

A TALK ON EMPTY CHAIRS

A POWERFUL ARGUMENT FROM DR. TALMAGE IN OHIO.

Are Greater Influences Are in the Family Circle Than the Mute Appeals of Departed Ones—Vacant Places at the Fireside.

LAKEVILLE, O., July 19.—For many years people have gathered in multitudes at this season of the year for a great outdoor assembly. The grounds are a short sail from Sandusky; the place beautiful beyond description. Dr. Talmage preached this morning in this delightful place to a vast multitude. His subject was the "Vacant Chair." His text, I Samuel xx, 18, "Thou shalt be missed, because thy seat will be empty."

Set on the table the cutlery and the chased silverware of the palace, for King Saul will give a state dinner today. A distinguished place is kept at the table for his son-in-law, a celebrated warrior, David by name. The guests, jeweled and plumed, come in and take their places. When people are invited to a king's banquet they are very apt to go. But before the covers are lifted from the feast Saul looks around and finds a vacant seat at the table. He says within himself, perhaps audibly: "What does this mean? Where is my son-in-law? Where is David, the great warrior? I invited him. I expected him. What a vacant chair at the king's banquet!" The fact was that David, the warrior, had been seated for the last time at his father-in-law's table. The day before Jonathan had coaxed David to go and occupy that place at the table, saying to David in the words of my text, "Thou shalt be missed, because thy seat will be empty."

The prediction was fulfilled. David was missed. His seat was empty. That one vacant chair spoke louder than all the occupied chairs at the banquet. In almost every house the articles of furniture take a wing personality. That picture—a stranger would not see anything remarkable either in its design or execution, but it is more to you than all the pictures of the Louvre and the Luxembourg. You remember who bought it, and who admired it. And that hymn book—you remember who sang out of it. And that cradle—you remember who rocked it. And that Bible—you remember who read out of it. And that bed—you remember who slept in it. And that room—you remember who died in it. But there is nothing in all your house so eloquent and so mighty voiced as the vacant chair. I suppose that before Saul and his guests got up from this banquet there was a great clatter of wine pitchers, but all that racket was drowned out by the voice that came up from the vacant chair at the table.

Millions have gazed and wept at John Quincy Adams' vacant chair in the house of representatives, and at Henry Wilson's vacant chair in the vice presidency, and at Henry Clay's vacant chair in the American senate, and at Prince Albert's vacant chair in Windsor castle, and at Thiers' vacant chair in the councils of the French nation. But all these chairs are unimportant to you as compared with the vacant chairs in your own household. Have these chairs any lesson for us to learn? Are we any better men and women than when they first addressed us?

FATHER'S CHAIR. First I point out to you the father's vacant chair. Old men always like to sit in the same place and in the same chair. They somehow feel more at home, and sometimes when you are in their place and they come into the room you jump up suddenly and say, "Here, father, here's your chair." The probability is it is an armchair, for he is not so strong as he once was, and he needs a little upholding. His hair is a little frosty, his gums a little depressed, for in his early days there was not much dentistry. Perhaps a cane chair and old fashioned apparel, for though you may have suggested some improvement, father does not want any of your nonsense. Grandfather never had much admiration for new fangled notions.

I sat at the table of one of my parishioners in a former congregation; an aged man was at the table, and the son was presiding, and the father somewhat abruptly addressed the son and said, "My son, don't now try to show off because the minister is here!" Your father never liked any new customs or notions, but he never looked so happy as when, with his eyes closed, he sat in the armchair in the corner. From the wrinkled brow to the tip of the slippers, what placidity! The wave of the past years of his life broke at the foot of that chair. Perhaps sometimes he was a little impatient, and sometimes told the same story twice; but over that old chair how many blessed memories hovered! I hope you did not crowd that old chair, and that it did not get very much in the way.

Sometimes the old man's chair gets very much in the way, especially if he has been so unwise as to make over all his property to his children, with the understanding that they are to take care of him. I have seen in such cases children crowd the old man's chair to the door, and then crowd it clear into the street, and then crowd it into the parlor, and keep on crowding it until the old man fell out of it into his grave.

But your father's chair was a sacred place. The children used to climb up on the rungs of it for a good night kiss, and the longer he stayed the better you liked it. But that chair has been vacant now for some time. The furniture dealer would not give you fifty cents for it, but it is a throne of influence in your domestic circle. I saw in the French palace, and in the throne room, the chair that Napoleon used to occupy. It was a beautiful chair, but the most significant part of it was the letter "N" embroidered into the back of the chair in purple and gold. And your father's old chair sits in the throne room of your heart, and your affections have embroidered into the back of that old chair purple and gold the letter "F." Have all the prayers of that old chair been answered? Have all the counsels of that old chair been practiced? Speak out old armchair.

History tells us of an old man whose three sons were victors in the Olympic games, and when they came back these three sons with their garlands put them on the father's brow, and the old man was so rejoiced at the victories of his three children that he fell dead in their arms. And are you, oh man, going to bring a wreath of joy and Christian usefulness and put it on your father's brow, or on the vacant chair, or on the memory of the one departed? Speak out, old armchair! With reference to your father, the words of my text have been fulfilled, "Thou shalt be missed, because thy seat will be empty."

MOTHER'S CHAIR. I go a little further on in your house and I find the mother's chair. It is very apt to be a rocking chair. She had so many cares and troubles to soothe that it must have rockers. I remember it well; it was an old chair, and the rockers were almost worn out, for I was the youngest, and the

swarthy mother, the tears rolling down his face, got up and shook his fist and said, "Stop that noisy band, and give the baby a chance." Oh, there was pathos in it, as well as good cheer in it. There is nothing to arouse and melt and subdue the soul like a child's voice. But when it goes away from you the high chair becomes a higher chair and there is desolation all about you. In three-fourths of the homes of this congregation there is a vacant high chair. Somehow you never get over it. There is no one to put to bed at night; no one to ask strange questions about God and heaven. Oh, what is the use of that high chair? It is to call you higher. What a drawing upward it is to have children in heaven! And then it is such a preventive against sin. If a father is going away into sin he leaves his living children with their mother; but if a father is going away into sin what is going to do with his dead children floating about him and hovering over his every wayward step. Oh, speak out, vacant high chair, and say: "Father, come back from sin; mother, come back from worldliness. I am watching you. I am waiting for you." With respect to your child the words of my text have been fulfilled, "Thou shalt be missed, because thy seat will be empty."

AN INVITATION UPWARD. My hearers, I have gathered up the voices of your departed friends and tried to intone them into one invitation upward. I set in array all the vacant chairs of your homes and of your social circle, and I bid them cry out this morning: "Time is short. Eternity is near. Take my Saviour. Beat peace with my dried-up eye. Stop where I am. We live together on earth; some live together in heaven." We answer that invitation. We come. Keep a seat for us, as Saul kept a seat for David, but that seat shall not be empty. And oh! when we are all through with this world, and we have shaken hands all around for the last time, and all our chairs in the home circle and in the outside world shall be vacant, may we be worshipping God in that place from which we shall go out no more forever.

I thank God there will be no vacant chairs in heaven. There we shall meet again and talk over our earthly heart-breaks. How much you have been through since you saw them last! On the shining shore you will talk it all over. The heart-aches. The loneliness. The sleepless nights. The weeping until you had no more power to weep, because the heart was withered and dried up. Story of empty cradles and little shoes only half worn out never to be worn again, just the shape of the foot that once pressed it. And dreams when you thought the departed had come back again, and the room seemed bright with their faces, and you started up to greet them and in the effort the dream broke and you found yourself standing amid room in the midnight—alone.

Talking it all over, and then, hand in hand, walking up and down in the light. No sorrow, no tears, no death. Oh, heaven! beautiful heaven! Heaven where our friends are. Heaven where we expect to be. In the east they take a cage of birds and bring it to the tomb of the dead, and then they open the door of the cage, and the birds, flying out, sing. And I would today bring a cage of Christian consolations to the grave of your loved ones, and I would open the door and let them fill all the air with the music of their voices.

Oh, how they bound in these spirits before the throne! Some shout with gladness. Some break forth into uncontrollable weeping for joy. Some stand speechless in their shock of delight. They sing. They quiver with excessive gladness. They gaze on the temples, on the palaces, on the waters, on each other. They weave their joy into garlands, they spring it into triumphal arches, they strike in on timbrels, and then all the loved ones gather in a great circle around the throne of God—fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, sons and daughters, lovers and friends, hand to hand around about the throne of God—the circle ever widening—hand to hand, joy to joy, jubilee to jubilee, victory to victory, "until the day break and the shadows flee away. Turn thou, my beloved, and be like a roe or a young hart upon the mountains of Bethel."

To Keep the House Cool. Much of the heat of our houses is supplied by the kitchen range, which Brilget keeps red hot even in the dog days. Prevent this by using a gas stove or oil stove as far as possible. Then shut up tight all rooms not in use. Awnings should be abutted and windows be closed, but the blinds must be lowered to exclude every ray of light, and the doors locked to prevent the running in and out of the children, who thus admit waves of heated air. Perhaps it would be neither wise nor practicable to hermetically seal all the rooms of a house, but one room, at least, can be so treated—the parlor, and also the dining room between meals; the room selected should be closed side to side to get it while the air has some freshness, and before the sun strikes the windows; then it should not be opened until late in the afternoon.

Every house should have an accessible trap door in its roof, and when this is left open a current of heated air must rise through it and make a general draught over all the house. Awnings should be pulled in color, and should be at all windows and doors except those to the north. They are great helps in keeping out glare, but they should be chosen of a kind which is readily raised and lowered. After sundown, a plentiful watering of your street and pavement, and of all the garden you possess, will cool the air wonderfully.—Ladies' Home Journal.

Women and Men. Society is composed, principally, of women and ladies. They call upon each other and bore each other fearfully, yet each would feel mortally injured if the other did not call. The natural prey of man is woman, and of woman, man; but man has less leisure to pursue his natural instincts. The appreciation by which a woman is held by the male sex gives a good index, on the inverse ratio method, of the estimation in which she is held by her own. Nor, though husband and wife are one and indivisible, does it follow that the admirers of the one will be equally attached to the other. Politically speaking, England and Ireland stand to each other in a very similar relationship. Intellect in woman is appreciated by man only in so far as it qualifies her to appreciate it in him.—Murray's Magazine.

Suits Against New York. Chief Bonner said the other day that claims aggregating at least \$2,000,000 were pending against this city for alleged violations by the fire department of patent rights. "Syndicates have been formed to push these claims," said the chief, "and there are two big suits in the courts now. One is for an alleged infringement of a patent on the heater stove used on our fire engines and the other suit relates to the Nibbs relief valve. The city authorities have been legally advised that none of these claims can hold against the city."—New York Times.

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