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TALMAGE'S SERMON.

AN ELOQUENT DISCOURSE AND UNIQUE TEXT.

How Sisera Was Killed by Jael—The Bad News Brought to His Mother—Sitting at the Palace Window—An Eulogy of the Needle—Anxious Mothers.

Mothers in Israel.

This novel and unique subject was presented by Dr. Talmage, Sunday afternoon, Text, Judges v, 28, "The mother of Sisera looked out at a window."

Spiked to the ground of Jael's tent lay the dead commander in chief of the Canaanitish host, General Sisera, not far from the river Kishon, which was only a dry bed of pebbles when in 1888, in Palestine, we crossed it, but the gullies and ravines which ran into it indicated the possibility of great freshets like the one at the time of the text. General Sisera had gone out with 900 iron chariots, but he was defeated, and his chariot wheels interlocked with the wheels of other chariots, he could not retreat fast enough, and so he leaped to the ground and ran till, exhausted, he went into Jael's tent for safety. She had just been changing and when he asked for water she gave him butter-milk, which in the East is considered a most refreshing drink. Very tired, and supposing he was safe, he went to sleep upon the floor, but Jael, who had resolved upon his death, took a tent pin, long and round and sharp, in one hand and a hammer in her other hand, and, putting the sharp end of the tent pin to the forehead of Sisera, with her other hand she lifted the hammer and brought it down on the head of the pin with a stout stroke, when Sisera struggled to rise, and she struck him again, and he struggled to rise, and the third time she struck him, and the commander in chief of the Canaanitish host lay dead.

Meaning of the Text.

Meanwhile in the distance Sisera's mother sits amid surroundings of wealth and pomp and scenes palatial waiting for his return. Every mother expects her son to be victorious, and this mother looked out at the window expecting to see him drive up in his chariot followed by wagons loaded with embroidered robes and also by regiments of men vanquished and enslaved. I see her now sitting at the window, in high expectation. She watches the farthest turn of the road. She looks for the flying dust of the swift hoofs. The first flash of the bit of the horses' bridle she will catch.

The ladies of her court stand round, and she tells them of what they shall have when her son comes up—chains of gold and caracents of beauty and dresses of such wondrous fabric and splendor as the Bible only hints at, but leave us to imagine. "He ought to be here by this time," says his mother. "That battle is surely over. I hope that freshet of the river Kishon has not impeded him. I hope those strange appearances we saw last night in the sky were not omens, when the stars seemed to fight in their courses. No, no! He is so brave in battle I know he has won the day. He will soon be here." But alas for the disappointed mother! She will not see the glittering headgear of the horses at full gallop bringing her son home from victorious battle. As a solitary messenger arriving in hot haste rides up to the window at which the mother of Sisera sits, he cries, "Your armies are defeated, and your son is dead." There is a scene of horror and anguish from which we turn away.

Now you see the full meaning of my short text. "The mother of Sisera looked out at the window." Well, my friends, we are all out in the battle of life; it is raging now, and the most of us have a mother watching and waiting for news of our victory or defeat. If she is not sitting at the window of earth, she is sitting at a window of heaven, and she is going to hear all about it.

By all the rules of war Sisera ought to have been triumphant. He had 900 iron chariots and a host of many thousands vaster than the armies of Israel. But God was on the other side, and the angry freshets of Kishon, and the hail, the lightning, and the unmanageable war horses, and the captured chariots, and the stellar panic in the sky, discomfited Sisera. Josephus in his history describes the scene in the following words: "When they were come to a close fight, there came down from Heaven a great storm with a vast quantity of rain and hail, and the wind blew the rain in the face of the Canaanites and so darkened their eyes their arrows and slings were of no advantage to them, nor would the coldness of the air permit the soldiers to make use of their swords, while this storm did not so much incommode the Israelites because it came on their backs. They also took such courage upon the apprehension that God was assisting them that they fell upon the very midst of their enemies and slew a great number of them, so that some of them fell by the Israelites, some fell by their own horses, which were put into disorder, and not a few were killed by their own chariots."

Hence, my hearers, the bad news brought to the mother of Sisera looking out at the window. And our mother, whether sitting at a window of earth or a window of Heaven, will hear the news of our victory or defeat—not according to our talents or educational equipment or our opportunities, but according to whether God is for us or against us.

"Where's mother?" is the question most frequently asked in many households. It is asked by the husband as well as the child coming in at nightfall, "Where's mother?" It is asked by the little ones when they get hurt and come in crying with pain, "Where's mother?" It is asked by those who have seen some grand sight or heard some good news or received

some beautiful gift. "Where's mother?" She sometimes feels wearied by the question, for they all ask it and keep asking it all the time. She is not only the first to hear every case of perplexity, but she is the judge in every court of domestic appeal. That is what puts the premature wrinkles on so many maternal foreheads. You see, it is a question that keeps on for all the years of childhood.

If that question were put to most of us this morning, we would have to say, if we spoke truthfully, like Sisera's mother, she is at the palace window. She has become a Queen unto God forever, and she is pulling back the rich folds of the King's upholstery to look down at us. We are not told the particulars about the residence of Sisera's mother, but there is in that scene in the book of Judges so much about embroideries and needlework and ladies in waiting that we know her residence must have been princely and palatial. So we have no minute and particular description of the palace at whose window our glorified mother sits, but there is so much in the closing chapters of the good old book about crowns, and pearls big enough to make a gate out of one of them, new songs and marriage suppers, and harps, and white horses with kings in the stirrups, and golden candlesticks that we know the heavenly residence of our mother is superb, is unique, is colonnaded, is domed, is embowered, is fountained, is glorified beyond the power of pencil or pen or tongue to present, and in the window of the palace the mother sits watching for news from the battle. What a contrast between that celestial surrounding and her once earthly surroundings! What a work to bring up a family, in the old time way, with but little or no hired help, except perhaps for the washing day or for the swine slaughtering, commonly called "the killing day."

Old Fashioned Mothers.

There was then no reading of elaborate treatises on the best modes of rearing children, and then leaving it all to nred help, with one or two visits a day to the nursery to see if the principles announced are being carried out. The most of those old folks did the sewing, the washing, the mending, the darning, the patching, the millinery, the mantua making, the house-keeping, and in hurried harvest time helped spread the hay or tread down the load in the mow. They were at the same time caterers, tailors, doctors, chaplains, and nurses for a whole household all together down with measles or scarlet fever, or round the house with whooping coughs and croup and runround fingers and earaches and all the infantile distempers which at some time swoop upon every large household. Some of these mothers never got rested in this world. Instead of the self-rocking cradles of our day, which, wound up, will go hour after hour for the solace of the young slumberer, it was weary foot on the rocker, sometimes half the day or half the night—rock—rock—rock—rock. Instead of our drug stores filled with all the wonders of materia medica and called up through a telephone, with them the only apothecary short of four miles ride was the garage, with its bunches of peppermint and penny-royal and catnip and mustard and camomile flowers, which were expected to do everything. Just think of it! Fifty years of preparing breakfast, dinner, and supper. The chief music they heard was that of spinning wheel and rocking chair. Fagged out, headachy, and with ankles swollen. Those old fashioned mothers—if any persons ever fitted appropriately into a good, easy, comfortable Heaven, they were the folks, and they got there, and they are rested. They wear no spectacles, for they have their third sight—as they lived long enough on earth to get their second sight—and they do not have to pant for breath after going up the emerald stairs of the Eternal palace, at whose window they now sit waiting for news from the battle.

But if anyone keeps on asking the question "Where's mother?" I answer, she is in your present character. The probability is that your physical features suggest her. If there be seven children in a household at least six of them look like their mother, and the older you get the more you will look like her. But I speak now especially of your character and not of your looks. This is easily explained. During the first ten years of your life you were almost all the time with her, and your father you saw only mornings and nights. There are not years in any life so important for impression as the first ten. Then and there is the impression made for virtue or vice, for truth, or falsehood, for bravery or cowardice, for religion or skepticism. Suddenly start out from behind a door and frighten the child, and you may shatter his nervous system for a lifetime. During the first ten years you can tell him enough spook stories to make him a coward till he dies. Act before him as though Friday were an unlucky day, and it were baleful to have thirteen at the table, or see the moon over the left shoulder and he will never recover from the idiotic superstitions. You may give that girl before she is ten years old a fondness for dresses that will make her a mere "dum my frame," or fashion plate, for 40 years, Ezekiel xvi, 44, "As is the mother so is her daughter." Before one decade has passed you can decide whether that boy shall be a Shylock or a George Peabody. Boys and girls are generally echoes of fathers and mothers. What an incoherent thing for a mother out of temper to punish a child for getting mad, or for a father who smokes to shut his boy up in a dark closet because he has found him with an old stump of a cigar in his mouth, or for that mother to rebuke her daughter for staring at herself too much in the looking glass when the mother has her own mirrors so arranged as to repeat her form from all sides! The great English poet's loose moral character was decided before he left the nursery, and his schoolmaster in the schoolroom overheard the conversation: "Byron, your mother is

a fool," and he answered, "I know it." You can hear through all the heroic life of Senator Sam Houston the words of his mother when she in the war of 1812 put a musket in his hand and said: "There, my son, take this and never disgrace it, for remember I had rather all my sons should fill one honorable grave than that one of them should turn his back on an enemy. Go and remember, too, that while the door of my cottage is open to all brave men it is always shut against cowards." Agrippina, the mother of Nero, murderer, you are not surprised that her son was a murderer. Give that child an overdose of catechism, and make him recite verses of the Bible as a punishment and make Sunday a bore, and he will become a stout antagonist of Christianity. Impress him with the kindness and the gentility and the loveliness of religion, and he will be its advocate and exemplar for all time and eternity.

The Needle Enthroned.

The trouble with Sisera's mother was that, while sitting at the window of her text watching for news of her son from the battlefield, she had the two bad qualities of being disolute and being too fond of personal adornment. The Bible account says: "Her wise ladies answered her ye. She returned answer to her maid, 'Have they not sped? Have they not divided the prey—to every man a damsel or two, to Sisera a prey of divers colors, a prey of divers colors of needlework, of divers colors of needlework on both sides?' She makes no anxious utterance about the wounded in battle, about the bloodshed, about the dying, about the dead, about the principles involved in the battle going on, a battle so important that the stars and the angels took part, and the clash of swords was answered by the thunder of the skies. What she thinks most of is the bright colors of the wardrobes to be captured and the needlework. 'To Sisera a prey of divers colors, a prey of divers colors of needlework, of divers colors of needlework on both sides.'"

An Apostrophe to Mothers.

But if you still press the question, "Where's mother?" I will tell you where she is not, though once she was there. Some of you started with her likeness in your face and her principles in your soul. But you have cast her out. That was an awful thing for you to do, but you have done it. That hard, grinding, dissipated look you never got from her. If you had seen any one strike her, you would have struck him down without much care whether the blow was just sufficient or fatal; but, my boy, you have struck her down—struck her innocence from your face, and struck her principles from your soul. You struck her down! The last time that Jael drove three times into the skull of Sisera was not so cruel as the stab you have made more than three times through your mother's heart. But she is waiting yet, for mothers are slow to give up their boys—waiting at some window on earth or at some window in Heaven. All others may cast you off. Your wife may seek divorce and have no more patience with you. Your father may disinherit you and say, "Get him never again darken the door of our house." But there are two persons who do not give you up—God and mother.

How many disappointed mothers waiting at the window! Perhaps the panes of the window are not great glass panes, bevel edged and hovered over by exquisite lambrequin, but the window is made of small panes, I would say about six or eight of them, in summer weathered with trailing vine and in winter protected by the branches of the forest, a real country window. The mother sits there knitting, or busy with her needle on homely remains, when she looks up and sees coming across the bridge of the meadow brook a stranger, who dismounts in front of the window. He lifts and drops the heavy knocker of the farmhouse door. "Come in!" is the response. He gives his name and says, "I have come on a sad errand. There is nothing the matter with my son in the city, is there?" she asks. "Yes," he says. "Your son got into an unfortunate encounter with a young man in a liquor saloon last night and is badly hurt. The fact is he cannot get well. I hate to tell you all. I am sorry to say he is dead." "Dead!" she cries as she totters back. "Oh, my son, my son!" Would God I had died for thee! That is the ending of all her cares and anxieties and good counsels for that boy. That is her pay for her self sacrifice in his behalf. That is the bad news from the battle. So the tidings of derelict or Christian sons travel to the windows of earth or the windows of Heaven at which mothers sit.

"But," says some one, "are you not mistaken about my glorified mother hearing of my evildoing since she went away?" Says some one else, "are you not mistaken about my glorified mother hearing of my self sacrifice and moral bravery and struggle to do right?" No! Heaven and earth are in constant communication. There are trains running every five minutes—trains of immortals ascending and descending—spirits going from earth to Heaven to live there. Spirits descending from Heaven to earth to minister and help. They hear from us many times every day. Do they hear good news or bad news from this battle, this Sedan, this Thermopylae, this Austerlitz, in which every one of us is fighting on the right side or the wrong side. O God, whose I am, and whom I am trying to serve, as a result of this sermon, for ever yours or never yours, send down to earth their responsibility, and upon all children, whether still in the nursery or out on the tremendous Edraelon of middle life or old age, the fact that their victories or defeats sound clear out, clear up to the windows of sympathetic maternity. Oh, is not this the minute when the cloud of blessing filled with the exhaled tears of anxious mothers shall burst in showers of mercy on this audience?

A Scorpion-Proof Editor.

A pachydermatous editor of the southern citrus belt affords conclusive evidence of the important fact that "the devil takes care of his own." He puts it in another way, however, as follows: "A remarkable proof of the protection of innocence, (says the Azusa Pomotropic,) occurred at the editor's home last week. When his good wife was making up the bed in the morning she found a huge scorpion almost crushed to death, upon which the writer had reposed all night. The poisonous reptile had been lain upon so solidly all night that it couldn't elevate its stinging machine, and by morning had almost lost its warlike habits. It had been carried in from the bushes on a pillow and died without avenging its own death."

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to start it least I have not enough control of my emotion to conclude it. As when we were children we so often came in from play or from a hurt or from some childish injustice practiced upon us, and as soon as the door was open we cried, "Where's mother?" and she said, "Here I am," and we buried our weeping face in her lap, so after awhile, when we get through with the pleasures and hurts of this life, we will, by the pardoning mercy of Christ, enter the heavenly home, and among the first questions, not the first, but among the first, will be the old question that we used to ask, the question that is being asked in thousands of places at this very moment—the question, "Where's mother?" And it will not take long for us to find her or for her to find us, for she will have been watching at the window for our coming, and with the other children of our household of earth we will again gather round her, and she will say: "Will, how did you get through the battle of life? I have often heard from others about you, but now I want to hear it from your own souls. Tell me all about it, my children!" And then we will tell her of all our earthly experiences, the holidays, the marriages, the birth hours, the burials, the heartbreaks, the losses, the gains, the victories, the defeats, and she will say: "Never mind, it is all over now. I see each one of you has a crown, which was given you at the gate as you came through. Now cast it at the feet of the Christ who saved you and saved me and saved us all. Thank God, we are never to part, and for all the ages of eternity you will never again have to ask, 'Where's mother?'"

Rousseau's Defects.

He is a remarkable example of the thinker in whom passion is forever taking the place of reason, who lives upon half-truths. A single illustration will be enough, and we will take it from "The Discourse on Inequality." "The riot which ends in the death or deposition of a sultan is as lawful as the acts by which he could, the day before, dispose of the fortunes and lives of his subjects. As his position was maintained only by force, so by force only he is overthrown. Thus everything happens according to the law of nature; and whatever may be the outcome of these frequent and sudden revolutions, nobody has the right to complain of the injustice of his fellows, but merely of his own indiscretion or ill luck."

To a generation that is acquainted with the political uses of dynamite, these words of Rousseau may appear mild; let it, however, be remembered that he was not a salaried assassin, but an original thinker and a man of genius. The wretches who commit crimes for political purposes usually drift into the hands of the executioner, and the business is at an end; but Rousseau's influence did not end at his death.

Now if, in the ordinary course of human affairs, these words of Rousseau may with justice be put in practice, it follows that Charlotte Corday's act in killing Marat may not have been a crime: it was such teachings as Rousseau's (whether she was conscious of it or not) that gave her the inspiration. Charlotte Corday's act was a crime: only a perverted moral sense will deck it out with fine phrases.—Macmillan's Magazine.

Artificial Ice Surfaces.

A successful system of producing artificial ice surfaces has been inaugurated in Paris, and is available in large areas at all seasons of the year. As explained, the machinery consists of two ammonia ice machines, driven by two fifty-horse power steam engines; this ice apparatus has pumps which force ammoniacal gas into water cooler condensers, liquefying the gas, which then passes into large reservoirs, where it expands with the production of cold, the same gas being pumped back and used continuously. In the application of this system for the formation of a skating surface, a rink has been constructed sixty by one hundred and thirty feet having a floor of cork and cement, upon this being laid three miles of connected iron pipe; through this pipe circulates a solution of chloride of calcium, an unconceivable liquid which, by passage through spirals in the refrigerating reservoirs, is cooled to some five to twenty degrees below zero. The water over the pipe is thus kept frozen, and daily sweeping and flooding insures smoothness.

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