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AT THE TABERNACLE.

DR. TALMAGE SCORES THE IDLERS, TRIFLERS AND FLOATERS.

The Bible in Many Places Denounces Idleness as a Sin, and Modern Ministers Soon Discover That the Idler Is Not Susceptible to Religious Truth.

BROOKLYN, April 24.—A visitor to the Brooklyn Tabernacle this morning would have no difficulty in understanding the secret of the attraction which fills the vast building Sunday after Sunday with throngs of eager listeners. Avoiding abstruse theological subjects, Dr. Talmage preached a sermon on a practical topic giving shrewd common-sense lessons of inestimable value to his hearers, especially to the young people who make up a large part of his congregation. His text was Proverbs xii, 27, "The slothful man conceiveth not that which he taketh in hunting."

David and Jeremiah and Ezekiel and Micah and Solomon of the text showed that at some time they had been on a hunting expedition. Spears, lances, swords and nets were employed in this service. A deep pitfall would be dug. In the center of it there was some raised ground, with a pole on which a lamb would be fastened, and the wild beast, not seeing the pitfall, but only seeing the lamb, would plunge for its prey and dash down, itself captured. Birds were caught in gins or pined with arrows. The hunters in olden time had two missions—one to clear the land of ferocious beasts, and the other to obtain meat for themselves and their families. The occupation and habit of hunters are a favorite Bible simile. David said he was hunted by his enemy like a partridge upon the mountain. My text is a hunting scene.

A sportsman arrived in a garb appropriate to the wild chase lets slip the bloodthirsty hounds from their kennels, and mounting his feet horse, with a halloo and the yell of the greyhound pack they are off and away, through brush and dell, over marsh and moor, across alders where a misstep would hurl horse and rider to death, plunging into mire up to their hunches or into swift streams up to the bit, till the game is tracked by dripping foam and blood and the antlers crack on the rocks and the hunter has just time to be in at the death.

Yet after all the haste and peril of the chase, my text represents this sportsman as being too indolent to dress the game and prepare it for food. He lets it lie in the dooryard of his home and become a portion for vermin and beasts of prey. Thus by one manner Solomon gives a picture of laziness, when he says, "The slothful man roareth not that which he taketh in hunting." The most of hunters have the game they shot or entrapped cooked the same evening or the next day, but not so with this laggard of the text. Too lazy to rip off the hide. Too lazy to kindle the fire and put the gridiron on the coals.

A BEAUTIFUL PICTURE.
 The first picture I ever bought was an engraving of Thoreau's "Autumn." The clusters of grapes are ripe on the vine of the homestead, and the returned hounds, panting from the chase, are lying on the doormat, and the hunter is unshouldering the game, while the housewife is about to take a portion of it and prepare it for the evening meal. Unlike the person of the text, she was enough industrious to roast that which had been taken in hunting. But the world has had many a specimen since Solomon's time of those whose lassitude and improvidence and absurdity were depicted in my text. The most of those who have made a dead failure of life can look back and see a time when a great opportunity opened, but they did not know it.

They were not as wise as George Stephenson, "the father of railways," who, when at sixteen years of age he received an appointment to work a pumping engine for twelve shillings a week, cried out, "Now, I am a made man for life." God gives to most men at least one good opportunity. A great Grecian general was met by a group of beggars, and he said to them: "If you want bread to plow your land, I will lend you some. If you want land, I will give you some. If you want seed to sow your land, I will see that you get it, but I will encourage none in idleness." But God gives to most people an opportunity of extrication from depressed circumstances.

As if to create in us a hatred for indolence, God has made those animals which are sluggish to appear loathsome in our eyes, while those which are fleet and active he has clothed with attractiveness. The tortoise, the sloth, the small, the crocodile repel us, while the deer and the gazelle are as pleasing as they are fleet, and from the swift wings of innumerable birds God has spared no purple or gold or jet or crimson or snowy whiteness. Besides all this the Bible is constantly assailing the vice of laziness. Solomon seems to order the idler out of his sight as being beyond all human instruction when he says, "Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways and be wise." And Paul seems to drive him up from his dining table, before he gets through with the first course of food, with the assertion, "If any will not work, neither shall he eat."

look the canary. The way that many lose the opportunity of a lifetime is by the same stupidity. They say, "Wait a minute." My advice is not to wait at all.

INDOLENCE AND IDLENESS.
 Again, bad habits are a fruitful source of indolence. Slothful indolences shut a man's shop and dull his tools and steal his profits. Indolence is generally the end of industry. There are those who have the rare faculty of devoting occasionally a day or a week to indolence, and at the expiration of that time go back with bleared eyes and tremulous hands and beated cheeks to the faithful and successful performance of their duties. Indeed, their employers and neighbors expect this amusement or occasional season of frolic and idleness.

Some of the best workmen and most skillful artisans have this mode of conducting themselves, but, as the time rolls on, the season of dissipation becomes more protracted and the season of steadiness and sobriety more limited, until the employers become disgusted and the man is given up to a continual and ruinous idleness. When that point has arrived he rushes to destruction with astonishing velocity. When a man with wrong proclivities has nothing to do, no former self respect or moral restraint or the beseechings of kindred can save him.

The only safety for a man who feels himself under the fascination of any form of temptation is an employment which affords neither recreation nor pleasure. Nothing can be more unfortunate for a man of evil inclination than an occupation which keeps him exceedingly busy during a part of the year and then leaves him for weeks and months entirely unemployed. There are many men who cannot endure protracted leisure. They are like fractions steels that must constantly be kept to the load, for a week's quiet makes them intractable and uncontrollable. Bad habits produce idleness and idleness produces bad habits.

The probability is that you will either have to give up your loose indulgences or else give up your occupation. Sin will take all enthusiasm out of your work and make you sick of life's drudgery, and then you and then between your seasons of dissipation, you may rise up to a sudden activity and start again in the chase of some high and noble end, even though you catch the game, you will sink back into slothfulness before you have roasted that which you took in hunting. Bad habits unfit a man for everything but politics.

INDOLENCE AND WEALTH.
 Furthermore, indolence is often a result of easy circumstances. Rough experience in earlier life seems to be necessary in order to make a man active and enterprising. Mountaineers are nearly always industrious, and those who have toiled among mountains of trouble get the most nerve and muscle and brain. Those who have become the deliverers of nations once had not where to lay their heads. Locust and wild honey have been the fare of many a John the Baptist, while those who have been fond of fortune and petted and praised have often grown up lethargic.

They have none of that heroism which comes from fighting one's own battles. The warm summer sun of prosperity has weakened and relaxed them. Born among the luxuries of life exertion has been unnecessary, and therefore they spend their time in taking it easy. They may enter into business, but they are unfitted for its application, for its hardships. For its rewards they have lost the most of that which they have invested go back to thorough inaction. This costly yacht may do well enough on the smooth, glassy bay, but cannot live an hour amid a chopped sea.

Another cause of indolence is severe discouragement. There are those around us who started life with the most sanguine expectations. Their enterprise excited the remark of all competitors. But some sudden and overwhelming misfortune met them and henceforth they have been inactive. Trouble, instead of making them more determined, has overthrown them. They have lost all self reliance. They imagine that all men and all occurrences are against them. They hang their heads where once they walked upright. They never look you in the eye. They become misanthropic and pronounce all men liars and scoundrels. They go melancholic and treadbare to their graves. You cannot rouse them to action by the most glittering offer.

In most cases these persons have been honorable and upright all their lives, for reasons never discouraged, as there is always some other plot they have laid and some other trap they have not sprung. There are but few sadder sights than a man of talent and tact and undoubted capacity giving up life as a failure, like a line of magnificent steamers rotting against wharves, from which they ought to have been carrying the exportations of a nation. Every great financial panic produces a large crop of such men. In the great establishments where they were partners in business they are now weighers or draymen or clerks on small salary.

Reverie is also a cause of indolence. There are multitudes of men who expect to achieve great success in life who are entirely unwilling to put forth any physical, moral or intellectual effort. They have a great many eloquent theories of life. They are all the while expecting something to turn up. They pass their life in dreaming. They have read in light literature how men suddenly and unexpectedly came to large estates, or found a pot of buried gold at the foot of the rainbow of God Luck, or had some great offer made them. They have passed their lives in reverie.

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