

**SATURDAY NIGHT TALKS**

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Rutland, Vt.

CHURCH'S HALL OF FAME.

International Bible Lesson for  
June 13, '09—(Heb. 11: 1-40)



Every nation has its hall of fame. On the walls of its Valhalla the names of the immortals are inscribed, like the Pantheon, built by Louis I. of Bavaria, which was consecrated to all Germans who have become renowned in war, statesmanship, literature, science, or art.

**Roll of the Departed.**

And it is significant that these great men are all dead men. The world has a universal habit of finding out that it has been entertaining angels unawares. Blessings brighten as they take their flight. The Washington monument erected among the skyscrapers of New York would not attract so much attention as it does standing out solitary and alone on the banks of the Potomac. We are too near the men of the present to properly estimate their proportions. Some of them are much bigger than they appear, and some of them will shrink mightily when we get the proper perspective. It is quite likely that the neighbors of Abraham thought him a deluded, addle-brained visionary when he gave up his pleasant home in Ur of the Chaldees, and started out on a wild goose errand to a land that he expected to receive for an inheritance, and we know that even Moses, the greatest statesman of the ages was criticised by his brother and sister, and that the common rabble of the street took up stones to pelt him. We have frowns, and criticism, and abuse and mud for our living leaders, but fragrant flowers for their coffins, and soaring monuments for their graves.

**Have to Die to Be Appreciated.**

People have to die to be appreciated. Joan of Arc was burned at the stake as a vile heretic, but she has recently been beatified by the Pope. The flames did not harm her great spirit, and the beatification will not add any lustre to her glory. The incident only serves to point this moral and adorn this tale. There were thousands of men who abused Abraham Lincoln. They never could speak of him without a sneer. He was a "rail-splitter," a black republican, an uncouth interloper. He was abused by the newspapers, caricatured on the platform, denounced by the politicians. The waves of assault rolled up to his feet from the south, and dashed over his head from the north, and they never ceased to roll over him till his gentle heart broke in death. But 40 years after his assassination Columbia carves his name in her temple of fame side by side with Washington, and the whole country, yea, the whole civilized world uncovers and bends the knee at the grave of Abraham Lincoln.

**A Matchless Pantheon.**

The Hebrew people have their hall of fame. It is found in the eleventh chapter of the book of Hebrews, written very likely by Apollon, a lover of his race. He goes into that matchless Pantheon, and beginning with Abel, the first martyr, he writes upon the pages of an imperishable book the names of the heroes of faith for 4,000 years. The nations visit that sacred edifice and read the deathless names.—Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, the Prophets.—a cloud of witnesses, an honor roll whom the proudest nations of earth might covet.

**The Living Dead.**

And yet these heroes are not dead. They never began to have the influence in the world that they have at this very moment. Their contemporaries never were affected by them as the whole world is to-day. When Abraham set out from Mesopotamia he took none of his neighbors with him. When Enoch walked with God, he went alone, in life and in translation. When Noah sailed over the judgment flood he could induce no one else to embark with him, save his own family. They had little success, as men count success with those who were coeval with them. But to-day wherever the Bible is read Enoch is walking with God, Abraham is inheriting the promises,—the father of a multitude like the sands of the sea,—and Moses is breaking the bonds of the oppressor and shouting in the ear of every taskmaster, "Let my people go." No great man ever really dies. When Jesus was in the flesh he was limited to the narrow confines of Palestine. It was only at his departure that he could really say, Go ye into all the world, and lo, I am with you always. The Christ is the most omnipresent personality in the world to-day. But the same thing is true in a lesser degree in respect to every great soul of man. Thus the present is peopled with the shadowy forms of the past. It is impossible to reach the immortals.

**WHEN NIAGARA RUNS DRY.**

Nature Will Destroy Cataract in Three Thousand Years.

According to an official of the Geological Survey, a comparison of the gage records for a period of 20 years shows that the land surrounding the Great Lakes is being gradually tilted from northeast to southwest at such a rate that, of two points 100 miles apart, the northern rises five inches with reference to the southern in 100 years.

At Chicago the lake level rises about one inch in 10 years.

The official quoted predicts that, if this movement continues, in about 3,000 years all the upper lakes will discharge into the Illinois River, the Detroit and St. Clair Rivers will flow backward, carrying the water of Lake Erie into Lake Huron, and the Niagara River will run dry.

**Women in Ethnology.**

The recent investigations of Dr. C. G. Seligman among the Veddas of Ceylon, and the great importance of the aid which Doctor Seligman's wife was able to give him, lead Mr. A. C. Haddon to point out the desirability of women of a scientific turn of mind interesting themselves in work of this kind. But for the presence of his wife Doctor Seligman would have been unable to secure many of the facts which he has accumulated. The Veddas, who live in caves, are extremely averse to having white men visit their families; but Mrs. Seligman was warmly welcomed among them, and among other things she collected records of the songs of the women and girls. They took the greatest delight in the phonograph, and their amazement was unbounded at hearing their songs and lullabies repeated by the instrument.

**Natural Rotation in Forests.**

Observations in India indicate that just as agricultural land, after many repetitions of the same crops, becomes exhausted for that particular species, so in forest lands, after long periods, the seedlings may fall owing to changes in the soil, and new varieties may take their place. Forests of blue pine in that country have been observed to fall, the deodar-tree tending to take the place of pine. In another case forests of pine and oak have been found, each invading and tending to take up the ground occupied by the other. Elsewhere in India spruce and silver fir have been found advancing into a falling oak forest, and mulberry extending upon land formerly occupied dominantly by "shisham" trees.

**His Favorite Game-Bird.**

At a dinner one day, says a writer in the Philadelphia Public Ledger, some men were discussing the merits of different kinds of game-birds. One preferred canvasback duck, another, woodcock, and still another thought a quail the most delicious article of food. The discussion and the dinner ended at about the same time.

"Now, Frank," said one of the men to the waiter at his elbow, "what kind of game do you like best?"

"Well, sah, to tell the truth, almost any kind of game suits me, but what I like best is an American eagle served on a silver dollar."

**A Bird Census.**

Under the direction of Prof. S. A. Forbes of the University of Illinois a summer bird census of that state has been taken. The method was to enumerate the birds seen on a strip 150 feet broad and 428 miles long, running across the state from north to south. This strip covers an area of 12 square miles. The count showed 7,740 birds of 80 species. On this basis the total summer bird population of Illinois was calculated at 30,750,000, of which 2,500,000 are English sparrows. The meadow-lark is the next most numerous. The English sparrows were found to decrease in number from north to south. On the contrary, the native birds increased.

**Whips from a Tree.**

In the island of Jamaica there grows a tree with the botanic name of the Daphne lagetto, from the branches of which native workmen make peculiarly strong and excellent whips. These whips have the handle and lash all in one piece. The handle consists of a part of the stem retaining the bark. For the lash the stem is deprived of bark and then split into strips, which are woven together in a flexible cord six or seven feet long. The proper taper is afforded by detaching more and more of the strips as the end of the lash is approached.

**A Doctor's Messenger.**

In the north of Scotland there is a doctor who has to drive many miles to visit some of his patients. He takes with him several carrier-pigeons and sends them back to his office with a message asking for the prescriptions that need to be made up and sent at once. Then these reach the sick person very soon. If any of these patients living far off are so ill that they may need to have the doctor come again to see them, he leaves pigeons with them which can be sent to him with a line asking him to come.

**The "Vanilla Bean."**

The vanilla bean is the fruit of a vine belonging to the orchid family, originally found in Mexico, but now cultivated in South America, Java, and other tropical regions. The term "bean" is incorrect, as the plant is not a legume, and the long, pencil-shaped fruit pods, containing thousands of minute seeds, do not resemble a bean. The beans having the finest flavor and the most expensive as to cost, are brought from Mexico.

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