Andover News.

SATURDAY, MARCH 16, 1901.

SOLD THEFTS IN PARIS.

How an Adventuress Secures Her Valuable Diamonds.

The other day a jeweller of renown in the Palais Royal received a visit from a distinguished-looking lady, who, after looking over his stock, selected a riviere of diamonds. Then turning to the proprietor she said:

"Before buying this parure, which seems rather high-priced, I would like to show it to my husband and get his consent to the purchase, as he is the one in the family who holds the purse-strings. Let one of your clerks in whom you have confidence accompany me to my home and I have no doubt we can strike a bargain. My carriage is at the door and little time need be lost."

The jeweller found the request very natural and sent his confidential clerk with the jewels to accompany the lady. On the way she spoke not a word to her companion, but preserved a proud reserve. She was evidently a lady of the *haut monde*.

They arrived before a house of elegant but simple exterior. On the first floor they entered, and the clerk was left in the ante-chamber while the client entered the room beyond, asking him to wait while she showed the parure to her husband.

The appartment was the consulting-room of a famous mad doctor who is almost daily quoted in the press as an authority on insanity. As soon as she was confronted with the savant she said:

"Doctor, I bring to you a young relation of mine who is a monomaniac on a certain subject. He is now in the ante-chamber, and as the sight of me may excite him to violence I shall go away for half an hour and return for your advice. I will go out the back way if you don't mind, for he is calm now, and you will be better able to examine him. He is insane on one subject. He imagines that he is employed by a jeweller, and that some one has stolen from him a riviere of diamonds. It is very painful for the family, because my relative is a very charming young man. You will give me your advice."

The doctor bowed and the lady disappeared down the back stairs which gave exit on a courtyard and a side street. The clerk began to find the time very long, when the doctor opened the door and bade him enter. The young man, thinking it was the husband, said:

"Madame has probably left in your hands a riviere of diamonds."

"Certainly, certainly," responded the doctor, reassuringly, and very quietly he began to question the young man on his hereditary antecedents, his habits and early life.

The clerk opened his eyes and began to loudly demand either his diamonds or the money, and seeing that he was to receive neither he commenced to scream "Thieves! thieves!" and made an abominable scene.

The doctor tried in vain to calm him, and had to summon two assistants of the madhouse to hold the young man, who was now acting as if he were crazy. When the doctor knew the truth and that the clerk was as sane as himself, the adventuress was in security, and it is not probable that they will ever find her again.

This game, with variations, is played about every three months in Paris, and in spite of the publicity given to the affairs they rarely fail of success.

The last time it was a minister of the Church of England who appeared at the jeweller's. He wanted to buy some jewels for a sick wife. The proprietress, a woman, brought 7,000 francs worth to his house. He took them in the next room to show them to the invalid. He never came back. The rooms had only been hired by the day for that purpose.

Two Letters of William I.

Two remarkably interesting autograph letters of Emperor William I. have been discovered in an antiquarian's shop in Berlin. One dated March 13, 1848, five days before the Revolution, says: "Through revolution and the weakness of her rulers Germany has come to the point at which Louis Philippe began in 1830. Whither are we tending? We can see how logical has been the radical agitation. And now even the national guard! Such things and the freedom of the press will make a republic of Germany yet."

"The political world is still unwilling to make use of our arm," he wrote from Coblenz in 1853, "but yet we must keep our sword sharp, for the time will come when we must swing it, and then wish to see it cut foreign rather than domestic foes.

Corbett Will Give Kilrain a Chance.

SAN FRANCISCO, March 16.—Jim Corbett says: "I stated that if Kilrain defeated Godfrey I would give him a chance for another 'go' at me, and I meant what I said. If he wants to try me again I'll give him an opportunity and a good whipping besides."

Escaped from Prison and Recaptured.

THOMASTON, Me., March 16.—George Knight, who has been in prison nearly 34 years for wife murder, made an attempt to escape at noon. He has had considerable liberty of late and succeeded in getting outside of the jail, but was quickly missed, pursued and captured.

SELF-DENIAL consists in being able to say no to one's self—a lesson which Socrates meant to inculcate when he said to the Atheniens, "No thyself."

THE ship of matrimony has a companionway, but there be many husbands and wives who never find it.

OUGHT TO BE.

We should waste no moments in vain regret,
If the day were but over!
If what we remember and what we forget
Went out with the sun;
We should be from our clamorous selves set free
To work or to pray,
And to be what the Father would have us be,
If we had but a day.

—[Mary Lowe Dickinson.

THE PORTRAIT.

BY EVELYN THORP.

It was a February day without; but within the high, wide studio building there was color in plenty and movement, and an animated hum of voices. It was an artist's reception. All the studios were open and in all there was a crowd. But in none was there so great a crowd as in Roderick Roth's studio. For Roderick Roth was talked about; talked about incessantly. There had been no such original work shown as his had been, that year or any year. It had the touch of genius. Roderick Roth was a star of the first magnitude just breaking upon the horizon. People wanted to see him. Of course, his studio was besieged.

There were those who looked at him quite as much as they looked at his two or three exhibited pictures; and quite as admiringly. He was like the figure of some youthful Viking, with eyes as blue as seas in Summer and a yellow mane against his velveteen coat collar.

Some of Roderick Roth's fellow-artists arched their lips at the yellow mane. They pronounced it, among themselves, a pose. But prejudice alone could not have found Roderick Roth guilty of any pose whatever, once it had seen one of his frank smiles. This young man, who measured six foot two and was so athletically deep of chest and wide of shoulder, had a most disarmingly sunny, and honest, and good-tempered, and gentle smile. It was quite free from any artifice. It was the sort of smile that on a man's lips causes the mothers of daughters to wish that they might have such a son-in-law!"

It was quite surely with no such sentiment, however, that Mrs. Ritchey now stood, smiling also on her side, and benignly, in front of the young man.

"The sittings may be arranged to suit your own convenience, of course, Mr. Roth. I should like them to begin as soon as possible, however, as the portrait is destined for a certain purpose, at a certain time. By the by, you have not seen your sitter yet, Ethel."

Mrs. Ritchey turned, seeking at her elbow the daughter who, however, had become a little separated from her in the crowd.

"Ethel, this is Mr. Roth. He is going to paint your portrait."

Roderick looked at the young girl and caught his breath a little. She must have been quite accustomed to such admiration ere now, yet she changed color slightly. Mrs. Ritchey saw that Ethel had made a profound impression and was amused and gratified. Of course, an artist, of all men, would be struck with Ethel's beauty. He would appreciate it at its full worth. The mother felt that she had presented this rising Velasquez with a model magnificently fit to inspire his art.

"He seems a nice, unpretentious young man, too," said she as they drove home.

"Not spoiled by his success at all. And his work is certainly very fine. I wonder who the prim, elderly woman was who sat near him and out of the crowd a little. She appeared to belong to him, somehow. She didn't look old enough to be his mother. An aunt, or an older sister, perhaps. But there was no resemblance, certainly! He is a wonderfully good-looking young man. And he has quite an air."

"Yes," said Ethel Ritchey.

Meanwhile the afternoon had come to a close, the crowd had dispersed and Roderick Roth, finding himself restored to privacy, had turned to the woman whom Mrs. Ritchey had noticed. She had been sitting very quietly for a long time and she looked a little pale and tired. She was not in any sense pretty and probably had not been even in her youth. She was now thirty-eight or forty.

"I'm afraid you've been dreadfully bored, Lavinia," said Roderick cheerily.

"Oh, no. I've been looking and—and thinking. I think I'll go now."

"Wait until I get my coat and hat."

He disappeared in an inner room and when he reappeared they went out together. He took her to her "home," which was a boarding-house on a quiet block.

There was a fine mist in the air and the street lamps twinkled, blurred and sallow, through it. They walked along, both rather silently. When Roderick had rung the bell and while they were waiting for the servant to answer it Roderick's companion said:

"Are you going to paint that young girl's portrait, Roderick, the one with the large hat?"

"Miss Ritchey? Yes. Croft was telling me about her the other day. He has known the family since she was a child. It was he who suggested to Mrs. Ritchey that perhaps I could paint the portrait she wanted of her daughter. He said she was the most beautiful creature in the world. And she is, she is! Did you see her well, Lavinia? She is perfect, perfect!" He stopped with glowing eyes.

"Yes, I saw her," answered Lavinia. The door opened and she went rather quickly in.

She did not usually take leave of him thus abruptly, and as Roderick retraced his steps along the moist, black pavement he wondered a little. Had he offended Lavinia? Could it be that she was hurt at the enthusiasm with which he had spoken of that beautiful young girl? Impossible! Lavinia was the largest-hearted, the noblest of women. She was incapable of a small, a suspicious thought.

Several times during the evening, although his studio was again invaded by a coming and going, a pushing and talking throng, a vision of the faultless face under the brim of the large hat rose up before Roderick's mental eye, and his fancy busily worked at the pose he should give it, the light he should bring to bear upon it.

When everyone had gone and the studio was dim and quiet he chose a canvas and placed it on his easel and for a moment stood lost in thought.

He aroused himself from his reverie with a light sigh.

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"Yes," said Croft, "You have made a great success of it, Roth, a great success. It's your best portrait. I don't know but that it is your very best work." He glanced from the canvas on the easel to the original of the portrait, and as the glance left Ethel Ritchey's face it sought that of Roderick, standing beside him.

"Ah!" said Croft to himself. "Ah!"

"Will there be many more sittings needed, Mr. Roth?" remarked Mrs. Ritchey, her gratified smile beaming patronizingly on the artist between the two big diamonds in her ears. "It would be a great pity not to have the picture quite, quite perfect. It is such a very, very good likeness."

"Three or four more sittings," murmured Roth. He spoke a trifle hoarsely and busied himself with his brushes and paint tubes.

That evening Croft dined at Mrs. Ritchey's house. He was a very quiet man. All animation in him seemed centred in his shrewd, observant eye.

"Yes," he remarked, as he sat a little apart with Ethel in the course of the evening. "Roderick Roth has a great future before him. I cannot but feel it to be a pity that he should be bound by this engagement to Miss Peck, although it is one of those things that seem predestined and unavoidable. Any marriage, however, would be hampering, perhaps, at the very outset of his artistic career. And in this case, of course, the disparity of years—"

In the moment's silence that followed upon his words he could feel the change that came over the face of the girl. He purposely avoided looking up to see it. It was as he had imagined. The tie that bound Roderick to Lavinia Peck had not once been suspected by her. Croft was just enough to exonerate Roth from blame in this secrecy. It had probably seemed impossible to him that this beautiful young woman of fashion could be interested in anything concerning him. He had never mentioned his engagement because he had never mentioned any personal matter whatever before her.

"How did such an engagement come about?"

Ethel Ritchey had commanded herself quickly. Croft knew her thoroughly. Though he had discovered her secret, he was capable of hiding it well. Beneath that exquisite exterior there was a supple, flexible moral strength, like the strength of a delicate steel blade. Poor, proud child! She had been foolish enough—the world would call it folly—to lose her heart to the young artist, and now she must suffer. But Croft knew that she would suffer bravely.

"Ah, well, simply enough, poor fellow," he replied. "She used to keep the boarding-house where Roderick took a room. That was some years ago. It was a little room, but Roderick could not pay for it. He painted night and day in a bare loft somewhere, but he found no purchasers for his work. Roderick would sacrifice his art to nothing, you know. He might have daubed pot-boilers and sold them, but he wouldn't. He preferred to die. And when things got very bad he did prepare to die. He spent the last piece of money in his pocket for laudanum enough to kill ten men. Yes. This is a sad chapter in poor Roderick's life. You did not know that such things actually occurred in real life, Ethel? Alas, they are all around us. But they are not made for such hothouse flowers as you to hear! Well, Lavinia Peck discovered his intention. She has lost her youth, and she is neither pretty nor attractive. But she is a noble, tender-hearted woman. Perhaps she loved him even then. In any case, she helped him. Roderick's is one of those rare natures which can accept rare favors without loss of self-respect. He asked nothing but to be allowed to paint, to work out his conceptions. But he was grateful—profoundly, honestly, loyally grateful. He could do but one thing in return. And he did it. He asked Lavinia Peck to marry him. Now he has been famous a year. But if one should ask me whether I think he has ever allowed himself to regret his engagement I should say no. Yes, he is a loyal fellow, is Roderick Roth."

When he stopped Ethel stood upright, her hands tightly clasped, before him.

"Thank you for telling me," she said in a whisper. Her eyes shone. "Thank you."

There was no pretense at concealment. She saw that this old and faithful friend had read her soul and had wished to warn her, to guard her from a great wrong to the other. She put out her hand and Croft took it with firm gentleness.

"You always were a good little girl, Ethel!"

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"There should certainly be one sitting more, at least, Ethel," urged Mrs. Ritchey.

"No, mamma. It is really not necessary."

Mrs. Ritchey had never quite understood her daughter; but certainly she was apt to give away before what she termed Ethel's quiet obstinacy.

"Very well, if you think you would like to have the portrait considered finished and complete. But you are a queer girl. I wish you were not!"

Left alone, Ethel sat down rather wearily. Was she queer? Ah, well, it did not matter much. Nothing mattered much, except the keeping of this one resolution. She must never again see Roderick Roth if she could avoid it; never allow him to see her. For he loved her—he loved her! That bitter-sweet thought made a tumult in her veins, however much she might try to drown it. They had never been alone together; he had never spoken a word that the whole world might not have heard; he had never looked at her but a guard had been on his glance, that it might do no injustice to the woman who had a sacred claim to all his truth and allegiance. Yet he loved her! And Ethel knew it, as the blind may know when the sun shines. As she sat there, fighting her first grievous battle in the deeps of her soul, a servant came quietly in.

"There is a lady, miss, who would like to see you. She did not give me a card nor yet her name."

When Ethel first entered the room she did not recognize the figure that half rose at her appearance. Then the full light touched her face.

Lavinia Peck!

Poor, perhaps, she was, but to-day she looked many years more. She was a woman without any sort of assurance, either of speech or manner. Even at this moment, the most critical of her life, she had no outward dignity save that which comes from simplicity. She might be a heroine wearing a crown of thorns as sharp as ever stung a martyr's flesh, but in aspect she was only a faded little spinster in an unmodish bonnet and with nervously twitching hands.

"I wanted to see you," she began; her voice died away, but she rallied and commenced anew: "Perhaps you will think it strange, what I am going to say. But it seems best. Perhaps you did not know that I was engaged to Mr. Roth?"

"I did not know it until yesterday."

"I was engaged to him three years ago. It did not seem so wrong then, though, of course, people might think it strange. We understand each other very well. I think he was fond of me. Yes, I think he was. But—all that is past now." She suddenly lifted her eyes to Ethel's pale, beautiful face. "Roderick loves you."

"No, no!"

Lavinia Peck went on with growing quiet.

"Yes; it is so. I felt that it would be the first day. He could not hide it from me, though he has always tried. He would marry me to-morrow and be a good husband, and just because I happened to be a friend to him once. But I see how that it is all a mistake. That is all I wanted to tell you. He is quite free."

She rose and Ethel rose too. In a novel the girl would have thrown herself into this poor woman's arms. But real life witnesses no such scenes between women. Ethel could not speak. She dared not even put out her hand.

Yet each knew what was in the other's heart.

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Perhaps that meeting with Ethel had been the bitterest phase in all Lavinia Peck's sacrifice. When she left Mrs. Ritchey's house she knew that the last step was consummated. To Roderick, the man she had loved so well and renounced so nobly, she could not speak, but she had written; and when she was gone the letter, according to the order she had left, was taken to him.

An hour later Roderick Roth, white and trembling, burst into Croft's room. He flung the letter on the table.

"Read it!"

Croft read it slowly, then folded it and put it back in its envelope.

"Well—she is a noble woman!"

"Noble! Oh, Croft, I can't bear it! She shames me; she shames me! What would have become of me had it not been for her? And now, now!"

Croft reflected a moment.

"I know how you must feel, Roderick. But—undoubtedly it is for the best. It seems brutal to say so, and yet the engagement was a mistake. Yes, a mistake. You can't make a marriage like that right, gratitude or no gratitude. Yes, women are capable of noble things. Ethel Ritchey would not have stretched out her proud little finger to win you once she knew you were bound to another woman."

"Miss Ritchey?" The color flamed up in Roderick's face. "Lavinia thinks that she, too—but no, no, it cannot be!"

Croft nodded quietly.

"Well, Miss Peck is right. Ethel Ritchey loves you."

"Good God, man!" Roderick sprang to his feet.

"Yes, and you can have her, even though her mother may object a little at first. Your being poor won't matter to Ethel. You will be rich enough one of these days. Not that it would make any difference with Ethel in any case. You may believe me, I know her well." He got up. "Yes, yes; go on and be happy, both of you. Youth—love! There is one season only for them; enjoy them while you may." He smiled with a slight sigh at the same time. "Poor Miss Peck knows that now; and so does a man of my age."

But Roderick Roth stood there unheeding. Heaven had opened in a vision before his eyes.—[New York Mercury.

WHY THE BOY WAS DISCHARGED.

Dr. Nostrum (to caller)—Yes, sir. Our testimonials are entirely voluntary. They are merely the outpouring of gratitude for health restored.

Office Boy—Man here to see you, sir.

Dr. Nostrum—What does he want?

Office Boy—He wants that $10 for the last batch of testimonials he wrote, and he says he's tired of calling around for his money.—[New York Recorder.

SUNDAY SERMON.

ONE OF REV. DR. TALMAGE'S STIRRING DISCOURSES.

Subject: "Baleful Amusements."

TEXT: "*Let the young men now arise and play before us!*"—II Samuel, ii., 14.

There are two armies encamped by the pool of Gibeon. The time hangs heavily on their hands. One army proposes a game of sword jousting. Nothing could be more healthful and innocent. The other army accepts the challenge. Twelve men against twelve men, the sport opens. But something went wrong. Perhaps one of the swordsmen got an unlucky clip, or in some way had his ire aroused, and that which opened in sportfulness ended in violence, each one taking his contestant by the hair, and then with the sword thrusting him in the side, so that that which opened in innocent fun ended in the massacre of all the twenty-four sportsmen. Was there ever a better illustration of what was true then, and is true now, 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 straight-jacket 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 in 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 has made a tremendous mistake in trying to suppress the sportfulness 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 for 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 everything mean 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 my Bible commends those who use the world without abusing it, and in the natural world God has done everything to please and amuse us. Its poetic figures 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 the winds sight, but they never did have any trouble; and that the storm howls, but it never lost its temper. The world is a rose, and the universe a garland.

I am glad to know that in all our cities there are plenty of places where we may find elevated, moral entertainment. But all honest men and good women will agree with me in the statement that one of the worst plagues of these cities is corrupt amusement. Multitudes have gone down under the blast. Its influence never to rise. If we may judge of what is going on in many of the places of amusement by the Sodomic pictures on board fences and in many of the show windows, there is not a much lower depth of profligacy to reach. At Naples, Italy, they keep such pictures locked up from indiscriminate inspection. These pictures were exhumed from Pompeii and are not fit for public gaze. If the effrontery of bad places of amusement in handing out improper advertisements of what they are doing night by night grows worse in the same proportion, in fifty years New York and Brooklyn will beat not only Pompeii, but Sodom.

To help stay the plague now raging I propose certain principles by which you may judge in regard to any amusement or recreation, finding out for yourself whether it is right or whether it is 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 tendency. There are people who are 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 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 paean 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 air 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 those 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 those 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 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 aroak.

If any amusement sends you home longing for a life of romance and thrilling adventure, so that takes poison and shoots itself, moonlight adventures and hair breadth escapes, you may depend upon it that you are the sacrificial victim of unsanctified pleasure. Our recreations are intended to build up, and if they pull us down as to our moral or as to our physical strength you may come to the conclusion that they are obnoxious.

There is nothing more depraving than attendance upon amusements that are full of lasciviousness and low suggestion. The young man enters. At first he sits far back, with his hat on and his coat collar up, fearful that somebody there may know him. Several nights pass on. He takes off his hat earlier and puts the coat collar down. The blush that first came into his cheek when anything indecent was enacted comes no more to his cheek. Farewell, young man! You have probably started on the long road which ends in consummate destruction. The days of hope will go out one by one, and you will be left in utter darkness. Hear you not the rush of the maelstrom, in whose outer circle your bark now hovers, soaking ever with less resistance? You cry for help. In vain! Behold the sea to the

back, but the occupant will not avail! You will be tossed and tossed and shipwrecked and swallowed in the whirlpool, and your ready crushed in its wrath ten thousand fathoms.

Young men who have just come from country residence to city residence will do well to be on guard and let no one mattered to place of immoral amusement. It is sleepy, and it is easy to go along, and a citizen, offers to show a new comer all around.

I add 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 amusements feeling that we have wasted our money and time. You may by it have made an investment worth more than the transactions that yielded you hundreds or 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 gyentide one of these men piled 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 bastile—I made up my mind he was a bastilak. I remember how he wheeled his chair round in front of me, and with a concentrated 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! oh, 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 silver tea set. The carousing party has burned up the boy's primer, and the tablecloth in 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 counterpart 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 mire and drowning out the carol of music with the whooping of bloated sons come home to break their old mother's heart.

I saw a beautiful home, where the bell rang violently late at night. The son had been off in sinful indulgencies. His comrades were bringing him home. They carried him in window. They rang the bell at 1 o'clock in the morning. Father and mother came down. They were waiting for the wandering son, and then the comrades, as soon as the door was opened, threw the prodigal headlong into the doorway, crying: "Here he is, drunk as a fool. Ha, ha! When men go into amusements they cannot afford they first borrow what they cannot earn and then they steal what they cannot borrow. First they go into embarrassment and then into lying and then into theft; and when a man gets as far on as that he does not stop short of the penitentiary. There is not a prison in the land where there are not victims of unsanctified amusements.

Merchants of Brooklyn or New York, is there a disarrangement in your accounts? Is there a leakage in your money drawer? Did not too last account come out right last night? I will tell you why. 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.

Young men, resolutely take the path of unestrained 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! Hard work, poverty, the poor house! Let other people, and in turn are stranded. The watch chain jingles. The cup flows. The cheeks flush. Their eyes flash. The mighty 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 grog shop, 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 grog shop 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 kitchen 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 she will be true with the agony. The great dramatist says: "How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is to have a thankless child."

I go further, and say these are unchristian amusements which become the chief business of a man's life. Life is an earnest thing. Whether we were born in a palace or hovel, whether we are affluent or pinched, we have to work. If you do not sweat with toil, you will sweat with disease. You have a soul that is to be transfigured amid the pomp of a judgment day; and after the sea has sung its last caant and the mountain shall have come down in an avalanche of a rock, you will live and think and act, high on a throne where seraphs sing, or deep in a dungeon where demons howl. In a world where there is so much to do for yourselves, and so much to do for others, God pity that man who has nothing to do.

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 gas lighted foolery! The man who is always has on his overcoat and is 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 grovelling worm that has to hide off as the grovelling worm that has to hide off as 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 jugglers 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. Amusements are the flowers on the grave of dead hopes, dead faiths, dead loves, dead manhoods, dead souls. Yet how many resolutions of an hour are made to be broken in the battle of life!

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 disreputable, 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 manhood. They will drop you when you are destroyed. They will give not one cent to support your children when you are dead. They will weep not one tear at your burial. They will chuckle over your damnation.

I had a friend at the west—a rare friend. He was one of the true Christians. He was new home. To fine personal appearance he added a generosity, frankness and ardor of nature that made me love him like a brother. But I saw evil people gathering around him. They came up from the saloons, from the gambling hells. They plied him with a thousand arts. They seized upon his social nature, and he could not stand the charm. They drove him on the rocks, like a ship full winged, shivering on the breakers. I used to admonish him. I would say, "Now I wish you would quit these bad habits and become a Christian." "Oh," he would reply, "I would like to. I would like to, but I have gone so far I don't think there is any way back." In his moments of repentance he would go home and take his little girl of eight years, and embrace her convulsively, and cover her with ornaments and straw around her pictures and toys and every thing that could make her happy; and then, as though bounding on an evil spirit, he would go out to the enflaming cup and the house of shame, like a fool to the correction of the stocks.

I was summoned to his deathbed in haste. I entered the room. I found him to my surprise, lying in full every day dress on the top of the clothes. I put out my hand. He grasped it excitedly and said, "Sit down, Mr. Talmage, sit down here." 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 those strings off of me. There are strings spun all around my body. I wish you would take them off of me." I saw it was delirium.

"Oh," replied his wife, "my dear, there is nothing there, there is nothing there." He went on, and said: "Just where you sit, Mr. Talmage, my mother sat. She said: 'Henry, I do wish you would do better.' I got out of bed, put my arms around her, and said, 'Mother, I want to do better. I have been trying to do better.' 'Well, 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. I tell do wish you would take these things 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, "Good-by; I hope your will be better soon." He said, "Good-by, good-by."

That night his soul went to the God who gave it. Arrangements were made for the obsequies. Some said, "Don't bring him in the church; he was too dissolute." "Oh," I said, "bring him. 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."

As I sat in the pulpit and saw his body coming up through the aisle I felt as if I could weep tears of blood. I told the people that day: "That man had his virtues, and a good many of them. He had his faults, and a good many of them, but if there is any man in this audience who is without sin let him cast the first stone at this coffin lid." In one side the pulpit sat that little child, rosy, sweet faced, as beautiful as any little child that sat at your table this morning. I warrant you. She looked up wistfully. Not knowing the full sorrows of an orphan child. Oh, her countenance beaming one day like some sweet face looking upon us through a horrid dream. On the other side of the pulpit were the men who had destroyed him. There they sat, hard visaged, some of them pale from exhausting disease, some of them flushed until it seemed as if the fires of iniquity flamed through the cheeks and crackled the lips. They were the men who had done the work. They were the men who had bound him hand and foot. They had kindled the fires. They had poured the wormwood and gall into that orphan's cup. Did they weep? No. Did they sigh repentingly? No. Did they say: "What a pity that such a brave man should be slain?" No, no; not one bloated hand was lifted to wipe a tear from a bloated cheek. They sat and looked at the coffin like vultures gazing at the carcass of a lamb whose heart they had ripped out! I cried in their ears as plainly as I could: "There is a God and a judgment day!" Did they tremble? Oh, no, no. They went back from the house of God, and that night, though their victim lay in Oakwood Cemetery, I was told that they blasphemed, and they drank, and they gambled, and there was not one less boisterous in all the houses of iniquity. They destroyed man was a Samson in physical strength, but Delilah sheared him, and the Philistines of evil companionship dug his eyes out and threw him into the prison of evil habits. But in the hour of his death he rose up and took hold of the two pillared curses of God against drunkenness and unchastity, and shook himself forward, until down upon him and his companions there came the thunders of an eternal catastrophe.

Again, my amusements 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 to-day the fragments before me of blasted households. Oh, if you have wandered away, I would like to charm you back by the solemn 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 into 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!

I saw a wayward husband standing at the deathbed of his Christian wife, and I saw her point to a ring on her finger, and heard her say to her husband, "Do you see that ring?" He replied, "Yes, I see it." "Well," said she, "do you remember who put it there?" "Yes," said he, "I put it there," and all the past seemed to rush upon him. By the memory of that day when, in the presence of men and angels, you promised to be faithful in joy and sorrow, and in sickness and in health; by the memory of those pleasant hours when you sat together in your new home talking of a bright future; by the cradle and the joyful hour when our life was spared and another given; by that sick bed, when the little one lifted up the voice and called for help, and you knew he must die, he put one arm around each of your necks and brought you very near together in that dying kiss; by the little grave in Greenwood that you never think of without a rush of tears; by the family Bible, where, amidst stones of heavenly love, is the brief but expressive record of births and deaths; by the neglects of the past and by the agonies of the future; by a judgment day, when husbands and wives, parents and children, in immortal transport, will stand to be clasped in shining raiment, or to shrink down into darkness; by all that, I beg you to give to home your best affections.

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