

Saturday Night

Talks By F. E. DAVISON
Rutland, Vt.

BREAKERS AHEAD.

Dec. 27, '08—(Prov., Ch. 4).

The book of Proverbs falls naturally into three sections:—

Chapters 1-9. Addressed chiefly to the young.

Chapters 10-24. Addressed to all ages and ranks.

Chapters 25-29. A later collection made by the orders of King Hezekiah from extant records of the wisdom of Solomon. Two appendices are added. The words of an unknown sage, Agur, fill the 30th chapter. The 31st chapter contains the words of Lemuel, the King, probably an Arab prince. It contains good advice for a king, and is remarkable for being cast in the form of an acrostic, the verses descriptive of a virtuous woman, from the 10th verse downward, beginning the successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet in regular order.

From the miscellaneous nature of its contents it is impossible to give a comprehensive synopsis of the book, but the warnings it utters against prominent evils, which prevailed in Solomon's time, and still prevail, may be grouped under a few heads.

Filial Impiety.

Solomon makes a great deal of this subject. He had himself been dutiful both to his father and mother, but he had seen the terrible effects of disobedience on his father's house through the waywardness of his brothers, Amnon, Absalom and Adonijah, who had all come to a bad end, and caused their father David sorrow and shame. Then, too, he probably had misgivings in regard to his own son Rehoboam, the half-sister to whom he makes bones, the oft repeated address, "My son, my son." Disobedience to parents is one of the crying sins of our day. Young America, headstrong and impatient, thinks it a mark of smartness to refer to his father as "the governor" or "the old man," and Miss America looks at the old fogey notions of her unfashioned mother and sings proudly boasts that she is not tied to the maternal apron strings. The boy in the grammar school knows more than seven men that can render a reason, and has no hesitation about expressing his opinion in contradiction of any wisdom of his parent. And the young miss not yet half through her teens ridicules the straight-faced theories of her godly mother, and takes a keen delight in tearing them into tatters and trampling them in the dust. Solomon's wise counsels were not sufficient to keep Rehoboam, his son, from making a fool of himself, and many a father since has been obliged to cry out with King Lear:

"How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is,
To have a thankless child."

Bad Company.

It was a heathen poet whom St. Paul quotes, "Be not deceived; evil communications corrupt good manners." And Solomon puts the case strongly when he says, "He that walketh with wise men shall be wise but a companion of fools shall be destroyed." It is not always true that "birds of a feather flock together," for in a multitude of cases young men and women have been utterly innocent of any disposition to evil in their choice of companions, they have been corrupted before they knew it. Evil associates do not usually advertise their baseness abroad, but do their work little by little. Youth is unsuspecting, almost utterly devoid of reserve, has a strong desire for companionship, and quick to resent any admonition of warning. Hence the necessity of prompt and vigorous action on the part of parents and guardians when evil companionship is even suspected.

Licentiousness.

Many people object to the Bible because it frankly and boldly grapples with deadly sin of whatever nature. As well might one criticize the health officers for erecting pest houses and warning the unsuspecting from the neighborhood with a red small pox flag. Many a person has been lured to death through this policy of closing the eyes to disagreeable and hideous facts. The peril is everywhere in our day and those are the wisest parents who teach their children the absolute necessity of heaven-blessed purity. "A white life for two" should be the standard wrought into the very constitutions of our boys and girls, and the Proverbs of Solomon are an inspired assistance in that direction.

Intemperance.

The intemperance against which Solomon inveighs is not limited to intoxicating drink, as some people imagine, but to all those indulgences of the appetite which are carried to excess and beyond a proper gratification. Solomon puts the glutton and the drunkard in the same category, while we are inclined to limit intemperance to the abuse of alcohol. It is not necessary in modern times to dwell upon the evils of strong drink; its effects are too apparent to be overlooked, but it is essential to bear in mind that over-indulgence in any direction is reprehensible. The mastery of physical appetites is a great desideratum. This is equally true in all the conditions of life, whether you use earthen dishes on a pine table or gold plate on polished mahogany.

TALK ON MARRIAGE

ONE OF THE BEST DISSERTATIONS ON MATRIMONY.

The Part Played by the Time, the Place and the Girl in That Momentous Event—The Authorship Unknown.

You may say what you like about the "Time the Place and the Girl," but, after all, the time and the place have a lot more to do with the making of matches than the "Girl," said the spinster with a foudness for statistics.

I've been getting up some data on the subject, and I find that in nine cases out of ten the circumstances—the mood a man is in, the clothes a girl happens to be wearing when they meet—have more to do with matrimony than the little bird god himself. And as to marriages being made in heaven—the spinster shrugged away that suggestion with contempt.

"Every wedding leaves some women wondering 'what he saw in her.' I myself have made the remark apropos of half a dozen married women I know, and in several cases when I knew the people pretty well, I've inquired of the husband where, and under what circumstances he fell in love."

"And what have you learned?" she was asked.

"I learned that two of the things that most appeal to men are helplessness and a certain dainty femininity of attire that some women effect—which puts the tailor-made girl out of business every time."

One man told me that he was first smitten by love's dart while crossing the street behind a lady, who, on lifting her skirts from the dust displayed fingers of the dainty, duffy order that stamps a girl, to the masculine mind, as a "sweet, feminine creature." He followed up the girl—and the opportunity. The result was matrimony and a charming fat. Then he awoke to the fact that the femininity was a mere matter of fancy-dress, and the lady was in reality one of the sort that insisted on having her own way and his, too; she was, in fact, a bully of the worst type.

"Another man I interviewed met his fate on a railroad train. She was in the act of struggling with a refractory car-window. 'Her little hands,' he said, 'looked so pretty and helpless; and, too, when he took the stubborn snub in hand and forced it open, his own brawn and muscle showed up so well by contrast. Then when she looked up at him and murmured admiringly, 'Oh, it's lovely to be so strong!' his doom was sealed."

What though she were freckled, snub-nosed and red-haired? She was a clinging vine, he a sturdy oak. Well, he married her, of course, and he greatly fancied his role for a year or two; but in course of time her clinging become monotonous. He has grown tired of it, and, between you and me, I think he has sometimes been tempted to bring damages against that railroad company for not having its windows in working order.

"And what conclusion have I reached on the subject you ask? This. That after a few years the result in most cases is the same! Disillusionment, disappointment, and dissatisfaction on the man's part."

"And the woman?"
"As to the woman, she, too, has her disenchantments, but then (this is strictly between ourselves) anything is better than being an old maid!"

Hands Age Rapidly.

A horrible revelation is made in a publication devoted to scientific matters. It is that hands age even more rapidly than faces. So whereas women make every effort to preserve the youthful aspect of their faces, they foolishly allow their hands to give them away. It is extremely disconcerting to think that the observant eye is not fixed on the face, or even on the telltale chin, but on the hands. There are ways, fortunately, by which their treachery can be circumvented, but precautions are more likely to be neglected in their case than in that of the face.

Squirrels Used for Sable Fur.

Several secrets of the fur trade were revealed in the Lord Chief Justice's court in London at a hearing a remarkable claim by a man who was suing a firm which formerly employed him. It was testified that in Berlin there is an extensive industry which employs hundreds of men in turning to "sables" the skins of squirrels brought from Siberia and other parts of the Russian Empire. Several squirrel skins are cut into shape and joined together and, after the skins have undergone processes of dyeing and straightening, they are sold as sable.

A Woman's Unique Distinction.

Dr. Wentchokova, a Russian, who studied and received her degree at Zurich, has, according to a report in a Vienna paper, received an appointment as a member of the faculty of the University of Moscow. The woman who has received this unique distinction has made pathology her special study. Her appointment is especially remarkable because the university which extended the call to her admits no women as students.

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