

THE FLAGS HOISTED.

DR. TALMAGE PREACHES A VIVID AND APPROPRIATE SERMON.

He Says He Hates War—But He Admires the Right Kind of Martial Spirit—Words of Glowing and Picturesque Exhortation.

Our Washington Pulpit.
At this time, when our national capital has for ten days been ablaze with our national flag, the imagery of this sermon of Dr. Talmage seems very vivid and appropriate. The text is Psalms xx, 5, "In the name of God we will set up our banners."

I hate war. In my boyhood we may have read the biography of Alexander or of some Revolutionary hero until our young heart beat high and we wished we had been born over 100 years ago, just for the glory of striking down a Hessian. For rusty swords hung up on the rafters and bullets cut out of log houses in which they were lodged during the great strife we had unbounded admiration, or on some public day, clothed in our grandfathers' soldierly accoutrements, we felt as brave as Gaius or Miltiades. We are wiser now, for we make a vast distinction between the poetry and the prose of war. The roll of drums and the call of bugles and the clamping of steeds foaming and pawing for the battle, 100,000 muskets glittering among the dancing plumes, "God Save the King" waving up from clarionets and trumpets and rung back from deep bellies and the arches of a prostrate city, distant capitals of kingdoms illuminated at the tidings, generals returning home under flaming arches and showering amaranths and the shout of empires—that is poetry.

Chilled and half-blanketed, lying on the wet earth; feet sore with the march and bleeding at the slightest touch; hunger pulling on every fiber of flesh or attempting to satisfy itself with a scanty and spoiled ration; thirst licking up the dew dripping out of filthy and trampled pools; thoughts of home and kindred far away while just on the eve of a deadly strife, where death may leap on him from any one of a hundred bayonets; the closing in of two armies, now charged to 100,000 man; the ground slippery with blood and shattered flesh; fallen ones writhing under the hoofs of unbridled chargers maddened with pain; the dreadfulness of night, that comes down when the strife is over; the struggle of the wounded ones crawling out over the corpses; the long, feverish agony of the crowded barracks and hospital, from whose mattresses the fragments of men send up their groans, the only music of carnage and butchery; desolate homes, from which fathers and husbands and brothers and sons went off without giving any dying message or sending a kiss to the dear ones at home, tumbling into the soldiers' grave trenches, and houses in which a few weeks before unbroken family circles rejoiced, now plunged in the great sorrows of widowhood and orphanage. That is prose.

But there is now on the earth a kingdom which has set itself up for conflicts without number. In its march it tramples on grainfields, it sacks no cities, it impoverishes no treasures, it fills no hospitals, it bereaves no families. The courage and victory of Solferino and Magenta without carnage. The kingdom of Christ against the kingdom of Satan. That is the strife now raging. We will offer no armistices. We will make no treaty. The nations of the earth shall not say, "We will make no treaty." Until all the revolted nations of the earth shall submit again to King Emmanuel "in the name of God we will set up our banners."

The Ensign.
Every army has its ensigns. Long before the time when David wrote the text they were in use. The hosts of Israel displayed them, the tribe of Benjamin carried a flag with the inscription of a wolf, the tribe of Dan a representation of cherubim, Judah a lion wrought into the groundwork of white, purple, crimson and blue. Such flags from their folds shook fire into the hearts of such numbers as were in the field when Abijah fought against Jeroram, and there were 1,200,000 soldiers, and more than 500,000 were left dead on the field. These ensigns gave heroism to such numbers as were assembled when Asa fought against Zerah, and there were 1,500,000 troops in the battle. The Athenians carried an inscription of the owl, which was their emblem of wisdom. The flags of modern nations are familiar to you all, and many of them so inappropriate for the character of the nations they represent it would be impolitic to enumerate them. These ensigns are streamers borne on the point of a lance and on the top of wooden shafts. They are carried in the front and rear of armies. They enroll from the main top galant masthead of an admiral's flagship to distinguish it among other ships of the same squadron. They are the objects of national pride. The loss of them on the field is ignominious.

The three banners of the Lord's hosts are the banner of proclamation, the banner of recruit and the banner of victory. When a nation feels its rights infringed or its honor insulted, when its citizens have in foreign climes been oppressed and no indemnity has been offered to the inhabitant of the republic or kingdom, a proclamation of war is uttered. On the top of batteries and arsenals and custom houses and revenue offices flags are immediately swung out. All who look upon them realize the fact that uncompromising war is declared. Thus it is that the church of Jesus Christ, jealous for the honor of his sovereign and determined to get back those who have been carried off captive into the bondage of Satan and intent upon the destruction of those mighty wrongs which have so long cursed the earth and bent upon the extension of the Saviour's reign of mercy, in the name of God sets up his banner of proclamation.

The church makes no assault upon the world. I do not believe that God ever made a better world than this. It is magnificent in its ruins. Let us stop talking so much against the world. God pronounced it very good at the beginning. Though a wandering child of God, I see in it yet the great Father's lineaments. Though tossed and driven by the storms of 6,000 years, she sails bravely yet, and as other leeching in the beginning the morning stars sang together, so at last the new world of heaven, the earth and the seas, crying in the calm harbor of God's mercy, shall be greeted by the hosts of glorified kingdoms. It is not the world against which we contend, but the wrongs of Satan and the evil of men, the world in bondage to Satan. Whatever is obtained in the way, debasing in position, harmful to health, false in dominion, hypocritical in profession—against all this "Christ makes no assault. From false professions he

would tear the mask. From oppression he would snatch the rod. From pride he would rend off the plumes. From revenge he would excise the devil. While Christ loved the world so much he died to save it, he hates sin so well that to eradicate the last trace of its pollution he will utterly consume the continents and the oceans. At the gate of Eden the declaration of perpetual enmity was made against the serpent. The result, roundabout Mount Sinai was only the roar and flash of God's artillery of wrath against sin. Sodom on its way only one of God's flaming bulletins announcing hostility. Ninveh and Tyre and Jerusalem in awful ruin mark the track of Jehovah's advancement. They show that God was terribly in earnest when he announced himself abhorrent of all iniquity. They make us believe that though nations beligerent and revengeful may sign articles of peace and come to an amicable adjustment, there shall be no cessation of hostilities between the forces of light and the forces of darkness until the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord. Affrighted by no opposition, discouraged by no temporary defeats, shrinking from no exposure—every man to his position, while from the top of our schools and churches and seminaries and asylums "in the name of God we will set up our banners."

A Glorious Standard.
Again, it was the custom in ancient times for the purpose of gathering armies to lift an ensign on the top of some high hill, so that all who saw it would feel impelled to rally around it. In more modern times the same plan has been employed for the gathering of an army. Thus it is that the church of Christ lifts its flag for recruits. The cross of Jesus is our standard, planted on the hill of Calvary. Other armies demand that persons desiring to enter the lists of war shall be between such and such an age, lest the folly of extreme youth or the infirmity of advanced age be a clog rather than an advantage. But none is too young for Christ's standard, none can be too old. The hand that is strong enough to bond a ball or trundle a hoop is skilled enough to fight for Christ, while many a hand trembling with old age has grasped the arrow of truth, and with a dim eye close to it, taking aim, has sent its sharp point right through the heart of the King's enemies. Many of you have long ago had your names written on the roll of celestial troops, and you like the service well, although you now bear the scars of multitudinous conflicts and can recount many a long march and tell of sieges won on you that you thought never would be spilled. But there may be some who have not yet enlisted. Your being here implies that you are seriously thinking about it, and your attention makes me hope you are only looking for the standard to be hoisted. Will you not, 100 of you, with all the ardent enthusiasm of your nature, come bounding into the ranks, while "in the name of God we set up our banners?"

What if arsenals and navy yards do not belong to the church? We do not want them. The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but spiritual and mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds. The world and Satan have no idea of the strength and heroism which God will yet let out against the forces of darkness. As yet they have had only one round from the first regiment. The Lord of Hosts will soon appear in the field at the head of his troops. Depend upon it, that when God inspires the soul with a new life he puts in it the principle of "never give up." In all ages of the church there have been those who have had a faith that was almost equal to sight, looking through persecution and reverses with as much expectation as through palpable achievements. There have been men for Christ who have noted as did the favorite troops of Brian, attacked by Fitzpatrick of Ossory. The wounded soldiers begged that they might enter the fight with the others. Brian said, "Let stakes be stuck in the ground and suffer each of us, tied to and supported by one of these stakes, to battle in the ranks by the side of a sound man." It is said that 700 or 800 men, sane and emancipated from former wounds, and thus supported by the stakes, struggled through the combat. Thus has it been that multitudes of the children of God, though feeling themselves weak and wounded, perhaps in body, perhaps in estate, perhaps in soul, supported by the staff of God's promise, have warred it up to the hill in the subjugation of a world of wickedness.

We are mighty in this cause, for we have the help of the pious dead. Messengers of salvation from high heaven, they visit the field. They stand behind us to keep us from ignominious retreat. They go before us to encourage us in the strife. The McChermes, the Paysons, and the Martins, and the Brainers, an uncounted multitude of the glorified, are our conductors. Although we have already much to encourage us in the work of the world's evangelization, yet we must confess that much of our time has been consumed in planting our batteries and getting ready for the conflict. We have not yet begun to march. We have not yet begun to pray. We have not yet begun to work. On the coasts of hethendom are missionary stations. They have scarcely yet begun to accomplish what they propose. It takes some time to dig the trenches and elevate the standard and direct the great guns. From what I hear I think they are about ready now. Let but the great Captain wave the signal and the ringing of celestial weaponry shall quake every dungeon of hell and sound up among the thrones of heaven. Pagodas and temples shall tumble under the shock, and besotted nations flying from their idols and superstitions, shouting like the confounded worshippers of Bani: "The Lord, he is the God! The Lord, he is the God!" We go not alone to the field. Aye, God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Ghost are our allies!

Pecious Dead.
The Mohammedans, in their struggles to subjugate the world, had passages from the Koran inscribed on the blades of their scimiters, and we have nothing to fear of, approaching the infidelity and malice that oppose the kingdom of Christ, we shall have glittering on our swords the words of David to the giant, "I come to thee in the name of the Lord of Hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied."
Now the church goes forth bearing precious seed, but after awhile it will be the sheaf binding, and reaper angels shall about the harvest home. Now it is tents and marching and exposure, but then, in the ranks of prostrate iniquity and on the very walls of heaven "in the name of God we will set up our banners."

The earth sends up its long, deep groans of pain and clings the great chains of its bondage and cries by the voice of sea and land and sky, "How long, O Lord, how long?" There was a tradition on the other side of the water that the daughter of Lir was transformed into a bird of the year round.

The highest inhabited spot in the world is a rising camp in the Andes—14,125 feet above sea level—where some 300 miners live in good health all the year round.

air, and that she wandered for hundreds of years over river and lake until the arrival of Christianity, and that at the stroke of the great cathedral bell her spirit was freed. Unaccounted millions of our race, by the power of sin and Satan, have been transformed into a state of wretchedness, and they wander like the poor daughter of Lir, but they shall after awhile be released. When the great church of Christ shall in those darkened regions of the gospel, then millions of wandering souls shall find rest in a Saviour's pity and a Saviour's love, transported from the kingdom of Satan into the kingdom of God's dear Son.

By and by you would hardly know the earth if you saw it. The world as a whole shall be as greatly improved as the individual heart by conversion. Fraud, leaving its trickery, will go to work for an honest living. Knavery shall begin to make righteous bargains. Passion shall answer to the control of reason. Scoffers shall be changed into worshippers and skeptics into Bible lovers. Christ shall begin his reign on earth. Whether he shall descend on to the earth in person and establish a Government at Jerusalem, I cannot say. But it will be an era of more than Augustan splendor. That is enough. Knowing this, we can never despair. More than we see the church of Christ putting on her beautiful garments and arising to meet us will say, with the enthusiasm of Oliver Cromwell, who, standing before his sick and famine-stricken soldiers at Dunbar, saw the sun rising out of the morning mist and, pointing to it with his sword, uttered a prayer which hurled his men upon the crushed foe like a sky full of thunderbolts: "Arise, O God! Let thine enemies be scattered." With the ear of faith I catch the sound of the latter day glory. Church of Christ, unsheath thy sword, in the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, march on! Upon every school and hospital, upon every banker's desk and merchant's counter, upon every chemist's laboratory and astronomer's tower, upon shepherd's hut and woodman's cabin, upon ship's deck and sailor's hammock, far out on the sea and high up in the mountain, before the gaze of nations, under the applaus of heaven, "in the name of God we will set up our banners."

Ensigns and Colors.
My subject has taught you that in this contest we are not without ensigns and colors. All we want now is men to carry them. Before I sit down I must propose to each of you this great honor. Becoming a Christian is not so ignominious a thing as many have thought it. "It makes a man stoop," you say. I know it, but it is only the stoop of an heir of royalty, who on his knees is to receive a crown of dominion. We want standard-bearers in all pulpits, in all places of business—everywhere. I do not ask you how old you are, nor how young, how weak or how strong, how dull or how sharp, nor what your home, nor who your ancestors. Without any condition, without any reserve, in the name of the God of Israel, offer you the honor of carrying the church's ensigns. Do not be afraid of the assaults of a world whose ranks you desert, nor of devils who will oppose you with infernal might. It were more blessed to fall here than stand anywhere else. It were more of an honor, engaged with Christ, to be trampled underfoot with this army of banners, than opposing Christ, to be buried, like Edward I., in Kyngslyan poesy.

The prophet Isaiah intimates that there shall before the destruction of the world be one great battle between truth and unrighteousness. We shall not probably see it on earth. God grant that we may see it, leaning from the battlements of heaven. On the side of sin shall be arrayed all forces of oppression and cruelty, led on by infernal kings and generals; the votaries of paganism, led on by their priests; the subjects of Mohammedanism, following the command of their sheiks. And gluttony and intemperance and iniquity of every phase shall be largely represented on the field. All the wealth and splendor and power and glory of wickedness shall be concentrated on that one decisive spot, and, maddened by 10,000 previous defeats, shall gather themselves up for one last terrible assault. With hatred to God for their cause and blasphemy for the battlecry, they spread out over the earth in square behind square and legion beyond legion, while in some overhanging cloud of blackness foul spirits of hell watch this last struggle of sin and darkness for dominion.

Scattered by the blasts of Jehovah's nostrils, plunder and sin and satanic force shall quit the field. As the roar of the conflict sounds through the universe all worlds shall listen. The air shall be full of wings of heavenly cohorts. The work is done, and in the presence of a world recruited for the crown of Jesus, and amid the crumbling of tyrannies and the defeat of satanic force, and amid the sound of heavenly acclamations, the church shall rise up in the image of our Lord, and with the crown of victory on her head and the scepter of dominion in her hand in the name of God shall set up her banners. Then Himalaya shall become Mount Zion, and the Pyrenees Moriah, and the oceans the walking place of him who trod the wave crests of Galilee, and the great heavens become a sounding board which shall strike back the sound of exultation to the earth till it rebound again to the throne of the Almighty. Angel of the Apocalypse, fly, fly! For who will stand in the way of thy might or resist the sweep of thy wing?

War.—History shows war to be useless. The great dynasties built on conquest have gone to ruin. Spain at its time dominated the earth, but its program was conquest, and to-day its last American colony is shaking off its rule. The dominion of the Mohammedans, acquired by force, is at present held together only by the sufferance of Europe. Grant was right when he said there never was a war which could not have been avoided by settlement some other way.—Rev. Frank Crane, Methodist, Chicago, Ill.

Good and Evil.—Evil is born in us; good must be acquired. If we cherish a good predominant, for man is so constituted that either good or evil must always be uppermost, and where evil has the advantage of hereditament, it must be acceded no other encouragement. Hence there can be no compromise, nothing less than a war of extermination.—Rev. B. S. Seward, Swedenborgian, New York City.

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THE FAMILY STORY

GETTIN' SHET OF MARY MASON.

IT WAS in a little house on a little street in a little Nebraska town—the Town of Hubble.

The little woman was crouched up on the carpet sofa in a limp heap. She looked ill, but sanguine—exhausted, but relieved. The remains of the mid-day meal were on the table. There were traces of ashes about the stove. The baby's gown was begrimed. In spite of these facts the mistress of the modest home smiled sweetly.

"Well," exclaimed her visitor, one comprehensive glance embracing the unwonted neglect of the place, "I heard you were not feeling well, but I did not know you required assistance with your household. I supposed, of course, your friend Mrs. Mason was with you."

The little woman looked up with a sparkle in her eye.

"O, I'm well enough. I was sick enough up to last Tuesday. I've been gettin' better ever since. I'll have the table red off an' things straightened before Tom gets home. If I feel like it now I can let things be. There ain't no one to notice. Mrs. Mason, she don't come over. Truth is, we've got shet of Mary Mason. We just," in emphatic repetition, "had to get shet of Mary Mason."

The visitor was sympathetic. The little woman was confidential.

"Me an' Tom," she explained, "have lived on farms all our lives. So when we rented the farm and moved into town, I thought the change was fine. 'My' I says to Tom, 'ain't it nice to live in a large place. I never before suspected how comfortable it was to live real near to folks, an' have them folks nearby. O'nt'n the half section we might be two weeks 'thout seein' a body to speak to. An' here we've got 300 people in this town, an' two trains a day—not to mention the freighters—an' houses all round us. It's awful nice,' I says to Tom, 'but what's the nicest Mrs. Mason. Why, she comes in that often I ain't got a bit of time to be lonesome for the stock. There's only herself an' her husband, so her work don't count. She ain't read or write like no Bohemy, an' she ain't got no use for that language since she married out'n her folks. Take it altogether, she's willin' to neighbor lots, an' that,' I says to Tom, 'will be mighty perk'in' for me!'"

"Yes," assented her visitor, with a rising inflection on the monosyllable.

"Tom, he didn't say much. He's kind of slow-like. He just said, 'What suits you, Eliza, suits me!' Well, Mrs. Mason she come. She kept comin'. Some times, if she got Samyel off early, she comes in before I got the dishes done up. An' she stayed. She stayed all mornin'—even wash mornin'. Sometimes she talked. Right along she kept nibblin'. Sometimes 'twas a bit of cheese, or a couple of crackers, or a hunk of spice gingerbread, or the top of a jar of jelly. I can't hear you when I'm a-rubb'in' it. That never mattered a bit to her. She'd wait till I got through rubbin' an' she was a-bilin'. But whether she talked or whether she didn't she allus come, sure as the daylight did, she allus kept a-nibblin', an' she allus stayed."

The narrator treated herself to a teaspoonful of medicine out of a bottle on the windowsill before she proceeded.

"Our girls get home from school at 12," went on the prostrated chateleine, "an' I allus have lunch for 'em then. Sometimes it's real good. Sometimes it's only scraps. Anyhow, it's the best me an' Tom can afford. Don't you think she stayed for every one of them lunches? My, yes. She don't have to get dinner for Samyel till 1, an' she 'lowed that she most generally got peckish about noon. So she'd set down with the children regular, an' then go across home to get dinner. Lots of times they'd be just a snag of pork, or a jamption of fried potatoes, or as much jam leavin' as you'd sneeze at. 'There ain't nothin' here, Mrs. Mason, to ask you to have a bite of,' I says to her often. 'O laws,' she answers, 'what's good enough for you is good enough for me!' An' she sets down."

Her visitor sighed softly.

"Then she would stay all afternoon. She was allus here when Tom come home to supper. Her husband took his supper at the hotel, so she used to line us. Samyel never got back from the store before 11, so she'd stay at our house to pass the time. Tom, he'd go for the mail, an' come back, an' there she was. 'Read the book!' she'd say. Tom, who is natchlly peckish, 'ud read it. He'd read, an' read, an' read! 'Land's sake!' Mrs. Mason 'ud put 'in,' 'go on! I could just set here all night an' listen.' An' she did—pretty near!"

There was a mournful silence.

"On the farm," continued Mrs. Robinson, "me an' Tom allus went to bed at 8. How was we to go to bed even at 10, with Mary Mason a-sittin' there? 'Land of the livin'!' she'd say, seein' me a-patchin', 'I'm glad I ain't got anny children to keep a-slayin' fer—they do take such a slew of work!' But when I got through the mendin', an' Tom had adverted every word in the paper, even the advertisements—there she was! Tom he'd pass an' yawn. 'I'd tell us how I was dead beat, not havin' got much sleep the night before with the baby that was crossty, like some peccodors"

to bear. By'm by, Tom, he'd go into our bedroom that's off the settin'-room, an' he'd haul off his shoes, an' sling 'em on the floor real hard. That didn't stir her. It was awful provokin'."

"It must have been" her visitor acquiesced.

"Then they was the berryin'. Not that Mary Mason called it berryin'. She said she hadn't a bit of use for folks that berryed. She said when she wanted anything from a person she neighbord with that she just went in an' took it, real friendly like. That's how our groceries kept a-meltin'. 'Tain't worth while me buyin' a package of yeast that costs 5 cents,' she'd say, 'when half a cake will make a bakin' for me an' Samyel. I'll take a bit of your'n.' The next time she come 'twould be favorin'. 'No use of me gettin' a whole bottle of vanilla,' she'd say, 'when I only make a cake once a week. A teaspoon 'll do me.' Then there was tea. Samyel drank only coffee, an' 'twould be extravagance for me,' she says, 'to buy half a pound of tea for myself. I'll take a pinch of yours.' So she took a pinch—most every day. Pinches make pounds—enough of 'em. 'Pickles,' she often observed, 'I'm most especially fond of, but Samyel says they rust out the linin' of a body's stomach. So I've made up my mind I'll eat mine over here, an' then he won't know if the linin' of my stomach is rusted out or not.' I wish," feebly concluded Mrs. Robinson, "that you'd look at that row of empty jars on top of the kitchen press!"

A depressing and significant silence followed.

"Me an' Tom," said the protesting voice, "wanted to talk it over, but 'twas only between 12 at night an' 6 in the mornin' we got a chance. 'Tom,' I says to him one night after she'd been in an' berryed our last half-dozen of eggs, sayin' she'd return 'em when they got cheaper, 'Tom, we got to get shet of Mary Mason.' Tom says, 'I don't know how we're goin' to do it unless we move back on the farm.'"

"But you couldn't well do that!"

"Not real easy. So I begun to give her hints. I give her all kind of hints. I said as how I'd never been used to sussety, an' that much of it made my head ache. I said as how Tom just loved solitood—that there wasn't anythin' he liked better than spendin' his evenings alone with me an' the children. I said late hours was fearful wearin' on our constitutions, an' that after this we was going to bed not later'n 9 o'clock. I said I couldn't return her visits because Tom hadn't no use for women that was allus gaddin'—me 'besides it wouldn't be no use for her to go over seein' she was never home. Them an' lots other gentle hints I gave her. She only says, 'O, stuffin'! I ain't one to make a fuss because a body can't keep up with the rules of etiquette! I don't mind if you never come over. I won't get mad. I ain't that proud sort. Guess I'll take a bit of that rilly-polly over for Samyel's dinner—'it'll save me makin' sass.' It was that way right along. When she got through eatin' she was sure to want somethin' to take home for Samyel. 'You jest put an' extry tablespoon of coffee in the pot,' she'd say, 'an' I'll run over with Samyel's cup. That'll save me makin' some.' Well, when I told Tom that their mild sayin' of mine 'ud no more mix into her mind than you could make sulphur blend with water, Tom says, 'Toll her we're goin' to move back on the farm. Maybe then she'll begin to neighbor with the folks that has just got married across the alley.'"

"That very day—a quarter to 12, a week ago yesterday—she come a-walkin' into the kitchen (she never knocked), a big plate in her hand. Like usual she had a whole big welcome for herself. 'I knowed,' she says, 'you was aimin' to have a billed dinner to-day, an' I thought I'd jest run over and get enough for Samyel an' me out'n the pot while it was hot.' So she marches to the stove, and takes the lid off'n the kettle, an' begins a-spearin' out the salt pork, the turnips, an' the cabbage. 'Sake's alive!' she says, prodin' round, 'there ain't no carrots. Why ain't you got some carrots? Me an' Samyel we're real fond of carrots.'"

"Maybe," says I, kind of sarcastic like, 'we'll have lots of 'em soon. That is, if we move back on the farm, like we're talkin' of doin'.'"

"Tom thought that'd be a knockdown blow. So did I. But 'twasn't. We didn't know Mary Mason. She smiled all over.

"'Gracious me!' she says, 'if that ain't luck! I told Samyel this mornin' I was clean beat out housekeepin' an' would like a chance to reconnoiter. Here it is! I'll go out to the farm with you an' stay for three months!'"

"Then I knew that my last hint had fall'n flatter'n the breakfast puffs you make from a newspaper prize recipe. I had felt my family peace a-goin', I had suffered my own health a-goin', an' I seen my dinner a-goin', too. So, I vis in my wrath.

"'No,' I says, 'you ain't comin'—for you ain't goin' to be asked.'"

"'She beat out a-livin'.'"

"'Mercy me!' she says, 'What a one you are for-jokin'! I never see the beat of you, Mr. Robson. I ain't so awful

peckerier than I wait for folks to ask me.'"

"Then my temper rises. It come up like milk a-bilin'. You don't know it's near the top till it runs over. 'I ain't jokin', I says. 'If we move back on the farm 'twill be to get shet of you!'"

"'What's that?' she says, an' stands there a-gawpin'.

"'I'll be to get shet of you! I repeated reel deliberate. 'This is the last hint I'll give ye, Mary Mason!'"

"'Did she take it?' the visitor queried. A faint smile of triumph illumined the face reposing on the patchwork pillow.

"'O, yes, she took it—along with the billed dinner. She said, though, that her faith in human natur' was shook. She said she'd never again try to neighbor with a wagner who didn't appreciate the friendliness of persons more accustomed to sassety. She 'lowed she never had much use now for folks who couldn't tell fiboosickle from sauerkraut.'"

"'So your ordeal is at an end?'"

"'We believe so,' the little woman said hopefully. 'It's a week since we had the billed dinner—most of which we didn't have. She ain't come over since. I'm gettin' my health back. Tom an' me is livin' happy an' peaceful again. We go to bed at half past 8. The children gets all their share at meal times. I red up when I feel willin'. Tom says it's too good to last. He says she'll come back one of these days. Do you think she will?'"

"'O, surely not!'"

"'I hope not,' returned the little woman, smiling brightly. But the next instant she cast toward the door a furtive glance that was dark with dread. 'We've got shet of Mary Mason I know, but—will we stay shet?'—Chicago Tribune.

A FREAK AMONG FLOWERS.

Venus' Fly Trap and Its Almost Human Action.

Now and again, in exploring American woods and swamps, botanists have come across floral curiosities that almost bridge over the great gulf that divides the animal and vegetable kingdoms, says the Designer. One of these, to be met with nowhere in the world save in North Carolina, is scientifically classified as *Dionaea muscipula*, but is colloquially known as "Venus' fly trap."

In appearance the extraordinary plant is prettily but unassumingly the leafless flower stem, running from six to eight inches in height and surmounted by a cluster of five petalled blossoms, rising erect like a rosette-like bed of leaves. It is in the edge of the leaves that the death-dealing apparatus is set—for this modest little plant, which is so delicate that it dies of the slightest injury to root or stem, sustains its life by feeding upon the unwary insects that chance to alight upon its leaves, enticing them to their destruction by extending from the edges of its fatal traps a viscid fluid, somewhat resembling honey.

The traps consist of two soft, velvety leaves, fringed with delicate bristles and hinged together on one side. The unsuspecting fly, lured by the honey, alights on these bristles in anticipation of a feast, but at the first touch of its feet the hinges close, the two leaves come together, the bristles interlock, and the hapless insect is imprisoned in a cell from which escape is impossible.

Under the stimulus of the victim's struggles the tiny glands with which the inner walls of the trap are furnished pour forth a secretion which Darwin analyzed as a vegetable gastric juice, resembling that which insures digestion in animal life. Under the influence of this curious fluid, the fly is actually digested alive, and its juices being extracted the trap doors are reopened and the skeleton is flung out.

The scientist declare that the plant unquestionably lives upon the juices of its victims, but one or two expert florists take exception to this statement. It is worthy of note that, although the habit of the plant is carnivorous, experiments have proved that it lives longer and thrives better when so inclosed that no insects can reach it—a superabundance of its favorite diet apparently rendering it even more delicate than it is by nature. The set of muscles controlling its leaves are said to resemble those of the human eyelids. —New York Herald.

A Curious Wooden Watch.

The most curious timekeeper, perhaps, that has ever been made in this country was the work of one Victor Doriot, who lived at Bristol, Tenn., about twenty years ago. This oddity was nothing more or less than a wooden watch. The case was made of briar root and the inside works, except three of the main wheels and the springs (which were of metal) were made from a piece of an old boxwood rule. The face, which was polished until it looked like a slab of finest ivory, was made from the shoulder blade of an old cow that had been killed by the cars. "Do-riot's queer watch," as it was called, was an open-faced affair, with a glass crystal, and was pronounced a fine piece of work by all the watchmakers in East Tennessee.

A Lucky "Spec."

Several days ago the schooner Robert I. Carter struck on Alden's Rock, and to all appearances was a total loss. Nautical experts agreed that she would leave her bones there, and her owners stripped her and sold the bulk to Charles Bartlett, of this city, who bought it for \$70 on "spec." Last night's wind and tide floated the schooner off, and to the amazement of the salts, she came drifting up the harbor. Bartlett had her towed in. She is worth \$45,000, and has besides a cargo of 1,200 tons of coal, most of which is salable.—Portland (Me.) Special Boston Herald.