

A CHEERFUL SPIRIT. Rev. Dr. Talmage Eulogizes His Father.

Speaks of His Watchful Care and Parental Faithfulness--Lived a Happy and Useful Life--The Dr. Tells of His Sainly Mother--Scene at His Father's Death-Bed.

A despatch from Washington says: Rev. Dr. Talmage preached from the following text: "The almond-tree shall flourish." Ecclesiastes xii. 5. In January Palestine is adorned with the blossoming of the almond-tree. It breathes its life into that winter month as a promise of God's sunlight and the promise of God's coldness and desolation of a sorrowing spirit. It was not a useless tree, made just to bloom and die, or like the willow by the water-courses, to stand weeping into the stream, but it disputed with terebinth and cassia for a high place in the commerce of the world, its wealth bore down the dromedaries of the desert, and in ships of Tarshish struggled with the sea. Its rugged trunk parted into graceful-furrows of branch and burst into a lavishness of bloom, till the Temple imitated it in the golden candlestick, and Jeremiah beheld its branches shaking in his dream. The pomegranate had more pretentious colour, and rung out its fragrances with red blossoming bells, but the almond-tree stood in simple white, as if, while laden with its white blossoms, it were the apparel of those who dwell in "raiment exceeding white," so as no fuller on earth can whiten them. When the almond-tree was in full bloom, it looked like some tree before our window on a winter's morning, after a nightfall of snow, when its brightness is almost insufferable, every stem a white and feathery plume. A row of almond-trees in full bloom must have raised up all the soul's sense of purity, and when they began to scatter their blossoms, they began to scatter their hopes, and faster, until the herbage, still deeply tinged with autumnal coloring, covered, and the mountains that were as scarlet became as snow.

WHITE AS SNOW.

Now you are ready to see the meaning of the text. Solomon was giving a full-length portrait of an aged man, by sketching the features of a young man, he set forth his trembling and decrepitude, and then comes to describe the whiteness of his locks by the blossoming of the almond-tree. If the master-artist had not said, "I see in this one sentence not only the appearance of the hair, but an announcement of the beauty of old age. The white of a head man are but the gathered frosts of the second death, but a hoary head is a crown of glory," if it be found in the way of righteousness, there may be no colour in the cheek, no lack of strength, no sign of the step, no firmness in the voice, and yet around the head of every old man whose life has been upright and Christian, there hangs a glory brighter than ever shook in the white tops of the almond-tree. If the voice quiver, it is because God is changing into a tone fit for the celestial choral. If no lack of strength, it is because the life is just about to lie down in peaceful sleep. If the hand tremble, it is because God is unloosing it from the earthly disappointments of a life of ringing harp and waving palm. If the hair has turned, it is only the gray light of heaven's dawn streaming through the scant locks. If the body was adorned by a luxuriance of autumn or raven, is smitten with baldness, it is only because God is preparing a place to set the everlasting crown. The falling of this good man's hair, he stood at the veils of the heavenly gate to swing open, the scattering of the almond blossoms will only discover the setting of the sun. The hair of the young man were too tame for this ascending spirit. The arms of Jesus are grander than bounding horses of fire. There are lessons for me to learn, and also for you, for I know of you, I know him. The child of his old age, I come to-night to pay a notable tribute to him who, in the hour of my birth, took me into his arms, and who, as a parental faithful one, combined with that of my mother, was the means of bringing my erring feet to the cross, and kindling in my soul the anticipation of immortal blessedness. If I failed to speak, methinks the old antiquity of immortal blessedness, family Bible, that I brought home with me, would rebuke my silence, and the very walls of my youthful home would tell the story of my ingratitude. I MUST SPEAK.

though it be with broken utterance, and in terms which may seem too strong for those who never had an opportunity of gathering the fruit of this transient almond-tree. I see in my father's old age was to be seen the beauty of a cheerful spirit. I never remember to have heard him make a gloomy expression. This was not because he had no perception of the pollutions of society. He abhorred anything like impurity, or fraud, or double-dealing. He never failed to lift up his voice against sin, when he saw it. He was terrible in his indignation against wrong, and had an iron grip for the throat of him who tempted on the helpless. Better than him, if you had been stealing bread from the mouth of the father, my mother's voice could calm him when once the mountain storm of his righteous wrath was in full blast; while as for himself, he would submit to more imposition, and say nothing, than any man I ever knew. But, while sensitive to the evils of

household. She layeth her hand to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff. She is not afraid of the snow for her hoariness, for all her household are clothed with scarlet. Her children arise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her. Many daughters have done virtuously, but she excelleth them all.

HIS LARGE FAMILY.

Nothing but faith in God upheld him in the trials of his old age. His cheerfulness wrought was more like a romance than a reality. He walked through many a desert, but every morning had his manna, and every hard rock a rod that could shatter it into crystal fountains at his feet. More than once he came to his last dollar, but by right behind that last dollar he found Him who owns the cattle on a thousand hills, and out of the palm of whose hand all the fowls of heaven pecked their food, and who hath given life to the world, a very good place to live in. For fifteen years an invalid, he had a fearful struggle to support his large family.

HIS HAPPY VOICE.

He took the pitch of sacred song on Sabbath morning, and lost it not through all the week. I have heard him ploughing amid the aggravations of a new ground, serving visits, examining deeds, going to arrest criminals, in the house and by the way, at the barn and in the street. When the church choir would break down, everybody looked round to see if he were not ready with "Woodstock," "Mount Pisgah," or "Uxbridge." But few families fall heir to so large a pile of well-studied notes-books. He was ready to proper time for all kinds of innocent amusement. He often felt a merriest that not only touched the lips, but played upon every fibre of the body, and rolled down into the very depths of his soul, with long reverberations. No one that I ever knew understood more fully the science of a good laugh. He was not only quick to recognize hilarity when created by others, but was always ready to do his share toward making it. Before extreme old age, he could outrun and outstep any of his children.

But whence this cheerfulness? Some might ascribe it all to natural disposition. No doubt there is such a thing as sunshine of temperament. God gives more brightness to the almond-tree than to the cypress. While the pool purifies under the summer sun, God slips the rill off the rocks with a frolicsome that fills the mountain with echo. No doubt constitutional structure had much to do with this cheerfulness. He had, by a life of sobriety, preserved his freshness and vigor. You know that good habits are better than speaking-tubes to the ear; better than a staff to the hand; better than lozenges to the throat; better than warm baths to the feet; better than bitters to the stomach. His lips had not been polluted by the wine of the world, nor had he work in the Lord's vineyard, when if the marble had not lied, it would have said, "Killed by villainous tobacco!" He abhorred anything that could intoxicate, being among the first in this country to join a crusade against alcoholic beverage. When urged, during a severe sickness, to take some stimulant, he said: "No; if I am to die, let me die soberly."

THE SWIFT OF THE BREWERY.

had never been poured around the roots of this thrifty almond. But physical health could not account for half of this lushness. Sixty-four years ago a coal from the heavenly altar had kindled a light that shone brighter and brighter to the perfect day. Let Almighty grace for nearly three-quarters of a century triumph in a man's soul, and do you wonder that he is happy? For twice the length of your life and mine he had sat in the bower of the promises, plucking the round, ripe clusters of Eschcol. While others bit their tongue for thirst, he stood at the veils of salvation, and put this lips to the bucket that came up dripping with the fresh, cool, sparkling waters of eternal life.

AGAIN.

We beheld in our father the beauty of a Christian faith. Let not the account of his cheerfulness give you the idea that he never had any trouble. But few men have so serious and overwhelming a life-struggle. He went out into the world without means, and with no educational opportunity save that which was afforded him in the winter months, in an old, dilapidated school-house, from instructors whose chief work was to collect their own salary. Instead of postponing the marriage relation, as modern society compels a young man to postpone it, until he can earn the means for its support, he entered an early alliance with one who would not only be able to enjoy the success of life, but who would with her own willing hands help to achieve it. And, while father ploughed the fields, and threshed the wheat, and broke the flax, and husked the corn, my mother stood for Solomon's portrait when he said, "She riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her

one quoted the passage: "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." "Of whom I am chief," responded the dying Christian. We said, "To live again!" He answered, "To die is gain!" And as if the vision grew more enrapturing, he continued to say, "To die is gain!" Ministers of the Gospel came in, and after the usual greeting he said, "Pray for me."

PEACE! PEACE!

On the morning of the 27th of October, just three years from the day when the soul of his companion sped into the heavens, it was evident that the last moment had come. Softly the news came to all the sleepers in the house, and the quick glance of lighted candles in the room signalled the coming of the death angel. We took out our watches, and said, "Four o'clock and fifteen minutes!" The pulse fluttered, and a gasp escaped from the lips as the motion of a bird's wing about to cleave its way into the heavens. No quick start of pain; no glassy stare; but eyelids tightly closed, and calm lips, and white blossoms of the almond tree. From the stand we turned over the old timepiece that he had carried so long, and which he thought always went right, and announced that four o'clock and twenty minutes! The tides of the cold river rising, felt of the wrist, but no pulse; of the temples, but no stir; of the heart, but no action. We listened, but heard nothing. Still still! The gates of the earthly prison-house silently open wider and wider. Free! Clear the way for the conquering spirit! Shout upwards the tidings!

THE RED RIBBON OF HONOR.

Among the honors which can be won by citizens of France is the right to wear a tiny bow of red ribbon in the buttonhole. The Legion of Honor was founded by the first Napoleon as the reward of distinguished services to France in civil and military life. The order of the red ribbon, which carries with it the right to a pension, in cases of poverty and old age, is not for men alone. The first woman who wore it was Virginia Gluquiere, who served as cantoniere under Marshal Junot in Portugal. Many others have been likewise honored, but only one woman has ever worn both the ribbon of the Legion and the military medal of the same order. Juliette Dodu is still alive. When the Franco-German War broke out in 1870 she was employed as a telegraph operator at an office in a frontier town. An invading army corps speedily took possession of the place, and as the German staff wished to send the telegraph office in a frontier town, information of the advance, a despatch was given to Juliette to transmit. She was scarcely twenty years old at the time, but she was shrewd and intelligent, and she never acquiesced in the words of the telegram, she transmitted other words, and secretly destroyed the dispatch. The poor girl's stratagem was soon discovered, for no answering message came from the prince. She was arrested and sentenced to be shot. But the next day, before the drums beat for the execution, the prince himself arrived. He heard the story, and struck with admiration, ordered Juliette's instant release, and with chivalrous courtesy, complimented her upon her courage. An incident so honorable to both sides in the midst of a fierce and bloody war deserves long to be remembered.

A BACHELOR GIRL'S RESOLVE.

"I refuse absolutely to grow old," said a bachelor maiden of thirty the other day. "If I cannot stem the rush of advancing years, I can, at least gracefully accept the inevitable, and turn my attention to the care and furtherance of such charms it has pleased a beneficent Providence to bestow on me. With the added years, one is apt to accumulate flesh, and all who grow stout as they advance along life's turnpike should bear in mind the solemn warning of the obituary circular that 'fat is fatal.'"

THE QUEER LITTLE FELLOW.

A queer little fellow indeed was Tommy Dick. Why, he would give away the last marble he had, if a boy wanted it. He would run on errands all day long and never grumble. He would always give the best place to somebody else, no matter who, and feel so honestly glad in seeing other folks having a good time that he really forgot all about himself. Don't you see he was a very queer little fellow? But, somehow, everybody liked to have the "queer little fellow" around. Grandma always smiled all over her face when she saw Tommy coming. Aunt Lou, who was a very busy woman, used to say, "Well, now you've come just in time, Tommy. Run and--" When Tommy went to spend the day with grandma or Aunt Lou, the folks at home all missed him. One would say: "Now, if Tommy were only here!"

EGOTISM.

No, indeed, declared the Independent Young Thing, I wouldn't marry the same man on earth as I would on Mars. You needn't be afraid, replied the Conciliated Cad: I'm not going to propose to you.

PARISIAN DOGS.

How They Are Fed and Cared for by Fashionable Ladies.

Dog-tailors have a good time in Paris. Under the impression that nature has not provided the right kind of coat for a dog, the dog-lovers—or fashion-lovers—of Paris have fostered a new industry, the providing of clothing for ladies' pets. Some very interesting and suggestive facts about this industry are collected by Good Words. "Our clients belong to the very highest classes of society," said one of these Parisian dog-tailors. "We recently had a very remunerative order from the daughter of a diplomat in Paris for a set of gala clothes for her dog to match the liveries of her father's lackeys. She was about to be married, and as she entered the residence after the ceremony her three dogs were to be waiting for her at were to be dressed in their liveries, and each was to have a bouquet of orange-blossoms attached to its collar."

CRANIAL EXPOSURE.

I wish I knew, said Mr. Tucker, how I caught this cold. Didn't you get a bad cold when you changed your underclothes last spring, puffed asked Tommy? Yes, I did, I did. This cold's in your head, ain't it, paw? Yes. Guess you got it by changing your mind.

PROPER AGE TO MARRY

Sarah Grand, very ably reads the signs of the times on the subject of the age at which girls should marry.

When wives and daughters were the goods and chattels, she writes, and men had the principal say in the matter, little girls were cruelly forced to marry at the beginning, instead of the completion of the change from childhood to womanhood. They were made wives, that is to say, while they were still far from being perfectly developed women physically, and were utterly immature mentally, with all their natural womanly instincts which are the only safe guides in the matter still in abeyance. Fortunately the iniquity and absurdity of this, have been thoroughly exposed, and now if parents attempted to pitch their little daughters of from 12 to 16 into matrimony as they did with impunity not so very long ago, the whole world would cry shame upon them.

The whole tendency of the modern education for girls is to prolong their girlhood. The ghastly doctrine that this is necessarily a wicked world, in which misery must be our portion, no longer finds general acceptance. It is a favorite axiom with us nowadays that every age has its pleasure, or should have, with a fair chance—childhood, girlhood, womanhood—and to get the full value out of each. Our intelligent girls begin to have ideas of their own on the subject of the disposition of their lives, prompted, no doubt, by mothers of a new order. They do not care to be put off with half an education and hustled into matrimony while they still should be doing their school course. They like to enjoy as they go along. They combine recreation with study, and delight in everything, and it is not until they have had the foundation of a good general education that they begin to be serious on the subject of matrimony. Serious is quite the right word for their attitude. The meaning of life has begun to interest them, and they pause to inquire, What they demand more worthy recreation while they still should be doing their school course. They like to enjoy as they go along. They combine recreation with study, and delight in everything, and it is not until they have had the foundation of a good general education that they begin to be serious on the subject of matrimony. Serious is quite the right word for their attitude. The meaning of life has begun to interest them, and they pause to inquire, What they demand more worthy recreation while they still should be doing their school course. They like to enjoy as they go along. They combine recreation with study, and delight in everything, and it is not until they have had the foundation of a good general education that they begin to be serious on the subject of matrimony. Serious is quite the right word for their attitude. 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