THE EMPTY PLACE.

The Old Arm-Chair Where the Aged Father Sat With Closed Eyes and Happy Mind.

The Rocking-Chair Where Mother Cried Over the Waywardness of Her Willful Children.

That High Chair Where Baby Sat and Cooed His Happiness—All, All Are Vacant Now.

Special to the Gazette.

BROOKLYN, N. Y., Sept. 5.—The Rev. T. De Witt Talmage's text to-day was I. Samuel, xx, 18: "Thou shalt be missed, because thy seat will be empty." Following is the sermon in full:

Set on the table the cutlery, and chased silverware of the palace, for King Saul will give a state dinner to-day. A distinguished place is kept at the table for his son-in-law, a celebrated warrior, David by name. The guests, jeweled and plumed, come in and take their places. When people are invited to a king's banquet they are very apt to go. But before the covers are lifted from the feast Saul looks around and finds a vacant seat at the table. He says within himself, or perhaps audibly: "What does this mean? Where is my son-in-law? Where is David, the great warrior?

I INVITED HIM.

I expected him. What? A vacant chair at a king's banquet!" The fact was that David, the warrior, had been seated for the last time at his father-in-law's table. The day before Jonathan had coaxed David to go and occupy that place at the table, saying to David, in the words of my text: "Thou shalt be missed, because thy seat will be empty."

The prediction was fulfilled. David was missed. His seat was empty. That one vacant chair spoke louder than all the occupied chairs at the banquet. In almost every house the articles of furniture take a living personality. That picture—a stranger would not see anything remarkable either in its design or execution, but it is more to you than all the pictures of the Louvre and the Luxembourg. You remember who bought it and who admired it. And that hymn-book—you remember who sang out of it. And that cradle—you remember who rocked it. And that bible—you remember who read out of it. And that bed—you remember who slept in it. And that room—you remember who died in it. But there is nothing in all your house so eloquent and so mighty-voiced as the vacant chair. I suppose that before Saul and his guests got up from this banquet there was a great clatter of wine-pitchers, but all that racket was drowned out by the voice that came up from the vacant chair at the table. Many have gazed and wept at John Quincy Adams' vacant chair in the house of representatives, and at Mr. Wilson's vacant chair in the vice-presidency, and at Henry Clay's vacant chair in the American senate, and at Prince Albert's vacant chair in Windsor castle, and at Thiers' vacant chair in the councils of the French nation, but all these chairs are unimportant to you as compared with

THE VACANT CHAIRS

in your own household. Have these chairs any lessons for you to learn? Are we any better men and women than when they first addressed us?

1. First, I point out to you the father's vacant chair. Old men always like to sit in the same place and in the same chair. They somehow feel more at home, and sometimes when you are in their place and they come into the room, you jump up suddenly and say: "Here, father, here's your chair." The probability is it is an arm-chair, for he is not so strong as he once was and he needs a little upholding. His hair is a little frosty, his gums a little depressed, for in his early days there was not much dentistry. Perhaps a cane chair and old-fashioned apparel, for though you may have suggested some improvement, father does not want any of your nonsense. Grandfather never had much admiration for new-fangled notions. I sat at the table of one of my parishoners in a former congregation; an aged man was at the table and his son was presiding, and the father somewhat abruptly addressed the son and said: "My son, don't now try to show off because the minister is here!"

Your father never liked any new customs or manners; he preferred the old way of doing things, and he never looked so happy as when with his eyes closed he sat in the armchair in the corner. From wrinkled brow to the tip of the slippers, what placidity? The wave of the past years of his life broke at the foot of that chair. Perhaps sometimes he was a little impatient, and sometimes told the same story twice, but over that old chair how many blessed memories hover! I hope you did not crowd that old chair, and that it did not get very much in the way. Sometimes the old man's chair gets very much in the way, especially if he has been so unwise as to

MAKE OVER ALL HIS PROPERTY

to his children, with the understanding that they are to take care of him. I have seen in such cases children crowd the old man's chair to the door, and then crowd it clear into the street, and then crowd it into the poor-house, and keep on crowding it until the old man fell out of it into his grave.

But your father's chair was a sacred place. The children used to climb up on the rungs of it for a good-night kiss, and the longer he stayed the better you liked it. But that chair has been vacant now for some time. The furniture dealer would not give you 50 cents for it, but it is a throne of influence in your domestic circle. I saw in the French palace and in the throne-room the chair that Napoleon used to occupy. It was a beautiful chair, but the most significant part of it was the letter "N" embroidered into the back of the chair in purple and gold. And your father's old chair sits in the throne room of your heart; and your affections have embroidered into the back of that chair in purple and gold the letter "F." Have all the prayers of that old chair been answered? Have all the counsels of that old chair been practiced? Speak out, old arm-chair! History tells us of an old man whose three sons were victors in the Olympic games, and when they came back, these three sons, with their garlands, and put them on their father's brow, the old man was so rejoiced at the victories of his three children that he fell dead in their arms. And are you, O man, going to bring a wreath of joy and Christian usefulness and put it on to your father's brow, or on the vacant chair or on the memory of the one departed? Speak out, old arm-chair! With reference to your father, the words of my text have been fulfilled: "Thou shalt be missed, because thy seat will be empty."

2. I go a little further on in your house, and I find

THE MOTHER'S CHAIR.

It is very apt to be a rocking-chair. She had so many cares and troubles to soothe that it must have rockers. I remember it well. It was an old chair, and the rockers were almost worn out, for I was the youngest, and the chair had rocked the whole family. It made a creaking noise as it moved; but there was music in the sound. It was just nigh enough to allow us children to put our heads into her lap. That was the bank where we deposited all our hurts and worries. Oh, what a chair that was! It was different from father's chair; it was entirely different. You ask me how? I cannot tell; but we all felt it was different. Perhaps there was about this chair more gentleness, more tenderness, more grief when we had done wrong. When we were wayward father scolded, but mother cried. It was a very wakeful chair. In the sick days of children other chairs could not keep awake; that chair always kept awake, kept easily awake. That chair knew all the old lullabies and all those wordless songs which mothers sing to their sick children—songs in which all pity and compassion and sympathetic influences are combined. That old chair has stopped rocking for a good many years. It may be set up in the loft or the garret, but it holds a queenly power yet. When at midnight you went into that grog-shop to get the intoxicating draught did you not hear a voice that said: "My son, why go in there?" And louder than the boisterous encore of the wicked place of amusement, a voice saying: "My son, what do you here?" And when you went into

THE HOUSE OF SIN

a voice saying: "What would your mother do if she knew you were here?"

And you were provoked with yourself, and you charged yourself with superstition and fanaticism, and your head got hot with your own thoughts, and you went home and went to bed, and no sooner had you touched the bed than a voice said: "What a prayerless pillow! Man, what is the matter?" This: You are too near your mother's rocking-chair. "Oh, pshaw!" you say. "There's nothing in that. I'm 500 miles off from where I was born. I'm 3000 miles off from the church whose bell was the first music I ever heard." I cannot help that; you are too near your mother's rocking-chair. "Oh," you say, "there can't be anything in that; that chair has been vacant a great while." I cannot help that; it is all the mightier for that; it is omnipotent, that mother's vacant chair. It whispers, it speaks, it weeps, it carols, it mourns, it prays, it warns, it thunders. A young man went off and broke his mother's heart, and while he was away from home his mother died, and the telegraph brought the son, and he came into the room where she lay and looked upon her face, and he cried out: "Oh, mother, mother! what your life could not do your death shall effect. This moment I give my heart to God." And he kept his promise. Another victory for the vacant chair. With reference to your mother the words of my text were fulfilled: "Thou shalt be missed, because thy seat will be empty."

Some one said to a Grecian general: "What was the proudest moment in your life?" He thought a moment and said: "The proudest moment in my life was when I sent word home to my parents that I had gained the victory." And the proudest and most brilliant moment in your life will be the moment when you can send word to your parents that you have conquered your evil habits by the grace of God, and become eternal victor. Oh, despise not parental anxiety! The time will come when you will have neither father nor mother, and you will go around the place where they used to watch you, and

FIND THEM GONE

from the house, and gone from the field, and gone from the neighborhood. Cry as loud for forgiveness as you may over the mound in the churchyard, they will not answer. Dead! Dead! And then you will take out the white lock of hair that was cut from your mother's brow just before they buried her, and you will take the cane with which your father used to walk, and you will think and think and wish that you had done just as they wanted you to, and would give the world if you had never thrust a pang through their dear old hearts. God pity the young man who has brought disgrace on his father's name! God pity the young man who has broken his mother's heart! Better if he had never been born; better if in the first hour of his life, instead of being laid against the warm bosom of maternal tenderness, he had been coffined and sepulchred. There is no balm powerful enough to heal the heart of one who has brought parents to a sorrowful grave, and who wanders about through the cemetery, rending the hair and wringing the hands and crying; "Mother! Mother!" Oh, that to-day by all the memories of the past and by all the hopes of the future, you would yield your heart to God! May your father's God and your mother's God, be your God forever.

3. I go on a little further; I come to the invalid's chair. What? How long have you been sick? "Oh, I have been sick ten, twenty, thirty years." Is it possible! What a story of endurance! There are in many families of my congregation these invalid chairs. The occupants of them think they are doing no good in the world, but that invalid's chair is the mighty pulpit from which they have been preaching, all these years, trust in God.

One day on an island just off from Sandusky, Ohio, I preached, and there was a great throng of people there. But the throng did not impress me so much as the spectacle of

JUST ONE FACE,

the face of an invalid who was wheeled in on her chair. I said to her afterwards: "Madam, how long have you been prostrated?" for she was lying flat in the chair. "Oh," she replied, "I have been this way fifteen years." I said: "Do you suffer much?" "Oh, yes," she said, "I suffer very much, I suffer all the time. Part of the time I was blind. I always suffer." "Well," I said, can you keep your courage up?" "Oh, yes," she said, "I am happy, very happy indeed." Her face showed it. She looked the happiest of any one on the ground. Oh! what a means of grace to the world, these invalid chairs!

On that field of human suffering the grace of God gets its victory. Edward Payson, the invalid, and Richard Baxter, the invalid, and Robert Hall, the invalid, and the ten thousand of whom the world has never heard, but of whom all heaven is cognizant. The most conspicuous thing on earth for God's eye and the eye of angels to rest on, is not a throne of earthly power, but it is the invalid's chair. Oh, these men and women who are always suffering but never complaining—these victims of spinal disease, and neuralgic torture, and rheumatic excruciation, will answer to the roll call of martyrs, and rise to the martyr's throne, and will wave the martyr's palm! But when one of these invalids' chairs becomes vacant, how suggestive it is! No more bolstering up of the weary head. No more changing from side to side to get an easy position. No more use of the bandage and the catapiasm and the prescription. That invalid's chair may be folded up or taken apart, or set away but it will never lose its queenly power; it will always preach of trust in God and cheerful submission. Suffering all ended now. With respect to that invalid the words of my text have been fulfilled: "Thou shalt be missed because thy seat will be empty."

4. I pass on and I find one more vacant chair. It is a high chair, it is

THE CHILD'S CHAIR.

If that chair be occupied I think it is the most potent chair in all the household. All the chairs wait on it; all the chairs are turned toward it. It means more than David's chair at Saul's banquet. At any rate, it makes more racket. That is a strange house that can be dull with a child in it. How that child breaks up the hard worldiness of the place, and keeps you young to sixty, seventy and eighty years of age! If you have no child of your own, adopt one; it will open heaven to your soul. It will pay its way. Its crowing in the morning will give the day a cheerful starting, and its glee at night will give the day a cheerful close. You do not like children? Then you had better stay out of heaven, for there are so many there they would fairly make you crazy! Only about five hundred millions of them! The old crusty disciples told the mothers to keep the children away from Christ. "You bother him," they said; "you trouble the Master." Trouble Him! He has filled heaven with that kind of trouble.

A pioneer in California says that for the first year or two after his residence in Sierra Nevada county there was not a single child in all the reach of one hundred miles. But the Fourth of July came, and the miners were gathered together, and they were celebrating the Fourth with oration and poem and a boistrous brass band; and while the band was playing an infant's voice was heard crying, and all the miners were startled, and the swarthy men began to think of their homes on the Eastern coast, and of their wives and

CHILDREN FAR AWAY,

and their hearts were filled with homesickness as they heard the babe cry. But the music went on and the child cried louder and louder, and the band played louder and louder, trying to drown out the infantile interruption, when a swarthy miner, the tears rolling down his face, got up and shook his fist and said: "Stop that noisy band and give the baby a chance." Oh, there was pathos in it, as well as good cheer in it. There is nothing to arouse, and melt, and subdue the soul like a child's voice.

But when it goes away from you, the high chair becomes a higher chair, and there is desolation all about you. In three fourths of the homes of my congregation there is a vacant high chair. Somehow you never get over it. There is no one to put to bed at night; no one to ask strange questions about God and heaven. Oh, what is the use of that high chair? It is to call you higher. What a drawing upward it is to have children in heaven! And then it is such a preventive against sin. If a father is going away into sin he leaves his living children with their mother; but if a father is going away into sin what is he going to do with his dead children floating about him and hovering over his every wayward step? Oh, speak out vacant high chair, and say: "Father, come back from sin; mother, come back from worldliness. I am watching you; I am waiting for you." With respect to your child the words of my text have been fulfilled: "Thou shalt be missed because thy seat will be empty."

My hearers, I have gathered up the voices of your departed friends, and tried to intone them into one invitation upward. I set in array

ALL THE VACANT CHAIRS

of your homes, and of your social circle, and I bid them cry out: "Time is short; eternity is near. Take my Savior. Be at peace with my God. Come up where I am. We lived together on earth; come, let us live together in heaven." We answer that invitation. We come. Keep a seat for us, as Saul kept a seat for David; but that seat shall not be empty. When we are all through with this world, and we have shaken hands all around for the last time, and all our chairs in the home circle and in the outside world shall be vacant, may we be worshipping God in that place from which we shall go out no more forever. I thank God there will be no vacant chairs in heaven.

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It Was the General's Son.

One of the many curious incidents which happen almost daily in New York occurred on a recent afternoon in the Cyclorama building at Seventh avenue and Fifty-fifth street, where the painting of the battles of Vicksburg is exhibited. Capt. L. S. Hudson, a veteran of the war, and who took part with his battery, the Chicago Mercantile, in the conflict, was rehearsing the incidents of the hard fought day in his capacity of lecturer at the Cyclorama. A visitor suddenly interrupted him by asking: "Who was in your front, captain, at the battle of Champion hill?"

"The First Mississippi Light artillery," replied Capt. Hudson.

"Do you remember who was their commander?" queried the visitor.

"I do, well. It was Gen. Tilghman. I aided in serving the gun that killed him. We stood on a little hill in advance of his command, and we cut him in two with a spherical case shot."

"That was my father," said the visitor, who was Mr. Tilghman, a Wall street broker. The two men were naturally greatly affected at this strange meeting, and after shaking Capt. Hudson's hand Mr. Tilghman immediately departed.—[New York Times.

Ex-President Arthur's law partner, Mr. Ransom; Judge Hyer of Rahway, N. J.; A. A. Drake, Esq., N. Y. Stock Exchange; Rev. Stephen Merritt, N. Y.; and many others are witnesses that Palmer's "Skin-Success," is a safe, sure and speedy remedy for skin complaints of every name and degree of severty.

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STRANGE STORY.

A Peculiarly Deformed Creature Discovered in Pittsburg.

Pittsburg Commercial-Gazette.

A most curious freak of nature was discovered last night by a reporter of this paper. It has been confined in one room for twenty-six years past, and it was known to exist only by a few persons. After climbing a rickety staircase in a three-story tenement house at No. 1443 Penn avenue the visitor entered one room. It contained two beds and one cot, an old bureau, one table, two or three chairs and a cooking stove. Lying on one of the beds was a human being, who is one of the most remarkable monstrosities seen outside of a circus side-show. He is a man twenty-seven years of age, whose height is only three and one-half feet. His face gives him the appearance of a wild man, having thick stubs of a beard covering it, and a thick black growth of hair on his head.

Around his neck measures fifteen and one-half inches and around the forehead five inches. His hands were compared with the hand of a three year-old child lying at the foot of the bed, and were found to be much smaller. They were then put alongside the hand of another child of two years sleeping on the cot and found to be about the same size. His chest is very small. His legs measure about sixteen or eighteen inches around the upper part and the least bit smaller above the knee. Below the knee they are very fleshy. In all, his limbs are about the size of a large, heavy man. His feet could not be seen as they were covered, and as he was sleeping the father, Joseph Glaser, an employe of H. & J. Heinz's pickle works, did not care to wake him. Mr. Glaser stated that they were an unusual size.

The man seems to gradually grow larger from the top of his head down. He is deaf and dumb and cannot utter a single syllable.

Mr. Glaser, who is a German, stated that the child was born in Cincinnati. Its mother, he said, fell down a flight of stairs a few weeks before its birth, thus causing the strange shape. A Cincinnati physician thinks this was the cause. When the child was one year old the family moved to Pittsburg, taking a room in the above-named house, where it has since lived for twenty-six years, seldom if ever leaving the room or the hallway outside the door.

A New York museum manager, who heard of the freak, offered $700 for it, and $500 was offered by a Cincinnati museum manager. Another offer was made of $20 per week. All these offers were refused. The man or child was never on the street but once, when he escaped the vigilance of his stepmother. It will seem strange when it is stated that the neighbors know nothing of this monstrosity. The father has also one son, twenty-one years of age, of unsound mind.

Artistic Vagaries.

Upon the first page of Puck of August 11 appeared a cartoon by F. Opper entitled, "President Cleveland Will Protect the National Corn-field Himself." The political idea was good; the general drawing was excellent; but the "corn-field" itself was such a one as never before was exhibited upon this terrestrial globe. It was a sort of conglomerate mixture of sugar-cane and sorghum, with not the faintest possibility of being mistaken for corn. The New York dailies, and especially the Tribune and the Sun, jumped on it unmercifully; and in its issue of August 25 Puck made a humorous defense, from which the following is extracted:

"We plead guilty for Mr. Opper, who, being only an artist, has to appear by his natural guardians. It was about the worst corn that we ever saw. But if our esteemed contemporaries had to wrestle with the wild and untamed artist they would know that this was but a small and venial vagary. The artist who would let the laws of nature or the system of the universe interfere with his untrammeled fancy would be no artist for us. We should be frightened about him."

This is really funny; but now comes the funniest part of it. In the very same issue of Puck which contains the above editorial appears a full page cartoon by Mr. Opper, of which the central feature is a colossal figure of "The Grim Destroyer" scythe in hand. The drawing, the attitudes—the "movement," so to speak—is really sublime, and the portraits of the New York characters are so marvelously accurate that it is not even felt necessary to label them. The whole picture is a remarkably fine piece of work, save in one most laughable exception. The upper arm of the skeleton representing Death, has two bones in it. We respectfully submit that "the artist who would let the laws of nature * * * interfere with his untrammeled fancy would be no artist for us."—[Cincinnati Enquirer.

Remarkably Fast Time.

Much has been said about fast time between the West and the East, but we have recently been made aware of an arrangement which puts entirely in the shade the time heretofore made from St. Louis to New York. The Vandalia Line, in connection with the Pennsylvania railroad, has so arranged its schedule that the run from St. Louis to New York city is made in thirty-four hours and a half, or nearly five hours quicker than the old time. This line is by far the shortest between the points named (over one hundred miles shorter than its shortest competitor), which allows the run to be made in this time at a perfectly safe rate of speed. The track and equipment have a world-wide reputation as being first-class in every particular. It is the only line running a through car from St. Louis to New York leaving St. Louis in the morning, and on the evening train a magnificent Pullman Palace Buffet car which runs through without change. We have always found this line to be a pleasant one, and by it have never missed connections at intermediate points, as its trains seem to be run solid between St. Louis and New York. We advise our friends to try it.

If you want any definite information regarding it, would suggest you drop a line to E. A. Ford, general passenger agent, St. Louis, or to Thos. H. Thorp, Southwestern passenger agent, Dallas, Texas, either of whom is always glad to answer questions and to send maps, etc.

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