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Shorn Locks of Samson

SERMON PREACHED SUNDAY, SEPT. 29, BY REV. T. DE WITT TALMAGE.

His Text is from Judges xvi, 3, and His Discourse is One of the Most Powerful of the Year—Full Report of His Remarks.

BROOKLYN, Sept. 29.—After expounding the appropriate passages of Scripture in the Brooklyn Tabernacle this morning the Rev. T. De Witt Talmage, D. D., gave out the hymn:

So let our lips and lives express The holy gospel we profess; So let our works and virtues shine To prove the doctrine all divine.

The subject of Dr. Talmage's sermon was "The Shorn Locks of Samson." He took for his text Judges xvi, 3: "Entice him, and see wherein his great strength lieth, and by what means we may prevail against him, that we may bind him to afflict him; and we will give thee every one of us eleven hundred pieces of silver."

One thousand pounds, or about five thousand dollars of our money, were thus offered for the capture of a giant. It would take a skillful photographer to picture Samson as he really was. The most facile words are not simple enough to describe him. He was a giant and a child, the conqueror and the defeated; able to snap a lion's jaw and yet captured by the sigh of a maiden. He was ruler and slave; a commingling of virtue and vice, the sublime and the ridiculous; sharp enough to make a good riddle, but yet weak enough to be caught in the most superficial stratagem; honest enough to settle his debt, and yet outrageously robbing somebody else to get the material to pay it; a miracle and a scolding; a crowning glory and a burning shame. There he stands, looming up above other men, a mountain of flesh, his arms bunched with muscle that can lift the gate of a city, taking an attitude defiant of armed men and wild beasts. His hair had never been cut and it rolled down in seven great plaits over his shoulders, giving to his fierce mien and terror. The Philistines want to conquer him, and therefore they must find out where the secret of his strength lies.

There is a woman living in the valley of Sorek by the name of Delilah. They appoint her to seduce him. The secret of his strength is secreted in the same building, and then Delilah goes to work and coaxes Samson to tell what is the secret of his strength. "Well," he says, "if you should take seven green withes, such as the fasten wild beasts with, and put them around me, I should be perfectly powerless." So she binds him with the seven green withes. Then she claps her hands and says, "They come—the Philistines!" and he walks out as though there were no impediment. She coaxes him again and says, "Now tell me the secret of this great strength!" and he replies, "If you should take some ropes that have never been used, and tie me with them, I should be just like other men." She ties him with the ropes, claps her hands and shouts, "They come—the Philistines!" He walks out as easy as he did before—not a single obstruction.

If she coaxes him again, and he says, "Now, if you should take these seven long plaits of hair, and by this time the seven green withes have failed to hold me, and I am now receiving a cure, send at once for a treatise and a FREE BOTTLE of my INFALLIBLE REMEDY. Give Express and Post Office, it costs you nothing for a trial, and it will cure you. Address H. G. ROOT, M. C., 183 PEARL ST., NEW YORK."

Now there, as my subject suggests, domestic scenes are so tranquil. What a curse to Job and Potiphar were their companions, to Ahab was Jezebel, to Jehoram was Athaliah, to John Wesley was Mrs. Wesley, to Samson was Delilah. The Philistines were a nation of triumph and exhibition of character we find among the women of history, and the world thrills with the names of Marie Antoinette and Josephine and Joan of Arc and Maria Theresa, and a hundred of others who have ruled the brightest homes and sung the sweetest cantos and enchanted the nations with their art and sway of the mightiest of scepters, on the other hand the names of Mary the First of England, Margaret of France, Julia of Rome and Elizabeth Petrovna of Russia have scorched the eye of history with their abominations, and their names, like banished spirits, have gone shrieking and cursing through the world. In female biography we find the two extremes of excellence among women. Woman stands nearest the gate of heaven or nearest the door of hell. When adorned by grace she reaches a point of Christian elevation which man cannot attain, and when blasted of crime she sinks deeper than man's. Yet I have seen the instances in which woman makes utter shipwreck of character as comparatively rare. YOU WILL FIND GOOD PEOPLE IF GOOD YOURSELF.

But, says some cynical spirit, what do you do with those women in Ecclesiastes who Solomon says: "Behold, this have I found, saith the preacher, counting one by one, to flout out the accounts which yet my soul seeketh; but I find not: one man among a thousand have I found, but a woman among all those have I not found." My answer is, that if Solomon had behaved himself with common decency and kept out of infamously finding integrity of character among women and never would have uttered such a tirade.

Ever since my childhood I have heard speakers admiring Diogenes, the cynic philosopher who lived in a tub, for going through the streets of Athens in broad daylight with a lantern, and when asked what he did that for, said, "I am looking for an honest man."

Now, I warrant that that philosopher who had such hard work to find an honest man was himself dishonest. I think he stole both the lantern and the tub. So when I hear a man expatiating on the weaknesses of woman I immediately suspect him and say: There is another Solomon with Solomon's wisdom left out. Still I would not have the illustrations in female biography lead you to suppose that there are no perils in woman's pathway. God's grace alone can make an Iphigeneia, a Helen, or a Christina Alsop, or a Felicia Pike, or a Catherine of Siena. Temptations lurk about the brightest domestic circle. It was no unmeaning thing when God set up amidst the splendors of his word the character of infamous Delilah.

HOW GOOD MEN LOSE STRENGTH.

Again, this narrative teaches the power of an ill disposed woman. In the portrait gallery of Bible queens we find Abigail and Ruth and Miriam and Vashti and Deborah, but in the rogues' gallery of a police station you will find the pictures of women as well as men. Delilah's picture belongs to the rogues' gallery, but she had more power than all Philistine armies with sword and spear. She could carry off the iron gates of Samson's resolution as easily as he shouldered the gates of Gaza. The force that had killed the lion which one day plunged out fierce from the thicket utterly succumbs to the siren net which Delilah weaves for the giant. He who had driven an army in riotous retreat with the bleached javelin, snatching them hip and thigh with great slaughter, now falls captive at the feet of an unworthy woman. Delilah in the Bible stands in the memorable company of Ahab, and Zillah, and Bathsheba, and Jezebel, and Athaliah, and Herodias. How deplorable the influence of the woman in contrast with Rebecca and Phoebe and Huldah and Tryphena and Jephtha's daughter and Mary, the mother of Jesus. While the latter glitter in the firmament of God's word the former are the shadows of the night.

How deplorable the influence of the woman in contrast with Rebecca and Phoebe and Huldah and Tryphena and Jephtha's daughter and Mary, the mother of Jesus. While the latter glitter in the firmament of God's word the former are the shadows of the night. The former show like lightning, cheerful, holy, light, the former show like lightning, cheerful, holy, light, the former show like lightning, cheerful, holy, light, the former show like lightning, cheerful, holy, light.

From the island of Corsica there started forth a nature charged with unparalleled energies to make the world tremble and conquer the earth. Piedmont, Naples, Bavaria, Germany, Italy, Austria and England rose up to crush the rising man. At the plunge of bayonets Bastilles burst open. The earth groined with the agonies of Russia, Saragossa, and the city of Plevna, and the city of St. Helena and the crew go up to see the spot where the French exile expired in loneliness and disgrace, the mightiest of all Samsons of his locks by ambition, that he kept at the same time a million men in his hands. Crowns were showered at his feet, and kingdoms hoisted triumphal arches to let him pass under, and Europe was lighted up at the conflagration of consuming cities. He had almost made a causeway of human bones between London and Constantinople. No power short of the omnipotent God could arrest him. But out of the ocean of human blood there arose a spirit in which the conqueror found more than a conqueror. The world was not to be rocked the world was now to be his destroyer. He grasped for too much, and in his effort lost all. He reached up after the scepter of universal dominion, but slipped and fell back into desolation and banishment. The American people are now to be his conquerors.

"Listen to My Tale of Woe." There is something strangely fascinating about the jingle of the latest popular song, "Listen to My Tale of Woe." Nobody, we think, has ever performed it with more poetry than the one in my mind. It is said that Mrs. Abbott could perform these same feats when she was a mere child, and she comes north indorsed by many prominent citizens of the south. Like Lulu Hurst, she is a Georgia woman, and it would seem as if there were something peculiar in the soil or atmosphere of that state. Her exhibition is likely to excite much comment. At all events, it will prove interesting.—Boston Herald.

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