DR. TALMAGE'S SERMON.

ELOQUENT DISCOURSE CONCERNING GOOD AND BAD LITERATURE.

"Many of Them Also Which Used Curious Arts Brought Their Books Together, and Burned Them Before All Men."

BROOKLYN, May 1.—At the tabernacle this morning the pastor, the Rev. T. De Witt Talmage, D. D., expounded some of the Proverbs of Solomon. The congregation sang with magnificent effect the hymn beginning:

Arm of the Lord, awake! awake!
Put on thy strength, the nations shake.

Dr. Talmage took for his text Acts xix, 19: "Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all men; and they counted the price of them, and found it 50,000 pieces of silver."

Paul had been stirring up Ephesus with some lively sermons about the sins of that place. Among the more important results was the fact that the citizens brought out their bad books, and in a public place made a bonfire of them. I see the people coming out with their arms full of Ephesian literature, and tossing it into the flames. I hear an economist standing by and saying: "Stop this waste. Here are $7,500 worth of books—do you propose to burn them all up? If you don't want to read them yourselves, sell them, and let somebody else read them." "No," said the people, "if these books are not good enough for us, they are not good for anybody else, and we shall stand and watch until the last leaf has turned to ashes. They have done us a world of harm, and they shall never do others harm." Hear the flames crackle and roar!

Well, my friends, one of the wants of the cities of this country is a great bonfire of bad books and newspapers. We have enough fuel to make a blaze 200 feet high. Many of the publishing houses would do well to throw into the blaze their entire stock of goods. Bring forth the insufferable trash and put it into the fire, and let it be known, in the presence of God, and angels, and men, that you are going to rid your homes of the overtopping and underlying curse of profligate literature.

The printing press is the mightiest agency on the earth for good and for evil. The minister of the Gospel, standing in a pulpit, has a responsible position; but I do not think it is as responsible as the position of an editor or a publisher. At what distant point of time, at what far out cycle of eternity will cease the influence of a Henry J. Raymond, or a Horace Greeley, or a James Gordon Bennett, or a Watson Webb, or an Erastus Brooks, or a Thomas Kinsella? Take the simple fact that our New York dailies now have a circulation of about 850,000 per day, and add to it the fact that three of our weekly periodicals have an aggregate circulation of about 1,000,000, and then cipher, if you can, how far up, and how far down and how far out reach the influences of the American printing press. Great God, what is to be the issue of all this? I believe the Lord intends the printing press to be the chief means for the world's rescue and evangelization, and I think that the great last battle of the world will not be fought with swords and guns, but with types and presses—a purified and Gospel literature triumphing over, trampling down and crushing out forever that which is depraved. The only way to overcome unclean literature is by scattering abroad that which is healthful. May God speed the cylinders of an honest, intelligent, aggressive, Christian printing press.

I have to tell you this morning that the greatest blessing that ever came to this nation is that of an elevated literature, and the greatest scourge has been that of unclean literature. This last has its victims in all occupations and departments. It has helped to fill insane asylums, and penitentiaries, and alms houses and dens of shame. The bodies of this infection lie in the hospitals and in the graves, while their souls are being tossed over into a lost eternity, an avalanche of horror and despair!

The London plague was nothing to it. That counted its victims by thousands, but this modern pest has already shoveled its millions into the charnel house of the morally dead. The longest rail train that ever ran over the Erie or Hudson tracks was not long enough or large enough to carry the beastliness and the putrefaction which have been gathered up in bad books and newspapers of this land in the last twenty years.

Now, it is amid such circumstances that I put this morning a question of overmastering importance to you and your families. What books and newspapers shall we read? You see I group them together. A newspaper is only a book in a swifter and more portable shape, and the same rules which will apply to book reading will apply to newspaper reading. What shall we read? Shall our minds be the receptacle of everything that an author has mind to write? Shall there be no distinction between the tree of life and the tree of death? Shall we stoop down and drink out of the trough which the wickedness of men has filled with pollution and shame? Shall we mire in impurity and chase fantastic will o' the wisps across the swamps when we might walk in the blooming gardens of God? Oh, no! For the sake of our present and everlasting welfare we must make an intelligent Christian choice. Standing as we do chin deep in fictitious literature, the first question that many of the young people are asking me is: "Shall we read novels?" I reply: There are novels that are pure, good, Christian, elevating to the heart and ennobling to the life. But I have still further to say that I believe that ninety-nine out of 100 novels in this day are baleful and destructive to the last degree. A pure work of fiction is history and poetry combined. It is a history of things around us with the licenses and the assumed names of poetry. The world can never pay the debt which it owes to such fiction writers as Hawthorne and McKenzie, and Landon and Hunt, and Arthur and Marion Harland, and others whose names are familiar to all. The follies of high life were never better exposed than by Miss Edgeworth. The memories of the past were never more faithfully embalmed than in the writings of Walter Scott. Cooper's novels are healthfully redolent with the breath of the seaweed and the air of the American forest. Charles Kingsley has smitten the morbidity of the world, and led a great many to appreciate the poetry of sound health, strong muscles and fresh air. Thackeray did a grand work in caricaturing the pretenders to gentility and high blood. Dickens has built his own monument in his books, which are an everlasting plea for the poor and a anathema of injustice. Now, I say, both of these, read at right times, and read in [illegible] and with other books, cannot [illegible] ennobling and purifying; but, alas [illegible] and impure literature that [illegible] country in the shape of [illegible] overflowing all the [illegible] common sense! They [illegible] of the most celebrated [illegible] of the country. They are [illegible] of some of our [illegible] lie on your center [illegible] and blast with [illegible] Yet

reception room. You see a light in your child's room late at night. You suddenly go in and say: "What are you doing?" "I am reading." "What are you reading?" "A book." You look at the book; it is a bad book. "Where did you get it?" "I borrowed it." Alas, there are always those abroad who would like to loan your son or daughter a bad book. Everywhere, everywhere an unclean literature. I charge upon it the destruction of 10,000 immortal souls, and I bid you this morning wake up to the magnitude of the theme. I shall take all the world's literature—good novels and bad, travels true and false, histories faithful and incorrect, legends beautiful and monstrous, all tracts, all chronicles, all epilogues, all family, city, state and national libraries—and pile them up in a pyramid of literature and then I shall bring to bear upon it some grand, glorious, infallible, unmistakable Christian principles. God help me to speak with reference to my last account and God help you to listen.

I charge you, in the first place, to stand aloof from all books that give false pictures of human life. Life is neither a tragedy nor a farce. Men are not all either knaves or heroes. Women are neither angels nor furies. And yet, if you depended upon much of the literature of the day you would get the idea that life, instead of being something earnest, something practical, is a fitful and fantastic and extravagant thing. How poorly prepared are that young man and woman for the duties of to-day who spent last night wading through brilliant passages descriptive of magnificent knavery and wickedness! The man will be looking all day long for his heroine in the tin shop, by the forge, in the factory, in the counting room, and he will not find her, and he will be dissatisfied. A man who gives himself up to the indiscriminate reading of novels will be nerveless, inane and a nuisance. He will be fit neither for the store, nor the shop, nor the field. A woman who gives herself up to the indiscriminate reading of novels will be unfitted for the duties of wife, mother, sister, daughter. There she is, hair dishevelled, countenance vacant, cheeks pale, hands trembling, bursting into tears at midnight over the fate of some unfortunate lover; in the day time, when she ought to be busy, staring by the half hour at nothing, biting her finger nails into the quick. The carpet, that was plain before, will be plainer after having wandered through a romance all night long in tesselated halls of castles. And your industrious companion will be more unattractive than ever now that you have walked in the romance through parks with plumed princesses or lounged in the arbor with the polished desperado. Oh, these confirmed novel readers! They are unfitted for this life, which is a tremendous discipline. They know not how to go through the furnaces of trial through which they must pass, and they are unfitted for a world where everything we gain we achieve by hard, long continuing and exhaustive work.

Again: Abstain from all those books which, while they have some good things about them, have also an admixture of evil. You have read books that had two elements in them—the good and the bad. Which stuck to you? The bad! The heart of most people is like a sieve, which lets the small particles of gold fall through, but keeps the great cinders. Once in a while there is a mind like a loadstone, which, plunged amid steel and brass filings, gathers up the steel and repels the brass. But it is generally just the opposite. If you attempt to plunge through a hedge of burrs to get one blackberry, you will get more burrs than blackberries. You cannot afford to read a bad book, however good you are. You say: "The influence is insignificant." I tell you that the scratch of a pin has sometimes produced the lockjaw. Alas, if through curiosity, as many do, you pry into an evil book, your curiosity is as dangerous as that of the man who would take a torch into a gunpowder mill merely to see whether it would really blow up or not. In a menagerie in New York a man put his arm through the bars of a black leopard's cage. The animal's hide looked so sleek, and bright, and beautiful. He just stroked it once. The monster seized him, and he drew forth a hand torn, and mangled, and bleeding. Oh, touch not evil, even with the faintest stroke! Though it may be glossy and beautiful, touch it not, lest you pull forth your soul torn and bleeding under the clutch of the black leopard. "But," you say, "how can I find out whether a book is good or bad without reading it?" There is always something suspicious about a bad book. I never knew an exception—something suspicious in the index or style of illustration. This venomous reptile almost always carries a warning rattle.

Again: I charge you to stand off from all those books which corrupt the imagination and inflame the passions. I do not refer now to that kind of a book which the villain has under his coat waiting for the school to get out and then, looking both ways to see that there is no policeman around the block, offers the book to your son on his way home. I do not speak of that kind of literature, but that which evades the law and comes out in polished style, and with acute plot sounds the tocsin that rouses up all the baser passions of the soul. To-day, under the nostrils of this land, there is fetid, reeking, unwashed literature enough to poison all the fountains of public virtue and smite your sons and daughters as with the wing of a destroying angel, and it is time that the ministers of the Gospel blew the trumpet and rallied the forces of righteousness, all armed to the teeth, in this great battle against a depraved literature.

Again, abstain from those books which are apologetic of crime. It is a sad thing that some of the best and most beautiful book bindery, and some of the finest rhetoric, have been brought to make sin attractive. Vice is a horrible thing, anyhow. It is born in shame and it dies howling in the darkness. In this world it is scourged with a whip of scorpions, but afterward the thunders of God's wrath pursue it across a boundless desert, beating it with ruin and woe. When you come to paint carnality, do not paint it as looking from behind embroidered curtains or through lattice of royal seraglio, but as writhing in the agonies of a city hospital.

Cursed be the books that try to make impurity decent and crime attractive and hypocrisy noble. Cursed be the books that swarm with libertines and desperadoes, who make the brain of the young people whirl with villainy. Ye authors who write them, ye publishers who print them, ye booksellers who distribute them shall be cut to pieces, if not by an aroused community, then at last by the hail of Divine vengeance, which shall sweep to the lowest pit of perdition all ye murderers of souls. I tell you, though you may escape in this world, you will be ground at last under the hoof of eternal calamities, and you will be chained to the rock, and you will have the vultures of despair clasing at your soul, and those whom you have destroyed will come around to torment you, and to pour hotter coals of fury upon your head, and rejoice eternally in the outcry of your pain and the howl of your damnation. "God shall wound the hairy scalp of him that goeth on in his trespasses."

The clock strikes midnight. A fair form bends over a romance. The eyes flash fire. The breath is [illegible] and irregular. Occasionally the [illegible] to the cheek, and then [illegible] tremble as though [illegible] to shake the [illegible] fall [illegible]

at its own sound. The sweat on her brow is the spray dashed up from the river of death. The clock strikes "four," and the rosy dawn soon after begins to look through the lattice upon the pale form that looks like a detained specter of the night. Soon in a mad house she will mistake her ringlets for curling serpents, and thrust her white hand through the bars of the prison, and smite her head, rubbing it back as though to push the scalp from the skull, shrieking: "My brain! my brain!" Oh, stand off from that! Why will you go sounding your way amid the reefs and warning buoys when there is such a vast ocean in which you may voyage, all sail set?

There is one other thing I shall say this morning before I leave you, whether you want to hear it or not. That is, that I consider the lascivious pictorial literature of the day as most tremendous for ruin. There is no one who can like good pictures better than I do. The quickest and most condensed way of impressing the public mind is by picture. What the painter does by his brush for a few favorites the engraver does by his knife for the million. What the author accomplishes by fifty pages the artist does by a flash. The best part of a painting that costs $10,000 you may buy for ten cents. Fine paintings belong to the aristocracy of art. Engravings belong to the democracy of art. You do well to gather good pictures in your homes. Spread them before your children after the tea hour is past and the evening circle is gathered. Throw them on the invalid's couch. Strew them through the rail train to cheer the traveler on his journey. Tack them on the wall of the nursery. Gather them in albums and portfolios. God speed the good pictures on their way with ministries of knowledge and mercy!

But what shall I say of the prostitution of this art to purposes of iniquity. These death warrants of the soul are at every street corner. They smite the vision of the young man with pollution. Many a young man buying a copy has bought his eternal discomfiture. There may be enough poison in one bad picture to poison one soul, and that soul may poison ten, and ten fifty, and the fifty hundreds, and the hundreds thousands, until nothing but the measuring line of eternity can tell the height, and depth, and ghastliness, and horror of the great undoing. The work of death that the wicked author does in a whole book the bad engraver may do on a half side of a pictorial. Under the guise of pure mirth, the young man buys one of these sheets. He unrolls it before his comrades amid roars of laughter, but long after the paper is gone the result may perhaps be seen in the blasted imaginations of those who saw it. The queen of death holds a banquet every night, and these periodicals are the printed invitation to her guests. Alas that the fair brow of American art should be blotched with this plague spot, and that philanthropists, bothering themselves about smaller evils, should lift up no united and vehement voice against this great calamity!

Young man, buy not this moral strychnine for your soul! Pick not up this nest of coiled adders for your pocket! Patronize no news stand that keeps them! Have your room bright with good engravings; but for these outrageous pictorials have not one wail, not one bureau, not one pocket. A man is no better than the picture he loves to look at. If your eyes are not pure your heart cannot be. At a news stand one can guess the character of a man by the kind of pictorial he purchases. When the devil fails to get a man to read a bad book he sometimes succeeds in getting him to look at a bad picture. When satan goes a fishing he does not care whether it is a long line or a short line, if he only draws his victim in. Beware of lascivious pictorials, young man—in the name of Almighty God I charge you.

If I have this morning successfully laid down any principles by which you may judge in regard to books and newspapers, then I have done something of which I shall not be ashamed on the day which shall try every man's work of what sort it is.

Cherish good books and newspapers. Beware of the bad ones. One column may save your soul; one paragraph may ruin it. Benjamin Franklin said that the reading of Cotton Mather's "Essay on Doing Good" molded his entire life. The assassin of Lord Russell declared that he was led into crime by reading one vivid romance. The consecrated John Angell James, than whom England never produced a better man, declared in his old days that he had never yet got over the evil effects of having for fifteen minutes once read a bad book. But I need not go so far off. I could come near home and tell you of something that occurred in my college days. I could tell you of a comrade who was great hearted, noble and generous. He was studying for an honorable profession, but he had an infidel book in his trunk, and he said to me one day: "De Witt, would you like to read it?" I said: "Yes, I would." I took the book and read it for only a few minutes. I was really startled with what I saw there, and I handed the book back to him and said: "You had better destroy that book." No, he kept it. He read it. He reread it. After a while he gave up religion as a myth. He gave up God as a nonentity. He gave up the Bible as a fable. He gave up the church of Christ as a useless institution. He gave up good morals as being unnecessarily stringent. I have heard of him but twice in many years. The time before the last I heard of him he was a confirmed inebriate. The last I heard of him he was coming out of an insane asylum—in body, mind and soul an awful wreck. I believe that one infidel book killed him for two worlds.

Go home to-day and look through your library, and then, having looked through your library, look on the stand where you keep your pictorials and newspapers, and apply the Christian principles I have laid down this morning. If there is anything in your home that cannot stand the test, do not give it away, for it might spoil an immortal soul; do not sell it, for the money you get would be the price of blood, but rather kindle a fire on your kitchen hearth or in your back yard and then drop the poison in it, and keep stirring the blaze until from preface to appendix there shall not be a single paragraph left, and the bonfire in Brooklyn shall be as consuming as that one in the streets of Ephesus.

Historian and Librarian.

Mr. Bancroft will not be seen on horseback this summer. He has sold his tall, gaunt bay he rode so often [illegible] Spofford. Th[illegible] quaint German [illegible] riding, and ta[illegible] constitutional. [illegible] rides alone. A [illegible] dusty coat and [illegible] the world like a [illegible] ling out a sermon, [illegible] makes as he rides [illegible] straddly ahead [illegible] animal walks, trots or [illegible] ton Letter.

A Lady Teacher in [illegible]

A teacher's life in Ab[illegible] described by a committee[illegible] an eastern friend: "She tries to [illegible] thing just as pleasant as she can [illegible] mind work. She takes the [illegible] —went to the [illegible] and [illegible]

DRIVING THROUGH THE SKY.

A Wonderful Mirage Seen in a City at Night.

Describing a curious illusion observed one night last week in Memphis, Tenn., a writer in The Avalanche says: I heard a noise as if a span of horses were coming up the street with some sort of vehicle. I thought it was a hack approaching, until I heard the ring of bells, and then concluded that it must be a street car, but upon looking at my watch I saw that it was rather late for a car to be out.

An instant before I had heard a rumbling noise as if a train of cars were passing over a bridge, and when I looked up I saw, about fifty feet up in the air and apparently only 100 yards from us, a span of horses with flashing tails and harness, and moving along at a rapid pace. The shapes of the animals were as clearly defined in the atmosphere as if one had seen them hitched to a vehicle on the ground. The whole picture was there only an instant before it passed out of sight, but following the horses came a street car, like one of those used on the Madison street lines. You could see the platforms and the railings around them. The tongue of the car and the traces connecting it with the horses in front of it were also graphically portrayed, and the windows and cone shaped roof were perfectly represented.

The mirage was passing up Main toward the north, and in that direction as it moved along we could hear distinctly the sounds of the horse's hoofs on the cobble stones and the rumble of the wheels along the rails. The noise grew less and less distinct every moment after the mysterious vehicle had passed out of sight, and at last, when all had quieted down, we could hear nothing. The apparition was undoubtedly nothing but the reflection of a real street car, running along a neighboring street, upon the clouds of dust which filled the air.

Too Much Brain Work.

The suicide of Lieut. Dauenhower at Annapolis the other day is believed by friends here to have been first suggested to his disease mind by the death of his near friend, Lieut. Robert W. Calewood, who committed suicide on the Norfolk beat a week ago. This makes the fourth case in the last two years where young naval academy graduates have killed themselves. The other cases were those of Cadet Schack, of Pennsylvania, who on the eve of graduation at the Royal college, in Greenwich, England, shot himself, and Cadet F. C. Ridder, who blew his brains out while taking the prescribed two years' course in the United States steamer Swatara. In a few more days Schack would have become an assistant naval constructor. Another instance may be cited where an overworked brain has been the immediate cause of death in that of young Snook, of South Carolina. Snook was a poor fellow who worked on a farm near Annapolis at $10 a month to pay his entrance fee. He entered in May, did well on the practice cruise, but was found deficient in studies at the following semi-annual examinations. He had until June to make up the deficiency, but brain fever set in and death was the result.—New York Sun.

All About Calico.

Mrs. Leon Owens says in her "Travels in India" that "in the year 1498, just ten months and two days after leaving the port of Lisbon, Nasco da Gama landed on the coast of Malabar at Calicut, or more properly Kalo Rhoda, 'City of the Black Goddess.' Calicut was at that period not only a very ancient seaport but an extensive territory, which, stretching along the western coast of southern India, reached from Bombay and the adjacent islands to Cape Comorin. It was at an early period so famous for its weaving and dyeing of cotton cloth that its name became identified with the manufactured fabric, whence the name calico. It is now generally admitted that this ingenious art originated in India in very remote ages, and from that country found its way into Egypt. It was not until toward the middle of the seventeenth century that calico printing was introduced into Europe.—Kansas City Times.

Hoops for the Children.

The plain wooden hoop is all the go now. The iron hoop is not called for. Granville, Mass., turns out about 200,000 this year and Philadelphia about two-thirds as many. They are made of beech or ash. The wood is cut into narrow strips and steamed. The heat curls the strips and the ends are tacked together. Hoops with bells, flags and other ornaments are made in Philadelphia. Few are sold. They cost too much and usually go to amuse sick children who have not a lusty pair of legs. The hoop trade will reach 2,000,000 this year. No one will get wealthy out of this. The margin is too small on account of the great competition. Care is taken by the manufacturers that a hoop is not made strong enough to last forever. The more hoops broken in the season the livelier is the trade. The east supplies the west with rolling stock of this kind.—New York Sun.

Patti's Two Hour Drive.

Mme. Patti takes a two hour drive through the park and on the road daily. Signor Nicolini accompanies her almost invariably. The happy pair usually occupy a closed carriage, but one day this week they ventured forth in open vehicle. Mme. Patti and Signor Nicolini sit bolt upright, look straight before them, and are never seen to converse. The prima donna, however, keeps awake when in Signor Nicolini's company. A friend who bowed to her one day when she was escorted by her pretty niece, Carlina, was surprised at first when his salute was not returned. Approaching her carriage a second time, he discovered that Mme. Patti was asleep, or so deeply plunged in thought that nobody would have known the difference between a songtress' meditation and her slumber.—New York Sun.

Wax in the Keyhole.

One afternoon recently a Boston man found his keyhole stopped with wax when he went home in the afternoon. The police were asked to try to catch the parties who had taken the impression of the lock. The officers secreted themselves in the house and prepared for a night's watch for the thieves, who were expected to descend upon the place. But early in the evening it was explained that the governess, who has a sweet tooth, is in the habit of carrying caramels in the same pocket with her door key, and some of the sweetmeats stuck to the key. She used it during the day, and the waxy appearing substance became scraped from the key and remained in the lock.

The Blue Glass Theory.

[illegible] of Bridgeport's unmarried women is [illegible] to be a strong believer in the blue glass [illegible]. She dresses in blue silk, wears blue [illegible], eats off blue glass dishes, lives in a [illegible] whose windows are of blue glass, has [illegible] this room for more than ten minutes [illegible] for eight years, during which she [illegible] has not had an ache or a pain.

How to Catch Rats.

[illegible] near Meriwether, Ga., [illegible] rats, filled a caldron with [illegible] sprinkled a thick layer of [illegible] of tempting bait. The [illegible] two drowned rats