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VOL. XXVI. ELIZABETH CITY, N. C., FRIDAY, JANUARY 14, 1898. NO. 39.

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TWO KINDS OF CLUBS.

REV. DR. TALMAGE ON THE GOOD AND THE BAD.

Famous Clubhouses In the Big Cities. Effect of the Club Upon Business and Religious Life—A Warning to the Young.

[Copyright, 1898, by American Press Association.]

WASHINGTON, Jan. 9.—This discourse of Dr. Talmage will be helpful to those who want to find places with healthful and improving surroundings and to avoid places deleterious. His text is II Samuel ii, 14, "Let the young men now arise and play before us."

There are two armies encamped by the pool of Gibeon. The time hangs heavily on their hands. One army proposes a game of sword fencing. Nothing could be more healthful and innocent. The other army accepts the challenge. Twelve men against 12 men, the sport opens. But something went adversely. 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 24 sportsmen. Was there ever a better illustration of what was true then and is true now, that that which is innocent may be made destructive?

At this season of the year the clubhouses of our towns and cities are in full play. I have found out that there is a legitimate and an illegitimate use of the clubhouse. In the one case it may become a healthful recreation, like the contest of the 24 men in the text when they began their play; in the other case it becomes the massacre of body, mind and soul, as in the case of these contestants of the text when they had gone too far with their sport. All intelligent ages have had their gatherings for political, social, artistic, literary purposes—gatherings characterized by the blunt old Anglo-Saxon designation of "club."

Famous Clubs.

If you have read history, you know that there was a King's Head club, a Ben Jonson club, a Brothers' club, to which Swift and Bolingbroke belonged; a Literary club, which Burke and Goldsmith and Johnson and Boswell made immortal; a Jacobin club, a Benjamin Franklin Junto club—some of these to indicate justice, some to favor the arts, some to promote good manners, some to despoil the habits, some to destroy the soul. If one will write an honest history of the clubs of England, Ireland, Scotland, France and the United States for the last 100 years, he will write the history of the world. The club was an institution born on English soil, but it has thrived well in American atmosphere. Who shall tell how many belong to that kind of club where men put purses together and open house, apportioning the expense of caterer and servants and room and having a sort of domestic establishment—a style of clubhouse which in my opinion is far better than the ordinary hotel or boarding house? But my object now is to speak of clubhouses of a different sort, such as the Cosmos or Chevy Chase or Lincoln club of this capital, or the Union Leagues of many cities, the United Service club of London, the Lotos of New York, where journalists, dramatists, sculptors, painters and artists from all branches gather together to discuss newspapers, théaters and elaborate art; like the Americus, which camps out in summer time, dimpling the pool with its hook and arousing the forest with its stag hunt; like the Century club, which has its large group of venerable lawyers and poets; like the Army and Navy club, where those who engaged in warlike service once on the land or the sea now come together to talk over the days of carnage; like the New York Yacht club, with its floating palaces of beauty upholstered with velvet and paneled with ebony, having all the advantages of electric bell and of gaslight and of king's pantry, one pleasure boat costing $3,000, another $15,000, another $30,000, another $65,000, the fleet of pleasure boats belonging to the club having cost over $2,000,000; like the American Jockey club, to which belong men who have a passionate fondness for horses, fine horses, as had Job when, in the Scriptures, he gives us a sketch of that king of beasts, the arch of its neck, the nervousness of its foot, the majesty of its gait, the whirlwind of its power, crying out: "Hast thou clothed his neck with thunder? The glory of his nostrils is terrible. He paweth in the valley and rejoiceth in his strength. He saith among the trumpets 'Ha, ha!' and he smelleth the battle afar off, the thunder of the captains and the shouting;" like the Travelers' club, the Blossom club, the Palette club, the Commercial club, the Liberal club, the Stablo Gang club, the Amateur Boat club, the gambling clubs, the wine clubs, the clubs of all sizes, the clubs of all morals, clubs as good as good can be and clubs as bad as bad can be—clubs innumerable. During the day they are comparatively lazy places. Here and there an aged man reading a newspaper or an employee dusting a sofa or a clerk writing up the accounts, but when the curtain of the night falls on the natural day then the curtain of the clubhouse hoists for the entertainment. Let us hasten up now the marble stairs. What an imperial hallway! See, here are parlors on the side with the upholstery of the Kremlin and the Tuileries and here are dining halls that challenge you to mention any luxury that they cannot afford, and here are galleries with sculpture and paintings and lithographs and drawings from the best of artists, Cropsey and Bierstadt and Church and Hart and Gifford—pictures for every mood, whether you are impassioned or placid; shipwreck or sunlight over the sea, Sheridan's ride or the noonday party of the farmers under the trees, foaming deer pursued by the hounds in the Adirondacks or the sheep on the lawn. On this side there are reading rooms where you find all newspapers and magazines. On that side there is a library where you find all books, from hermeneutics to the fairy tale. Coming in and out there are gentlemen, some of whom stay ten minutes, other stay many hours. Some of these are from luxurious homes, and they have excused themselves for awhile from the domestic circle that they may enjoy the larger sociability of the clubhouse. These are from dismembered households, and they have a plain lodging somewhere, but they come to this clubroom to have their chief enjoyment. One blackball amid ten votes will defeat a man's becoming a member. For rowdyism, for drunkenness, for gambling, for any kind of misdemeanor, a member is dropped out. Brilliant clubhouse from top to bottom—the chandeliers, the plate, the furniture, the companionship, the literature, the social prestige, a complete enchantment.

Bad Clubs.

But the evening is passing on, and so we hasten through the hall and down the steps and into the street, and from block to block until we come to another style of clubhouse. Opening the door, we find the fumes of strong drink and tobacco something almost intolerable. These young men at this table, it is easy to understand what they are at, from the flushed cheek, the intent look, the almost angry way of tossing the dice or of moving the "chips." They are gambling. At another table are men who are telling vile stories. They are three-fourths intoxicated, and between 12 and 1 o'clock they will go staggering, hooting, swearing, shouting on their way home. That is an only son. On him all kindness, all care, all culture has been bestowed. He is paying his parents in this way for their kindness. That is a young married man who, only a few months ago, at the altar, made promises of kindness and fidelity, every one of which he has broken. Walk through and see for yourself. Here are all the implements of dissipation and of quick death. As the hours of the night go away the conversation becomes imbecile and more debasing. Now it is time to shut up. Those who are able to stand will get out on the pavement and balance themselves against the lamppost or against the railings of the fence. The young man who is not able to stand will have a bed improvised for him in the clubhouse, or two hot quite so overcome with liquor will conduct him to his father's house, and they will ring the doorbell, and the door will open, and the two imbecile escorts will introduce into the hallway the ghastliest and most hellish spectacle that ever enters a front door—a drunken son. If the dissipating clubhouses of this country would make a contract with the inferno to provide it 10,000 men a year and for 20 years on the condition that no more should be asked of them, the clubhouses could afford to make that contract, for they would save homesteads, save fortunes, save bodies, minds and souls. The 10,000 men who would be sacrificed by that contract would be but a small part of the multitude sacrificed without the contract. But I make a vast difference between clubs. I have belonged to four clubs—a theological club, a ball club and two literary clubs. I got from them physical rejuvenation and moral health. What shall be the principle? If God will help me, I will lay down three principles by which you may judge whether the club where you are a member or the club to which you have been invited is a legitimate or an illegitimate clubhouse.

Club Influence.

First of all I want you to test the club by its influences on home, if you have a home. I have been told by a prominent gentleman in club life that three-fourths of the members of the great clubs of these cities are married men. That wife soon loses her influence over her husband who nervously and foolishly looks upon all evening absence as an assault on domesticity. How are the great enterprises of art and literature and beneficence and public weal to be carried on if every man is to have his world bounded on one side by his front doorstep and on the other side by his back window, knowing nothing higher than his own attic or nothing lower than his own cellar? That wife who becomes jealous of her husband's attention to art or literature or religion or charity is breaking her own scepter of conjugal power. I know an instance where a wife thought that her husband was giving too many nights to Christian service, to charitable service, to prayer meetings and to religious convocation. She systematically decoyed him away until now he attends no church and is on a rapid way to destruction, his morals gone, his money gone and, I fear, his soul gone. Let any Christian wife rejoice when her husband consecrates evenings to the service of God or to charity or to art or to anything elevated, but let not men sacrifice home life to club life. I can point out to you a great many names of men who are guilty of this sacrilege. They are as genial as angels at the clubhouse and as ugly as sin at home. They are generous on all subjects of wine suppers, yachts and fast horses, but they are stingy about the wife's dress and the children's shoes. That man has made that which might be a healthful recreation a usurper of his affections, and he has married it, and he is guilty of moral bigamy. Under this process the wife, whatever her features, becomes uninteresting and homely. He becomes critical of her, does not like the dress, does not like the way she arranges her hair, is amazed that he ever was so unromantic as to offer her hand and heart. She is always wanting money, money, when she ought to be discussing eclipses and Dexter and Derby day and English drags with six horses, all answering the pull of one "ribbon."

I tell you there are thousands of houses in the cities being clubbed to death. There are clubhouses where membership always involves domestic shipwreck. Tell me that a man has joined a certain club, tell me nothing more about him for ten years, and I will write his history if he be still alive. The man is a wine guzzler, his wife broken hearted or prematurely old, his fortune gone or reduced and his home a mere name in a directory. Here are six secular nights in the week. "What shall I do with them?" says the father and the husband. "I will give four of those nights to the improvement and entertainment of my family, either at home or in good neighborhood. I will devote one to charitable institutions. I will devote one to the club." I congratulate you. Here is a man who says: "I will make a different division of the six nights. I will take three for the club and three for other purposes." I tremble. Here is a man who says, "Out of the six secular nights of the week I will devote five to the clubhouse and one to the home, which night I will spend in scowling like a March squall, wishing I was out spending it as I had spent the other five." That man's obituary is written. Not one out of 10,000 that ever gets so far on the wrong road ever stops. Gradually his health will fail through late hours and through too much stimulus. He will be first rate prey for erysipelas and rheumatism of the heart. The doctor coming in will at a glance see it is not only present disease he must fight, but years of fast living. The clergyman, for the sake of the feelings of the family, on the funeral day will only talk in religious generalties. The men who got his yacht in the eternal rapids will not be at the obsequies. They will send flowers to the coffin lid and send their wives to utter words of sympathy, but they will have engagements elsewhere. They never come. Bring me mallet and chisel, and I will cut on the tombstone that man's epitaph, "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord." "No," you say, "that would not be appropriate." "Let me die the death of the righteous and let my last end be like his." "No," you say, "that would not be appropriate." Then give me the mallet and the chisel, and I will cut an honest epitaph, "Here lies the victim of a dissipating clubhouse."

I think that damage is often done by the scions of some aristocratic family who belong to one of these dissipating clubhouses. People coming up from humbler classes feel it an honor to belong to the same club, forgetting the fact that many of the sons and grandsons of the large commercial establishments of the last generation are now as to mind imbecile, as to body diseased, as to morals rotten. They would have got through their property long ago if they had had full possession of it, but the wily ancestors, who earned the money by hard knocks, foresaw how it was to be, and they tied up everything in the will. Now, there is nothing of that unworthy descendant but his grandfather's name and roast beef rotundity. And yet how many steamers there are which feel honored to lash fast that worm eaten tug, though it drags them straight into the breakers.

The Club In Business.

Another test by which you can find whether your club is legitimate or illegitimate—the effect it has on your secular occupation. I can understand how through such an institution a man can reach commercial successes. I know some men have formed their best business relations through such a channel. If the club has advantaged you in an honorable calling, it is a legitimate club. But has your credit failed? Are bargain makers more cautious how they trust you with a bill of goods? Have the men whose names were down in the commercial agency A1 before they entered the club been going down ever since in commercial standing? Then look out! You and I every day know of commercial establishments going to ruin through the social excesses of one or two members, their fortunes beaten to death with ball players' bat, or cut amidships by the front prow of the regatta, or going down under the swift hoofs of the fast horses, or drowned in large potations of cognac or monongahela. Their clubhouse was the "Loch Earn." Their business house was the "Ville du Havre." They struck, and the "Ville du Havre" went under.

A third test by which you may know whether the club to which you belong or the club to whose membership you are invited is a legitimate club or an illegitimate club is this: What is its effect on your sense of moral and religious obligation? Now, if I should take the names of all the people in any audience and put them on a roll and then I should lay that roll back of the organ, and 100 years from now some one should take that roll and call it from A to Z, there would not one of you answer. I say that any association that makes me forget that fact is a bad association. Now, to many of the cities there are two routes, and you can take the Pennsylvania railroad or the Baltimore and Ohio; but suppose that I hear that on one route the track is torn up and the bridges are torn down and the switches are unlocked? It will not take me a great while to decide which road to take. Now, here are two roads into the future, the Christian and the un-Christian, the safe and the unsafe. An institution or any association that confuses my idea in regard to that fact is a bad institution and a bad association. I had prayers before I joined the club. Did I have them after? I attended the house of God before I connected myself with the club. Since that union with the club do I absent myself from religious influences? Which would you rather have in your hand when you come to die, a pack of cards or a Bible? Which would you rather have pressed to your lips in the closing moment, the cup of Belshazzarean wassail or the chalice of Christian communion? Who would you rather have for your pallbearers, the elders of a Christian church or the companions whose conversation was full of slang and innuendo? Who would you rather have for your eternal companions, those men who spend their evenings betting, gambling, swearing, carousing and telling vile stories or your little child, that bright girl whom the Lord took? Oh, you would not have been away so much nights, would you, if you had known she was going away so soon? Dear me, your house has never been the same place since. Your wife has never brightened up. She has not got over it; she never will get over it. How long the evenings are, with no one to put to bed and no one to tell the beautiful Bible story. What a pity it is that you cannot spend more evenings at home in trying to help her bear that sorrow! You can never drown that grief in the wine cup. You can never break away from the little arms that used to be flung around your neck when she used to say, "Papa, do stay home tonight—do stay home tonight." You will never be able to wipe away from your lips the dying kiss of your little girl.

The fascination of a dissipating clubhouse is so great that sometimes a man has turned his back on his home when his child was dying of scarlet fever. He went away. Before he got back at midnight the eyes had been closed, the undertaker had done his work, and the wife, worn out with three weeks' watching, lay unconscious in the next room. Then there is a rattling of the night key in the door, and the returned father comes up stairs and sees the empty cradle and the window up. He says, "What is the matter?" In God's judgment day he will find out what was the matter. Oh, man astray, God help you!

The influence which some of the clubhouses are exerting is the more to be deplored because it takes down the very best men. The admission fee sifts out the penurious and leaves only the best fellows. They are frank, they are generous, they are whole souled, they are talented. Oh, I begrudge the devil such a prize! After awhile the frank look will go out of the face, and the features will be haggard, and when talking to you, instead of looking you in the eye, they will look down, and every morning the mother will kindly ask, "My son, what kept you out so late last night?" and he will make no answer, or he will say, "That's my business." Then some time he will come to the store or the bank cross and befogged, and he will neglect some duty, and after awhile he will lose his place, and then, with nothing to do, he will come down at 10 o'clock in the morning to curse the servant because the breakfast is cold. The lad who was a clerk in the cellar has got to be chief clerk in the great commercial establishment, the young man who ran errands for the bank has got to be cashier, thousands of the young men who were at the foot of the ladder have got to the top of the ladder, but here goes the victim of the dissipating clubhouse with staggering step and bloodshot eye and mud bespattered hat set sidewise on a shock of greasy hair, his cravat dashed with cigar ashes. Look at him, pure hearted young man, look at him! The clubhouse did that. I know one such who went the whole round and, turned out of the higher clubhouses, went into the lower clubhouses and on down until one night he leaped out of a third story window to end his wretchedness.

A Warning.

Let me say to fathers who are becoming dissipated, your sons will follow you. You think your son does not know. He knows all about it. I have heard men who say, "I am profane, but never in the presence of my children." Your children know you swear. I have heard men say, "I drink, but never in the presence of my children." Your children know you drink. I describe now what occurs in hundreds of households in this country. The tea hour has arrived. The family are seated at the tea table. Before the rest of the family arise from the table the father shoves back his chair, says he has an engagement, lights a cigar, goes out, comes back after midnight, and that is the history of 365 nights of the year. Does any man want to stultify himself by saying that that is healthy, that that is right, that that is honorable? Would your wife have married you with such prospects?

Time will pass on, and the son will be 16 or 17 years of age, and you will be at the tea table, and he will shove back and have an engagement, and he will light his cigar, and he will go out to the clubhouse, and you will hear nothing of him until you hear the night key in the door after midnight. But his physical constitution is not quite so strong as yours, and the liquor he drinks is more terrifically drugged than that which you drink, and so he will catch up with you on the road to death, though you got such a long start of him, and so you will both go to hell together.

The revolving Drummond light in front of a hotel, in front of a locomotive, may flash this way and flash that upon the mountains, upon the ravines, upon the city, but I take the lamp of God's eternal truth, and I flash it upon all the clubhouses of these cities, so that no young man shall be deceived. By these tests try them, try them! Oh, leave the dissipating influences of the clubroom, if the influences of your clubroom are dissipating. Paid your money, have you? Better sacrifice that than your soul. Good fellows, are they? Under that process they will not remain such. Mollusca may be found 200 fathoms down beneath the Norwegian seas, Siberian stag get fat on the stunted growth of Altaian peaks, nenysarium grows amid the desolation of Sahara, tufts of osier and birch grow on the hot lips of volcanic Sneehattan, but a pure heart and an honest life thrive in a dissipating clubhouse—never.

The way to conquer a wild beast is to keep your eye on him, but the way for you to conquer your temptations, my friend, is to turn your back on them and fly for your life.

Oh, my heart aches! I see men struggling against evil habits, and they want help. I have knelt beside them, and I have heard them cry for help, and then we have risen, and he has put one hand on my right shoulder and the other hand on my left shoulder and looked into my face with an infinity of earnestness which the judgment day will have no power to make me forget as he has cried out with his lips scorched in ruin, "God help me!" For such there is no help except in the Lord God Almighty.

I am going to make a very stout rope. You know that sometimes a ropemaker will take very small threads and wind them together until after awhile they become ship cable. And I am going to take some very small, delicate threads and wind them together until they make a very stout rope. I will take all the memories of the marriage day, a thread of laughter, a thread of light, a thread of music, a thread of banqueting, a thread of congratulation, and I twist them together, and I have one strand. Then I take a thread of the hour of the first advent in your house, a thread of the darkness that preceded, and a thread of the light that followed, and a thread of the beautiful scarf that little child used to wear when she bounded out at eventide to greet you, and then a thread of the beautiful dress in which you laid her away for the resurrection, and then I twist all these threads together, and I have another strand. Then I take a thread of the scarlet robe of a suffering Christ, and a thread of the white raiment of your loved ones before the throne, and a string of the harp cherubic, and a string of the harp seraphic, and I twist them all together, and I have a third strand. "Oh," you say, "either strand is strong enough to hold fast a world!" No. I will take these strands, and I will twist them together, and one end of that rope I will fasten, not to the communion table, for it shall be removed—not to the pillar of the organ, for that will crumble in the ages—but I wind it round and round the cross of a sympathizing Christ, and having fastened one end of the rope to the cross I throw the other end to you. Lay hold of it! Pull for your life! Pull for heaven!

To prevent trousers from bagging at the knees re-enforcing strips of nonelastic material are placed inside the legs in diagonal positions and crossing each other at the front of the knee to strengthen the cloth and prevent stretching.

The finest opal of modern times belonged to the Empress Josephine. It was called the "Burning of Troy." Its fate is unknown, as it disappeared when the allies entered Paris.

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The students in Paris are radical; the students in London mostly con-

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GENTLEMEN:—In 1872 a small pimple broke out on my leg. It began eating and in four months I was treated by a physician of Talladega County, Ala., where I lived eighteen years. He relieved it for a short while. In six weeks it broke out in both legs, also on my shoulder. Two small bones were taken out. It continued until 1876. In this time I had twelve different physicians. They told me the only remedy was amputation: that it could never be cured. For six months I could not walk a step. I went to Mineral Wells, Texas, spent 300.00; came home; went to Hot Springs, Ark., staid nine months—all failed to cure me. In 1887 I came back to Burmingham, Ala. I was advised to write you, which I did. You wrote we that B. B. B. would cure me, and I could get the medicine from Nabors & Morrow, Druggists in our city. I bought ten bottles and before I had finished my fifth bottle my legs began to heal, and in less than two months I was sound and well. That has been nearly two years ago, and no sign of its return yet. I have spent in cash over $400.00, and B. B. B. done the work that all the rest failed to do. You have my permission to publish this. I have traveled so much trying to get well that my cure is well known. Fifty-two doctors have treated me in the last 17 years. All they did was to take what money I had, and done me no-good. I am now a well man. PROF. C. H. RANGER.

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