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## TALMAGE'S SERMON.

AMUSEMENTS THE SUBJECT ON LAST SUNDAY.

"Let the Young Men Now Arise and Play Before Us"—Second Sermon, Chapter II, Verse 14—Sports as a Means to an End—The Home Life.

(Copyright, 1901, by Louis Klopsch, N. Y.) Washington, May 19.—This discourse of Dr. Talmage is in accord with all innocent hilarities, while it reprehends amusements that belittle or deprave; text, II Samuel ii, 14, "Let the young men now arise and play before us."

There are two armies encamped by the pool of Gibeon. The time hangs heavily on their hands. One army proposes a game of sword fencing. Nothing could be more healthful and innocent. The other army accepts the challenge. Twelve men against 12 men, the sport open. But something went awfully. Perhaps one of the swordsmen got an unlucky clip or in some way had his eye aroused and that which opened in sportfulness ended in violence, each one taking his contestant by the hair and with the sword thrusting him in the side, so that that which opened in innocent fun ended in the massacre of all the 24 sportsmen. Was there ever a better illustration of what was true then and is true now—that that which is innocent may be made destructive?

What of a worldly nature is more important and strengthening and innocent than amusement, and yet what has counted more victims? I have no sympathy with a straightjacket religion. This is a very bright world to me, and I propose to do all I can to make it bright for others. I never could keep step to a dead march. A book years ago issued says that a Christian man has a right to some amusements. For instance, if he comes home at night weary from his work and, feeling the need of recreation, puts on his slippers and goes into his garret and walks lively round the floor several times there can be no harm in it. I believe the church of God made a great mistake in trying to suppress the sports of men of youth and drive out from men their love of amusement. If God ever implanted anything in us, he implanted this desire. But instead of providing this demand of our nature the church of God has for the main part ignored it. As in a riot the mayor plants a battery at the end of the street and has it fired off, so that every thing is cut down that happens to stand in the range, the good as well as the bad, so there are men in the church who plant their batteries of condemnation and fire away indiscriminately. Everything is condemned. But Paul the apostle commends those who use the world without abusing it, and in the natural world God has done everything to please and amuse us. In poetic figure we sometimes speak of natural objects as being in pain, but it is a mere fancy. Poets say the clouds weep, but they never yet shed a tear, and that winds sigh, but they never did have trouble, and that the storm howls, but it never lost its temper. The world is a rose and the universe a garland.

### Find Out for Yourself.

I project certain principles by which you may judge in regard to any amusement or recreation, finding out for yourself whether it is right or wrong.

I remark, in the first place, that you can judge of the moral character of any amusement by its healthful result or by its baleful reaction. There are people who seem made up of hard facts. They are a combination of multiplication tables and statistics. If you show them an exquisite picture they will begin to discuss the pigments involved in the coloring. If you show them a beautiful rose they will submit it to a botanical analysis, which is only the post mortem examination of a flower. They have no rebound in their nature. They never do anything more than smile. There are no great tides of feeling surging up from the depths of their soul in billow after billow of reverberating laughter. They seem as if nature had built them by contract and made a bungling job out of it. But, blessed be God, there are people in the world who have bright faces and whose life is a song, an anthem, a pean of victory. Even their troubles are like the vines that crawl up the side of a great tower on the top of which the sunlight sits and the soft airs of summer hold perpetual carnival. They are the people you like to have come to your house; they are the people I like to have come to my house. If you but touch the hem of their garments you are healed.

Now, it is these exhilarant and sympathetic and warm hearted people that are most tempted to pernicious amusements. In proportion as a ship is swift it wants a strong helmsman, in proportion as a horse is gay it wants a stout driver, and these people of exuberant nature will do well to look at the reaction of all their amusements. If an amusement sends you home at night nervous, so that you cannot

sleep, and you rise up in the morning not because you are slept out, but because your duty drags you from your slumbers, you have been where you ought not to have been. There are amusements that send a man next day to his work with his eyes bloodshot, yawning, stupid, nauseated, and they are wrong kinds of amusement. They are entertainments that give a man disgust with the drudgery of life, with tools because they are not swords, with working aprons because they are not robes, with cattle because they are not infuriated bulls of the arena. If any amusement sends you home longing for a life of romance and thrilling adventure, love that takes poison and shoots itself, moonlight adventures and hair-breadth escapes, you may depend upon it that you are in the sacrificed victim of unsanctified pleasure. Our recreations are intended to build us up and if they pull us down as to our moral as well as to our physical strength you may come to the conclusion that they are obnoxious.

**Live Within Your Means.**  
Still further, those amusements are wrong which lead you into expenditure beyond your means. Money spent in recreation is not thrown away. It is all folly for us to come from a place of amusement feeling that we have wasted our money and time. You may say it has made an investment worth more than the transaction that yielded you hundreds of thousands of dollars. But how many properties have been riddled by costly amusements.

The first time I ever saw the city—it was the city of Philadelphia—I was a mere lad. I stopped at a hotel, and I remember in the eventide one of these men pined me with his infernal art. He saw I was green. He wanted to show me the sights of the town. He painted the path of sin until it looked like emerald, but I was afraid of him. I shoved back from the basilisk—I made up my mind he was a basilisk. I remember how he wheeled his chair round in front of me and, with a centered and diabolical effort attempted to destroy my soul, but there were good angels in the air that night. It was no good resolution on my part, but it was the all encompassing grace of a good God that delivered me. Beware, beware, O young man! "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof is death."

The table has been robbed to pay the club. The champagne has cheated the children's wardrobe. The carousing party has burned up the boy's primer. The tablecloth of the corner saloon is in debt to the wife's faded dress. Excursions that in a day make a tour around a whole month's wages ladies whose lifetime business it is to "go shopping," large bets on horses, have their counterparts in uneducated children, bankruptcies that shock the money market and appall the church and that send drunkenness staggering across the richly figured carpet of the mansion and dashing into the mirror and drowning out the carol of music with the whooping of bloated sons come home to break their old mother's heart.

**Look Out for the Leakage.**  
Merchant, is there a disarrangement in your accounts? Is there a leakage in your money drawer? Did the cash account come out right last night? I will tell you. There is a young man in your store wandering off into bad amusements. The salary you give him may meet lawful expenditures, but not the sinful indulgences in which he has entered, and he takes by theft that which you do not give him in lawful salary.

How brightly the path of unrestrained amusement opens! The young man says: "Now I am off for a good time. Never mind economy. I'll get money somehow. What a fine road! What a beautiful day for a ride! Crack the whip, and over the turnpike! Come, boys, fill high your glasses. Drink! Long life, health, plenty of rides just like this!" Hardworking men hear the clatter of the hoofs and look up and say: "Why, I wonder where those fellows get their money from. We have to toil and drudge. They do nothing." To these gay men life is a thrill and excitement. They stare at other people and in turn are stared at. The watch chain jingles. The cup foams. The cheeks flush. The eyes flash. The midnight hears their guffaw. They swagger. They jostle decent men off the sidewalk. They take the name of God in vain. They parody the hymn they learned at their mother's knee, and to all pictures of coming disaster they cry out, "Who cares!" and to the counsel of some Christian friend, "Who are you?"

Passing along the street some night you hear a shriek in a grogshop, the rattle of the watchman's club, the rush of the police. What is the matter now? Oh, this reckless young man has been killed in a grogshop fight. Carry him home to his father's house. Parents will come down and wash his wounds and close his eyes in death. They forgive him all he ever did, although he cannot in his silence ask it. The prodigal has got home at last. Mother will go to her little garden and get the sweetest flowers and twist them into a chaplet for the silent heart of the

wayward boy and push back from the bloated brow the long locks that were once her pride. And the air will be rent with the agony. The great dramatist says, "How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is to have a thankless child."

**Sports a Means to an End.**  
Your sports are merely means to an end. They are alleviations and helps. The arm of toil is the only arm strong enough to bring up the bucket out of the deep well of pleasure. Amusement is only the bower where business and philanthropy rest while on their way to stirring achievements. Amusements are merely the vines that grow about the anvil of toil and the blossoming of the hammers. Alas for the man who spends his life in laboriously doing nothing, his days in hunting up lounging places and loungers, his nights in seeking out some gaslight foolery! The man who always has on his sporting jacket, ready to hunt for game in the mountain or fish in the brook, with no time to pray or work or read, is not so well off as the greyhound that runs by his side or the fly bait with which he whips the stream. A man who does not work does not know how to play. If God had intended us to do nothing but laugh he would not have given us shoulders with which to lift and hands with which to work and brains with which to think. The amusements of life are merely the orchestra playing while the great tragedy of life plunges through its five acts—infancy, childhood, manhood, old age and death. Then exit the last earthly opportunity. Enter the overwhelming realities of an eternal world!

I go further and say that all those amusements are wrong which lead into bad company. If you go to any place where you have to associate with the intemperate, with the unclean, with the abandoned, however well they may be dressed, in the name of God quit it. They will despoil your nature. They will undermine your moral character. They will drop you when you are destroyed. They will not give one cent to support your children when you are dead. They will weep not one tear at your burial.

**The Final Scene.**  
I was summoned to his deathbed. I hastened. I entered the room. I found him, to my surprise, lying in full everyday dress on the top of the couch. I put out my hand. He grasped it excitedly and said, "Sit down, Mr. Talmage, right there." I sat down. He said: "Last night I saw my mother, who has been dead twenty years, and she sat just where you sit now. It was no dream. I was wide awake. There was no delusion in the matter. I saw her just as plainly as I see you. Wife, I wish you would take these strings off me. There are strings spun all around my body. I wish you would take them off me." I saw it was delirium. "Oh," replied his wife, "my dear, there is nothing there." He went on and said: "Just where you sit, Mr. Talmage, my mother sat. She said to me, 'Henry, I do wish you would do better.' I got out of bed and put my arms around her and said: 'Mother, I want to do better. I have been trying to do better. Won't you help me to do better? You used to help me.' No mistake about it, no delusion. I saw her—the cap and the apron and the spectacles, just as she used to look twenty years ago. But I do wish you would take these strings away. They annoy me so! I can hardly talk. Won't you take them away?" I knelt down and prayed, conscious of the fact that he did not realize what I was saying. I got up. I said: "Goodby. I hope you will be better soon. He said, 'Goodby, goodby.'"

That night his soul went up to the God who gave it. Arrangements were made for the obsequies. Some said: "Don't bring him in the church; he is too dissolute." "Oh," I said, "bring him in. He was a good friend of mine while he was alive, and I shall stand by him now that he is dead. Bring him to the church."

**Delight in the Home Life.**  
Again, any amusement that gives you a distaste for domestic life is bad. How many bright domestic circles have been broken up by sinful amusements! The father went off. The mother went off. The child went off. There are today the fragments before me of blasted households. Oh, if you have wandered away, I would like to charm you back by the sound of that one word, "home." Do you not know that you have but little more time to give to domestic welfare? Do you not see, father, that your children are soon to go out in the world, and all the influence for good you are to have over them you must have now? Death will break in on your conjugal relations, and alas if you have to stand over the grave of one who perished from your neglect!

Ah, my friends there is an hour coming when our past life will probably pass before us in review. It will be our last hour. If from our death pillow we have to look back and see a life spent in sinful amusement, there will be a dart that will strike through our soul sharper than the dagger with which Virginian slew his child. The memory of the past will make us quake like Macbeth.

## FARM AND GARDEN.

MATTERS OF INTEREST TO AGRICULTURISTS.

Some Up-to-Date Hints About Cultivation of the Soil and Yields Thereof—Horticulture, Viticulture and Floriculture.

### The Sand Plum.

In a book written by Professor Waugh, on plum culture, he prints a letter received by him from D. M. Adams, of Sumner county, Kansas, on the sand plum. We believe it will be interesting to our readers and so reproduce it here:

"This plum grows wild in this country along the Arkansas river. The best patch of wild ones I have seen was on the bank of the Arkansas at the mouth of Slate Creek, a few miles above Gueda Springs. There was about forty acres in the patch that had been left in its natural state. The ground looked like a barren sandbank. There was no grass or weeds or other shrubbery, except a few wild grape vines. It was a hot day in August. The sand was so hot that the boys could not walk over it in their bare feet. The bushes grew down to high water mark in the river. Most of the hills were about ten feet above the level of the river. The person that owned the land sold the fruit and let us pick it. They watched and had it picked clean as they went. It was about the middle of August. They had been picking for a month and thought there would be plums there for another month. The bushes were from three to six feet high. The plums were brown, the size of a May cherry, the size of a Damson plum. Some were a bright scarlet, the color of a cherry; others were a bright yellow or amber color. Where they had not been picked, the bushes were bending to the ground with their load of fruit. The fruit was so thick as almost to hide the leaves. It was the grandest sight in the fruit line that I ever saw. They looked like a large flower garden at a short distance. We cultivate them in our yards and gardens. All you have to do is to set out a few bushes. Soon they will spread until they make a thickset that one cannot walk through. When they are in bloom they look like a bank of snow. They begin to ripen at about the same time as wheat, and continue to ripen for six weeks to two months. They do not all ripen on the same bush at once. There will be ripe ones and others perfectly green on the same limb at the same time. They are one of the best fruits for cooking that grow. We have a patch of four or five square rods. It gives us all we want while they are going, and then we have a supply for canning. Here is one of the most valuable fruits. Some of the small-sized plums have a bitter taste, still are very juicy and acid. I do not know how they will succeed further north. Since I have been here I have sent several lots of seeds and roots to different parties in different states, but have never received reports from any of them. I sent a lot of seed to a nurseryman in Indiana. He advertised them in his catalogue as Kansas dwarf plums."

### An Appeal to Breeders.

The committee representing Poland-China, composed of R. D. Burnham, H. M. Kirkpatrick and Frank D. Winn, makes an appeal to the Poland-China breeders throughout the United States for help in making the Kansas City show the great success it promises to be with the support of the liberal spirited breeders of the United States. The condition of the Poland-China breed in this show is most unfortunate in having no association or Record Company behind it. When the Kansas City Stock Yards Company offered \$500 to each breed on condition that this amount be duplicated by each breed, the Berkshire and Duroc Jersey Record Associations made the guarantee, while the \$500 of the Poland-Chinas had to be guaranteed immediately by the three members of the committee. The committee wishes it to be distinctly understood that all the work they are doing in condition with this show is entirely gratis and that in addition to this the current expenses which have to be met are being taken care of personally and will have to be until after the show and besides this, each of the three members have made a liberal subscription to the special prize fund.

It would not be fair to even think that the breeders of the country who should be as much interested in this show as the committee members, will refuse to aid this great undertaking. The \$2,500 to be raised for the state fair list is about all provided for and a good portion of the \$2,500 for specials to be raised by the breeders has already been pledged, but there is yet considerable to be raised which can be done easily by a little help from each. It is not expected that breeders living at a distance will give a large amount, but they can afford to give something and the committee wants it understood that anything offered will be gratefully accepted. If you do not feel able to give \$25, give \$10 and if not \$10 then give \$1. There are thou-

### Horticultural Items.

According to a man who is said to be the biggest dealer in palms in New York, some 6,000,000 of them were distributed throughout the country for church use on the Sunday previous to Easter day.

From Dalmatia has come a perennial cabbage, which forms the principal food of hundreds of families in Dalmatia. It grows to a height of five feet and bears tender leaves throughout the winter. These are picked singly or the whole head is cut and the stems sprout again. It stands in the fields for three or four years.

A table, published in the annual report of the department of agriculture, is enlightening as to the amount of money the people of the United States spent in purchasing favorite flowers at retail in 1899—roses, \$6,000,000; carnations, \$4,000,000; violets, \$750,000; chrysanthemums, \$500,000; miscellaneous, including lilies, \$1,250,000. These vast sums found their way into the pockets of nearly 100,000 producers and retailers.

Cleveland has a home gardening association which encourages children to cultivate flowers at home. Last spring the association distributed to children 50,000 penny packages of flower seeds, accompanied with printed instructions how to prepare the soil, plant and water. The teachers supplemented these instructions by talks. In the fall exhibitions were held in many schools, which revealed the fact that about 75 per cent of the efforts of the children were successful.

Flour and water to be used in thickening a gravy can be much more quickly and satisfactorily blended by the use of an egg beater than by stirring with a spoon.

sands of Poland-China breeders, and even \$1 from each would more than raise the money, although there are few breeders who could not afford to give at least \$5. The subscription blanks are now being sent out and it is to be hoped that no breeder will return same without something filled in.

The Record Companies have practically refused to take an interest in the show, the state fairs have cut the premium list down on hogs until no exhibitor can win enough money to pay expenses and it is due to the three members of the committee who are working untiringly to make this show a grand success and when the subscription blanks are sent around that a donation of some kind be made. This is a breeders' show and nobody but the breeders will be benefited and each should see that he does his part. There is a friendly rivalry between the two breeds as to who will make the best show and have the most attractive premium list. Will the representatives of the great breed of Poland-Chinas stand still and see their favorite outdone? Consider this when filling out your subscription blank, it is the earnest request of the management.

### Is the Robin a Friend or Foe?

An Illinois professor, who has made a study of birds and bird-life, says:

Gardeners have long looked on the robin with suspicion; its abundance, its size, its boldness in entering our gardens and orchards, render him quite a factor for the weal or woe of the fruit grower; so it has received an unusual share of attention from investigators. Even when the snows of winter linger late the robins come at their appointed time and content themselves with last year's sumach or wild grapes. Once the lawns are clear they descend to them and subsist chiefly on fly larvae, of these 175 have been counted in a single stomach. As the season advances the diet is more varied, larvae of many kinds, beetles, grasshoppers and other ground insects receiving attention. During March twenty per cent of their food is cutworms; in April beetles are often in the majority; but up to the end of May, ninety-five per cent of their food is insects. Then comes a change. During June—I use figures compiled for our own state—fifty-five per cent is fruit, in July this figure rises to seventy-nine per cent, in August it is fifty-six but more than half of this is wild cherries. For the balance of the year fruit predominates, wild grapes being most favored but forty-one different kinds of wild berries have been found in the stomachs. For the whole year sixty-five per cent of the food is insects, twenty-five domestic and ten per cent wild fruit. Of the insects we find that forty-three per cent are injurious and thirty-six per cent beneficial species, while twenty-one per cent are neutral. The question becomes very complicated for we would not only have to know the value of the fruit, but the damage done by the injurious species, including those that would have been destroyed by the beneficial species, and other details, all reduced to dollars and cents. It is evident we cannot enter on this subject here, but it has been worked out thoroughly and carefully elsewhere, and in concluding an exhaustive paper on the subject Professor Forbes says: "I, for my part, do not believe that the horticulturist can sell his small fruits anywhere in the ordinary markets of the world at so high a price as to the robin, provided he uses diligence that the little huckster does not overreach him in the bargain."

### Creameries and Cheese Factories.

One of the drawbacks to the development of the dairy industry in any state is the bad work done by traveling salesmen in organizing co-operative companies and taking contracts to erect buildings at prices far above what are right. This sort of business has brought the co-operative creamery into disrepute in many sections. We do not object to the agents of the machinery manufacturers building up their business by every legitimate means, but we do object to the farmers being plundered. It frequently happens that the charges by these agents are more than double what they should be. In Missouri the matter has been quite fully investigated with the following results:

"From reports received from a number of the managers of creameries and cheese factories that are doing a satisfactory business in different parts of the state, we would say that a plant for making cheese only, having a capacity of 4,000 pounds of milk per day, can be erected for \$800 to \$1,000, which includes \$500 to \$600 as the cost of the building. For a plant with a capacity of 6,000 to 10,000 pounds of milk per day, the building should be erected for \$1,000 to \$1,500 and equipped for about \$500, making a total cost of \$1,500 to \$2,000. From the same source was received the statement that a creamery plant of the capacity of 8,000 to 10,000 pounds of milk per day should be built and equipped for from \$1,700 to \$2,900. One manager reports, 'we contracted for our plant complete for \$3,950 but we could build now and equip from any reliable creamery supply house for \$1,000 less money.' Another says, 'we paid \$4,400, under contract, but could be put up now for \$2,000.' Another says, 'a building should be put up for \$700 and equipped for butter making for about \$1,000, but ours cost in the first place \$3,300, and much of the machinery was worthless.'"

The egg contains a variety of substances, and so the food of the hen must be varied accordingly; grain of different kinds, bone and meat, vegetables, lime, and one other article which should never be overlooked, and that is grit.

Succotash is a dish borrowed from the Narragansett Indians and called by them m'sickutash.

### The Sweet Potato.

The sweet potato is coming to be recognized as one of the most important products of our soil. The interest in it as an article of food for both man and beast is steadily increasing. Not many years ago northern people had sweet potatoes on their tables only during the short fall season, lasting from the time when sweet potatoes were mature enough to dig, to perhaps the end of November. Now, on account of the more scientific ways of handling, transplanting and storing them they are on our tables during a large portion of the winter. Canning them has also become a practice. New ways of keeping and utilizing them are being tried. They are being dried and some are being ground up into sweet potato flour.

It is said that the sweet potato thrives only in a warm climate, but what that means depends on the understanding of the word warm. It may be said that the sweet potato thrives only where the temperature during its time of growth does not fall below 45 degrees. On this point a government bulletin says: "On soils suited to the sweet potato it may be grown wherever the large dent varieties of maize reach maturity, but when grown near its northern limit or at high altitudes it generally lacks sweetness and flavor. This loss of quality must be attributed to the cool nights, which are likely to prevail in high latitudes, and at considerable elevations in lower latitudes during the latter part of the growing season, a condition that does not admit of the growing of sweet potatoes in a large way." Then follows the suggestion that in high latitudes farmers may grow sweet potatoes by starting them in pots and afterward transplanting them into the open ground after the danger of frosts is past. For profitable general field culture the sweet potato requires at least four months of warm weather, free, not only from frost, but also from cold winds and from the cool nights that prevail in summer at the north and at high altitudes everywhere. Sweet potatoes do not suffer as quickly as Irish potatoes from drouth, but are injured by excessive rainfall and overirrigation.

In a suitable climate and with good cultivation the sweet potato will thrive on any well-drained soil. Nevertheless, it should not be planted on heavy or peaty soils unless intended for stock feeding. It is not always practicable to harvest the crop when the ground is dry, and such soils, unless they are very dry, adhere to the tubers and so detract from their value. Moreover, the quality of sweet potatoes grown on these soils is always relatively low. The best soil for the sweet potato is a light, well-drained, but not leachy sandy loam that will not adhere to the potatoes. If the best quality is desired, soils which have an excess of organic matter should be avoided.

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