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ELIZABETH CITY, N. C., FRIDAY, APRIL 8, 1898.

VOL. XXVII.

NO. 2.

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THE FIELD OF BLOOD.
AN EFFECTIVE SERMON ON GAMBLING
BY DR. TALMAGE.

The Downward Path of the Gambler
Pointed Out With Startling Fidelity.
The Church Not Guiltless—The Letting
Habit—Modern Gift Enterprises.

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WASHINGTON, April 8.—The spirit of hazard in this sermon is arraigned by Dr. Talmage, and the downward path of the gambler is plainly pointed out; text, Acts 1, 19, "Acedama—that is to say, the field of blood."

The money that Judas gave for surrendering Christ was used to purchase a graveyard. As the money was blood money, the ground bought by it was called in the Syriac tongue "Acedama," meaning "the field of blood." Well, there is one word I want to write today over every race course where wagers are staked, and every poolroom, and every gambling saloon, and every table, public or private, where men and women bet for sums of money, large or small, and that is a word incarnated with the life of innumerable victims—Acedama.

The gambling spirit, which is at all times a stupendous evil, ever and anon sweeps over the country like an epidemic, prostrating uncounted thousands. There has never been a worse attack than that from which all the villages, towns and cities are now suffering.

While among my hearers and readers are those who have passed on into the afternoon of life, and the shadows are lengthening, and the sky crimson with the glow of the setting sun, a large number of them are in early life, and the morning is coming down out of the clear sky upon them, and the bright air is redolent with spring blossoms, and the stream of life, gleaming and glancing, rushes on between flowery banks, making music as it goes. Some of you are engaged in mercantile concerns as clerks and bookkeepers, and your whole life is to be passed in the exciting life of traffic. The sound of busy life stirs you as the drum stirs the fiery war horse. Others are in the mechanical arts to hammer and chisel your way through life, and success awaits you. Some are preparing for professional life, and grand opportunities are before you—many, some of you already have buckled on the armor. But, whatever your age and calling, the subject of gambling about which I speak today is pertinent.

Some years ago, when an association for the suppression of gambling was organized, an agent of the association came to a prominent citizen and asked him to patronize the society. He said: "No, I can have no interest in such an organization. I am in no wise affected by the evil." At that very time his son, who was his partner in business, was one of the heaviest players in a famous gambling establishment. Another refused his patronage on the same ground, not knowing that his first bookkeeper, though receiving a salary of only \$4,000, was losing from \$50 to \$100 per night. The president of a railroad company refused to patronize the institution, saying, "That society is good for the defense of merchants, but we railroad people are not injured by this evil," not knowing that at that very time two of his conductors were spending three nights of each week at faro tables in New York. Directly or indirectly this evil strikes at the whole world.

What is Gambling?
Gambling is the risking of something more or less valuable in the hope of winning more than you hazard. The instrument of gaming may differ, but the principle is the same. The shuffling and dealing cards, however full of temptation, is not gambling unless stakes are put up; while, on the other hand, gambling may be carried on without cards or dice or billiards or a tennis alley. The man who bets on horses or elections, on battles, the man who deals in "fancy" stocks or conducts a business which hazards extra capital or goes into transactions without foundation, but dependent upon what men call "luck," is a gambler.

Whatever you expect to get from your net without offering an equivalent in money or time or skill is either the product of theft or gaming. Lottery tickets and lottery policies come into the same category. Bazaars for the founding of hospitals, schools and churches, conducted on the raffling system, come under the same denomination. Do not, therefore, associate gambling necessarily with any instrument or game or time or place or think the principle depends upon whether you play for a glass of wine or 100 shares of railroad stock. Whether you patronize "action pools," "fringe mutuality" or "bookmaking," whether you employ faro or billiards, rondo and keno, cards or bagatelle, the very idea of the thing is dishonest; for it professes to bestow upon you a good for which you give no equivalent.

"This crime is no newborn sprite, but a haggard transgression that comes staggering down upon a mantle of crimes through many centuries. All nations, barbarous and civilized, have been addicted to it.

But now the laws of the whole civilized world denounce the system. enactments have been passed, but only partially enforced and at times not enforced at all. The men interested in gaming houses and in jockey clubs wield such influence by their numbers and affluence that the judge, the jury and the police officer must be bold indeed who would array themselves against these infamous establishments. The house of commons of England actually adjourns on Derby day that members may attend the races, and in the best circles of society in this country today are many hundreds of professedly respectable men who are acknowledged gamblers.

Hundreds of thousands of dollars in

this land are every day being won and lost through sheer gambling. Says a traveler through the west, "I have traveled 1,000 miles at a time upon the western waters and seen gambling at every waking moment from the commencement to the termination of the journey." The southwest of this country reeks with this sin. In some of those cities every third or fourth house in many of the streets is a gaming place, and it may be truthfully averred that each of our cities is cursed with this evil.

Abundance of Opportunities.
Men wishing to gamble will find places just suited to their capacity not only in the underground oyster cellar, or at the table back of the curtain covered with greasy cards, or in the steamboat smoking cabin, where the bloated wretch with rings in his ears deals out his pack and waits in the unrespecting attitude of a waiter for a drink, but in many of the streets is a gaming place, and it may be truthfully averred that each of our cities is cursed with this evil.

Notice also the effect of this crime upon domestic happiness. It has sent its ruthless plowshare through hundreds of families, until the wife sat in rags and the daughters were disgraced and the sons grew up to the same infamous practices or took a short cut to destruction across the murderer's scaffold. Home has lost all charms for the gambler. How tame are the children's caresses and a wife's devotion to the gambler! How drearily the fire burns on the domestic hearth! There must be louder laughter and something to win and something to lose, an excitement to drive the heat faster, flip the blood and fire the imagination. No home, however bright, can keep back the gambler. The sweet call of love pounds back from his iron soul, and all endearments are consumed in the fire of his passion. The family Bible will go after all other treasures are lost, and if his crown in heaven were put into his hand he would cry: "Here goes! One more game, my boys. On this one throw I stake my crown of heaven."

A young man in London, on coming home, received a fortune of \$124,000, and through gambling in three years was thrown on his mother for support. An only son went to New Orleans. He was rich, intellectual and elegant in manners. His parents gave him, on his departure from home, their last blessing. The sharps got hold of him. They flattered him. They lured him to the gaming table and let him win almost every time for a good while, and patted him on the back and said, "First rate player. But, fully in their grasp, they floored him, and his \$30,000 were lost. Last of all, he put up his watch and lost that. Then he began to think of his home and of his old father and mother and wrote thus:

"My beloved parents, you will doubtless read a momentary joy at the reception of this letter from the child of your bosom, on whom you have lavished all the favors of your declining years. But should a feeling of joy for a moment spring up in your hearts, when you should have received this from me, I wish it to be insupportable. I cannot, may I will not, suffer the shame of having ruined you. Forget and forgive is the dying prayer of your unfortunate son."

The old father came to the postoffice, got the letter and fell to the floor. They thought he was dead at first, but his brusque back the white hair from his brow and fanned him. He had only faintly: "Acedama, the field of blood!"

When things go wrong at a gaming table, they shout, "Foul, foul!" Over all the gaming tables of the world I cry out: "Foul, foul, foul!"

"Gift stores" are abundant throughout the country. With a book or knife or sewing machine or coat or carriage, there goes a prize. At these stores people get something thrown in with their purchase. It may be a gold watch, or a set of silver, or a ring or a farm. Sharp way to get off unsalable goods. It has filled the land with fictitious articles and covered up our population with brass finger rings, and despoiled the moral sense of the community, and is fast making us a nation of gamblers.

The church of God has not seemed willing to allow the world to have all the advantage of these games of chance. A church bazaar opens, and toward the close it is found that some of the more valuable articles are unsalable. Forthwith, the conductors of the enterprise conclude that they will raffle for some of the valuable articles, and under pretense of anxiety to make their minister a present or please some popular member of the church, fascinating persons are dispatched through the room, peddling such devices for their own advantage and scores of people go home with their trophies, thinking that it is all right, for Christian ladies did the raffling, and Christian men did the raffling, and the proceeds went toward a new communion set. But you may depend on it, that as far as morality is concerned, you might as well have won by the crack of the billiard ball or the turn of the dice box. Do you wonder that churches built, lighted or upholstered by such processes as that come to great financial and spiritual derelict? The devil says, "I helped to build that house of worship and I have as much right there as you have," and for once the devil is right. We do not read that they had a lottery for building the church at Corinth, or at Antioch, or for getting up an embroidered surplice for St. Paul. All this I style ecclesiastical gambling. More than one man who is destroyed can say that his first step on the wrong road was when he won something at a church fair.

The gambling spirit has not stopped for any indecency. There transpired in Maryland a lottery in which people drew for lots in a burying ground. The modern habit of betting about everything is productive of immense mischief. The most harmful and innocent amusements of yachting and baseball playing have been the occasion of putting that which to many has been advantageous to body and mind has become others the means of financial and moral loss. The custom is pernicious in the extreme, where scores of men in respectable life give themselves up to betting, now on this boat, now on that; now on this ball club, now on that. Betting that once was chiefly the accompaniment of the race course is fast becoming a national habit, and in some circles any opinion advanced on finance or politics is accompanied by the interrogation, "How much will you bet on that, sir?" This custom, which makes no appeal to slow, lethargic temperaments, but there are in the country tens of thousands of quick, nervous, sanguine, excitable temperaments, ready to be acted upon, and their feet will soon take hold on death. For some months, and perhaps for years, they will linger in the more polite and elegant circle of gamblers, but after awhile their pathway will come to the fatal plunge.

Career of the Gambler.
Shall I sketch the history of the gambler? Lured by bad company, he finds his way into a place where honest men ought never to go. He sits down to his first game, but only for pastime and the desire of being thought sociable. The players deal out the cards. They unconsciously play into satan's hands, who takes all the tricks and both the players' souls for trumps—he being a sharper at any game. A slight stake is put up, just to add interest to the play. Game after game is played. Larger stakes and still larger. They begin to move nervously on their chairs. Their brows lower and eyes flash until now they who win and they who lose, fired alike with passion, sit with set jaws and compressed lips and clenched fists and eyes like fireballs that seem starting from their sockets to see the final turn before it comes; if losing, pale with envy and tremulous with unuttered oaths cast back red-hot upon the heart; or winning, with hysterical laugh—"Ha, ha! I have it!"

A few years have passed, and he is only the wreck of a man. Seating himself at the game, ere he throws the first card, he stakes the last relic of his wife—the marriage ring which sealed the solemn vows between them. The game is lost, and staggering back in exhaustion he dreams. The bright hours of the past mock his agony, and in his dreams fiends with eyes of fire and tongues of flame circle about him with pinched hands, to dance and sing their dirges with hellish chorus, chanting, "Hail, brother," kissing his clammy forehead until their loathsome locks, flowing with serpents, crawl into his bosom and sink their sharp fangs and suck up his lifeblood, and coiling around his heart pinch it with coils and shudders unutterable.

Take warning! You are no stronger than tens of thousands who have by this practice been overthrown. No young man in our cities can escape being tempted. Beware of the first beginnings! This road is a down grade and every instant increases the momentum. Launch not upon this treacherous sea. Splint hulk strew the beach. Everlasting storms howl up and down, tossing unwary craft into the hell gate. I speak of what I have seen with my own eyes. To a gambler's death there comes no hope. He will probably die alone. His former associates come not nigh his dwelling. When the hour comes, his miserable soul will go out of a miserable life into a miserable eternity. As his poor remains pass the house where he was ruined, old companions may look out for a moment and say, "There goes the old carcase—dead at last," but they will not get up from the table. Let him down into his grave. Plant no tree to cast its shade there, for the long, deep, eternal gloom that sets in there is shadow enough. Plant no "forget-me-nots" or glistenings around the spot, for flowers were not made to grow on such a blasted heath. Visit it not in the sunshine, for that would be mockery, but in the dismal night, when no stars were out, and the spirit of darkness come down, horsed on the wind, then visit the grave of the gambler.

He's a Lobster.
The expression "He's a lobster," which has now become so general in colloquial use about town as to convey a clear cut message of contempt or derision, has a somewhat peculiar origin. There is nothing about a lobster, which the elder Talmage, it may be recalled, described as "the cardinal of the sea," to invite derision, but a few years ago when all winter racing was a customary thing in the vicinity of New York, especially in neighboring New Jersey, a mud horse that failed to realize the expectations of those who bet money upon it was called a "lobster," an allusion to its mode of progression. Horses which had been generally defeated were "lobster horses," and as this colloquial expression got to be more general in use on the race tracks it began to be applied not only to horses, but to men and things as well. A lobster car was a car that made slow time. A lobster boat was a boat in which rapid time could not be expected. A lobster calculator was a man who took too long in the judgment of his critics, to add up an account, and so gradually the name lobster has come to be accepted as a designation of sloth or inferiority, and "He's a lobster" has come to be regarded as a phrase of disapproval.—New York Sun.

Full Dress at Fights.
In London judges, artists, lords and gentlemen attend prizefights in evening dress. When Croft was killed by Barry by a blow in the twentieth round, most of the spectators wore of the upper class.

THE WONDERS OF SCIENCE
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Please tell the Doctor that you saw his offer in the **ECONOMIST**.

How the Whale Escaped.
A whale is seldom caught napping. When, however, one is waked from his after dinner sleep by a passing vessel, he makes off from the intruder in great haste. The author of a recent book, "With Russian Pilgrims," has a good story to tell of a whale thus disturbed.

One day at sea, when I was chaplain on the Vancouver, a big whale created a sensation. The upper deck was covered with loungers, for it was a lovely summer afternoon, and all the deck chairs had their novel reading occupants.

The whale was sleeping in the sunshine and suddenly felt his tail tickled by the passing monster. He leaped bodily out of the water in his anxiety to hurry away. The fashionable crowd gave a shout, novels flew and chairs emptied themselves quickly as every one rushed to the rail, but the whale divided, and an infant's voice said, "Ma, did the whale jump out of the cabin window!"

Practical.
"Do you believe in dat motto, 'Nevvuh put off tell tomorrow what yoh kin jes' as well do terday'?" inquired Pickaninny Jim.

"Sho'ly I does," replied his mother, who was removing the dishes from the table.

"Well, den, ez long ez I hab de time I reckons mebbe I might ez well go right ahead an eat anuth supper."—Washington Star.

In the course of a sermon a negro preacher in Georgia, touching on the subject of earthquakes, said: "Oh, my sinful hearers, a yearthquake is nothin mo' ner less den dis: Hell den got tired waitin fer you an gone ter sleep en wake up yawnin'!"

Its Lofty Purpose.
"Will you tell me," asked the reporter who had looked upward at the cloud piercing structure until his neck was weary, "what you are building this gigantic smokestack for?"

"In order, perhaps," coldly replied the architect who was constructing the tower, "to get beyond the reach of the higher criticism."

And the deafening roar of the workmen went on.—Chicago Tribune.

An Awful Disclosure.
"Your future," said the trance medium, "is clear. I see you going over a wide, unsettled expanse of country. You walk, walk, walk, for days at a time."

"An explorer! God be praised!"

"No, young man," replied the fair dealer in futures, "you will be an actor."—St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

Thackeray and Liddell.
Thackeray and the late Dean Liddell were boys together at the famous Charterhouse school, and they sat next to each other in the form, the boys of which were called the "Emeriti." No one was promoted from this form who could not repeat from memory the "Eulogues" and the "Georgics." This feat was accomplished by Liddell, but not by Thackeray. In giving these reminiscences some years ago at the speech day of the Oxford Boys' High school, Dr. Liddell added that Thackeray accused him later of having been the Dolbin who wrote his Latin verses for him, an impeachment the dean would not own, though he admitted that Thackeray could not have written them himself.