The St. Tammany Farmer.

"The Blessings of Government, Like the Dew from Heaven, Should Descend Alike Upon the Rich and the Poor."

W. G. KENTZEL, Editor. COVINGTON, ST. TAMMANY PARISH, LA., SATURDAY, MARCH 25, 1899. VOL. XXIV.—NO. 13.

SONG OF THE TRAMP.

With garments tattered and torn,
With eyes that were blear and red,
Remnants of shoes on his feet,
And the ghost of a hat on his head,
On through the sunshine and rain,
Year in and year out he strode,
And anon as he strayed by meadow and glade,
He sang this song of the road:

Tramp, tramp, tramp,
O why will folks try to be good.
Tramp, tramp, tramp,
Why, I would not work if I could;
Tramp, tramp, tramp,
Oh, this is the life for me,
Tramp, tramp, tramp,
Toward the shore of eternity.

Tramp, tramp, tramp,
The appetite never flags,
Though I know that they call me a scamp,
And look with disdain on my rags.
Tramp, tramp, tramp,
What do I care for their jeers?
Give me the barn for a camp,
And what care I for their sneers.

Tramp, tramp, tramp,
By the farmhouse thrifty and white;
Tramp right up
To the back door and ask for a bite.
Tramp, tramp, tramp,
Comes the farmer and hands me a kick,
Says that unless I tramp,
He'll mellow my head with a brick

Tramp, tramp, tramp,
With a heart that is light as air;
Tramp, tramp, tramp,
And never a worry or care,
So let them call me a scamp,
Riches and honor for some,
But for me the life of a tramp.
—H. Tims, in Minneapolis Journal.

At Cross Purposes

Mrs. Crushington (a widow), 39; Florence Crushington (her daughter), 18; Tittums (her kitten), 6 months; Hon. George Hilton, 35.

Scene: Mrs. Crushington's drawing-room. Mrs. C. and her daughter are chatting.

MRS. C—He hasn't called yet. He can't be going to disappoint us! And I told them to say I was not at home to anyone else.

Flor.—How nice of you, mother dear!

Mrs. C.—My dear child, you are very good to say so, even when there is danger of our not admitting Frank Romer.

Flor.—I don't care for Frank Romer.

Mrs. C.—Don't you, really? Then you needn't have given him four dances at the county ball.

Flor.—Now, Madame Propriety, don't throw stones, or I shall bring you to book for dancing two sets of Lancers, and—yes, actually—one waltz with the Honorable George at that self-same ball. At your age, too! I'm quite ashamed of you. When he calls this afternoon I shall give him a good scolding.

Mrs. C.—Florence, you are too flippant.

Flor.—So is Tittums, and so are you. We're all flippant? Aren't we, Tittums?

Tit.—Mew! mew!

Mrs. C.—When George Hilton arrives perhaps you would not mind leaving us alone for a few minutes?

Flor.—I was just about to ask you whether you couldn't find some pretext for being called away.

Mrs. C.—I?

Flor.—Well, you know, it's difficult when the dragon is present.

Mrs. C.—The dragon—difficult! What on earth do you mean?

Flor.—I mean that he might feel awkward even before you, dearest. Give me ten minutes.

Mrs. C.—You absurd child! Ha, ha, I begin to see. And so you actually have the effrontery to presume that our expected caller is coming here to propose for your hand?

Flor.—Well, what else could I assume? If not, why all this planning and scheming to get him here alone?

Mrs. C.—Florence, I am a widow.

Flor.—Yes, and a very respectable one. You'll be antique presently.

Mrs. C.—I am on the sunny side of forty.

Flor.—The days are getting terribly short, don't you think?

Mrs. C.—My glass tells me that I am still not devoid of attractions.

Flor.—Matronly attractions.

Mrs. C.—You yourself need a father's advice and counsel.

Flor.—A husband's.

Mrs. C.—No, a father's. I hope to be able to present you with such a father in—

Flor.—George Hilton?

Mrs. C.—The same.

Flor.—You absurd mother! Now I begin to understand. And so you actually have the effrontery to assume—

Mrs. C.—Silence, will you!

Flor.—No. I won't!

Mrs. C.—To have one's child turn upon one! It's unnatural!

Flor.—That a mother should try to mar her daughter's prospects—it's abominable.

Mrs. C.—A mere chit like you! Young enough to be his daughter!

Flor.—And you might have been his mother!

Tit.—Mew, mew!

Flor.—What does it want, the dear?

Mrs. C.—Your kitten thinks it's near tea time. You can have yours in the breakfast-room.

Flor.—I shall have mine here.

Mrs. C.—So you insist?

Flor.—I do insist.

Mrs. C.—You will spoil the game for us both.

Flor.—I didn't know Mr. Hilton was a pheasant!

Mrs. C.—Very well! I shall tell them not to admit him.

Flor.—You are too late, my lady. He is coming up the stairs.

Mrs. C.—Those electric bells!

(A servant announces "The Hon. George Hilton.")

Mrs. C.—My dear Mr. Hilton, how good of you to keep your promise!

Flor.—And a promise made in the park, too.

Hil.—I am most pleased to find you in. Ah, that beautiful Persian kitten! (Coaxing it.)

Tit.—Mew, mew!

Mrs. C.—And you love kittens?

Hil.—Well, love is rather a strong word.

Flor.—Of course it is. How absurd you are, mother dear!

Mrs. C.—Yes, love is a strange word, Mr. Hilton.

Hil.—Few people seem to think so nowadays. The modern equivalent is too often caprice or fancy.

Mrs. C.—Florence, dear, would you mind fetching that photograph of Tittums which Mr. Romer took for you?

Flor.—I will ring for it, dearest. (Does so.) I caught a nasty cold, Mr. Hilton, at the county ball.

Mrs. C.—Yes, poor child! I quite forgot.

Hil.—I'm so sorry, and I heard you danced so well, too.

Flor.—Why weren't you there?

Hil.—Because I don't care for dancing now. Mr. Romer dances well, doesn't he?

Flor.—Pretty well.

Mrs. C.—Now that's not fair, Florrie. You never dance a second time with a bad dancer, and with Mr. Romer you—

Flor.—Mother, there's a spider in your hair.

Mrs. C.—A spider! O!

Hil.—I don't see it.

Flor.—It's off now.

Hil.—Mrs. Crushington, I want you to do me a favor.

Mrs. C.—It is granted.

Hil.—It may seem a great liberty to take on so short an acquaintance.

Mrs. C.—Had not Florence better leave the room?

Hil.—Why should she? My favor concerns her as much as yourself.

Flor. (aside)—I said so!

Mrs. C. (aside)—I knew it!

Hil.—Do you love this kitten very much?

Mrs. C.—As if one would be so foolish as to love a kitten!

Flor.—Of course not. It's a pretty plaything, that's all.

Tit.—Mew, mew!

Hil.—I know some one who is dying to possess such a kitten as this.

Mrs. C.—He may have this one with pleasure.

Hil.—Then you would really not mind parting with it?

Mrs. C. (aside)—What has this to do with it? (Aloud) Not in the least. Anything to oblige you, dear Mr. Hilton.

Hil.—How delightful of you! Then I will send Tittums out to Australia, if I may, by the very next boat. I hope you won't mind the voyage, Tittums!

Tit.—Mew, mew!

Mrs. C.—Send her wherever you like—to the north pole or the equator. And now, what is your favor? I am dying to grant it.

Hil.—You have granted it.

Flor.—What, Tittums?

Hil.—Yes, Tittums! Don't you think that's quite enough to ask for one afternoon, you generous beings?

Mrs. C.—So that's all?

Hil.—Quite.

A strained and desultory conversation follows for about five minutes. Hilton rises to go.

Mrs. C.—Good day, Mr. Hilton.

Flor.—Would it be too inquisitive to ask who is your Australian friend?

Hil.—Not at all. I hope to introduce her to you both some day.

Mrs. C.—Her!

Hil.—Yes, Miss Calthorpe—my fiancee.

Mrs. C.—Your fiancee!

Hil.—Didn't you know I was engaged? Well, it is rather a secret. But I don't mind telling you. She's the sweetest girl in the world, and I'm the luckiest man!

Mrs. C. (icily)—How charming! Good afternoon.

Flor.—Really, Mr. Hilton, it seems terribly ungracious, but I don't think I could part with Tittums. She is my own little kitten, and has wound herself round my heart. Haven't you, darling?

Tit—Mew, mew!

Hil.—As you please, Miss Crushington; but I wish you hadn't raised my hopes to dash them. Good afternoon. (Exit.)

Flor.—Raised his hopes to dash them, indeed!

Mrs. C.—My dear, the man's a beast!

Tit.—Mew, mew!—Black and White.

THE BIGGEST WEDDING.

Was That in Which Alexander the Great Figured as the Bridegroom.

On the day that Alexander the Great was married no fewer than 20,202 persons in one ceremony were made husbands and wives. This seems impossible, but the event really took place, as historical records tell us. This monster wedding occurred upon the conquest by Alexander the Great of Persia, which was then ruled over by King Darius.

Alexander married Statira, the daughter of the conquered king, and decreed that 100 of his chief officers should be married to 100 ladies from the noblest Persian and Medean families. In addition to this, he stipulated that 10,000 of his Greek soldiers should marry 10,000 Asiatic women.

When everything was settled a vast pavilion was erected, the pillars of which were six feet high. One hundred gorgeous chambers adjoined this for the 100 noble bridegrooms, while for the remaining 10,000 an outer court was inclosed, outside of which tables were spread for the multitude. Each pair had seats, and ranged themselves in semicircles round the royal throne. Of course the priests could not marry this vast number of couples in the ordinary way, so Alexander the Great devised a very simple ceremony. He gave his hand to Statira and kissed her—an example that all the bridegrooms followed.

Thus ended the ceremony, and that vast number were married. Then followed the festival, which lasted five days, the grandeur of which has never been equaled since.—Cincinnati Enquirer.

Getting Even.

It is not always easy to punish a boor without losing one's temper, but a London paper tells how a boatload of sailors, on shore leave from a man-of-war, did it good-naturedly and without violence. As they journeyed up the roadway into the Cornish village a gentleman's wagonette passed. One of the tars thoughtlessly jumped on the step behind. "Git orf there!" shouted the coachman, and being a churlish sort of fellow he lashed the sailor viciously across the face with his whip. That was enough. In an instant the other 11 blues had closed round and stopped the trap, the boatswain's mate in command. "'Tention!" cried he, and 'tention there was. "Dismount the gun!" he shouted, and it seemed as if every bluejacket carried a whole carpenter's outfit. In three minutes they had taken the wagonette into 172 pieces, and that without so much as scratching one bit of paint or losing a solitary screw. They laid them all out neatly on the stony road, and the boatswain's mate, after inspecting the job, cried: "Good! Dismiss!"—Youth's Companion.

FOREHANDED GRAVEDIGGER.

Provision Made for Si Johnson in the "Dreadful Cold" Connecticut Winters.

One day late in November a commercial traveler from New York was walking aimlessly through the graveyard in a little village in Connecticut. It was a dreary looking place. The few trees which had been planted there by the friends of those sleeping underground were bare of leaves, and the wind made their branches rub together with a sound which suggested Irving's description of the haunted tree at Sleepy Hollow. The commercial traveler was about to seek a more cheerful scene for the continuation of his stroll when he caught sight of a man carrying a spade coming through the little gate which was reserved for pedestrians, the other and larger entrance being used by those who rode in carriages—or otherwise.

"Business pretty brisk around here?" asked the drummer, throwing away his cigar and joining the man with the spade.

"Not very," replied the man as he bent to measure off a parallelogram eight feet by four. "Only two funerals since August and one of those was a baby's, so I only got half price for diggin' the grave."

The business of the gravedigger was not exactly what the drummer had referred to, but he let the matter drop, and, seating himself on a large, flat stone in the vicinity of the parallelogram, watched the progress of excavation with apparent interest.

"You haven't a very imposing array of monuments in this cemetery," he remarked, casting his eye over the few rows of plain, mossgrown headstones, from which here and there a slab of clean, shining marble plainly told the story of its late arrival.

"No, we haven't a very attractive place here," the gravedigger reluctantly admitted. "You see, the folks in this town are mostly poor, and those that ain't poor are too stingy to invest in marble statuary for their monuments. Only about one family in ten thinks of giving me even a drink of cider for fixing up their graves and lining 'em with leaves so as to kinder soften the sound of the box as it goes down."

The drummer drew a flask from his pocket and handed it to the man with the spade.

"That's rather cold work you're doing," he said: "Better have a drink."

"Thank-ye, sir," said the gravedigger, handing back the bottle.

"By the way," said the drummer, as he restored it to his pocket, "whose grave is that you're digging now?"

"Old Si Johnson's?"

"Si Johnson," repeated the drummer. "Si Johnson! It seems to me I have heard the name before. Isn't he father of the man that keeps the store up at the Corners?"

"Yes, that's Si," answered the gravedigger, throwing up a very large shovelful of dirt which came near landing on the patent leather shoes of his questioner.

"But I didn't know that he was dead," said the drummer. "I was in his son's place this morning, and—"

"Oh! he ain't dead yet," interrupted the gravedigger, resting for a moment on his spade and contemplating the progress he had made. "He ain't dead yet, but the doctor says he can't last till New Year's, so I thought I'd better get his grave ready before the ground freezes up too hard. Dreadful cold winters we have down here in Connecticut!"

"Have another drink," said the drummer, gravely, handing over the bottle.—N. Y. Sun.

WONDERFUL FORCES.

Many New Powers in Nature Are Being Discovered in This Day.

New forces in nature are being constantly discovered, and nobody but an expert attempts to describe them with accuracy. Some of the experiments border on the miraculous. There is that one, for instance, with liquefied air in which quicksilver is frozen. The mercury is poured into a mold having a hammer shape, and is subjected to the temperature of liquid air 240 degrees below zero, from which it comes in so solid a form that it can be used to drive nails. For an hour its solidity of form is preserved. Then there is another experiment, seemingly still more marvelous. Liquefied aid is brought into contact with a lump of ice, and the latent heat in the ice boils the liquefied air. Yet water freezes at 32.

Compressed air has been developed as a great power, and is soon to be put into practical operation on certain railroads. Two cross-town car lines are to be run by it within a few weeks, and between One Hundred and Twenty-fifth street and Yonkers a locomotive run by compressed air is to be started.

Think of all the dirt and dust that would be saved the summer traveler were cars to be operated altogether by this force! Private street carriages may also ultimately be run by it. The cost is said to be slight, and the power enormous. Even without Keely's secrets, therefore, we can do very well for a decade or two, and by that time some one else will be on the track of his special and well-guarded discovery. For Nature is nothing if not prodigal with her favors, and her secrets are never intended for the special few. So soon as the majority can understand the latest of them she yields it over, and she is not half as reluctant about revealing herself as we are slow in perceiving what she extends to us. It is interesting to remember that the hitherto invisible and immaterial forces are those which within the century have been put to the highest use, and that while men have been mourning the decadence of those crafts which made the glory of other times, they have been steadily progressing into the realm of higher revelations and to excellence on a different plane.—Harper's Bazar.

His Reason.

Hooley—Oi don't see any rayson foi yure wearin' yure hair so short dis cold weather?

McLubberty—Naw; yez don't know me woife!—N. Y. Journal.

A Man's Idea of Happiness.

Nothing makes a man happier than to come home after an absence of several years and put up at the best hotel in town.—Washington (Ia.) Democrat.

ALWAYS ATTENDED FUNERALS

The Strange Habit of a Queer Little Chicago Woman and Her Grandchild.

For years there lived on the West side a little woman with bright, sharp eyes and an expressive face. Her step was slow and her shoulders bent, for she was long past the beauty of youth and the glory of middle-aged womanhood. Her small crepe bonnet was placed on perfectly arranged hair. Her black gown was trimmed with bands of crepe, and she always wore a soft black shawl thrown loosely over her shoulders. She was never seen alone, but always with her was a wee girl who called her "grandma." Few knew who the woman was or who was the child, or where they lived, but both were known to all of the prominent ministers on the West side, as well as to the undertakers and funeral directors. For years there was not a prominent funeral in that end of town but the little woman and her grandchild were in attendance. If there was really no choice in funerals they attended the one where their favorite minister prayed. But no matter who the dead had been or who the minister was in charge, or what the weather, the little woman and the child went to a funeral every day. Some West side preachers say they did not preach a funeral service in years without first shaking hands with the little woman and her grandchild, for they were always present. Some of the choir boys learned to know them and to speak and the funeral directors grew so accustomed to their presence at services for the dead that they invariably reserved two seats in a carriage for them to ride out to the cemeteries. Arriving at the cemetery, the woman and child would wander off hand in hand to some place near by, and, seated on a grave, would unwrap a package of luncheon, which they would spread out over the grave picnic fashion. When the carriages drew up for the mourners to return the little woman and the child would mingle with the rest and return to the city. That was all; no display of grief, no comments, but always that dignified silence and constant attendance. Some people tried to learn why they went to funerals, and who they were, but they never seemed to comprehend that there was anything unusual or mysterious in their manner, so no one ever found out.

Two weeks or so ago there was a large funeral on the West side that neither the woman nor child attended. The minister missed them, and thought there must be a large funeral somewhere else. The funeral director reserved the seats in the carriage, but the woman and child did not come to occupy them. The church janitor saved for the child a rose that had fallen from the casket, but she was not to be found. Nor was she seen until a few days ago. She entered the church alone. Her dark frock had a fresh band of crape and she wore a new feather and a flower in her hat. Her rosy face looked thin and her eyes were unusually dark and brilliant. The minister said, as he shook hands with her: "Where is your grandmother, my dear?"

For a moment the child was silent. Then she broke into a torrent of weeping. "Grandma's dead," she cried. "She died the last night we got home from the last funeral."—Chicago Chronicle.

THE "DIPSEY CHANTEY."

Where Rudyard Kipling Got the Peculiar Name of His Popular Poem.

Landlubbers sometimes wondered at the name of Kipling's poem, "The Dipsey Chantey." When sailors are going to do any work which needs concerted action they sing. There are different chanteys, one for each kind of work. A man sits on the capstan and roars out the chantey, and at certain words all the rest come in as a chorus, and all push or pull together. "The Dipsey Chantey" is for heaving the lead. The officers of a ship like to hear the men roaring out their chantey well, for it means that they are contented. When they are discontented they barely growl it out; and when they do not sing at all, then look out for trouble.

The chantey is used even when the wind is blowing so hard that the words are indistinguishable. When reefling down the foresail of a square-rigged vessel—and the foresail is not reefed till the wind is howling—the men will all sing: "Whisky is the lift of man," though the gale tears the song from their lips so that they cannot hear their own words; but the rhythm is so well known that they all pull on the sail together almost as well as if they could hear.

The man who sings the chantey often improvises, especially when he has a grudge against any of the officers. He will sing about a brass-bound pirate of a mate, naming no names, but the mate knowing all the time who is meant. That is about the only chance the sailorman has of freeing his mind about his officers without getting put in irons. There is one other way. When an order is given, the man to whom it is directed has to repeat it word for word, adding, "sir" at the end. If the captain roars at him in tones anything but polite: "Come aft there you!" the sailor may repeat in exactly the same surly tones: "Come aft there, you—sir," and feel more comfortable in his mind than if he had made no noise himself; for it is etiquette in the merchant marine that the officers are not to take offense at their own tones reproduced, no matter how insulting those tones may be.—N. Y. Commercial Advertiser.

The Queen and Her Ministers.

At the beginning of Queen Victoria's reign it was the rule that either Lord Melbourne or one of the secretaries of state should be in attendance upon her majesty, except when the court was at Buckingham palace or at Claremont. This custom prevailed during the first 16 years of the reign. Then it was conceded that Windsor castle was within such close touch of London that the personal attendance of a minister might be dispensed with. As railways advanced in speed and the telegraph wire spread, cobweb-like, over the land, Osborne was placed in the same category. But the queen has always had a minister in attendance at Balmoral.—Chicago Inter Ocean.

INDIAN NAMES.

They Are Generally Descriptive of the Places to Which They Are Attached.

The most of our Indian names of rivers, lakes, mountains, etc., have become so altered and disguised by the English spelling of them that it is very difficult to recover their original forms and to be quite sure of the meaning that was attached to them by the Indians. In all of those cases in which their significance can be clearly made out they are found to be simply descriptive words, as, indeed, all names were originally, the object being named from some notable feature of it, and we are perfectly safe, as a rule, in rejecting as fanciful all of those poetical meanings which have been attached to many of our Indian names. For example, the name of Winnipiseogee has been said to mean "Smile of the Great Spirit." Yet this is one of the easiest names to decipher. It is pure Algonquin—Win-nipe-s-au-kee— and means simply "Beautiful-lake-place." Winnipeg has the same meaning—"At the beautiful lake." Winnepegoes is a diminutive of this name, and means "Little Winnipeg."

This word miche "great," enters into several other Indian names. Missi-ouri is the "Great Muddy;" Michigan is the "Great Sea;" Michi-le-mackinac—now shortened into Mackinac or Mackinaw—is the "Great Turtle," a name given to the island probably because of its resemblance to a turtle.

Connecticut means "long rivet," according to Roger Williams, the first part of it being the Indian word guni, "long."

Wisconsin, called by Father Joliet Miskonsing, is said to mean "turbulent river." Ohio is an Iroquois name, and was translated by the French belle riviere, "beautiful river."

Massachusetts appears originally to have been Mos-wetuset. The last part of this name means "hill." The meaning of "mos" is not so certain. Some have rendered the name "Arrowhead hill," and have supposed it to have been given originally to a certain hill on one side of the islands in Boston harbor. Roger Williams, however, an excellent authority, says that the name means "Blue hills," and it is worthy of note that there is a range of hills not far from Boston which still bears this name.

Passamaquoddy means "Place-full-of-bears," from mawka, a bear. This word enters into a town in Pennsylvania, Mauch Chunk, which means "bear hill."

Piscataqua is the "many deer place" from attuck, a deer. The Schoodic lakes, in Maine, are the "trout lakes."—St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

MONUMENT'S VICISSITUDES.

Masterpiece Cobwebbed for Thirty Years Is at Last to Be Erected.

Monuments have had their ups and downs. Among the unfortunate it would perhaps be difficult to find one more so than that destined to honor Napoleon III. in Italy. It was decided to erect one after the war of 1859, when the French emperor crossed the Alps with his army to fight for Italian unity and independence, and, addressing the people, pronounced the famous phrase: "You must to-day be all soldiers in order to be to-morrow the free citizens of a great nation." After the campaign there was great enthusiasm throughout the country, and especially in Milan, to subscribe to a fund for a monument to the victor of Magenta and Solferino. The monument, which took the form of a magnificent equestrian statue, the masterpiece of Barzaghi, was completely finished, but, when it was on the point of being put up, popular feeling had to a large extent changed, the liberal and radical element insisted on the inappropriateness of Italy raising a memorial to the man of the coup d'etat. They forgot that Italy owed to him the liberation of Lombardy, without which the unity of the country might not perhaps have been accomplished.

So the bronze statue of the last emperor of the French was hidden away in the courtyard of a palace in Milan, where it has lain about 30 years, apparently forgotten by all, and covered by dust and spiders' webs. Now that, with the reestablishment of commercial relations between France and Italy, the political intercourse between the two countries is daily becoming more friendly, an agitation is on foot to unearth and set up the monument—not as an apotheosis of the second empire, but as an expression of the everlasting gratitude of Italy for the help received from her Latin sister.

Although we are still far from seeing this an accomplished fact, the question of the most appropriate site is being warmly discussed. The choice seems to be between Milan, where Napoleon III. made his triumphal entry at the side of Victor Emanuel, and the battlefield of Solferino, the scene of the greatest French victory of that period.—Rome Cor. London Pall Mall Gazette.

New Use for Catfish.

In Portland, Ore., the familiar catfish figures as a hardy pioneer and a valued adjunct to the street department, all because the terra cotta sewers and drains, especially those in the lower part of the city, frequently get choked. If the sewer is not broken, it can be cleaned by passing a rope through it, to be pulled backward and forward until the obstruction is loosened and removed. The deputy superintendent of streets has had a great deal of such work to look after, and the worry connected with getting the rope through has gone far toward thinning his hair. He has at last discovered a quick, sure and easy method. He goes to the river, catches a catfish, ties a string to its tail, drops it down a manhole into the sewer, and it at once stars for the river, and forces its way through any obstruction not as solid as brick, dragging the string after it. Then the deputy goes as far down the sewer as he deems necessary, and picks up the string, which he uses to draw a wire through the sewer, and with this a rope is pulled through, and the sewer is soon cleared.—Portland Oregonian.

He Knew Them Both.

She—You only know the worst side of my husband.

He—Why, certainly you cannot deny that I know his better half?—Yonkers Statesman.

FOR THE DRUMMERS.

Dr. Talmage Preaches to the Army of Commercial Travelers.

Cautions Them to Start Right on Their Journeys—Condemns Work on the Sabbath—The Duty of Employers.

(Washington. . Copyright, 1899.)

In this discourse Dr. Talmage gives words of good cheer to commercial travelers and tells of their safeguards and their opportunities; text, Nahum 2:4, "The chariots shall rage in the streets; they shall justle one against another in the broad ways; they shall seem like torches; they shall run like the lightnings."

It has been found out that many of the arts and discoveries which we supposed were peculiar to our own age are merely the restoration of the arts and discoveries of thousands of years ago. I suppose that the past centuries have forgotten more than the present century knows. It seems to me that they must have known thousands of years ago, in the days of Nineveh, of the uses of steam and its application to swift travel. In my text I hear the rush of the rail train, the clang of the wheels and the jamming of the car couplings. "The chariots shall rage in the streets; they shall justle one against another in the broad ways; they shall seem like torches; they shall run like the lightnings."

Have you ever taken your position in the night far away from a depot along the track waiting to see the rail train come at full speed? At first you heard in the distance a rumbling like the coming of a storm; then you saw the flash of the headlight of the locomotive as it turned the curve; then you saw the wilder glare of the fiery eye of the train as it came plunging toward you; then you heard the shriek of the whistle that frenzied all the echoes; then you saw the hurricane dash of cinders; then you felt the jar of the passing earthquake and you saw the shot thunderbolt of the express train. Well, it seems that we can hear the passing of a midnight express train in my text, "The chariots shall rage in the streets; they shall justle one against another in the broad ways; they shall seem like torches; they shall run like the lightnings."

I halt the train long enought to get on board, and I go through the cars, and I find three-fourths of the passengers are commercial travelers. They are a folk peculiar to themselves, easily recognized, at home on all the trains, not startled by the sudden dropping of the brakes, familiar with all the railroad signals, can tell you what is the next station, how long the train will stop, what place the passengers take luncheon at, can give you information on almost any subject, are cosmopolitan, at home everywhere from Halifax to San Francisco. They are on the eight o'clock morning train, on the noon train, on the midnight train. You take a berth in a sleeping car, and either above you or beneath you is one of these gentlemen. There are 100,000 professed commercial travelers in the United States, but 500,000 would not include all those who are sometimes engaged in this service. They spend millions of dollars every day in the hotels and in the rail trains. They have their official newspaper organ. They have their mutual benefit association, about 4,000 names on the rolls, and have already distributed more than $200,000 among the families of deceased members. They are ubiquitous, unique and tremendous for good or evil. All the tendencies of merchandise are toward their multiplication. The house that stands back on its dignity and waits for customers to come instead of going to seek bargain makers will have more and more unsalable goods on the shelf and will gradually lose its control of the markets, while the great, enterprising and successful houses will have their agents on all the trains, and "their chariots will rage in the streets, they shall justle one against another in the broad ways; they shall seem like torches; they shall run like the lightnings."

I think commercial travelers can stand a sermon of warm-hearted sympathy. If you have any words of good cheer for them, you had better utter them. If you have any good, honest prayers in their behalf, they will be greatly obliged to you. I never knew a man yet who did not like to be prayed for. I never knew a man yet that did not like to be helped. It seems to me this sermon is timely. At this season of the year there are tens of thousands of men going out to gather the spring trade. The months of February and March in all our commercial establishments are very busy months. In a few days our national perplexities will be settled, and then look out for the brightest ten years of national prosperity which this country has ever witnessed. All our astute commercial men feel that we are standing at the opening gate of wonderful prosperity. Let the manufacturers put the bands on their wheels, and the merchants open a new set of account books in place of those filled with long columns of bad debts. Let us start on a new commercial campaign. Let us drop the old tune of "Naomi," and take up "Ariel" or "Antioch."

Now you, the commercial traveler, have received orders from the head men of the firm that you are to start on a long excursions. You have your patterns all assorted and prepared. You have them put up in bundles or cases and marked. You have full instructions as to prices. You know on what prices you may retreat somewhat. You have your valise or trunk, or both, packed. If I were a stranger, I would have no right to look into that valise, but as I am your brother, I will take the liberty. I look into the valise, and I congratulate you on all these comfortable articles of apparel. The seasons are so changeable you have not taken a single precaution too many. Some night you will get out in the snow bank and have to walk three or four miles until you get to the railroad station, and you will want all these comforts and conveniences. But will you excuse me if I make a suggestion or two about this valise? You say: "Certainly; as we are having a plain, frank talk I will not be offended at any honorable suggestion."

Put in among your baggage some carefully-selected, wholesome reading. Let it be history, or a poem, or a book of pure fiction, or some volume that will give you information in regard to your line of business. Then add to that a Bible in round, beautiful type—small type is bad for the eyes anywhere, but peculiarly killing in the jolt of a rail train. Put your railroad guide and your Bible side by side—the one to show you the route through this world and the other to show you the route to the next world. "Oh," you say, "that is superfluous, for now in all the hotels, in the parlor, you will find a Bible, and in nearly all the rooms of the guests you will find one!" But, my brother, that is not your Bible. You want your own hat, your own coat, your own blanket, your own Bible. "But," you say, "I am not a Christian, and you ought not to expect me to carry a Bible." My brother, a great many people are not Christians who carry a Bible. Besides that, before you get home you might become a Christian, and you would feel awkward without a copy. Besides that, you might get bad news from home. I see you with trembling hand opening the telegram, saying: "George is dying," or "Fannie is dead; come home!" Oh, as you sit in the train, stunned with the calamity, going home, you will have no taste for fine scenery, or for conversation, and yet you must keep your thoughts employed or you will go stark mad. Then you will want a Bible whether you read it or not. It will be a comfort to have it near you—that book full of promises which have comforted other people in like calamity. Whether you study the promises or not you will want that book near you. Am I not wise when I say put in the Bible?

Now, you are all ready to start. You have your valise in the right hand and you have your blanket and shawl strap in the left hand. Good-by! May you have a prosperous journey, large sales, great percentages. Oh, there is one thing I forgot to ask you about—what train are you going to take? "Well," you say, "I will take the five o'clock Sunday afternoon train." Why? "Oh," you say, "I shall save a day by that, and on Monday morning I will be in the distant city in the commercial establishment by the time the merchants come down!" My brother, you are starting wrong. If you clip off something from the Lord's day, the Lord will clip off something from your lifetime successes. Sabbath breaking pays no better for this world than it pays for the next.

Young man, the dollar that you earn on the Sabbath is a red-hot dollar, and if you put it into a bag with 5,000 honest dollars that red-hot dollar will burn a hole through the bottom of the bag and let out all the 5,000 honest dollars with it.

But I see you change your mind, and you are going on Monday morning, and I see you take the train—Pennsylvania, or the Baltimore & Ohio, or the Hudson River, or the Erie, or the Harlem, or the New Haven train. For a few weeks now you will pass half of your time in the rail train. How are you going to occupy the time? Open the valise and take out a book and begin to read. Magnificent opportunities have our commercial travelers for gaining information above all other clerks or merchants. The best place in the world to study is a rail train. I know it by experience. Do not do as some commercial travelers do—as many of them do, as most of them do—sit reading the same newspaper over and over again and all the advertisements through and through, then sit for two or three hours calculating the profits they expect to make, then spending two or three hours looking listlessly out of the window, then spending three or four hours in the smoking car, the rastiest place in Christendom, talking with men who do not know as much as you do. Instead of that, call William Shakespeare, the dramatist, and John Ruskin, the dramatist, and Tennyson, the poet, and Bancroft and Macaulay, the historians, and Ezekiel and Paul, the inspired men of God, and ask them to sit with you and talk with you, as they will if you ask them. I hear you say: "I do wish I could get out of this business of commercial traveling. I don't like it." My brother, why don't you read yourself out? Give me a young man of ordinary intellect and good eyesight, and let him devote to valuable reading the time not actually occupied in commercial errand, and in six years he will be qualified for any position for which he is ambitious.

But you have come now near the end of your railroad travel. I can tell by the motion of the car that they are pulling the patent brakes down. The engineer rings the bell at the crossing. The train stops. "All out!" cries the conductor. You dismount from the train. You reach the hotel. The landlord is glad to see you—very glad! He stretches out his hand across the registry book with all the disinterested warmth of a brother! You are assigned an apartment. In that uninviting apartment you stay only long enough to make yourself presentable. You descend then into the reading-room, and there you find the commercial travelers sitting around a long table with a great elevation in the center covered with advertisements, while there are inkstands sunken in the bed of the table, and scattered all around rusty steel pens and patches of blotting paper. Of course you will not stay there. You saunter out among the merchants. You present your letters of introduction and authority. You begin business. Now, let me say, there are two or three things you ought to remember. First, that all the trade you get by the practice of "treating" will not stick. If you cannot get custom except by tipping a wine glass with somebody, you had better not get his custom. An old commercial traveler gives as his experience that trade got by "treating" always damages the house that gets it in one way or the other.

Again, I charge you, tell the whole truth about anything you sell. Lying commercial travelers will precede you. Lying commercial travelers will come right after you into the same store. Do not let their unfair competition tempt you from the straight line. It is an awful bargain that a man makes when he sells his goods and his soul at the same time. A young man in one of the stores of New York was selling some silks. He was binding them up when he said to the lady customer: "It is my duty to show you that there is a fracture in that silk." She looked at it and rejected the goods. The head man of the firm, hearing of it, wrote to the father of the young man in the country, saying: "Come and take your son away. He will never make a merchant." The father came in agitation, wondering what his boy had been doing, and the head man of the firm said: "Why, your son stood here at this counter and pointed out a fracture in the silk, and of course the lady wouldn't take it. We are not responsible for the ignorance of customers. Customers must look out for themselves, and we look out for ourselves. Your son will never make a merchant." "Is that all?" said the father. "Ah! I am prouder of my boy than I ever was. John, get your hat and come home."

But it is almost night, and you go back to the hotel. Now comes the mighty tug for the commercial traveler. Tell me where he spends his evenings, and I will tell you where he will spend eternity, and I will tell you what will be his worldly prospects. There is an abundance of choice. There is your room with the books. There are the Young Men's Christian association rooms. There are the week night services of the Christian churches. There is the gambling saloon. There is the theater. There is the house of infamy. Plenty of places to go to. But which, O immortal man, which? O God, which? "Well," you say, "I guess I will—I guess I will go to the theater." Do you think the tarrying in that place until 11 o'clock at night will improve your bodily health or your financial prospects or your eternal fortune? No man ever found the path to usefulness or honor or happiness or commercial success or Heaven through the American theater. "Well," you say, "I guess, then, I will go to—I guess I will go to the gambling saloon." You will first go to look. Then you will go to play. You will make $100, you will make $500, you will make $1,000 you will make $1,500—then you will lose all. Then you will borrow some money so as to start anew. You will make $50, you will make $200, you will make $600—then you will lose all. These wretches of the gambling saloon know how to tempt you. But mark this—all gamblers die poor. They may make fortunes—great fortunes—but they lose them.

"Well," you say, "if I can't go to the theater, and if I can't go to the gambling saloon, then I guess—I guess I will go to the house of infamy." Commercial travelers have told me that in the letter box at the hotel within one hour after their arrival they have had letters of evil solicitation in that direction. It is far away from home. Nobody will know it. Commercial travelers have sometimes gone in that evil path. Why not you? Halt! There are other gates of ruin through which a man may go and yet come out, but that gate has a spring lock which snaps him in forever. He who goes there is damned already. He may seem to be comparatively free for a little while, but he is only on the limits, and the satanic police have their eyes upon him to bring him in at any moment.

The hot curse of God is on that crime, and because of it there are men whose heaven was blotted out ten years ago. There is no danger that they be lost. They are lost now. I look through their glaring eyeballs down into the lowest cavern of hell! Oh, destroyed spirit, why comest thou in here to-day? Dost think I have the power to break open the barred gateway of the penitentiary of the damned? There is a passage in Proverbs I somewhat hesitate to read, but I do not hesitate long. "At the window of my house I looked through my casement and beheld among the simple ones, I discerned among the youths, a young man void of understanding, passing through the street near her corner, and he went the way to her house, in the twilight, in the evening, in the black and dark night. He goeth after her straightway, as an ox goeth to the slaughter, or as a fool to the correction of the stocks, till a dart strikes through his liver."

But now the question is still open, Where will you spend your evening? Oh, commercial travelers, how much will you give me to put you on the right track? Without charging you a farthing I will prescribe for you a plan which will save you for this world and the next if you will take it. Go before you leave home to the Young Men's Christian association of the city where you live. Get from them letters of introduction. Carry them out to the towns and cities where you go. If there be no association in the place you visit, then present them at the door of Christian churches and hand them over to the pastors. Be not slow to arise in the devotional meeting and say: "I am a commercial traveler. I am far away from home, and I come in here to-night to seek Christian society." The best houses and the highest style of amusement will open before you, and instead of your being dependent upon the leprous crew who hang around the hotels, wanting to show you all the slums of the city on the one condition that you will pay their expenses, you will get the benediction of God in every town you visit. Remember this, that whatever place you visit bad influences will seek you out. Good influences you must seek out.

O commercial travelers, I pray for you the all sustaining grace of God! There are two kinds of days when you are especially in need of Divine grace. The one, the day when you have no success—when you fail to make a sale, and you are very much disappointed, and you go back to your hotel discomfited. That night you will be tempted to go to strong drink and rush into bad surroundings. The other day when you will especially need Divine grace will be when you have a day of great success and the devil tells you you must go and celebrate that success. Then you will want the grace of God to restrain you from rollicking indulgence. Yes, there will be a third day when you will need to be Christians, and that will be the last day of your life. I do not know where you will spend it. Perhaps in your house, more probably in a rail car, or a steamer, or the strange hotel. I see you on your last commercial errand. You have bidden good-by to the family at home for the last time. The train of your earthly existence is nearing the depot of the grave. The brakes are falling. The bell rings at the terminus. The train stops. All out for eternity. Show your ticket now for getting into the gates of the shining city—the red tic