

STARTING FOR HOME.

REV. DR. TALMAGE PREACHES A RADICAL SERMON.

The Prodigal's Return Furnishes the Theme for a Powerful Discourse—A Divine Cure for the Ills of the World—A Glorious Invitation.

The Capital Pulpit.

A most radical gospel sermon in the one of last Sunday by Dr. Talmage. It runs up and down the whole gamut of glorious invitation. His text was Luke xv., 18 "I will arise and go to my father."

There is nothing like hunger to take the energy out of a man. A hungry man can toll neither with pen nor hand nor foot. There has been many an army defeated not so much for lack of ammunition as for lack of bread. It was that fact that took the fire out of this young man of the text. Storm and exposure had begun to soliloquize. He says: "These are no clothes for a rich man's son to wear; this is no kind of business for a Jew to be engaged in, feeding swine. I'll go home; I'll go home. I will arise and go to my father."

I know there are a great many people who try to throw a fascination, a romance, a halo about sin, but notwithstanding all that Lord Byron and George Sand have said in regard to it, it is a mean, low, contemptible business, and putting food and fodder into the troughs of a herd of iniquities that root and wallow in the soul of man is a very poor business for men and women intended to be sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty, and when this young man resolved to go home it was a very wise thing for him to do, and the only question is whether we will follow him. Satan promises large wages and will serve him, but he clothes his victims with rags, and he pitches them with hunger, and when they start out to do better he sets after them all the bloodhounds of hell. Satan comes to us to-day, and he promises all luxuries and emoluments if we will only serve him. Liar, down with thee to the pit! "The wages of sin is death." Oh, the young man of the text was wise when he uttered the resolution, "I will arise and go to my father."

Seeing Ourselves.

As I take up the mirror of God's word to-day, I would that, instead of seeing the prodigal of the text, we might see ourselves—our want, our wandering, our sin, our lost condition—so that we might be as wise as this young man was and say, "I will arise and go to my father." The resolution of this text was formed in a disgust at his present circumstances. If this young man had been by his employer set to cultivating flowers, or training times over an arbor, or keeping an account of the pork market, or overseeing other laborers, he would not have thought of going home—if he had had his pockets full of money, if he had been able to say: "I have \$1,000 now of my own. What's the use of my going back to my father's house? Do you think I'm going back to apologize to the old man? Why, he would put me on the dumps. He would not have going on around the old place such conduct as I have been engaged in. I won't go home. There's no reason why I should go home. I have plenty of money, plenty of pleasant surroundings. Why should I go home?" Ah, it was his pauperism, it was his beggary. He had to go home. Some man comes and says to me: "Why do you talk about the ruined state of the human soul? Why don't you speak about the progress of the nineteenth century and talk of something more exhilarating?" It is for this reason: A man never wants the gospel until he realizes he is in a famine struck state. Suppose I should come to you in your home, and you are in good health, and I should begin to talk about the medicine, and about how much better this medicine is than that, and some other medicine than some other medicine, and talk about this physician and that physician. After a while you would get tired, and you would say: "I don't want to hear about medicines. Why do you talk to me of physicians? I never have a doctor." But suppose I come into your house and I find you severely sick, and I know the medicine that will cure you, and I know the physician who is skillful enough to meet your case. You say: "Bring on all that medicine, bring on that physician. I am terribly sick, and I want help."

Run In Sin.

If I come to you, and you feel you are all right in body, and all right in mind, and all right in soul, you have needed of nothing, but suppose I have persuaded you that the leprosy of sin is upon you, the worst of all sickness. Oh, then you say, "Bring me that balm of the gospel, bring me that divine medicine, bring me Jesus Christ." "But," says some one in the audience, "how do you know that we are in a ruined condition by sin? Well, I can prove it in two ways, and you may have your choice. I can prove it either by the statements of men or by the statement of God. Which shall it be? You say, 'Let us have the statement of God.' Well, he says in one place, 'The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked.' He says in another place, 'What is man that he should be clean, and he which is born of woman that he should be righteous?' He says in another place, 'There is none that doeth good—no, not one.' He says in another place, 'As by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all had sinned.' 'Well,' you say, 'I am willing to acknowledge that, but why should I take the particular rescue

that you propose?' This is the reason: 'Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.' This is the reason: 'There is one name given under heaven among men whereby they may be saved.' Then there are a thousand voices here ready to say: 'Well, I am ready to accept this help of the gospel. I would like to have this divine cure. How shall I go to work?' Let me say that a mere whim, an undefined longing, amounts to nothing. You must have a stout, a tremendous resolution like this young man of the text when he said, 'I will arise and go to my father.' 'Oh,' says some man, 'how do I know my father wants me? How do I know if I go back I would be received?' 'Oh,' says some man, 'you don't know where I have been; you don't know how far I have wandered; you wouldn't talk that way to me if you knew the inquiries I have committed.' What is that flutter among the angels of God? What is that horseman running with quick dispatch? It is news, it is news! Christ has found the lost.

Not angels can their joy contain, But kindly with new fire. The sinner lost is found, they sing, And strike the sounding chime.

God's Infinite Mercy.

When Napoleon talked of going into Italy, they said: "You can't get there. If you knew what the Alps were, you would not talk about it or think about it. You can't get your ammunition wagons over the Alps." Then Napoleon rose in his stirrups, and, waving his hand toward the mountains, he said: "There shall be no Alps." That wonderful pass was laid out which has been the wonderment of all the years since—the wonderment of all engineers. And you tell me there are such mountains of sin between your soul and God there is no mercy. Then I see Christ waving his hand toward the mountains. I hear him say, "I will come over the mountains of thy sin and the hills of thine iniquity." There shall be no Pyrenees; there shall be no Alps.

Again, I notice that this resolution of the young man of my text was founded in sorrow at his misbehavior. It was not mere physical plight. It was grief that he had so maltreated his father. It is a sad thing after a father has done everything for a child to have that child ungrateful. How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is to have a thankless child.

That is Shakespeare. "A foolish son is the heaviness of his mother." That is the Bible. Well, my friends, have not some of us been cruel prodigals? Have we not maltreated our Father? And such a Father! Three times a day has he fed thee. He has poured sunlight into thy day and at night kindled up all the street lamps of heaven. With what varieties of apparel he hath clothed thee? Whose hands defend thee? Whose heart sympathizes with thee? Who gave you your children? Who is guarding your loved ones departed? Such a Father! So loving, so kind. If he had been a stranger, if he had forsaken us; if he had flagellated us; if he had pounded us and turned us out of doors on the commons, it would not have been so wonderful—our treatment of him; but he is a Father, so loving, so kind, and yet how many of us for our wanderings have never apologized! If we say anything that hurts our friend's feelings, if we do anything that hurts the feelings of those in whom we are interested, how quickly we apologize! We can scarcely wait until we get pen and paper to write a letter of apology. How easy it is for any one who is intelligent, right hearted, to write an apology or make an apology! We apologize for wrongs done to our fellows, but some of us perhaps have committed ten thousand times ten thousand wrongs against God and never apologized.

An Irreparable Loss.

I remark still further that this resolution of the text was founded in a feeling of homesickness. I do not know how long this young man, how many months, how many years, he had been away from his father's house, but there is something about the reading of my text that makes me think he was homesick. Some of you know what that feeling is. Far away from home sometimes, surrounded by everything bright and pleasant—plenty of friends—you have said, "I would give the world to be home to-night." Well, this young man was homesick for his father's house. I have no doubt when he thought of his father's house he said, "Now, perhaps father may not be living." We read nothing in this story, this parable, founded on everyday life—see read nothing about the mother. It says nothing about going home to her. I think she was dead. I think she had died of a broken heart at his wanderings, or perhaps he had gone into dissipation from the fact that he could not remember a loving and sympathetic mother. A man never gets over having lost his mother. Nothing said about her, but he is homesick for his father's house. He thought he would just like to go and walk around the old place. He thought he would just like to go and see if things were as they used to be. Many a man after having been off a long while has gone home and knocked at the door, and a stranger has come. It is the old homestead, but a stranger comes to the door. He finds out father is gone and mother is gone and brothers and sisters all gone. I think this young man of the text said to himself, "Perhaps father may be dead." Still he starts to find out. He is homesick. Are there any here to-day homesick for God, homesick for heaven?

To Be Almost Saved Is to Be Lost.

There is a man who said, long ago, "If I could live to the year 1806, by that time I will have my business matters all arranged, and I will have time to attend to religion, and I will be a good, thorough, consecrated Christian." The year 1806 has come. January, February, March, April—a third of the year gone. Where is your broken vow? "Oh," says some man, "I'll attend to that when I get my character fixed up, when I can get over my evil habits; I am now given to strong drink." "Oh," says the man, "I am given to uncleanness." Or, says the man: "I am given to dishonesty. When I get over my present habits, then I'll be a thorough Christian." My brother, you will get worse and worse, until Christ takes you in hand. "Not the righteous, sinners Jesus came to call." Oh, but you say, "I agree with you in all that, but I must put it off a little longer." Do you know there were many who came just as near as you are to the kingdom of God and never entered it? I was at Easthampton, and I went into the cemetery to look around, and in that cemetery there are twelve graves side by side—the graves of sailors. This crew, some years ago, in a ship went into the breakers at Amagansett, about three miles away. My brother, then preaching at Easthampton, had been at the burial. These men of the crew came very near being saved. The people from

Amagansett saw the vessel, and they shot rockets, and they sent ropes from the shore, and these poor fellows got into the boat, and they pulled mightily for the shore, but just before they got to the shore the rope snapped and the boat capsized, and they were lost, their bodies afterward washed upon the beach. Oh, what a sad man day it was—I have been told of it by my brother—when these twelve men lay at the foot of the pulpit, and he read over them the funeral service. They came very near shore—within shouting distance of the shore, yet did not arrive on solid land. There are some men who come almost to the shore of God's mercy, but not quite, not quite. To be almost saved is to be lost!

Two Prodigals.

I will tell you of two prodigals—the one that got back, and the other that did not get back. In Richmond there is a very prosperous and beautiful home in many respects. A young man wandered off from that home. He wandered very far into sin. They heard of him after, but he was always out of the wrong track. He would not go home. At the door of that beautiful home one night there was a great outcry. The young man of the house ran down to open the door to see what was the matter. It was midnight. The rest of the family were asleep. There were the wife and children of this prodigal young man. The fact was he had come home and driven them out. He said: "Out of this house! Away with these children! I will dash their brains out. Out into the storm!" The mother gathered them up and fled. The next morning the brother, the young man who had staid at home, went out to find this prodigal brother and son, and he came where he was and saw the young man wandering up and down in front of the place where he had been staying, and the young man who had kept his integrity said to the older brother: "Here, what does all this mean? What is the matter with you? Why do you act in this way?" The prodigal looked at him and said: "Who am I? What do you take me to be?" He said, "You are my brother." "No, I am not. I am a brute, have you seen anything of my wife and children? Are they dead? I drove them out last night in the storm. I am a brute. John, do you think there is any help for me? Do you think I will ever get over this life of dissipation?" He said, "John, there is one thing that will stop this." The prodigal ran his fingers across his throat and said: "That will stop it, and I will stop it before night. Oh, my brain! I can stand it no longer." That prodigal never got home. But I will tell you of a prodigal that did get home. In England two young men started from their father's house and went down to Portsmouth—I have been there—a beautiful seaport. Some of you have been there. The father could not pursue his children—for some reason he could not leave home—and so he wrote a letter down to Mr. Griffin, saying: "Mr. Griffin, I wish you would go and see my two sons. They have arrived in Portsmouth, and they are going to take ship and going away from home. I wish you would persuade them back."

The Pardon of the Gospel.

Mr. Griffin went and tried to persuade them back. He persuaded one to go. He went with very easy persuasion because he was very homesick already. The other young man said: "I will not go. I have had enough of home. I'll never go home." "Well," said Mr. Griffin, "then if you won't go home I'll get you a respectable position on a respectable ship." "No, you won't," said the prodigal; "no, you won't. I am going as a private sailor as a common sailor. That will plague my father most and what will do most to tantalize and worry him will please me best." Years passed on and Mr. Griffin was seated in his study one day when a messenger came to him saying there was a young man in irons on a ship at the dock—a young man condemned to death—who wished to see this clergyman. Mr. Griffin went down to the dock and went on shipboard. The young man said to him, "You don't know me, do you?" "No," he said, "I don't know you." "Why don't you remember that young man you tried to persuade to go home and he wouldn't go?" "Oh, yes," said Mr. Griffin, "are you that man?" "Yes, I am that man," said the other. "Yes, I am that man who you pray for. I have committed murder and I must die, but I don't want to go out of this world until some one prays for me. You are my father's friend and I would like to have you pray for me."

Mr. Griffin went from judicial authority to judicial authority to get that young man's pardon. He slept not night nor day. He went from influential person to influential person, until in some way he got that young man's pardon. He came down to the dock and as he arrived on the dock with the pardon the father came. He had heard that his son, under a disguised name, had been committing crime and was going to be put to death. So Mr. Griffin and the father went on ship's deck and at the very moment Mr. Griffin offered the pardon to the young man the old father threw his arms around the son's neck and the son said: "Father, I have done very wrong and I am very sorry. I wish I had never broken your heart. I am very sorry." "Oh," said the father, "don't mention it. It won't make any difference now. It is all over. I forgive you, my son." And he kissed him and gave him the pardon of the gospel—full pardon, free pardon. I do not care what your crime has been. Though you say you have committed a crime against God, against your soul, against your fellow man, against your family, against the day of judgment, against the cross of Christ—whatever your crime has been, here is pardon, full pardon, and the very moment you take that pardon your Heavenly Father throws his arms around about you and says: "My son, I forgive you. It is all right. You are as much in my favor now as if you had never sinned." Oh, there is joy on earth and joy in heaven. Who will take the Father's embrace?

Irish soldiers fought in King Philip's war, which broke out in 1675, and some even earlier, in the Pequot war. Historical evidence exists of Irish settlers in New England within twenty years after the landing at Plymouth Rock. As early as 1634 Massachusetts granted land near Newburyport to certain Irish and Scotch comers, and in 1636 arrived the ship St. Patrick, belonging to Sir Thomas Wentworth, deputy of Ireland.

In 1543, after the introduction of metal pins as an article of feminine use, they became popular as New Year presents. They were very expensive, and for a gentleman to make his lady friends a present of four or five pins was considered a very happy thought.

THE FAMILY STORY

A LESSON FOR HUSBANDS.

THE little silver column in the thermometer was gradually mounting toward the almeties; the leaves hung motionless in the furnace-like air, and the scent of the perfumed swaths of newly cut hay pervaded everything, as Squire Sadley stood under the apple tree, and wiped his reeking brow with a yard square pocket handkerchief of yellow silk.

"Phew!" cried the Squire. "This is getting too much. I think I shall go home an hour earlier than usual."

"So'd I, if I wasn't workin' for day's wages," said Israel Newcomb, who was vigorously turning the fragrant billows of green with a fork which gleamed like serried lightning in the sunshine.

The Squire glared angrily at Israel; it was his pride that he worked as hard as any of his hired men, rich landowner though he was.

"I s'pose I can do as I please," said he.

"Sartin!" observed Israel. "I only wish I could."

The Squire went home, selecting the shady path which lay part way through the woods, and crossing the noisy little stream on a make-shift bridge formed by a fallen cedar tree.

Far down in the green cross-lights and glinting reflections of the glen he could see Will Dallas, who had abandoned all pretences of fishing, and lay on the moss at Mary Sadley's feet, reading aloud to her, out of some pocket volume of poetry.

The Squire frowned.

"Sporting—as usual," growled he, under his breath, and pushed steadily on.

The old homestead, painted white, with a refreshing contrast of green blinds, lay basking in the vivid sunshine.

The Squire looked at it with a complacent sense of proprietorship, as he went around to the back door, where a great honeysuckle vine was all in curls of buff and white blossoms. The kitchen, with its shining copper boiler and white board floor, was silent and empty.

He looked around.

"Hallo!" he shouted. "Is everyone dead?"

Little Kitty came running out of the front room.

"Hush, father!" said she, holding up a small forefinger. "Mother is asleep."

"Asleep?" roared the Squire. "A pretty time of day to be asleep, and the whole house wide open, ready for any tramp that may come along, and your grandmother's silver spoons in plain view on the dresser-shelf. Asleep!"

"I'm sorry, Titus," said an apologetic voice, as a pale, shadowy little woman issued from the hall beyond, where she had been lying on a Procrustean lounge, fashioned of unpainted deal boards, and draped with a lumpy mattress. "I hadn't any idea of falling asleep when I lay down; but my head ached a little—it's the heat, I s'pose—and I felt dizzy. I'm very sorry, but surely it isn't 12 o'clock yet?"

"It don't lack many minutes of it," said the Squire, gloomily, looking at the big wooden clock, whose fat, black Roman numerals glared back at him from behind a green nebulae of asparagus branches. "The heat, eh? Well, I s'pose other folks feel it, too. My head aches, but I don't take to my bed. And when a man comes home tired and beat out from the hayfield, he naturally expects to find things comfortable. I don't know what a woman has her board and her keep for, if it ain't to see that meals is reglar and things decent."

"I'm sorry, Titus," nervously reiterated the little woman, fluttering to and fro like a lame-winged pigeon, "but I'll make all the haste I can. Dinner will soon be ready. Here, Kitty" (to the child), "wash these potatoes in the sink as quick as you can, while I run out for some kindlings to hurry up the fire."

A minute afterward he could hear the quick strokes of a hatchet, and he bethought himself that, in the hurry incident to laying-time, the pile of kindlings had been allowed to get low.

"It does seem," he said, petulantly, "as if everything hindered a man's dinner."

"Then, father," said Kitty, glancing shrewdly over the top of the tin potato pan, "why don't you go out and split the kindlings, and let mother tend to the things indoors?"

"Hush, Kitty!" said Mrs. Sadley, quickly, as she touched a match to the mass of crumpled papers under the gate.

"Where's the last Gazette?" snarled the Squire, ignoring Kitty's query.

"Oh, Titus," cried his wife, "I've just set fire to it! I s'posed, of course, you'd read it. It's a week old to-day, you know."

"Of course," said Squire Sadley. "I might have known without asking! It's waste, and fling away, and burn up in this house. There ain't nothing safe where an extravagant woman's concerned!"

"Mother ain't extravagant!" said Kitty.

"Where's them peas I brought in this mornin'?" sharply demanded the Squire, looking around him with Argus eyes.

"There isn't time to shell them now," said Mrs. Sadley, timidly.

"Time—time!" repeated her husband. "Of course, there ain't time, but you

sleep away your life on that there sofa. I mean to have it taken away to-morrow. It's a deal too handy. What's the use of my plantin' the earliest peas in market, and hoin' and bruslin' 'em, and then givin' out afore sun-up to pick 'em, if my folks hasn't life enough to cook 'em?"

"I'll have 'em for supper," said Mrs. Sadley, with a little tremolo in her voice.

"No, you won't, neither," said the Squire. "I'll send them over to neighbor Barton's. His wife's got some snap in her! I declare, it's clear discouragin' for a man to be dragged back all the time by a shiftless wife!"

A big round drop flashed down into the frying-pan which Mrs. Sadley was just preparing to receive sundry slices of well-cured ham which she had been cutting; she made no verbal reply.

"Eh?" said the Squire, "why don't you say something? Slinkin', I s'pose, as usual?"

At this poor Mrs. Sadley burst into tears.

"No, Titus," said she, "I ain't sulkin'. But I feel awful bad to-day, and it don't take much to upset me. It's all true what you say. I am a poor, worn-out, feeble creature, and I don't blame you for getting out of patience. But if I hadn't worked so hard all these years—"

"Oh, yes, there's always some excuse," growled the Squire; and taking a stray "sample number" of a fashion paper, he went out to sit in the honeysuckle shade.

"I can't stand that roasting fire," said he.

"Then," said Kitty, the enfant terrible, "how do you suppose mother likes it?"

In an instant, however, her fickle, childish attention was diverted.

"See!" she cried. "There come Cousin Mary and Mr. Dallas over the hill! Oh, father, they're engaged. Did you know it?"

"Yes," absently answered the Squire, intent on his paper.

"I was in the parlor that night; it thundered and rained so hard," said Kitty, with a twinkling eye, "and they didn't know it. And I heard them talking to each other. And he called her his darling love—"

"Humph!" grunted the Squire. "A reglar case of spooning."

"And she said he was her dearest, dearest one," added Kitty, the circumstantialist.

"Young fools!" snapped Squire Sadley.

"Father," said Kitty, leaning on his shoulder—she was the only one in the house who was not afraid of the stern despot—"don't all lovers talk so?"

"They're fools for their pains, if they do."

"Didn't you love mother when she was a girl like Cousin Mary? Didn't you say just such things to her?"

The Squire moved uneasily in his chair under the calm searching light of Kitty's eyes.

"I might ha' done," he growled at last. "I s'pose I was just as great an idiot as other folks be."

"I don't see why people ever leave it off," said Kitty, abstractedly. "Was mother a pretty girl?"

"Don't talk nonsense," said the Squire, almost angrily; and he got up and walked around to the old wooden bench beside the well curb.

Had Kitty's mother been a pretty girl? Yes, that she had—rose-checked and limpid-eyed, with a laugh sweet as the note of a thrush, and the lightest foot in a Virginia reel, of any girl in the neighborhood.

And now, "I am a poor, worn-out, feeble creature," she had said, in a faint, weary accents, looking at him out of the dim, faded eyes; "and I don't blame you for getting out of patience."

Yes, it was all true. But what had wrought the change? Whose fault was it?

"I don't know," said the Squire, staring at heaven's blue eye, reflected far down in the heart of the deep, cool well, "but I most think I've been too hard on her. Now come to study on it. I've had lots of hired help about the farm, and she's done all the house work herself. And she never was very strong. Was she a pretty girl? There wasn't none prettier in a radius of twenty miles around Kingsley Church! And to look at her now!"

The Squire got up, and stamped unceremoniously around the well.

"I've been a brute!" he muttered to himself. "Worse than a dumb brute, for they ain't supposed to know no better. I don't know what I've been thinkin' of all these years. Leave off loving her? I hadn't never left it off. I love her now, bless her faithful, patient soul, as well as ever I did, only I've fell into the way of bein' careless and neglectful! But I'll turn over a new leaf this very day, see if I don't!"

He kept his word.

"Engaged, Mary? Is it really a settled thing?" said Mrs. Sadley. "Oh, I hope you'll be happy! I hope after twelve years of marriage, dear Mary, you'll be as happy as I am now!"

Her eyes shone; a faint smile glowed on her ordinarily pale cheeks. Mary Sadley looked at her in surprise.

"Would you believe," went on the Squire's wife, "he has hired a girl to come here and do all the rough work, so as to spare me? And there is such

an easy, spring-upholstered sofa in the hall, in place of the lumpy old lounge; and there's one of the hay-bands splitting a pile of wood to last from now to Michaelmas. And we are to keep our wedding anniversary in real old-fashioned style next week; and Titus has ordered a dress trimmed with white ribbons, just like the one I was married in. He says I shall look as young and pretty as I did then. Such nonsense, you know? And yet it is nice of him to say so—now, isn't it?"

And Mrs. Sadley laughed through her tears.

Poor soul! The sunshine had come late in life, yet it filled her whole being with blessedness.

"I am so glad!" said Mary. "But you deserve it all, Cousin Eunice."—Leisure Hours.

Billard's Sleigh-Ride.

There once lived in Vermont a young man who was not much more than half-witted, but who, like many other people who are lacking in intelligence, always wanted to do just as other and more gifted people do. In the town where he ran his ambitious career, "Billard's sleigh-ride" is still a synonym for an enterprise that depends largely on the resources of others.

One winter when the sleighing was good, and all the young swaths of the town were taking their young lady friends to ride, Billard was impressed with the desirability of organizing an expedition of this sort on his own account. But he had no "rig," and no money to hire one with.

Nevertheless he came one afternoon to a worthy young lady of his neighborhood and asked her to go sleigh-riding that evening.

"But, Billard," she said, "you haven't got any horse."

"John Miles, he's promised to lend me his'n."

"Why, John hasn't got any harness."

"Pete Corlies' gonn' to let me take his'n."

"What are you going to do for a sleigh?"

"Mrs. Beals, she said I could take her'n."

"You can't go sleighing without a string of bells."

"Nathan Page's gonn' to let me take his string."

"You've got to have a buffalo robe." "John Currier, he said he'd jest as lives I'd have his old one, and by gorry, I c'n cut a whip myself!"

The young lady said that under the circumstances she guessed he would have to borrow some other girl. Nevertheless, he persisted in his search for a partner until he actually found one, and went on the sleigh-ride in fine style.

Some years after this occurrence Billard came late to an engagement to do a job of work, and was asked the reason for his tardiness.

"Huh!" he answered, with a smirk, "I've been gettin' merried this mornin'!"

"Married! you, Billard! Why you can't support yourself!"

"Well," said Billard, "I c'n purty near support myself, and I think she ought to help some!"

Bicycle Rider a Poor Risk.

The accident insurance underwriters have come to the conclusion that the present premium rates on bicycle riders are too low.

The mutual underwriters are now holding a convention with the representatives of other accident companies. They hope to advance the rate of insurance on this particular line of risks. They have learned that when the cyclist buys his first wheel he gets an accident policy at the same time. The wheel is bought on the installment plan, but the accident policy is paid for outright.

The next thing the novice does is to mount his wheel and begin to learn. Many are injured, and the insurance company generally pays for the wheel, as the injured man gets the full benefit of the "total inability" clause of his policy.

Statistics of last year show that about 35 per cent. of the accidents which were paid for by the accident companies were those of bicycle riders.

The risks are classified. A book-keeper, who is for the greater part of the time indoors and is less liable to accident, has always paid a smaller premium than a collector, who is required to be constantly moving about and more liable to mishaps. Now, however, the book-keeper has a bicycle and runs a greater risk of injury.

The insurance men desire to pay on all risks only 50 per cent. of the amount for the bicycle rider. If a business man is insured against accident for \$5,000 and is injured in any way other than by a bicycle he gets full value of his claim. But should he be hurt while riding a wheel he relinquishes 50 per cent. of his claim against a company. An advance of 100 per cent. on premiums for bicycle riders is also agitated.

Leap in a Porter.

Some years ago a porter named Fuller, employed at Billingsgate Market, London, made a bet that he would jump from London Bridge tied in a sack, his only stipulation being that he should be provided with a knife—which he was not to open till he touched the water—with which to rip open the sack. He succeeded in accomplishing the feat, and when poked up by some friends in a boat was none the worse for his dive.

He was proposing to the Boston girl, and in the fervor if his plea he leaned over her anxiously. "Pardon me," she said, "are you not getting a trifle too parsimonious?" "Parsimonious!" he gasped. "Yes," she said; "or, as the vulgar would put it, 'close.'"—Philadelphia Press.

Gladstone's effectiveness in politics is about over. He is simply posing now as the Grand Old Man.