting came. Artist and model were to part.

Geoffrey, who had grown familiar with the child, took her hand in his own when he bade her adieu. Suddenly Consuelo burst into tears.

The artist himself felt unexpectedly and strangely moved. Even to him the parting seemed painful. Why? Alind egotism! unknown to himself he had learned to love. Only at this crisis did the truth dimly dawn upon him. But why these tears of hers? strange infatuation! Then the child must love him also.

She then turned away to weep.

"Consuelo," he said gravely, "come Consuelo came at his bidding.

"Look me straight in the face."

"I cannot," she sobbed.

"Consuelo, why do you weep?"

The face could be doubted no longer except by the blind.

"Consuelo, would you like to stay here always—to be my wife?" he said rather nervously, half frightened himself.

The girl looked at him and seemed to make some sudden resolve.

Withdrawing her hand from his, she wiped her eyes, and then without another word or look fled from the studio.

"She is frightened, but I must follow her," said the artist. How soon she had become infinitely precious to him! He hastened to the door, but no trace of Consuelo could be seen. He paused to reflect. He did not know even her address. The Italian had already called for his money. How should he find her? What strange impulse had caused her to turn and fly so suddenly? It was inexplicable, but he must find a key to the mystery. How? Would she not return to her old avocation, accompanying the organ? If he searched the streets for a few days he would soon find her again.

But days, weeks and months rolled by, and no trace of Consuelo or the Italian rewarded his anxious search.

So his passion died away into a vague and hopeless regret. Nothing remained of Consuelo but the blending of her beauty with his own dreams in the picture. So he devoted himself with renewed ardor to his favorite pursuits. The "Angel of Sorrow" was completed; extravagant offers were made for it, but the picture was not for sale. Money could not buy it.

It hung in the artist's own studio—his greatest achievement—and many wondered as they gazed upon the sorrowful face whence came the inspiration for it.

Geoffrey Vail received many visitors at his studio. Wealthy patrons and personal friends brought others often to see the great artist's work; aften sadly interrupting him when he wished to be alone, but courteously received.

Five years had gone by since his brief love dream had its sudden birth and tragic finale. His gentle face had grown fentle, and perhaps a tinge of sadness crept in between the handsome lines; but he had little to complain of so far as success was concerned.

He is busy in his studio when some callers are announced. They are foreigners, evidently, from their names. Geoffrey glanced carelessly at the card, and, not recognizing the names, is about to excuse himself, but suddenly changes his mind.

His visitors are shown into the studio.

A gentleman refined and distinguished in appearance, and a lady some years his junior. A ve' partly occludes the lady's face.

Geoffrey bows politely, and advances to meet them as they are announced. The gentleman, speaking in French, apologizes for their intrusion, and asks permission to look at some of the artist's work, and the lady, who had observed the artist's favorite picture, leads her companion towards it. After viewing it for some minutes, and exchanging remarks of admiration in their own tongues the gentleman, turning to Geoffrey, asks him if the picture can be purchased.

"On no consideration," said the artist. "It is reserved for the most discerning eye. I never care to sell it."

"The artist replied to the lady, "And did you ever suggested such beauty?"

"I have seen one," said the lady, "with which this could but feebly compare."

As he said this the face of the lady, who had been so pale, flushed.

"Consuelo!" cried the gentleman, "is this your daughter?"

But they were smiling softly.

"Fardon me," said the gentleman, "I did not recognize her."

The lady approached the artist.

"Do you remember?" she said softly.

The artist looked perplexed. "Surely it is pardon me, you have named her." And he gazed at her companion.

No more the "Angel of Sorrow" might now pose for the artist's picture. Consuelo seemed to have been forgotten.

The artist shook his head.

"Pa, this is Mr. Vail," turning to her companion, he said to Geoffrey.

"You are wonderful means," said Consuelo, "but it is a long story you while I look around the studio and repeat the question to me so long ago, answered, repeat it to me."

The story was long.

Consuelo had been her home in Italy and New York. After many years traced and returned.

She had fled from her father, ashamed of her parents, and parentage, being to be her father, and immediately after.

Such a story could not be a happy marriage, surely a happy one. Geoffrey commenced having found in his suitable subject for artistic creation.—The

A Battle Between

Although the matter is of great extent, it is a battle between two men, who are both of the name of Henrietta of France.

to that which occurred in the commencement of her life.

illness. Her mother, a homeopathist, called for the head of that man, and all the eminent physicians declined to see her.

The attitude of the special practitioner by whom she was given a wonderful cure, was young and able minded, and considers obedience of two miles his calling.—London Living

Did Not Was

A handsome young well known for her who devotes a great deal of time to making light of the which other folks are a family worthy of consisted of a mother, dren, the eldest a few wretchedly dressed, cast about and finally situation in a wholesale the girl.

The salary was not long, and all the time to pack candy. She was ation gladly, and left the family feeling placed the girl in a enough money to support About two weeks the tenement where she and was surprised at home.

"Why, what's the matter?"

"Are you not working?"

"No, ma'am, I'm not working at all."

"When did you last pay you enough money?"

"Oh, yes, ma'am, I did right. It wasn't that long."

"Was the work so hard?"

"No, ma'am, it wasn't enough."

The young woman was uneasy. She looked low. But she looked bravely and asked:

"Were you not treated in an alcove near a window the sun came in, and I was afraid I'd get frosty."

New York Herald.

to Europe to get married. Maud—Without too either, I fancy.