

THE ROAD TO HAPPINESS.

DR. TALMAGE SEVENTH SERMON TO THE WOMEN OF AMERICA.

"What Can and What Cannot Make a Woman Happy?" His Subject—The Chief Aim of Life Should Be Usefulness—Mistakes of Young People.

BROOKLYN, Feb. 19.—This morning the Rev. T. De Witt Talmage, D.D., preached the seventh of his series of "Sermons to the Women of America, with Important Hints to Men." The opening hymn begins:

Then let our songs abound, And every heart be true, We're marching through the human ground, To fairer worlds on high.

Dr. Talmage took for his text the following words: "She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth." He said: "The editor of a Boston newspaper, a few days ago, wrote asking me the terse question: 'What is the road to happiness?' and, 'Ought happiness be the chief aim of life?' My answer was: 'The road to happiness is the continuous effort to make others happy. The chief aim of life ought to be usefulness, not happiness, but happiness always follows usefulness.' This morning's text in a strong way sets forth the truth that a woman who seeks in worldly advantage her chief enjoyment will come to disappointment and death. 'She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth.'"

My friends, you all want to be happy. You have had a great many recipes by which it is proposed to give you satisfaction—solid satisfaction. At times you feel a thorough wretch. You know as well as older people that it is to be depressed. As dark shadows sometimes fall upon the biography of the school girl as upon the page of the professed philosopher, I have seen no cloudy days in May as in November. There are no deeper shadows than the grandmothers than by the granddaughters. I correct the popular impression that people are happier in childhood and youth than they ever will be again. If we look right, the older the happier. The happiest woman that I ever knew was a Christian octogenarian; her hair white, white would be; the smile of heaven in her afternoon gilding the peaks of snow. Have you to a great many of the young people that the most miserable time you are ever to have is just now. As you advance in life, as you come out into the world and have your head and heart full of good, honest, practical Christian work, then you will know what it is to begin to be happy. There are those who would have us believe that life is chasing this shadow and grasping bubbles. We have not found it as yet. To many of us it has been covering diamonds larger than the Golconda, and I think that our joy will continue to increase until nothing short of the ascending jubilee of heaven will be able to express it.

Horatio Greenough, at the close of the hardest life a man ever lives—the life of an American artist—wrote: "I don't want to leave this world until I give some sign that, born by the grace of God in this land, I have found life to be a very cheerful thing, and not the dark and bitter thing with which my early prospects were clouded."

Albert Barnes, the good Christian, known the world over, stood in his pulpit in Philadelphia at 70 or 80 years of age, and said:

"This world is so very attractive to me, I am very sorry I shall have to leave it."

I know that Solomon said some very dolorous things about this world, and three times declared: "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." I suppose it was a reference to those times in his career when his seven hundred wives almost pestered the life out of him. But I would rather turn to the description he gave after his conversion, when he says in another place: "Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace." It is reasonable to expect it will be so. The longer the fruit hangs on the tree, the riper and more mellow it ought to grow. You plant one grain of corn and it will send up a stalk with two ears, each having 850 grains, so that one grain planted will produce 1,700 grains. And ought not the implantation of a grain of Christian principle in a youthful soul develop into a large crop of gladness on earth, to a harvest of eternal joy in heaven? Hear me, then, while I discourse upon some of the mistakes which young people make in regard to happiness, and point out to the young women what I consider to be the source of complete satisfaction.

And, in the first place, I advise you not to build your happiness upon mere social position. Persons at your age, looking off upon life, are apt to think that if, by some stroke of what is called good luck, you could arrive in an elevated and affluent position, a little higher than that in which God has called you to live, you would be completely happy. Infinite mistake! The palace floor of Ahasuerus is red with the blood of Yashit's broken heart. There have been no more scalding tears wept than those which coursed the cheeks of Josephine. If the sob of unhappy womanhood in the great cities could break through the impetuous wall that sob would come along your streets today like the simoon of the desert. Sometimes I have heard in the rustling of the robes on the city pavement the hiss of theadders that followed in the wake. You have come out from your home, and you have looked up at the great house, and covet a life under these arches, when, perhaps, at that very moment, within that house, there may have been the wringing of hands, the start of horror and the very agony of hell. I knew such a one. Her father's house was plain, most of the people who came there were plain; but by a change of fortune such as sometimes comes, a hand had been offered that led her into a brilliant sphere. All the neighbors congratulated her upon her grand prospects; but what an exchange! On her side it was a heart full of generous affections and affection. On his side it was a soul dry and withered as the stubble of the field. On her side it was a father's house, where God was honored and the Sabbath light flooded the rooms with the very mirth of heaven. On his side it was a gorgeous residence, and the coming of mighty men to be entertained there; but within it were rev-

elry and godlessness. Hardly had the orange blossoms of the marriage feast lost their fragrance than the night of discontent began to cast here and there its shadow. Cruelties and unkindnesses changed all those splendid trappings into a hollow mockery. The trappings of solid silver, the cascades of pure gold, the head-dress of gleaming diamonds, were there; but no God, no peace, no kind words, no Christian sympathy. The festive music that broke on the captive's ear turned out to be a dirge, and the wreath in the plush was a reptile coil, and the upholstery that swayed in the wind was the wing of a destroying angel, and the bead-drops on the pitcher were the sweat of everlasting despair. Oh, how many rivalries and unhappinesses among those who seek in social life their chief happiness! It matters not how fine you have things; there are other people who have it finer. Taking out your watch to tell the hour of the day, some one will correct your timepiece by pulling out a watch more richly chased and jeweled. Ride in a carriage that cost you eight hundred dollars, and before you get around the park you will meet with one that cost two thousand dollars. Have on your wall a picture by Copley, and before night you will hear of some one who has a picture fresh from the studio of Church or Bierstadt.

All that this world can do for you in silver, in gold, in Westminster plush, in Gobelin tapestry, in wide halls, in lordly acquaintanceship, will not give you the ten thousandth part of a grain of solid satisfaction. The English lord, moving in the very highest sphere, was one day found seated with his chin on his hand and his elbow on the window sill, looking out and saying: "Oh, I wish I could exchange places with that dog!" Mere social position will never give happiness to a woman's soul. I have had wide and continuous observation, and I tell the young women that they who build on mere social position their soul's immortal happiness are building on the sand.

Suppose that a young woman expends the brightness of her early life in this unsatisfactory struggle and omits the present opportunity of usefulness in the home circle—what a mistake!

So surely as the years roll around, that home in which you now dwell will become extinct. The parents will be gone, the property will go into other possessions, you yourself will be in other relationships, and that home which, only a year ago, was full of congratulations, will be extinguished. When that period comes, you will look back to see what you did or what you neglected to do in the way of making home happy. It will be too late to correct mistakes. If you did not smooth the path of your parents toward the tomb; if you did not make their last days bright and happy; if you allowed your younger brother to go out into the world, unhelped by Christian and sisterly influences; if you allowed the younger sisters of your family to come up without feeling that there had been a Christian example set them on your part, there will be nothing but bitterness of lamentation. That bitterness will be increased by all the surroundings of that home; by every chair, by every picture, by the old time mantle ornaments, by everything you can think of as connected with that home. All these things will rouse up agonizing memories. Young women, have you anything to do in the way of making your father's home happy? Now is the time to attend to it, or leave it forever undone. Time is flying very quickly away. I suppose you notice the wrinkles are gathering and accumulating on those kindly faces that have so looked upon you; there is frost in the locks; the foot is not as firm in its step as it used to be; and they will soon be gone. The heaviest cloud that ever falls on a parent's coffin lid is the memory of an ungrateful daughter. Oh, make their last days bright and beautiful. Do not act as though they were in the way. Ask their counsel, seek their prayers, and, after long years have passed, and you go out to see the grave where they sleep, you will find growing all over the mound something lovelier than cypress, something sweeter than the rose, something chaster than the lily—the bright and beautiful memories of filial kindness performed ere the dying hand dropped on you a benediction, and you closed the lid over the weary eyes of the worn out pilgrim. Better that, in the hour of your birth, you had been struck with orphanage, and that you had been handed over into the cold arms of the world, rather than that you should have been brought up under a father's care and a mother's tenderness, at last to scoff at their example and deride their influence; and on the day when you followed them in long procession to the tomb, to find that you are followed by a still larger procession of untitled deeds done and wrong words uttered. The one procession will leave its burden in the tomb and disband; but that longer procession of ghastly memories will for ever march and for ever wait. Oh, it is a good time for a young woman when she is in her father's house. How careful they are of her welfare. How watchful those parents of all her interests. Seated at the morning repeat, father at one end the table, children on either side, and between, but the years will roll on, and great changes will be effected, and one will be missed from one end the table, and another will be missed from the other end the table. God pity that young woman's soul who, in that dark hour, has nothing but regretful recollections.

I go further, and advise you not to depend for enjoyment upon mere personal attractions. It would be sheer hypocrisy, because we may not have it ourselves, to despise, or affect to despise, beauty in others. When God gives it, he gives it as a blessing and as a means of usefulness. David and his army were coming down from the mountains to destroy Nabal and his flocks and vineyards. The beautiful Abigail, the wife of Nabal, went out to arrest him when he came down from the mountains, and she succeeded. Coming to the foot of the hill she knelt. David, with his army of sworn men, came down over the cliffs, and when he saw her kneeling at the foot of the hill he cried "Halt!" to his men, and the caves echoed it "Halt, halt!" That one beautiful woman kneeling at the foot of the cliff had arrested all those armed troops. A dew drop dashed back Niagara. The Bible sets before us the portraits of Sarah

and Rebecca, and Abigail, Abigail's sister, and Job's daughters, and says: "By out door exercise and by skillful arrangement of apparel, let women make themselves attractive. The sloven has only one mission, and that to excite our loathing and disgust. But alas! for those who depend upon personal charms for their happiness. Beauty is such a subtle thing, it does not seem to depend upon facial proportions, or upon the sparkle of the eye, or upon the flush of the cheek. You sometimes find it among irregular features. It is the soul shining through the face that makes one beautiful. But alas! for those who depend upon mere personal charms. They will come to disappointment and to a great fret. There are so many different opinions about what are personal charms; and then sickness, and trouble, and age, do make such ravages. The poorest girl that a woman ever worships is her own face. The saddest sight in all the world is a woman who has built everything on good looks, when the charms begin to vanish. Oh, how they try to cover the wrinkles and hide the ravages of time! When Time, with iron shod feet, steps on a face, the hoof marks remain, and you cannot hide them. It is silly to try to hide them. I think the most repulsive fool in all the world is an old fool!"

Why, my friends, should you be ashamed to be getting old? It is a sign it is prima facie evidence that you have behaved tolerably well or you would not have lived to this time. The grandest thing, I think, is eternity, and that is made up of countless years. When the Bible would set forth the attractiveness of Jesus Christ, it says: "His hair was white as snow." But when the color goes from the cheek, and the luster from the eye, and the spring from the step, and the gracefulness from the gait, alas! for those who have built their time and their eternity upon good looks. But all the passage of years cannot take out of one's face benignity and kindness, and compassion and faith. Culture you have and you have culture you have. The brightest glory that ever beamed from a woman's face is the religion of Jesus Christ. In the last war two hundred wounded soldiers came to Philadelphia one night, and came unheralded, and they had to extemporize a hospital for them, and the Christian women of my church and of other churches went out that night to take care of the poor wounded fellows. That night I saw a Christian woman go through the wards of the hospital, her sleeves rolled up ready for hard work, her hair disheveled in the excitement of the hour. Her face was plain, very plain; but after the wounds were washed and the new bandages were put round the splintered limbs, and the exhausted boy fell off into his first pleasant sleep, she put her hand on his brow, and he started in his dream and said: "Oh, I thought an angel touched me!" There may have been no classic elegance in the features of Mrs. Harris, who came into the hospital after the "Seven Days" awful fight, as she sat down by a wounded drummer boy and heard him soliloquize: "A ball through my body, and my poor mother will never again see her boy. What a pity it is!" And she leaned over him and said: "Shall I be your mother and comfort you?" And he looked up and said: "Yes, I'll try to think she's here. Please to write a long letter to her and tell her all about it, and send her a lock of my hair and comfort her. But I would like to have you tell her how much I suffered—yes, I would like you to do that, for she would feel so for me. Hold my hand while I die." There may have been no classic elegance in her features, but all the hospitals of Harrison's Landing and Fortress Monroe would have agreed that she was beautiful; and if any rough man in all that ward had insulted her, some wounded soldier would have leaped from his cot on his best foot and struck him dead with a crutch.

Again: I advise you not to depend for happiness upon the flatteries of men. It is a poor compliment to your sex that so many men feel obliged in your presence to offer unmeaning compliments. Men capable of elegant and elaborate conversation elsewhere, sometimes feel called upon at the door of the drawing room to drop their common sense and to dole out sickening flatteries. They say things about your dress, and about your appearance, that you know, and they know, are false. They say you are an angel. You know you are not. Determined to tell the truth in office, and store, and shop, they consider it honorable to lie to a woman. The same thing that they told you on this side of the drawing room three minutes ago they said to some one on the other side of the drawing room. Oh, let no one trample on your self respect. The meanest thing on which a woman can build her happiness is the flatteries of men.

Again: I charge you not to depend for happiness upon the discipleship of worldliness. I have seen men as vain of their old-fashioned and their eccentric hat as your brainless fop is proud of his dangling fooleries. Fashion sometimes makes a reasonable demand of us, and then we ought to yield to it. The daisies of the field have their fashion of color and leaf; the snowdrops and the snowflakes flung out of the winter heavens have their fashion of exquisiteness. After the summer shower the sky weaves the earth with ring of rainbow. And I do not think we have a right to despise the elegancies and fashions of this world, especially if they make reasonable demands upon us; but the discipleship and worship of fashion is death to the body, and death to the soul. I am glad the world is improving. Look at the fashion plates of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth centuries, and you will find that the world is not so extravagant and extraordinary now as it was then, and all the marvelous things that the granddaughter will do will never equal that done by the grandmother. Go still farther back, to the Bible times, and you find that in those times fashion wielded a more terrible scepter. You have only to turn to the third chapter of Isaiah, a portion of the scriptures from which I once preached to you a sermon, to read: "Because the daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with stretched forth necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go, and making a tinkling with their feet: In that day the Lord will take away the

bravery of their tinkling ornaments about their feet, and their caps, and their round like the moon, the chains, and the bracelets, and the mufflers, the bonnets, and the head bands, and the tablets, and the earrings, the rings, and the nose jewels, the changeable suits of apparel, and the mantles, and the wrappes, and the crisping pins, the glasses, and the fine linen, and the hosiery, and the veils." Only think of a woman having all that on! I am glad that the world is getting better, and that fashion, which has dominated in the world so ruinously in other days, has for a little time, for a little degree at any rate, relaxed its energies. All the splendors and the extravaganzas of this world dyed into your robe and hung over your shoulder cannot wrap peace around your heart for a single moment. The gayest wardrobe will utter no voice of condolence in the day of trouble and darkness. That woman is grandly dressed, and only she, who is wrapped in the robe of a Savior's righteousness. The house may be very humble, the hat may be very plain, the frock may be very coarse; but the halo in heaven settles in the room when she wears it, and the faintest touch of the resurrection angel will change that garment into raiment exceeding white, so as no fuller on earth could whiten it. I come to you young women, today, to say that this world cannot make you happy. I know it is a bright world with glorious sunshine, and golden rivers, fireworked sunsets, and bird orchestra, and the darkest cave has its crystals, and the wreathiest wave its foam wreath, and the earliest sunset is flaming abroad; but God will put out all these lights with the blast of his own nostrils, and the glories of this world will perish in the final conflagration. You will never be happy until you get your sins forgiven and allow Christ Jesus to take full possession of your soul. He will be your friend in every perplexity, he will be your comfort in every trial. I do not ask you to bring, like Mary, the spices to the sepulcher of a dead Christ, but to bring your all to the feet of a living Jesus. His word is peace. His back is love. His hand is help. His touch is life. His smile is heaven. Oh, come, then, in flocks and groups. Come, like the south wind over banks of myrrh. Come like the morning light tripping over the mountains. Wreath all your affections on Christ's brow, set all your genius into Christ's coronet, pour all your Sabbath air rattle with the wings of rejoicing angels, and the towers of God ring out the news of souls saved.

"This world is faded, perchance may crave, 'Tis not the pearl for me; 'Twill bring in his own time, 'Twill perish in the grave. But there's a pearl of price untold, Which never can be bought with gold; O, that 'twere sent for me!"

The snow was very deep, and it was still falling rapidly when, in the first year of my Christian ministry, I hastened to see a young woman die. It was a very humble home. She was an orphan; her father had been shipwrecked on the banks of Newfoundland. She had earned her own living. As I entered the room I saw nothing attractive. No pictures, no tapestry. Not even a cushioned chair. The snow on the window casement was not whiter than the cheek of that dying girl. It was a face never to be forgotten. Sweetness and majesty of soul, and faith in God, had given her a matchless beauty, and the sculptor who could have caught the outlines of those features, and frozen them into stone, would have made himself immortal. With her large, brown eyes she looked calmly into the great ceiling. I sat down by her bedside and said: "Now tell me all your troubles, and sorrows, and struggles, and doubts, or struggles." It is all plain to me. Jesus has smoothed the way for my feet. I wish when you go to your pulpit next Sunday you would tell the young people that religion will make them happy. "Oh, death, where is thy sting?" "My friends, I wonder if this is not the bliss of dying?" I said: "Yes, I think it must be." I lingered around the couch. The sun was setting, and her sister lighted a candle. She lighted the candle for me. The dying girl, the dawn of heaven in her face, needed no candle. I rose to go, and she said: "I thank you for coming. Good night! When we meet again it will be in heaven—in heaven! Good night! Good night!" For her it was good night to poverty, good night to death; but when the sun rose again it was good morning. The light of another day had burst in upon her soul. Good morning! The angels were singing her welcome home, and the hand of Christ was patting upon her brow a garland. Good morning! Her spirit rising. Her palm waving. Her spirit exulting before the throne of God. Good morning! Good morning! The white lily of poor Margaret's cheek had blushed into the rose of health immortal, and the snows through which we carried her to the country graveyard were symbols of that robe which she wears, so white that no fuller on earth could whiten it.

My sister, my daughter, may your last end be like hers!

Troubles of Polish Journalists.

The Russian authorities in Poland have redoubled their vigor in connection with the native press. No Polish editor may any longer receive any foreign journal or serial publication. Every year Polish newspaper publishers were compelled to send to the governor a list of the journals they wished to receive during the year; but this list was often curtailed, and the journals that were allowed to enter were almost invariably defaced by the censor's brush. This year the governor of Poland did not even deign to answer the petition of the Polish journalists, and all their foreign exchanges are shut off.—New York World.

In an English Divorce Court.

In the divorce court in London, England, in the case of an English woman who had married in America and had the marriage annulled by an American court, the judge held that the woman, having married an American and lived with him in America, was entitled to the same laws as her husband, and, therefore, the decree pronounced in America was binding in England without a further decree from an English court.—Frank Leslie's.

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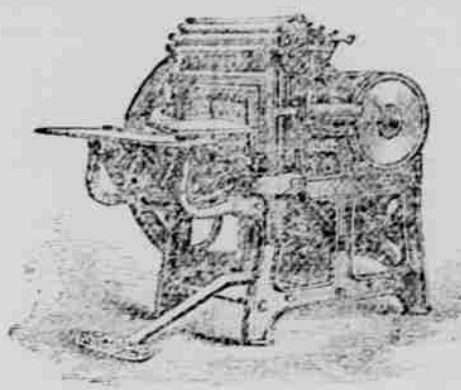
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