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Lectures to Young Men,
ON POPULAR AMUSEMENTS.

BY HENRY WARD BEECHER.

Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart; and in the sight of thine eyes; but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment. Ecclesiastes xi. 9.

I am anxious to venture the delicate task of reprehension, always unwelcome, but peculiarly offensive upon topics of public amusement. I am anxious, in the beginning, to put myself right with the young. If I satisfy myself, Christian men, and the sober community, and do not satisfy them, my success will be like a physician's, whose prescriptions please himself, and the relations, and do good to everybody except the patient,—he dies.

Allow me, first of all, to satisfy you that I am not meddling with matters which do not concern me. This is the impression which the patrons and partners of criminal amusement study to make upon your minds. They represent our duty to be in the church, taking care of doctrines, and of our own members. When more than this is attempted; when we speak a word for you who are not church-members, we are met with the surly answer, "Why do you meddle with things which don't concern you?" If you do not enjoy these pleasures, why do you molest those who do? May not men do as they please in a free country, without being hung up in a gibbet of public remark?" It is conveniently forgotten, I suppose, that in a free country, we have the same right to criticize pleasure, which others have to enjoy it. Indeed, you and I both know, young gentlemen, that in college-house circles, and in convivial hours nocturnal, the Church is regarded as little better than a spectated old beldam, whose impudent eyes are spying everybody's business but her own; and who, too old or too homely to be tempted, herself, with compulsory virtue, pants at the joyous dalliances of the young and gay. Religion is called a minstrel with gloomy vestments; and the Church a cloister, where ignorance is deemed innocence, and which sends out querulous reprobations of a world, which it knows nothing about, and has professedly abandoned. This is pretty; and is only defective, if not being true. The Church is not a cloister, nor her members recluses, nor are our censures of vice intermeddling. Not to dwell in generalities, let us take a plain and common case:

A strolling company offer to educate our youth; and to show the community the road of morality, which, probably they have not seen themselves for twenty years. We cannot help laughing at a generosity so much above one's means; and when they proceed to hew and hack each other with rusty iron, to teach our boys valor; and dress up practical mountebanks, to teach theoretical virtue; if we laugh somewhat more, they turn upon us testily: Do you mind your own business, and leave us with ours? We do not interfere with your preaching, do you let alone our acting?

But easily—may not religious people amuse themselves with very diverting men? I hope it is not bigotry to have eyes and ears: I hope it is not fanaticism, in the use of these excellent senses, for us to judge that throwing one's heels higher than their head-a-dancing, is not exactly the way to teach virtue to our daughters; and that women, whose genial warmth of temperament has led them into a generosity something too great, are not the persons to teach virtue, at any rate. Oh! no; we are told, Christians must not know that all this is very singular. Christians ought to think that men who are kings and dukes and philosophers; on the stage, are virtuous men, even if they gamble at night, and are drunk all day; and if

men are so used to comedy, that their life becomes a perpetual farce on morality, we have no right to laugh at this extra professional acting!

Are we meddlers, who only seek the good of our own families, and of our own community where we live and expect to die? or they, who wander up and down without ties of social connection, and without aim, except of money to be gathered off from men's vices?

I am anxious to put all religious men in their right posture before you; and in this controversy between them and the gay world, to show you the facts upon both sides. A floating population, in pairs or companies; without leave asked, blow the trumpet, for all our youth to flock to their banners! Are they related to them?—are they concerned in the welfare of our town?—do they live among us?—do they bear any part of our burdens?—do they care for our substantial citizens? We grade our streets, build our schools, support all our municipal laws, and the young men are ours; our sons, our brothers, our wards, clerks, or apprentices: they are living in our houses, our stores, our shops, and we are their guardians, and take care of them in health, and watch them in sickness; yet every vagabond who floats in hither, swears and swaggers, as if they were all his; and when they offer to corrupt all these youth, we pay them round sums of money for it, and if we get courage finally to say that we had rather not; that industry and honesty are better than expert knavery—they turn upon us in great indignation with, Why don't you mind your own business—what are you meddling with our affairs for?

I will suppose a case. With much pains-taking, I have saved enough money to buy a little garden spot. I put all around it a good fence—I put the spade into it and mellow the soil full deep; I go to the nursery and pick out choice fruit trees—I send abroad and select the best seeds of the rarest vegetables; and so my garden thrives. I know every inch of it, for I have watered every inch with sweat. One morning I am awoken by a mixed sound of sawing, digging, and delving; and looking out, I see a dozen men at work in my garden. I run down and find one man sawing out a huge hole in the fence. "My dear sir, what are you doing?" "Oh, this high fence is very troublesome to climb over; I am fixing an easier way for folks to get in." Another man has headed down several choice trees, and is putting in new grafts. "Sir, what are you changing the kind for?" "Oh, this kind don't suit me; I like a new kind." One man is digging up my beans, to plant cockles; another is rooting up my strawberries, to put in pursly; and another is destroying my currants, and gooseberries, and raspberries, to plant mustard and Jamestown weeds. At last, I lose all patience, and cry out, "Well, gentlemen, this will never do. I will never tolerate this abominable imposition; you are ruining my garden." One of them says, "You old hypocritical bigot! do mind your business, and let us enjoy ourselves. Take care of your house, and do not pry into our pleasures."

Fellow-citizens! I own that no man could so invade your garden; but men are allowed thus to invade our town, and destroy our children. You will let them evade your laws, fleece and demoralize you; and you sit down under their railing, as though you were the intruders!—just as if the man, who drives a thief out of his house, ought to ask the rascal's pardon for interfering with his little plans of pleasure, and profit!

Every parent has a right—every citizen and every minister has the same right, to expose traps, which men have to set them; the same right to prevent mischief, which men have to plot it;

the same right to attack vice, which vice has to attack virtue; a better right to save our sons and brothers, and companions, than artful men have to destroy them.

The necessity of amusement, is admitted on all hands. There is an appetite of the eye, of the ear, and of every sense, for which God has provided material. Gaiety of every degree, this side of puerile levity, is wholesome to the body, to the mind, and to the morals. Nature is a vast repository of many enjoyments. The magnificence of God's works is not less admirable than us Christians believe. The most perfect forms have been designed for the most perfect enjoyment; and structures of wondrous susceptibility. You are training yourselves to be just such vultures, if you are exciting your passions in spite of God.

(Continued)

by rejecting the counterfeit and the vile. Of gambling, I have already sufficiently spoken. Of cock-fighting, bear-baiting, and pugilistic contests, I need to speak but little. These are the desperate excitements of debauched men; but no man becomes desperately criminal, until he has been decently criminal. No one spreads his sail upon such waters *at first*; these brutal amusements are but the gulf into which sailors and the streams of civilization pour.

"Easy Joe Bruce.

BY H. HASTINGS WELD.

"Whew-ew-ew!" whistled Mr. Joseph Bruce, or perhaps we should rather say Joe Bruce, for, as he was a nice, easy fellow, nobody thought of calling him more than half his name, or of any thing else that belonged to him—"I see by the paper that Hawk & Harpy have assigned. I meant to have secured my debt yesterday!" He left his coffee half drunk, stumbled over the threshold and went down-stairs to the counting room of Hawk & Harpy. One half that speed on the day before would have saved his debt—as it was, he was just in seasons to put his name at the bottom of a dozen and a half preferred ones, to receive ten per cent. He went back to his unfinished breakfast with what appetite he might.

"Why did you neglect this so long, Mr. Bruce?" said his helpmeet, and comforter.

"I'll try sir."

"Try," was never conquered.

It is recorded of Dr. Paley, one of the brightest ornaments of the Christian church, that while in college, he was inclined to idleness, and dissipation. One morning a rich and dissipated fellow student came into his room with this singular reproof,—Paley, I have the means of dissipation, and can afford

I should make nothing if I were to apply myself. You are capable of going to an eminence—and impressed

with this truth. I have been awake during the whole night and have made solemnly to admonish you.

The effect of this remarkable admonition was his immediate reformation and the final result, that he became one of the guiding minds of his own and su-

surrounding ages. He became an acute and useful teacher, and Christianity found in him one of its ablest defenders. The

prover is dead, and his name has per-

ished; but that of Paley will live.

To my short period of recorded time

his reputation as a divine was

accomplished, under God, by a resolu-

tion deliberately formed and which

never for a moment wavered.

Perhaps the eye of some young men, already inclined to dissipation, may fall upon these hasty lines—and will they not be induced to stop a moment and count the cost of idleness and vice, and calculate, too, a few of the advantages of industry and untiring perseverance in well doing? The example of Paley ought never by such individuals to be forgotten.—*Watchtower*.

AFFECTING INCIDENT.—After the steamer Empire struck, near Newburg, recently I and while sinking, two mothers snatched what they supposed to be their own infants and rushed upon deck in their flight through the waves into the water. One of the devoted pa-

rents held the child to her bosom, and both were saved; while the other sus-

tained his infant until he lost his

hold of it, and sank beneath the surface.

And while the poor woman held impeded that her little one

should be lost to her, she own

self, too, was frantic with grief to

see her little that she had preserved un-

til now, and lost her, own.—*Tri-*

Proposals for carrying the mails!

exclaimed Mrs. Partington, in a tone of vigorous indignation, as she happened to glance over an advertisement in one of the papers. "Has it come to this, that

as poor unfortunate female riters are

to be a noble beast of burden, are to carry

about pack of good, for nothing male-

ness!"

"Never mind, Bruce," said another.

You are a lucky man. The news

of the great fire at Speedville has just

reached town by express, and I congrat-

ulate you that you were fully insured."

"Not a penny!" said Bruce. "My policy expired last week, and I meant to have got it renewed this morning."

Joe posted home in no very happy humor. When an easy man is fairly up, he is the most uneasy and unreasonable man in creation.

"Mrs. Bruce, by staying at home to hear you sold, I have lost thousands. I meant to have got insured this morning—I did not—Speedville is burned down, and I am a beggar."

"Why did you not do it yesterday, Mr. Bruce?"

"I was thinking of Hawk and Harpy."

"Thinking! Why did you not secure yourself?"

"I meant to, but—"

"But—use no bats—"

"You are in excellent spirits, Mrs. Bruce."

"Never in better."

"Vastly fine, madam. We are beggars."

Mrs. Bruce sat down, clapped her feet on the fender, after her husband's manner in the morning.

"We are beggars, madam," Bruce repented.

"Very good—I will take my guitar, and you shall shoulder the three children. We'll play under Mr. Hawk's window first and then under Mr. Harpy's, and then we will begin our way to Speedville, to play to the ashes of what was once your factory—which you meant to have insured. I should like begging above all things."

"You abominable woman I shall go mad."

"Don't I beseech you, Mr. Bruce. They put mad beggars in Bedlam."

Bruce sprang for the door. His wife intercepted him. "Here, Joseph, is a paper I meant to have shown this morning."

"A policy! And dated yesterday!"

"Yes you meant to get it renewed to day—I meant it should be done yesterday—so I told your clerk, from you, to do it. Am I not an abominable woman?"

"When I said so, I was in a pet. I meant—"

"No more of that, Joseph. Now tell me who is first on Hawk's & Harpy's assignment."

"Your brother."

"His claim covers you both."

"You are an angel!"

Easy Joe became an altered man, his wife was released from her watch over his out-door business. She died some years before him—but we are half inclined to suspect, that after her death Joe partially relapsed into his old habits—so true it is, that habit is a second nature.

Both were buried in the graveyard at Speedville, and our suspicions are founded on something like the following conversation between the grave digger and his assistant:

"Where are we to dig Mr. Bruce's grave?"

"I don't know exactly. His will says, next to his wife."

"Where was she laid?"

"That I don't know. Easy Joe always said he meant to place an obelisk over her, but it never was done."

Destiny is always of more importance than origin. When Philip Henry, the father of the celebrated commentator, sought the hand of the only daughter and heiress of Mr. Mauhew in marriage, an objection was made by the father, who admitted all his excellent qualities as a man and a preacher, but they did not know where he came from.

"True," said the daughter, "but I know where he is going, and I should like to go with him!"—and she did.

GUARD AGAINST PREMATURE BURIAL.—A learned Belgian, M. Mainpil, has recently discovered a very simple means of distinguishing between real and apparent death. It consists in creating a small burn; if there is life, a blister is always formed, even in the absence of apparent insensibility. If death has already intervened, nothing of the kind occurs.