

## A TALE THAT'S TOLD.

Rev. Dr. Talmage's Thoughts on the Closing Year.

## A SERMON FOR THE TIMES

Some Practical and Timely Suggestions as to Right Living. The Significance of Life.

In this holiday discourse Dr. Talmage takes the opportunity of offering some very practical and useful suggestions; text, Psalms x. 9. "We spend our years as a tale that is told."

The Israelites were 40 years in the wilderness, and during 38 years of the 40 nothing is recorded of them, and I suppose, no other emigrants had a duller or more uninteresting time than they had. So they got to telling stories—stories concerning themselves or concerning others; stories about the brick kilns of Egypt, where they had toiled in slavery; stories about how the waters of the Red sea piled up into palisades at their crossing; story of the lantern in the heavens to guide them by night; story of ibises destroying the reptiles of the wilderness; stories of personal encounter. It must have been an awful thing to have had nothing to do for 38 years except to get lost every time they tried to escape from the wilderness. So they whiled away the time in story telling. Indeed there were persons whose one business was to narrate stories, and they were paid by such trifles as they could pick up from the surrounding listeners. To such instances our text refers when it says, "We spend our years as a tale that is told."

At this tremendous passage from the year 1890 to the year 1900 it will do us all good to consider that our whole life is a story told—a good story or a bad story; a tragic story or a mournful story; a wise story or a foolish story; a clean story or a filthy story; a story of success or a story of failure. "We spend our years as a tale that is told."

In the first place I remark that every person's life is a very interesting story. My text does not deprecate a "tale that is told." We have all of us been entertained by the story teller when snow bound in the rail train; or in the group a winter's night in the farmhouse; or gathered around a blazing hearth with some hunters at the mountain inn. Indeed it is a praiseworthy art to impersonate a good story well. If you doubt the practical and healthful and inspiring use of such a story, take down from the library Washington Irving's "Tales of a Traveller" or Nathaniel Hawthorne's "Twice Told Tales." But as interesting as any of these would be the story of many an obscure life, if the tales were as well told. Why do we all like biographies and autobiographies? Because they are stories of eminent human lives. But the story of the life of a backwoodsman, of a man who looks stupid, of one about whom you never heard a word, must be just as thrilling on a small scale as on a larger scale is a life of a Cyrus, or a Caesar, or a Pizarro, or a Mark Antony, or a Charlemagne, or the late General Gordon, who was upon a parapet leading his soldiers with nothing but a stick in his hand, and his troops cried: "Gordon, come down. You will be killed." But he did not come down, and one of the soldiers said: "It is all right. He don't mind being killed. He is one of those blessed Christians."

If you get the confidence of that very plain man just come out of the backwoods and can induce him to give the stirring experiences of his life, he will tell you that will make your blood curdle and your hair stand on end. That night when a panther disputed his pathway on the way home; that landslide, when the mountains seemed about to come down on his cabin; that accident to his household and no surgeon within 15 miles; that long storm that shut them in and the food was exhausted; that contest at his doorway with bandits, who thought there might be within something worth taking; that deathbed with no one but himself to count the fluttering pulse.

As Oliver Cromwell on the anniversary of his greatest victory followed his darling daughter to the grave, so in the humblest and most unpretending life there has been a commingling of gladness and gloom, of triumph and despair. Nothing that David Garrick ever enacted at Drury Lane theater in the way of tragedy or Charles Matthews ever played in Covent Garden in the way of comedy exceeded things which on a small scale have been seen in the life of obscure men and women. Many a profound and learned sermon has put the audience to sleep, while some man whose physiognomy could not bearsed and whose attire was cut and tattered and made up of plainest household life has told the story of his life in a way that melted the prayer circle into tears as easily as a warm April sun dissolves the snow of the previous night.

It does not take long to tell all the vicissitudes of life—the gladness and the griefs, the arrivals and the departures, the successes and the failures, the victories and the defeats, the ups and the downs. The longer we live the shorter the years. We shall get over the bewildering fatigue of selecting gifts for children and friends and see that the presents get off in time to arrive on the appropriate day when we see another advancing group of holidays. Autumnal frost so sharply chases the summer harvest, and the snow of the white blossoms of springtime come so soon after the snows of winter. It is a remark so often made that it fails to make any impression and the platitude that calls forth no reply. "How rapidly that tale is told."

My text, in referring to the years, reminds me that in 12 hours this year will forever have gone away. Ninety-nine out of the hundred years of this century will have disappeared. We have only one year of the century left.

There ought to be something especially suggestive in the last year of a century.

It ought to be a year of unparalleled industries, of unheard of consecration.

"I know she knew nothing of the marriage license, because she is engaged to another man who don't live here. I think Ben began to get desperate when the other fellow came up to see Mollie about two weeks ago. He was insanely jealous when he found that she was receiving a rival, and I heard that he took a dose of strychnine one night while the other man was visiting Mollie. He has been acting queerly ever since and Mollie has been trying to avoid him."—Atlanta Journal.

## A SAD CASE.

Driven Mad by Love for a Brown Eyed Girl.

HIS MIND UNBALANCED  
She Had Promised to be His Wife but Married Another When the Wedding Day Came.

Unrequited love for a brown-eyed girl dethroned the reason of Benjamin F. Lee Friday night, suffering from the mania brought on by the pangs in his aching heart, he wandered into police headquarters and asked to be locked up to prevent the violent outbreak which he said was fast coming upon him.

The girl who refused to reciprocate the affection which Lee showered upon her was Miss Mollie Melton, aged 21, and very pretty. She lived with her married sister at 132 Walton street, Atlanta. She left the city Friday afternoon for her former home in Macon. Her sudden departure is what unbalanced the mind of young Lee. Half an hour after she left the house he called with a marriage license in his pocket and stated to her relatives that she had promised to marry him at 5 o'clock.

"Mollie will not marry you, Ben," said her sister to the young man when he had stated the object of his visit. "She has left the city."

"But I have the license," he replied, "and everything is ready for the ceremony. Oh, this is too cruel. Why did she treat me in this way?"

He refused to believe that she had left the city and begged to be allowed to see the girl he loved. When finally convinced that she was gone he went to the home of his brother, J. B. Lee, at 125 Crescent avenue, and told his brother of his deep trouble. He said that he had at first arranged to have the ceremony performed by Rev. Mr. Oxford, but that on second thought he had decided to have his father, A. F. Lee, who is a minister, tie the matrimonial bonds which would unite him to the girl of his choice. He then told the brother for the first time that the ceremony was to take place at his house.

Nothing more was seen of the young man until he turned up in police headquarters totally demoralized and fearing the consequences of his unsettled mental condition.

The courtship between Lee and Miss Melton extends over a space of five months and has a tinge of romance about it that is seldom equalled in real life.

Lee was a soldier in the Twenty-ninth regiment, which went to the Philippines islands after a month's stay at Fort McPherson. He was discharged just before the regiment left because of physical disability.

It was during his career as a soldier that he met the brown-eyed girl for whom he is now in close confinement. He was walking out Walton street one afternoon in the late autumn dressed in his soldier's uniform. Miss Melton was on the veranda of her home and smiled at the blue eyed soldier boy as he passed. Lee went to the home of his brother and sent her a note asking if he might call on her.

"Certainly not," was her reply in the note she sent back to him, "the smile I gave you was a patriotic smile because of the uniform you wear."

He did not despair, however, and a few days later met a friend who introduced him to the girl. After that he was a frequent caller at the house.

"Ben came to the house often to see Mollie," said the married sister, in speaking of the courtship. "Though she never did care for him he seemed determined to marry her. One night they were on the veranda just outside my window, and I overheard them talking."

"I am never happy except when looking into your eyes, Mollie," I heard him say to her.

"She was only flirting with him all the time. He had large blue eyes, and she is death on blue eyes."

"I know she knew nothing of the marriage license, because she is engaged to another man who don't live here. I think Ben began to get desperate when the other fellow came up to see Mollie about two weeks ago. He was insanely jealous when he found that she was receiving a rival, and I heard that he took a dose of strychnine one night while the other man was visiting Mollie. He has been acting queerly ever since and Mollie has been trying to avoid him."—Atlanta Journal.

## NO LIMIT TO COTTON MILLS

Interesting Interview with D. A. Tompkins, of Charlotte.

In an interview with an Associated Press reporter Mr. D. A. Tompkins, the well known cotton mill expert of Charlotte, N. C., takes a most encouraging view of textile conditions in the South. In reply to a question as to the prospects of new mill construction in 1900 Mr. Tompkins said that expectations in this line will be fully met.

"The machine manufacturers in the United States," said Mr. Tompkins, "can make 2,500,000 spindles a year. That is the extent of their output. The new mills to be built in 1900 will require 2,000,000 spindles for their equipment, so that the mill construction this year will be nearly equal to the capacity of the machine plants to turn out spindles."

Continuing, Mr. Tompkins said: "New England has 13,000,000 spindles, of which 7,000,000 are located in Massachusetts. There are now 5,000,000 spindles in the South. At the end of 1900 the South will have 7,000,000 spindles and New England will still have 13,000,000. In Massachusetts new spindles are being put in or fine stuffs only, while the old ones are being discontinued on course staffs."

LAST YEAR'S WEATHER.—The Columbia State says "the weather of 1899 was the most eccentric South Carolina has had for many years. The winter months of the year were unprecedentedly cold, with the mercury below zero in Columbia. The early spring was excessively rainy; so that by May the fall had exceeded the average about six inches. Then the sun took his jingling and there was great heat and drought until September. The fall and the winter to the close of the year were unusually bright and pleasant—a milder and more open season could hardly be desired. And now the footings for the year show only 20 degrees variation from the normal temperature and 21 inches variation from the normal rainfall. Had the year ended one day earlier its temperature would have been only one degree above the normal; but Sunday was an abnormal 31st of December and it prevented the making of an almost unheard-of record. It was a year of weather in long and antagonistic streaks, but it wound up pretty well at the end."

Time flies away fast.

The while we never remember.

How soon our life here

Grows old with the year

That dies with the next December.

A third reading of my text reveals that life is not only a story told, but a story listened to. There is nothing more vexatious to any one than to tell a story when people are not attending. They may be whispering on some other subject, or they are preoccupied. One cannot tell a story effectively unless there are good listeners. Well, that which in my text is called the "tale that is told" has plenty of listeners. There is no such thing as solitude, no such think as being alone. God listens and the air is full of spiritual intelligences all listening, and the world listens to the story of our life, some hoping it will be successful, others hoping it will be a failure.

We talk about public life and private life, but there is no private life. The story of our life, however insignificant it may seem to be, will win the applause or hiss of a great multitude that no man can number. As a "tale that is told" among admirers or antagonists, celestial or pandemoniacs, the universe is full of listening ears as well as of gleaming eyes. If we say or do the right thing that is known, I suppose the population of the intelligences in the air is more numerous than the population of intelligences on the earth. Oh, that the story of our life might be fit for such an audience in such an auditorium! God grant that wisdom and fidelity and earnestness and truth may characterize the "tale that is told."

Aye, all the world will yet listen to and he redeemed by a "tale that is told." We are telling it, each in his own way—some by voice, some by pen, some by artist's pencil, some by hand and some by song; mother telling to a child, teacher telling it to Sabbath class, reformer telling it to outcast, preacher telling it to assemblage. The story of the Loveliest of human coming down to this scarred and blasted island of a world. He was ordered back from its shores and struck through with lances of human hate as soon as he landed. Shepherd's dog baying on the hills that Christmas night was better treated than this rescuer of a race yet keeping right on, brambles on brook, feet on spikes, flagellated with whips that had lumps of lead fastened to them, through midnight without lanterns, through storms without a shelter, through years that got blacker until they ended in a noonday with the sun blotted out. Nighliest tale ever told, and keep on telling it until the last sorrow is assuaged and the last animosity is quenched and the last desert is with lily and golden with the cowslip and blue with the geranium and crimson with the rose.

While reading my text the fourth time I berthed myself that the story of life will end when the group breaks up—the "tale that is told" stops when the listeners depart. Sometimes we have been in groups interestedly listening to some story told when other engagements or the hour of the night demanded the going of the guest. That stopped the story. By this exit of another year I am reminded that these earthly groups will break up. No family group or social group or religious group or political group stays long together. Suppose some one should take from the national archives the roll of yonder United States senate chamber, the roll of yonder house of representatives as it was made up 20 years ago and then call the roll. The silence would be mightier than the voices that would hear and respond.

The family group breaks up. Did you ever know a household that for 25 years remained intact? Not one.

Was there ever a church record the same after the passage of 25 years or 15 years or 10 years? The fact is that the story of our life will soon end because the group of listeners will be gone. So you see if we are going to give the right trend and emphasis we must give it right away. If there are old people in the group of our influence, all we can do for them will be in five or ten years. If there are children around us, in 10 or 15 years they will no longer be children, and they will be fashioning the story of their own life. What the hand deeth to do, do with all the might, save?

A second reading of my text reminds me that life is not only a story told, but it is a brief story. A long narrative stretched out indefinitely loses its interest. It is generally the story that takes only a minute or half a minute to rehearse that arrests the attention. And that gives additional interest to the story of our life. It is a short story. Subtract from our life all the hours of necessary sleep, all the hours of incapacity through fatigue or illness, all the hours of childhood and youth before we get fairly to work, and you have abbreviated the story of life so much that you can appreciate the pessimist's remark when he says, "Thou hast made my days as a hand's breadth," and can appreciate the apostle James' expression when he compares life to "a vapor that appears for a little season and then vanishes away."

It does not take long to tell all the vicissitudes of life—the gladness and the griefs, the arrivals and the departures, the successes and the failures, the victories and the defeats, the ups and the downs. The longer we live the shorter the years. We shall get over the bewildering fatigue of selecting gifts for children and friends and see that the presents get off in time to arrive on the appropriate day when we see another advancing group of holidays. Autumnal frost so sharply chases the summer harvest, and the snow of the white blossoms of springtime come so soon after the snows of winter. It is a remark so often made that it fails to make any impression and the platitude that calls forth no reply. "How rapidly that tale is told."

My text, in referring to the years, reminds me that in 12 hours this year will forever have gone away. Ninety-nine out of the hundred years of this century will have disappeared. We have only one year of the century left.

There ought to be something especially suggestive in the last year of a century.

It ought to be a year of unparalleled industries, of unheard of consecration.

"I know she knew nothing of the marriage license, because she is engaged to another man who don't live here. I think Ben began to get desperate when the other fellow came up to see Mollie about two weeks ago. He was insanely jealous when he found that she was receiving a rival, and I heard that he took a dose of strychnine one night while the other man was visiting Mollie. He has been acting queerly ever since and Mollie has been trying to avoid him."—Atlanta Journal.

High Endorsements.

The Keeley treatment for the cure of the whiskey and the morphine habit has the endorsement of medical authorities, curative establishments and others equally entitled to respect. Besides this, the blessed fruits of the cure themselves are seen in the new lives of those who have had the benefit of the treatment. The Keeley treatment may be had at only one place in South Carolina—the Keeley Institute, Columbia. Letters of inquiry receive prompt attention. It is the desire of those in charge to give all detailed information.

A Strange Case.

"Mr. Charles West, of Ohio," says the Cincinnati Enquirer, "was playing a game of cards and his last dollar was at stake. As the cards were being dealt out he remarked: 'If the queen of hearts turns up again I hope to God that I may never speak again.' To his consternation the fateful card turned up. He attempted to utter an oath, but found that he could not articulate above a whisper. He has tried various remedial agents, but up to the present time he has not regained his voice. Many of the friends of Mr. West look upon his affliction as a visitation from God."

High Endorsements.

The Keeley treatment for the cure of the whiskey and the morphine habit has the endorsement of medical authorities, curative establishments and others equally entitled to respect. Besides this, the blessed fruits of the cure themselves are seen in the new lives of those who have had the benefit of the treatment. The Keeley treatment may be had at only one place in South Carolina—the Keeley Institute, Columbia. Letters of inquiry receive prompt attention. It is the desire of those in charge to give all detailed information.

A Strange Case.

"Mr. Charles West, of Ohio," says the Cincinnati Enquirer, "was playing a game of cards and his last dollar was at stake. As the cards were being dealt out he remarked: 'If the queen of hearts turns up again I hope to God that I may never speak again.' To his consternation the fateful card turned up. He attempted to utter an oath, but found that he could not articulate above a whisper. He has tried various remedial agents, but up to the present time he has not regained his voice. Many of the friends of Mr. West look upon his affliction as a visitation from God."

A Strange Case.

"Mr. Charles West, of Ohio," says the Cincinnati Enquirer, "was playing a game of cards and his last dollar was at stake. As the cards were being dealt out he remarked: 'If the queen of hearts turns up again I hope to God that I may never speak again.' To his consternation the fateful card turned up. He attempted to utter an oath, but found that he could not articulate above a whisper. He has tried various remedial agents, but up to the present time he has not regained his voice. Many of the friends of Mr. West look upon his affliction as a visitation from God."

A Strange Case.

"Mr. Charles West, of Ohio," says the Cincinnati Enquirer, "was playing a game of cards and his last dollar was at stake. As the cards were being dealt out he remarked: 'If the queen of hearts turns up again I hope to God that I may never speak again.' To his consternation the fateful card turned up. He attempted to utter an oath, but found that he could not articulate above a whisper. He has tried various remedial agents, but up to the present time he has not regained his voice. Many of the friends of Mr. West look upon his affliction as a visitation from God."

A Strange Case.

"Mr. Charles West, of Ohio," says the Cincinnati Enquirer, "was playing a game of cards and his last dollar was at stake. As the cards were being dealt out he remarked: 'If the queen of hearts turns up again I hope to God that I may never speak again.' To his consternation the fateful card turned up. He attempted to utter an oath, but found that he could not articulate above a whisper. He has tried various remedial agents, but up to the present time he has not regained his voice. Many of the friends of Mr. West look upon his affliction as a visitation from God."

A Strange Case.

"Mr. Charles West, of Ohio," says the Cincinnati Enquirer, "was playing a game of cards and his last dollar was at stake. As the cards were being dealt out he remarked: 'If the queen of hearts turns up again I hope to God that I may never speak again.' To his consternation the fateful card turned up. He attempted to utter an oath, but found that he could not articulate above a whisper. He has tried various remedial agents, but up to the present time he has not regained his voice. Many of the friends of Mr. West look upon his affliction as a visitation from God."

A Strange Case.