

THE PROUD INVALID.

Everybody Has Something which He
Never Bargained for and which
He Would Like to Get Rid of.

God Sends Affliction to Push Us On-
ward and Upward Toward Some-
thing Greater and Better.

We Have Got to Get Down Out of the
Chariot of Our Pride if We Ever
Expect to Become Christians.

Special to the Gazette.

BROOKLYN, N. Y., Dec. 12.—The Rev. T. DeWitt Talmage, D. D., preached this morning from the text, II Kings, v, 1: "He was a leper." He said:

Here we have a warrior sick, not with pleurisy or rheumatism or consumption, but with a disease worse than all these put together; a red mark has come out on the forehead, precursor of complete disfigurement and dissolution. I have something awful to tell you. Gen. Naaman, the commander-in-chief of all the Syrian forces, has the leprosy! It is on his hands, on his face, on his feet, on his entire person. The leprosy! Get out of the way of the pestilence! If his breath strike you, you are a dead man. The commander-in-chief of all the forces of Syria! And yet he would be glad to exchange conditions with the boy at his stirrup, or the hostler that blankets his charger. The news goes like wildfire all through the realm, and the people are sympathetic and they cry out: "Is it possible that our great hero who shot Ahab, and around whom we came with such veneration when he returned from victorious battle—can it be possible that our grand and glorious Naaman has the leprosy?"

Yes, everybody has something he wishes he had not—David, an Absalom to disgrace him; Paul, a thorn to sting him; Job, carbuncles to plague him; Samson, a Delilah to shear him; Ahab, a Naboth to deprive him; Haman, a Mordecai to irritate him; George Washington, childlessness to afflict him; John Wesley, a termagant wife to persecute him; Leah, weak eyes; Pope, a crooked back; Byron, a club foot; John Milton, blind eyes; Charles Lamb, an insane sister; and you, and you, and you, and you, something which you never bargained for, and would like to get rid of. The reason of this is, that God does not want this world to be too bright; otherwise, we would always want to stay, and eat these fruits, and lie on these lounges, and shake hands in this pleasant temple. We are only in the vestibule of a grand temple. God does not want us to stay on the doorstep, and therefore he sends aches, and annoyances, and sorrows, and bereavements of all sorts to push us on, and push us up toward ripe fruits, and brighter society, and more radiant prospects. God is only

whipping us ahead. The reason that Edward Payson and Robert Hall had more rapturous views of heaven than other people had was because, through their aches and pains, God pushed them nearer up to it. If God dashes out one of your pictures, it is only to show you a brighter one. If He sting your foot with gout, your brain with neuralgia, your tongue with an inextinguishable thirst, it is only because He is preparing to substitute a better body than you ever dreamed of, when the mortal shall put on immortality. It is to push you on, and push you up toward something grander and better, that God sends upon you as He did upon Gen. Naaman, something you do not want. Seated in his Syrian mansion—all the walls glittering with the shields which he had captured in battle, the corridors crowded with admiring visitors who just wanted to see him once, music and mirth and banqueting filling all the mansion, from tesselated floor to pictured ceiling—Naaman would have forgotten that there was anything better, and would have been glad to stay there ten thousand years. But, oh, how the shields dim, and how the visitors fly from the hall, and how the music drops dead from the strings, and how the gates of the mansion slam shut with sepulchral bang, as you read the closing words of the eulogium: "He was a leper! He was a leper!"

There was one person more sympathetic with Gen. Naaman than any other person. Naaman's wife walks the floor, wringing her hands and trying to think what she can do to alleviate her husband's sufferings. All remedies have failed. The surgeon-general and the doctors of the royal staff have met, and they have shaken their heads as much as to say: "No cure; no cure." I think that the office-seekers had all folded up their recommendations and gone home. Probably most of the employees of the establishment had dropped their work and were thinking of looking for some other situation. What shall now become of poor Naaman's wife? She must have sympathy somewhere. In her despair she goes to a little Hebrew captive, a servant girl to her house, to whom she tells the whole story; as sometimes, when overborne with sorrows of the world, and finding no sympathy anywhere else, you have gone out and found in the sympathy of some humble domestic—Rose, or Dinah or Bridget—a help which

THE WORLD COULD NOT GIVE YOU. What a scene it was! One of the grandest women in all Syria in cabinet couch with a waiting maid over the declining health of a mighty general? "I know something," says the little captive maid, "I know something," as she bounds to her bare feet. "In the land from which I was stolen there is a certain prophet known by the name of Elisha, who can cure almost everything, and I shouldn't wonder if he could cure my master. Send for him right away." "Oh, hush!" you say. "If the highest medical talent in all the land cannot cure that leper, there is no need of your listening to any talk of a servant girl." But do not scoff, do not sneer. The finger of that little captive maid is pointing in the right direction. She might have said: "This is a judgment on you for stealing me from my native land. Didn't they snatch me off in the night, breaking my father's and mother's hearts? And many a time I have laid and cried all night because I was so home-sick." Then, flushing up into childish indignation, she might have said: "Good for them! I'm glad Naaman's got the leprosy! I wish all the Syrians had the leprosy! No; forgetting her own personal sorrows, she sympathizes with the suffering of her master, and recommends him to the famous Hebrew prophet.

And how often it is that the finger of childhood has pointed grown persons in

the right direction. O, Christian soul, how long is it since that you got rid of the leprosy of sin? You say: "Let me see; it must be five years now." "Five years. Who was it that pointed you to the Divine Physician?" "Oh," you say, "it was my little Annie, or Fred, or Charley that clambered up on my knees and looked in my face, and asked me why I didn't become a Christian, and all the time stroking my cheek so I couldn't get angry, insisted upon knowing why I didn't have family prayers." There are grand-parents here who have been brought to Christ by their little grand-children. There are many Christian mothers here who had their attention first called to Jesus by their little children. How did you get rid of the leprosy of sin? How did you find your way to the Divine Physician? "Oh," you say, "my child, my dying child, with wan and wasted finger, pointed that way! Oh, I shall never forget," you say, "that scene at the cradle and the crib that awful night! It was hard, very hard, but if that little one on its dying bed had not pointed me to Christ, I don't think I ever would have got rid of my leprosy." Go into the Sabbath-school this afternoon and you will find

HUNDREDS OF LITTLE FINGERS pointing in the same direction, toward Jesus Christ and toward heaven.

Years ago the astronomers calculated that there must be a world hanging at a certain point in the heavens, and a large prize was offered for some one who could discover that world. The telescopes from the great observatories were pointed in vain, but a girl at Nantucket, Mass., fashioned a telescope and, looking through it, discovered that star, and won the prize and the admiration of all the astronomical world, that stood amazed at her genius. And so it is often the case that grown people cannot see the light, while some little child beholds the star of pardon, the star of hope, the star of consolation, the star of Bethlehem, the morning star of Jesus. "Not many mighty men, not many wise men are called; but God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the mighty; and base things and things that are not, to bring to naught things that are." Oh, do not despise the prattle of little children when they are speaking about God, and Christ, and heaven! You see the way your child is pointing; will you take that pointing or will you take the pointing of another world, and then it will beckon you upward? Will you take the pointing of the child, or will you take the pointing of the world? Blessed be God that the little Hebrew captive pointed in the right direction! It seemed to God for the saving ministry of Christian children!

No wonder the advice of this little Hebrew captive threw all of Naaman's mansion and Ben-hadad's palace into excitement. Good-bye, Naaman! With face scarred, and ridged, and leamed by the pestilence, and aided by those who supported him on either side, he staggered out to the chariot. Hold fast the fiery coursers of the royal stable while the poor sick man lifts his swollen feet and pain-struck limbs into his vehicle. Hold him up with his pillow, and let him take a lingering look at his bright apartment, for perhaps the Hebrew captive may be mistaken, and the next time Naaman comes to that place he may be a dead weight on the shoulders of those who carry him—an expired chieftain seeking sepulture amid the lamentations of an admiring nation.

GOOD-BYE, NAAMAN!

Let the chariot drive gently over the hills of Hermon lest he jolt the invalid. Here goes the bravest man of all his day, a captive of a horrible disease. As the ambulance winds through the streets of Damascus the tears and prayers of all the people go after the world-renowned invalid. Perhaps you have had an invalid go out from your house on a health excursion. You know how the neighbors stood around and said: "Ah, he will never come back again alive." Oh, it was a solemn moment, I tell you, when the invalid had departed, and you went into the room to make the bed, and to remove the medicine phials from the shelf, and to throw open the shutters so that the fresh air might rush into the long-closed room! Good-bye, Naaman! There is only one cheerful face looking at him, and that is the face of the little Hebrew captive, who is sure he will get cured and who is so glad she helped him. As the chariot winds out and the escort of mounted courtiers, and the mules laden with sacks of gold and silver and embroidered suits of apparel, went through the gates of Damascus and out on the long way, the hills of Naphtali and Ephraim look down on the procession, and the retinue goes right past the battle-fields where Naaman, in the days of his health, used to rally his troops for fearful onset; and then the procession stops and recedes a while in the groves of olives and oleander, and Gen. Naaman so sick—and so very, very sick!

How the countrymen gaped at the procession passed. They had seen Naaman go past like a whirlwind in days gone by, and had stood aghast at the clank of his war equipments; but now they commiserate him. They say: "Poor man! he will never get home alive! Poor man! Gen. Naaman wakes up from a restless sleep in the chariot, and he says to the chariot driver: 'How long before we shall reach this prophet Elisha's?' The chariot driver says to a bystander: 'How far is it to Elisha's house?' He says: 'Two miles.' 'Two miles.' Then they whip up the lathered and fagged-out horses. The whole procession brightens up at the prospect of speedy arrival. They drive up to the door of the prophet. The chariot drivers shout: 'Whoa!' to the horses, and the tramping hoofs and grinding wheels cease shaking the earth.

Come out, Elisha, come out, you have company; the grandest company that ever came to your house has come to it now. No stir inside Elisha's house. The fact was, the Lord had informed Elisha that the sick captain was coming and just how to treat him. Indeed, when you are sick and the Lord wants you to get well, He always tells the doctor how to treat you; and the reason we have so many bungling doctors is because they depend upon their own strength and instructions and not on the Lord God, and that always makes malpractice. Come out, Elisha, and attend to your business. Gen. Naaman and his retinue waited, and waited, and waited. The fact was Naaman had two diseases—

PRIDE AND LEPROSY: the one was as hard to get rid of as the other. Elisha sits quietly in his house and does not go out. After a while, when he thinks he has humbled this proud man, he says to a servant: "Go out and tell Gen. Naaman to bathe seven times in the River Jordan, out yonder five miles, and he will get entirely well."

The message comes out. "What!" says the commander-in-chief of the Syrian forces, his eye kindling with an animation which it had not shown for weeks, and his swollen foot stamping on the bot-

tom of the chariot, regardless of pain: "What! isn't he coming out to see me? Why, I thought certainly he would come and utter some cabalistic words over me or make some enigmatical passes over my wounds. Why, I don't think he knows who I am. Isn't he coming out? Why, when the Shunammite woman came to him, he rushed out and cried: 'Is it well with thee? Is it well with thy husband? Is it well with the child?' And will he treat a poor unknown woman like that, and let me, a titled personage, sit here in my chariot and wait and wait? I won't endure it any longer. Charioteer, drive on! Wash in the Jordan! He! ha! The stinky Jordan—the muddy Jordan—the monotonous Jordan. I wouldn't be seen washing in such a river as that. Why, we watered our horses in a better river than that on our way here. The beautiful river, the jasper-paved river of Pharpar. Besides that, we have in our country another Damascus river, Abana, with foliaged bank and torrent ever swift and ever clear, under the flickering shadows of sycamore and oleander. Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel?"

I suppose Naaman felt very much as we would feel if, by way of medical prescription, some one should tell us to go and wash in the Danube or the Rhine. We would answer: "Are not the Connecticut or the Hudson just as good?" Or, as an Englishman would feel if he were told, by way of medical prescription, he must go down and wash in the Mississippi or St. Lawrence. He would cry out: "Are not the Thames and the Shannon just as well?" The fact was that haughty Naaman needed to learn what every Englishman and American needs to learn—that when God tells you to do a thing, you must go and do it, whether you understand the reason or not. Take the prescription whether you like it or not. One thing is certain: Unless haughty Naaman does as Elisha commands him, he will die of his awful sickness. And unless you do as Christ commands you, you will be seized upon by an everlasting wasting away. Obey and live—

DISOBEY AND DIE.

Thrilling, over-arching, under-girding, stupendous alternative! Well, Gen. Naaman could not stand the thought of the chariot giving a jerk to the right line until the bit snaps in the horse's mouth, and the whirl of the wheels and the flying of the dust show the indignation of the great commander. "He turned and went away in a rage." So people now often get mad at religion. They vituperate against ministers, against churches, against Christian people. One would think from their irate behavior that God had been studying how to annoy and exasperate and demolish them. What has he been doing? Only trying to cure their death-dealing leprosy. That is all. Yet they whip up their horses, they dig in the spurs, and they go away in a rage.

So, after all, it seems that this health excursion of General Naaman is to be a dead failure. That little Hebrew captive might as well have not told him of the prophet, and this long journey might as well not have been taken. Poor, sick, dying Naaman! are you going away in high dudgeon and worse than when you came? As his chariot halts a moment, his servants clamber up in it and coax him to do as Elisha said. They say: "It's easy if the prophet had told you to walk for a mile on sharp spikes in order to get rid of this awful disease you would have done it. It is easy. Come, my lord, just get down and wash in the Jordan. You take a bath every day, anyhow, and in this climate it is so hot that it will do you good. Do it on our account, and for the sake of the army you command, and for the sake of the nation that admires you. Come, my lord, just try this Jordanic bath."

"Well," he says, "to please you I will do as you say." The retinue drive to the brink of the Jordan. The horses paw and neigh to get into the stream themselves and cool their hot flanks. Gen. Naaman, assisted by his attendants, gets down out of the chariot and painfully comes to the brink of the river, and steps in until the water comes to the ankle, and goes on deeper until the water comes to the girdle, and now standing so far down in the stream, just a little inclination of the head will thoroughly immerse him. He bows into the flood, and comes up and shakes the water out of nostrils and eyes, and his attendants look at him and say: "Why, general, how much better you do look!" And he bows a second time into the flood and comes up, and the wild stare of the third time into the flood and comes up, and the shriveled flesh has got smooth again. He bows the fourth time into the flood and comes up, and the hair that had fallen out is restored in thick locks again all over the brow. He bows the fifth time into the flood and comes up, and the leprosy has gone out of his throat. He bows the sixth time and comes up, and all the soreness and anguish have gone out of the limbs.

"Why," he says, "I am almost well, but I will make a complete cure," and he bows the seventh time into the flood and he comes up, and not so much as a fester or scale or an eruption as big as the head of a pin is to be seen on him. He steps out on the bank and says: "Is it possible?" And the attendants look and say: "Is it possible?" And as, with the strength of an athlete, he bounds back into the chariot and drives on, there goes up from all his attendants a wild "huzzah! huzzah!" Of course they go back to pay and thank the man of God for his counsel so fraught with wisdom. When they left the prophet's house they went off mad; they have come back glad.

People always think better of a minister after they are converted than they do before conversion. Now we are to them an intolerable nuisance because we tell them to do things that go against the grain; but some of us have a great many letters from those who tell us that once they were angry at what we preached, but afterwards gladly received the Gospel at our hands. They once called us fanatics or terrorists or enemies; now they call us friends. Yonder is a man—I speak a literal fact—who said that he would never come into the church again. He said that two years ago. He said: "My family shall never come here again if such doctrines as that are preached." But he came again, and his family came again. He is a Christian, his wife a Christian, and his children Christians, the whole household Christian, and I shall dwell with them in the house of the Lord forever. Our undying coadjutors are those who once heard the Gospel and "went away in a rage."

Now, my hearers, you notice that this Gen. Naaman did two things in order to get well. The first was—he got out of his chariot. He might have stayed there with his swollen feet on the stuffed ottoman, seated on that embroidered cushion, until his last gasp, he would never have got any relief. He had to get down out

WHERE WILL IT END?

The Fearful Outrages Due to
Deranged Brains and What
Causes Them.

In looking over the columns of a recent Daily paper, we found the accounts of an insane negro who took possession of the smoking car on one railroad train of a rich mine owner, also insane, who created a panic in the sleeping car of another train, and of a case of arson and the terrible murder of two unfortunate women by an insane farmer. All these incidents occurred on the same day, and they are occurring nearly every day, showing the terrible increase of insanity all over America. There are men and women whom we see every day, who act peculiar, and we frequently call them "cranks." The insanity permits them to live and move around among people, but there is no knowing when some sudden frenzy may seize them or when they may become inflamed by liquor and do some terrible damage to somebody. Indeed, there seems to be a tendency on the part of very many people to become maddened at times. The stomach gets out of order, the head aches, the body pains and the nerves become irritated. It is then that people are in the condition such as the lady was when she said, "I feel as if I should fly." People do wrong to permit these feelings; they do wrong in not checking them at once, for when they continue, they lead to nervousness, exhaustion, insomnia and often insanity. The wife of a very prominent gentleman residing in Charleston, was in this deplorable condition, which had become worse from the excitement of the earthquake, and her friends felt seriously for her safety. Fortunately, she began to use a gentle yet powerful medicine which strengthens the nerves, enriches the blood and puts the mind in a healthy condition, and both she and her friends are rejoicing to-day over what Volina Cordial has accomplished for her. By a wonderful toning process she has been made fresh and vigorous instead of exhausted; bright and cheerful instead of with a clouded brain, and her experience may be repeated to advantage by thousands of others throughout the entire land.

It is a serious thing, to think how easily the delicate machinery of the mind can be thrown out of order. The least irregularity or tendency toward these morbid feelings should be noticed and checked at once. Any man or woman can be made insane under certain influences, but any man or woman can place the body and mind in a healthy and vigorous state by proper care, by the use of Volina Cordial, and it is the part of wisdom to do so, and do so at once.

of his chariot. And you have got to get down out of

THE CHARIOT OF YOUR PRIDE

If you ever become a Christian. You cannot drive up to the cross with a coach-and-four, and be saved among all the spangles. You seem to think that the Lord is going to be complimented by your coming. Oh, no! You poor, miserable, scaly, leprous sinner, get down out of that! We all come in the same haughty way. We expect to ride into the kingdom of God. Never until we get down on our knees will we find mercy. The Lord has unlearned us, uncharlotted us. Get down out of your self-righteousness and your hyper-criticism. We have all got to do that. That is the journey we have got to make on our knees. It is our infernal pride that keeps us from getting rid of the leprosy of sin. Dear Lord, what have we to be proud of? Proud of our scales? Proud of our uncleanness? Proud of this killing infection? Bring us down at Thy feet, weeping, praying, penitent, believing supplicants!

For sinners, Lord, Thou camest to bleed, And I'm a sinner vile indeed; Lord, I believe Thy grace is free, Oh, magnify that grace to me."

But he had not only to get down out of his chariot. He had to wash. "Oh," says you, "I am very careful of my ablutions. Every day I plunge into a bright and beautiful bath." Ah, my hearer, there is a flood brighter than any other. It is the flood that breaks from the granite of the eternal hills. It is the flood of pardon, and peace, and life, and heaven. That flood started in the tears of Christ and the sweat of Gethsemane, and rolled on, accumulating flood, until all earth and heaven could bathe in it. Zechariah called it the "fountain open for sin and uncleanness." William Cowper called it the "fountain filled with blood." Your fathers and mothers washed all their sins and sorrows away in that fountain. Oh, my hearers, do you not to-day feel like wading into it? Wade down now into this glorious flood, deeper, deeper, deeper. Plunge once, twice, thrice, four times, five times, six times, seven times. It will take as much as that to cure your soul. Oh, wash, wash, wash, and be clean.

I suppose that was a great time at Damascus when Gen. Naaman got back. The chariot drivers do not have to drive slowly any longer, lest they jolt the invalid; but as the horses dashed through the streets of Damascus, I think the people rushed out to hail back their chieftain. Naaman's wife hardly recognized her husband; he was so wonderfully changed she had to look at him two or three times before she made out that it was her restored husband. And the little captive maid, she rushed out, clapping her hands, and shouting: "Did he cure you? Did he cure you?" Then music woke up the palace, and the tanistry of the windows was drawn away, that the multitude outside might mingle with the princely mirth inside, and the feet went up and down in the dance, and all the streets of Damascus that night echoed and re-echoed with the news: "Naaman's cured! Naaman's cured!"

But a gladder tune than that that would be in all this place or wherever this sermon shall be read, if the soul should get cured of its leprosy. The swiftest white horse hitched to the king's chariot would rush the news into the Eternal City. Our loved ones before the throne would welcome the glad tidings. Your children on earth with more emotion than the little Hebrew captive would notice the change in your look, and the change in your manner, and would put their arms around your neck and say: "Mother, I guess you must have become a Christian. Father, I think you have got rid of the leprosy." O Lord God of Elisha, have mercy on us!

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