

REV. DR. TALMAGE.

THE BROOKLYN DIVINE'S SUNDAY SERMON.

Subject: "The Vacant Chair."

TEXT: "Thou shalt be missed, because thy seat will be empty."—I Samuel xx. 13.

Set on the table the cutlery and the chased silverware of the palace, for King Saul will give a state dinner to-day. A distinguished place is kept at the table for his son-in-law, a celebrated warrior, David by name. The guests, jeweled and plumed, come in and take their places. When people are invited to a king's banquet they are very apt to go. But before the covers are lifted from the feast Saul looks around and finds a vacant seat at the table. He says within himself, "Where is David? What does this mean? Where is my son-in-law? Where is David, the great warrior? I invited him. I expected him. What a vacant chair at the king's banquet! The fact was that, I, the warrior, had been seated for the last time at his father-in-law's table. The day before Jonathan had coaxed David to go and occupy that place at the table, saying to David in the words of my text, 'Thou shalt be missed, because thy seat will be empty.'" The prediction was fulfilled. David was his guest. His seat was empty. That one vacant chair spoke louder than all the occupied chairs at the banquet.

In almost every house the articles of furniture take a living personality. That picture—a stranger would see nothing remarkable either in its design or execution, but it is more to you than all the pictures of the Louvre and the Luxembourg. You remember who bought it, and who admired it. And that hymn book—you remember who sang out of it. And that cradle—you remember who rocked it. And that bed—you remember who slept in it. And that room—you remember who died in it. But there is nothing in all your house so eloquent and so mighty voiced as the vacant chair. I suppose that before Saul and his guests got up from this banquet there was a great clatter of wine pitchers, but all that racket was in vain. The voice that came up from the vacant chair at the table.

Millions have gazed and wept at John Quincy Adams's vacant chair in the house of representatives, and at Wilson's vacant chair in the vice-presidency, and at Henry Clay's vacant chair in the American senate, and at Prince Albert's vacant chair in Windsor castle, and at Thiers's vacant chair in the councils of the French nation. But all these chairs are unimportant to you as compared with the vacant chairs in your own household. Have these chairs any lesson for us to learn? Are we any better men and women than when they first addressed us?

First I point to you the father's vacant chair. Old that room you remember who died in it. But there is nothing in all your house so eloquent and so mighty voiced as the vacant chair. I suppose that before Saul and his guests got up from this banquet there was a great clatter of wine pitchers, but all that racket was in vain. The voice that came up from the vacant chair at the table.

History tells us of an old man whose three sons were victors in the Olympic games, and when they came back to their father's house, their garlands put them on the father's brow, and the old man was so rejoiced at the victories of his three children that he fell dead in his arms. And are you, on any, going to bring a wreath of joy and Christian usefulness and put it on your father's brow, or on the vacant chair, or on the memory of the one departed? Speak out, old armchair! With reference to your father, the words of my text have been fulfilled, "Thou shalt be missed, because thy seat will be empty."

I go a little further on in your house and I find the mother's chair. It is very apt to be a rocking chair. She had so many cares and troubles to soothe that it must have rocked. I remember it well; it was an old chair, and the rockers were almost worn out, for I was the youngest, and the chair had rocked the whole family. It made a creaking noise as it moved; but there was music in the sound. It was just high enough to allow us children to put our heads into her lap. That was the time when we deposited all our hurts and worries. Ah! what a chair that was. It was different from the father's chair; it was entirely different. You ask me how? I cannot tell; but you all felt it was different. Perhaps there was about this chair more gentleness, more tenderness, more grief when we had done wrong. When we were weary and father scolded, but mother cooed.

It was a very wakeful chair. In the sick days of children other chairs could not keep awake; that chair always kept awake—kept our eyes awake. The chair knew all the old lullabies and all those wondrous songs when mothers sing to their sick children—songs in which all pity and compassion and sympathetic influence are combined. That old chair has stopped rocking for a good many years. It may be set up in the left or the right, but it holds a queenly power yet. When at midnight you went into that grog shop to get the intoxicating draught, did you not hear a voice that said, "My son, why do you do this?" And louder than the boisterous encores of the place of amusement, a voice saying, "My son, that do you do here?" And when you went into the house of abandonment, a voice saying, "What would your mother do if she knew you were here?" And you were provoked with yourself, and you charged yourself with superstition and fan-

aticism and your head got hot with your own thoughts, and you went home and you went to bed, and no sooner had you touched the bed than a voice said, "You are a prayerless pillow? Man! what is the matter?" This you are too near your mother's rocking-chair. "Oh, you say, 'There's nothing in that.' I'm five hundred miles off from where I was born. I'm three hundred miles off from the church whose bell was the first music I ever heard." I cannot help that. You are too near your mother's rocking chair. "Oh, you say, 'There can't be anything in that.' That chair has been vacant a good while. I cannot help that. It is all the mightier for that. It is omnipotent, that vacant mother's chair. It whispers, it speaks, it weeps, it carols, it mourns, it prays, it warns, it thunders. A young man went off and broke his mother's heart, and while he was away from home his mother died, and the telegraph brought the son, and he came into the room where she lay and looked upon her face, and he cried out: "Oh, mother, mother, what your death has done to your death shall effect! This moment I give my heart to God." And he kept his promise. Another victory for the vacant chair. With reference to your mother the words of my text were fulfilled, "Thou shalt be missed, because thy seat will be empty."

I go on a little further, and I come to the invalid's chair. What! How long have you been sick? "Oh! I have been sick ten, twenty, thirty years." Is it possible? What a story of endurance. There are in many of the families of my congregation these invalid's chairs. The occupants of them think they are doing no good in the world, but that invalid's chair is the mighty pulpit from which they have been preaching, all these years, trust in God. The first time I preached here at Lakeside, Ohio, amid the throngs present, there was nothing that so much impressed me as the spectacle of just one face—the face of an invalid who was wheeled in on her chair. I said to her afterward: "Madam, how long have you been prostrated?" For about a year, she replied. "I have been this way fifteen years." I said, "Do you suffer very much?" "Oh, yes," she said, "I suffer very much; I suffer all the time; part of the time I was blind. Always when one of these invalid's chairs becomes vacant how suggestive it is! No more bolstering up of the weary head. No more changing from side to side to get an easy position. No more use of the bandage and the cravat and the prescription. That invalid chair may be put up or taken apart, or set away, but it will never lose its queenly power. It will always preach of trust in God and cheerful submission. Suffering all ended now. With respect to that invalid who was my text, have been fulfilled, "Thou shalt be missed, because thy seat will be empty."

I pass on and find one more vacant chair. It is a high chair. It is the child's chair. If the chair be occupied I think it is the most potent chair in all the household. All the chairs wait on it; all the chairs are turned toward it. It means more than David's chair at Saul's banquet. At any time it may be rocked. There is a strange house that can be built with a high chair in it. How that child drags up the hard woodiness of the place and keeps you young to sixty, seventy and eighty years of age. If you have no child of your own you will open heaven to a young soul. It will pay its way. Its crowing in the morning will give the day a cheerful starting, and its glee at night will give the day a cheerful close. You do not like children, then you had better stay out of heaven, for there are so many that would fairly make you crazy. Only about five hundred millions of them. The old clergyman Parson told the mothers to keep the children away from Christ. "You bother me," he said, "you trouble the Master." Trouble Him! He has filled heaven with that kind of trouble.

A pioneer in California says that for the first year or two after his residence in Sierra Nevada county there was not a single child in all the ranches, for twenty miles. But the Fourth of July came, and the miners were gathered together and they were celebrating the Fourth with oration and poem and a boisterous brass band, and while the band was playing an infant's voice was heard crying, and all the miners were startled, and the swarthy men began to think of their homes on the eastern coast, and their hearts were thrilled with homesickness as they heard the babe cry. But the music went on, and the men grew louder and louder, and the brass band played louder and louder, trying to drown out the infantile interruption, when a swarthy miner, the tears rolling down his face, got up and shook his fist and said, "Stop that noisy band, and give the babe a chance." Oh, there was pathos in it, as well as good cheer in it. There is nothing to arouse and melt and subdue the soul like a child's voice. But when it goes single from the high chair, it has a higher chair, and there is desolation all about you.

In three-fourths of the homes of this congregation there is a vacant high chair. Somehow you never get over it. There is no one to put to bed at night; no one to ask strange questions about God and heaven. Oh, what is the use of that high chair? It is to call you higher. What a drawing upward it is to have children in heaven! And there is such a preventive against sin as that father is going away into sin he leaves his living children with their mother; but if a father is going away into sin what is he going to do with his dead children floating about him and hovering over his every word and step. Oh, speak out, vacant high chair and say, "Father, come back from sin, mother, come back from worldliness. I am watching you. I am waiting for you." With respect to your child the words of my text have been fulfilled, "Thou shalt be missed, because thy seat will be empty."

My hearers, I have gathered up the voices of your departed friends and tried to intone them into one invitation upward. I set in array all the vacant chairs of your homes and of your social circle, and I bid them cry out this morning: "There is short Eternity is near. Take my Saviour. Be at peace with my God. Come up where I am. We live together on earth; come let us live together in heaven." We answer that invitation. We come. Keep a seat for us as Saul kept a seat for David, but that seat shall not be empty. And oh! when we are all through with this world, and we have shaken hands all around for the last time, and all our chairs in the home circle and in the outside world shall be vacant, may we be worshipping God in that place from which we shall go out no more forever.

I think God there will be no vacant chairs in heaven. There we shall meet again and talk over our earthly heart-breaks. How much you have been through since you saw them last. On the shining shore you will talk it over. The heart-aches. The loneliness. The sleepless nights. The weeping until you had no more power to weep, because the heart was withered and dried up. Story of misery cradled and a little sob only half worn out never to be worn again, just the shape of the foot that once pressed it. And dreams

when you thought the departed had come back again, and the room seemed bright with their faces, and you started up to greet them and in the effort the dream broke and you found yourself standing amid ruins in the midnight—alone.

Talking it all over, then, hand in hand, walking up and down in the light. No sorrow, no tears, no death. Oh, heaven! beautiful heaven! Heaven where our friends are. Heaven where we expect to be. In the east they take a cage of birds and bring it to the tomb of the dead, and then they open the door of the cage, and the birds, flying out, sing. And I would to-day bring a cage of Christian consolations to the grave of your loved ones, and I would open the door and let them fill all the air with the music of their voices.

Oh, how they bound in these spirits before the throne! Some shout with gladness. Some break forth into uncontrolable weeping for joy. Some stand speechless in their shock of delight. They sing. They quiver with excessive gladness. They gaze on the temples, on the palaces, on the waters, on each other. They weave their joy into garlands, they strike in on timbrels, and then all the loved ones gather in a great circle around the throne of God—fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, sons and daughters, lovers and friends, hand to hand around about the throne of God—the circle ever widening—hand to hand, joy to joy, jubilee to jubilee, victory to victory, "until the day break and the shadows flee away. Turn thou, my beloved, and be like a rose or a young hart upon the mountains of Beth-el."

SCIENTIFIC AND INDUSTRIAL.

Pacific coast uses English coal.

Electric buggies are announced.

Perfumery is made from coal tar.

An underground railway for Berlin is being discussed by German engineers.

It is estimated that at least 1,000,000 pounds of rubber are annually used for bicycle tires.

The telephone cables laid beneath the streets of Berlin are estimated to meet the requirements 30,000 subscribers, the present number being 15,000.

Coal in the Province of Almeria, in Spain, is so dear that there is a great rejoicing over the discovery of an inferior quality in a large vein near Albalanche.

A recent English invention is a machine which bends tubes without the necessity of filling them with some yielding material to preserve an accurate section.

An electric wire in Pittsburg parting, fell to the ground and within two inches of a pedestrian, who, though not touched by the wire, received a rather severe shock.

An electric car in St. Paul, Minn., while passing the end of a bridge in a heavy rain recently, was struck by lightning. The car was set on fire and the machinery rendered useless. Not one of the passengers was injured.

Among the novelties is an inflatable rubber chamber for bathers. It passes around the bust underneath the arms, making it possible for a bather to float in an erect position without fatigue. It can be inflated when desired by means of a tube attached to the neck.

Herr Bombel, an apothecary and chemist of Nuremberg, Germany, claims to have discovered a process by which the lymph which Dr. Koch invented may be purged of its dangerous qualities. Experiments with lymph so purged are said to have met with great success.

Some of the single plates of armor for the armored cruiser Maine, building at the Brooklyn (N. Y.) Navy Yard, will weigh fifty tons. A special crane is in construction at Alliance, Ohio, to handle the Maine's armor. The crane will be mounted on a railway running around the edge of the stone dry dock.

The rate of growth of corals is difficult to estimate. At the meeting of the Academy of Natural Sciences, of Philadelphia, Professor Heilprin exhibited a specimen of Porites astroides which had been taken from an anchor cast in the autumn of 1885. He estimated that the annual amount of increase was scarcely one-twentieth of an inch.

An attempt is to be made by Dr. H. Koplik at the Eastern Dispensary, situated in the tenement district of New York City, to furnish to the poor at a low price sterilized milk. It is hoped by this means to prevent the appalling mortality among the children of this class. The plan was initiated on a small scale last summer by Dr. Koplik, who reports favorable results in the majority of cases.

The new Archbishop of York, Dr. MacLagan, possesses at least one qualification which will endear him to the hearts of the Yorkshiresmen, in that he is a good judge of a horse and delights in equestrian exercise. In spite of this, he would scarcely go so far as another great cleric, who, so tradition says, in the case of a young nobleman, a candidate for orders, accepted a thoroughbred from the father and forgot to "pluck" the son. Few people, however, know Dr. MacLagan as a hymn-writer and composer of tunes. His powers of organization, if in the opinion of some too drastic for the diocese, will be extremely useful if utilized to weld the component parts of the great province.

New York has an anti-riding society, Boston a newly formed cat-breeder's society, and Philadelphia a comprehensive institution for the suppression of excitement of all kinds. Of a verity, Browning, Mr. and Mrs. Russell the grace-experts, and Mr. Howells the monotone word-painter will have to get upon themselves a goodly haul of the new fads will absorb all the yawning long-felt wants they have been attempting to fill for revenue only for these last several months.

If you have found your rut, stay in it. You will have trouble, and dissatisfaction, and unrest, if you try to get out. Time your life by the clock, and do the same things at the same time to-day you did at the same time yesterday. It may not be an ambitious life to live, but it will be a contented one. There is less wear and tear to it, and you will live longer.

NEWS AND NOTES FOR WOMEN.

Jeweled laces are new.

Church weddings are on the decline.

Cream colored lace is gaining favor.

Woman's suffrage is popular at the antipodes.

Chicago will build a home for working girls.

Embroideries seem to be the pet child of fashion this year.

The Government offices at Washington employ 4000 women.

Thirteen more women than men voted at the municipal election in Cawker City, Kan.

There is a well grounded rumor from Paris that hoop skirts are coming in next year.

One costume worn by the late prima donna Emma Abbott weighed 150 pounds.

Mrs. Jennie C. Croly, "Jennie June," has been made honorary president for life of Sorosis.

The Greensboro (N. C.) Female College graduates wore dresses of their own making this year.

The very latest craze which is exciting femininity is to have pocketbooks made of the exact stuff of the gown.

Two enterprising Indianapolis (Ind.) girls recently won a box of gloves by climbing a smokestack 120 feet high.

Mrs. Leland Stanford has given \$100,000 for the permanent support of the five kindergartens in San Francisco, Cal.

Light gloves can be cleaned with corn meal; black kids, with a teaspoon of oil to which a few drops of ink have been added.

Mrs. Oscar Wilde and Lady Hubberton are two of the noted English women who have adopted the divided skirt as part of their every-day attire.

Miss Nellie Blessing Eyster, President of the Women's Press Association of the Pacific coast, is a grand-niece of Barbara Fritchie, Whittier's heroine.

England has more women workers than any other country in proportion to its population, twelve per cent. of the industrial classes being women.

In all the cotton materials used for misses' dresses there is full scope for any amount of white embroidery, and this is especially fancied for gingham.

Mrs. Georgia Kendrick, of Poughkeepsie, N. Y., wife of the late Rev. Dr. Kendrick, has been elected to the lady principalship of Vassar College and has accepted it.

A Pomona (Cal.) woman has devised a process of drying rose leaves so as to retain their fragrance, and has secured a market for all she can prepare with a New York firm.

Dr. Martha Robinson, of Cleveland, Ohio, has been her father's partner in dentistry for five years past, and the old gentleman leaves all difficult operations to her especial care.

The only woman in America who is an operatic conductor is Miss Emma Steiner. A Southerner by birth, she composed music, as well as read and executed it, by the time she was eleven years old.

Belva Lockwood, the Washington lawyer, is annoyed at the statement in a well-known book of reference which makes her seventy-one years of age. She declares that she is yet only fifty-nine.

Bismarck's wife is rather short and stout. She was never pretty, but she has always had a remarkably fresh and clear complexion. Her gruff husband's devotion to her is said to be quite touching.

Shirring is desirable on the dresses of young girls and children because it is dressy, and it does away with the necessity for any other ornamentation, which will be a few loops of ribbon or rosettes.

The wife of Joel Chandler Harris, "Uncle Remus," is a pretty brunette woman, with beautiful teeth and a charming smile. She is of French-Canadian descent and is an accomplished linguist.

One of England's brightest girl college graduates this season is Miss Mary K. Montgomery, who has just taken the highest honors at the University of London. She is a young woman of twenty-two, the daughter of a Unitarian clergyman.

The woman's branch of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals in Philadelphia, after winning notable victories over fox hunters and pigeon shooters, has begun a determined campaign against the docking of horses' tails.

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