SUNDAY'S SERMON.

ONE OF REV. DR. TALMAGE'S STERLING DISCOURSES.

Subject: "The Angels of the Grass.'

TEXT: *"If then God so clothe the grass, which is to-day in the field, and to-morrow is cast into the oven; how much more will he clothe you?"*—Luke xii., 28:

The lily is the queen of Bible flowers. The rose may have disputed her throne in modern times and won it; but the rose originally had only five petals. It was under the long continued and intense gaze of the world that the rose blushed into its present beauty. In the Bible train, cassia and hyssop and frankincense and myrrh and spikenard and camphire and the rose follow the lily. Fourteen times in the Bible is the lily mentioned; only twice the rose. The rose may now have wider empire, but the lily reigned in the time of Esther, in the time of Solomon, in the time of Christ.

Cæsar had his throne on the hills. The lily had her throne in the valley. In the greatest sermon that was ever preached, there was only one flower, and that a lily. The Bedford dreamer, John Bunyan, entered the house of the interpreter, and was shown a cluster of flowers, and was told to "consider the lilies."

We may study or reject other sciences at our option. It is so with astronomy, it is so with chemistry, it is so with jurisprudence, it is so with physiology, it is so with geology; but the science of botany Christ commands us to study when he says: "Consider the lilies." Measure them from root to tip of petal. Inhale their breath. Notice the gracefulness of their poise. Hear the whisper of the white lips of the Eastern and of the red lips of the American lily.

Belonging to this royal family of lilies is the lily of the Nile, the Japan lily, the Lady Washington of the Sierras, the Golden Band lily, the Giant lily of Nepaul, the Turk's Cap lily, the African lily from the Cape of Good Hope. All these lilies have the royal blood in their veins. But I take the lilies of my text this morning as typical of all flowers and this Easter day, garlanded with all this opulance of floral beauty, seems to address us, saying: "Consider the lilies, consider the azalias, consider the fuchsias, consider the geraniums, consider the ivies, consider the hyacinths, consider the heliotropes, consider the oleanders." With differential and grateful and intelligent and worshipful souls, consider them. Not with insipid sentimentalism, or with sophomoric vaporing, but for grand and practical and everyday and, if need be, homely uses, consider them.

The flowers are the angels of the grass. They all have voices. When the clouds speak, they thunder; when the whirlwinds speak, they scream; when the cataracts speak, they roar; but when the flowers speak, they always whisper. I stand here to interpret their message. What have you to say, oh ye angels of the grass, to this worshipful multitude?

This morning I mean to discuss what flowers are good for. That is my subject: What are flowers good for?

I. I remark, in the first place, they are good for lessons of God's providential care. That was Christ's first thought. All these flowers seem to address us to-day, saying: "God will give you apparel and food. We have no wheel with which to spin, no loom with which to weave, no sickle with which to harvest, no well sweep with which to draw water; but God slakes our thirst with the dew, and God feeds us with the bread of the sunshine, and God has appareled us with more than Solomonic regality. We are prophetesses of adequate wardrobe. If God so clothed us, the grass of the field, will he not much more clothe you, oh ye of little faith?"

Men and women of worldly anxieties, take this message home with you. How long has God taken care of you? Quarter of the journey of life? half the journey of life? three-quarters the journey of life? Can you not trust Him the rest of the way? God does not promise you anything like that which the Roman Emperor had on his table at vast expense—500 nightingales' tongues—but He has promised to take care of you. He has promised you the necessities, not the luxuries—bread, not cake. If God so luxuriantly clothes the grass of the field, will he not provide for you, his living and immortal children? He will.

No wonder Martin Luther always had a flower on his writing desk for inspiration. Through the cracks of the prison floor a flower grew up to cheer Piccio-la. Mungo Park, the great traveler and explorer, had his life saved by a flower. He sank down in the desert to die, but seeing a flower near by, it suggested God's merciful care, and he got up with new courage and traveled on to safety. I said the flowers are the angels of the grass. I add now that they are the evangels of the sky.

II. If you insist on asking me the question: What are flowers good for? I respond: They are good for the bridal day. The bride must have them on her brow, and she must have them in her hand. The marriage altar must be covered with them. A wedding without flowers would be as inappropriate as a wedding without music. At such a time they are for congratulation and prophecies of good. So much of the pathway of life is covered up with thorns, we ought to cover the beginning with orange blossoms.

Flowers are rppropriate on such occasions, for in ninety-nine out of a hundred cases it is the very best thing that could have happened. The world may criticise and pronounce it an inaptitude, and may lift its eyebrows in surprise and think it might suggest something better; but the God who sees the twenty, forty, fifty years of wedded life before they have begun arranges all for the best. So that flowers, in almost all cases, are appropriate for the marriage day. The divergences of disposition will become correspondences, recklessness will become prudence, frivolity will be turned to practicality.

There has been many an aged widowed soul who had a carefully locked bureau, and in the bureau a box, and in the box a folded paper, and in the folded paper a half blown rose, slightly fragrant, discolored, carefully pressed. She put it there forty or fifty years ago. On the anniversary day of her wedding she will go to the bureau, she will lift the box, she will unfold the paper and to her eyes will be exposed the half blown bud, and the memories of the past will rush upon her, and a tear will drop upon the flower; and suddenly it is transfigured, and there is a stir in the dust of the anther, and it rounds out, and it is full of life, and it begins to tremble in the procession up the church aisle, and the dead music of a half century ago comes throbbing through the air; and vanished faces reappear, and right hands are joined, and a manly voice promises: "I will for better or worse," and the wedding march thunders a salvo of joy at the departing crowd; but a sigh on that anniversary day scatters the scene. Under the deep fetched breath, the altar, the flowers, the congratulating groups are scattered, and there is nothing left but a trembling hand holding a faded rosebud, which is put into the paper, and then into the box and the box carefully placed in the bureau, and with a sharp, sudden click of the lock the scene is over.

Ah, my friends, let not the prophecies of the flowers on your wedding day be false prophecies. Be blind to each other's faults. Make the most of each other's excellences. Above all, do not both get mad at once! Remember the vows, the ring on the third finger of the left hand, and the benediction of the calla lillies.

III. If you insist on asking me the question: What are flowers good for? I answer, they are good to honor and comfort the obsequies. The worst gash ever made in the side of our poor earth is the gash of the grave. It is so deep, it is so cruel, it is so incurable that it needs something to cover it up. Flowers for the casket, flowers for the hearse, flowers for the cemetery.

What a contrast between a grave in a country churchyard, with the fence broken down, and the tombstone aslant, and the neighboring cattle browsing amid the mullein stalks and the Canada thistles, and a June morning in Greenwood the waves of roseate bloom rolling to the top of the mounds, and then breaking into foaming crests of white flowers all around the pillows of dust. It is the difference between sleeping under rags and sleeping under an embroidered blanket. We want Old Mortality with his chisel to go through all the graveyards of Christendom, and while he carries a chisel in one hand, we want Old Mortality to have some flower seed in the palm of the other hand.

"Oh," you say, "the dead don't know; it makes no difference to them." I think you are mistaken. There are not so many steamers and rail trains coming to any living city as there are convoys coming from heaven to earth; and if there be instantaneous and constant communication between this world and the better world, do you not suppose your departed friends know what you do with their bodies? Why has God planted "golden rod" and wild flowers in the forest and on the prairie where no human eye ever sees them? He planted them there for invisible intelligences to look at and admire, and when invisible intelligences come to look at the wild flowers of the woods and the table lands, will they not make excursions and see the flowers which you have planted in affectionate rememberance of them?

When I am dead I would like to have a handful of violets—any one could pluck them out of the grass, or some one could lift from the edge of the pond a water lily—nothing rarely expensive, no insane display, as sometimes at funeral rites where the display takes the bread from the children's mouths, and the clothes from their backs, but something from the great democracy of flowers. Rather than imperial catafalque of Russian czar, I ask some one whom I may have helped by gospel sermon or Christian deed to bring a sprig of arbutus or a handful of china asters.

It was left for modern times to spell respect for the departed and comfort for the living in letters of floral gospel. Pillow of flowers, meaning rest for the pilgrim who has got to the end of his journey. Anchor of flowers, suggesting the Christian hope which we have as an anchor to the soul, sure and steadfast. Cross of flowers, suggesting the tree on which our sins were slain.

If I had my way, I would cover up all the dreamless sleepers, whether in golden handled casket or pine box, whether a king's mausoleum or potter's field, with radiant and aromatic arboresence. The Bible says, in the midst of the garden there was a sepulcher. I wish that every sepulcher might be in the midst of a garden.

IV. If you insist on asking me the question, What are flowers good for? I answer, for religious symbolism. Have you ever studied Scriptural flora? The Bible is an arboretum; it is a divine conservatory; it is a herbarium of exquisite beauty. If you want to illustrate the brevity of the brightest human life, you will quote from Job: "A man cometh forth as a flower and is cut down." Or you will quote from the psalmist: "As the flower of the field, so he flourisheth; the wind passeth over it and it is gone." Or you will quote from Isaiah: "All flesh is grass, and the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field." Or you will quote from James the Apostle: "As the flower of the grass, so he passeth away." What graphic Bible symbolism!

All the cut flowers of this Easter day will soon be dead, whatever care you take of them. Though morning and night you baptize them in the name of the shower, the baptism will not be to them a saving ordinance. They have been fatally wounded with the knife that cut them. They are bleeding their life away; they are dying now. The fragrance in the air is their departing and ascending spirits.

Oh yes! flowers are almost human. Botanists tell us that flowers breathe, they take nourishment, they eat, they drink. They are sensitive. They have their likes and dislikes. They sleep, they wake. They live in families. They have their ancestors and their descendants, their birth, their burial, their cradle, their grave. The zephyr rocks the one, and the storm digs the trench for the other. The cowslip must leave its gold, the lily must leave its silver, the rose must leave its diamond necklace of morning dew. Dust to dust. So we come up, we prosper, we spread abroad, we die, as the flower—as the flower!

Change and decay on all around I see;
O thou who changest not, abide with me!

Flowers also afford mighty symbolism of Christ, who compared Himself to the ancient queen, the lily, and the modern queen, the rose, when he said: "I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valley." Redolent like the one, humble like the other. Like both, appropriate for the sad who want sympathizers, and for the rejoicing who want banqueters. Hovering over the marriage ceremony like a wedding bell, or folded like a chaplet on the pulseless heart of the dead.

Oh, Christ! let the perfume of Thy name be wafted around the earth—lily and rose, lily and rose—until the wilderness crimson into a garden, and the round earth turn into one great bud of immortal beauty laid against the warm heart of God. Snatch down from the world's banners eagle and lion, and put on lily and rose, lily and rose.

But, my friends, flowers have no grander use than when on Easter morning we celebrate the reanimation of Christ from the catacombs. All the flowers of to-day spell resurrection. There is not a nook or corner in all the building but is touched with the incense. The women carried spices to the tomb of Christ, and they dropped spices all around about the tomb, and from those spices have grown all the flowers of Easter morn. The two white robed angels that hurled the stone away from the door of the tomb, hurled it with such violence down the hill that it crashed in the door of the world's sepulchre, and millions of the stark and dead shall come forth.

However labyrinthian the mausoleum, however costly the sarcophagus, however architecturally grand the necropolis, however beautifully parterred the family grounds, we want them all broken up by the Lord of resurrection. The forms that we laid away with our broken hearts must rise again. Father and mother—they must come out. Husband and wife—they must come out. Brothers and sisters—they must come out. Our darling children—they must come out. The eyes that with trembling fingers we closed must open in the luster of resurrection morn. The arms that we folded in death must join ours in embrace of reunion. The beloved voice that was hushed must be retuned. The beloved form must come up without its infirmities, without its fatigues—it must come up.

Oh, how long it seems for some of you. Waiting—waiting for the resurrection. How long! how long! I make for your broken hearts to-day a cool, soft bandage of Easter lilies. Last night we had come in the mails a beautiful Easter card, on the top of it a representation of that exquisite flower called the "trumpet creeper," and under it the inscription: "The trumpet shall sound," and the dead shall be raised." I comfort you this day with the thought of resurrection.

When Lord Nelson was buried in St. Paul's cathedral, in London, the heart of all England was stirred. The procession passed on amid the sobbing of a nation. There were thirty trumpeters stationed at the door of the cathedral, with instruments of music in hand, waiting for the signal, and when the illustrious dead arrived at the gates of St. Paul's Cathedral these thirty trumpeters gave one united blast, and then all was silent. Yet the trumpets did not wake the dead. He slept right on.

But I have to tell you what thirty trumpeters could not do for one man, one trumpeter will do for all nations. The ages have rolled on, and the clock of the world's destiny strikes 9, 10, 11, 12, and time shall be no longer!

Behold the archangel hovering. He takes the trumpet, points it this way, puts its lips to his lips, and then blows one long, loud, terrific, thunderous, reverberating and resurrectionary blast. Look! Look! They rise! The dead! The dead! Some coming forth from the family vault. Some from the city cemetery. Some from the country graveyard. Here a spirit is joined to its body, and there another spirit is joined to another body, and millions of departed spirits are assorting the bodies and then reclothing themselves in forms now radiant for ascension.

The earth begins to burn—the bonfire of a great victory. All ready now for the procession of reconstructed humanity! Upward and away! Christ leads and all the Christian dead follow, battalion and battalion, nation after nation. Up, up! On, on! Forward, ye ranks of God Almighty! Lift up your heads, ye everlasting gates, and let the conquerors come in! Resurrection! Resurrection!

And so I twist all the festal flowers of this church with all the festal flowers of chapels and cathedrals of all Christendom into one great chain, and with that chain I bind the Easter morning of 1888 with the closing Easter of the world's history—Resurrection! May the God of peace that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do His will.

The Hollow.

The hollow in the old oak tree,
Where happy children play,
Where woodbines climb and cling amid
The roses' clustering spray.

The hollow in the old oak tree,
Where happy lovers meet,
To linger long and whisper low
Upon its mossy seat.

This hollow in the old oak tree,
Where old men feebly come
To tell their tales and crack their jokes
Or ere they totter home.

The hollow in the old oak tree—
One haunts it when the moon
Gleams on the dewy wood walks, close
Beside the streamlet's tune.

Upon the roughened bark to spend
Hot kisses, passionate tears;
To murmur to the old oak tree
Life's grief for Love's lost years.

—[All the Year Round.

HUMOROUS.

A promising band---The engagement ring.

There will be no eclipse of the honeymoon this year.

The Envelope Trust does not appear to bear the stamp of public approval.

A Michigan girl has found 2125 four-leaved clovers, and is not married yet.

"I'm stuck on that girl," said the court-plaster. "Well, she breaks me all up, too," remarked the peanut candy.

Stranger (to workman driving railway spikes): Are you working for the contractor of this road? Pat: No sor; Oi'm workin' fer the extender av it.

"Look out!" he exclaimed, suddenly; "there's ice under that snow!" "Yes," said she, as he restored her tenderly to the perpendicular, "I tumbled to it."

In a Michigan town there is a girl whose height is six feet nine inches. When she makes up her mind to get married you may wager she stoops to conquer.

It is in the highest degree improper and unjust to ridicule a man on account of his small stature. Because he happens to be little it isn't right to belittle him.

The hen, fool though she is considered, possesses in a marked degree the faculty of making much out of little. Feed her corn by the pint and she eats it by the peck.

The original elements are earth, air, fire and water. Fire is the most destructive and water is the most powerful. Fire-water, therefore, forms a combination that is a teaser.

First Baldhead---That's a beautiful piece the orchestra is playing. Second Baldhead---Ah, it is one that will always haunt me. "Why?" "It is the only one my daughter knows."

A youth took of laudanum an oz
Because he'd been given the bz
By his prospective wife;
But they saved his young life,
Though his system received quite a jz.

An Indiana judge did not know what a cartoon was. A lawyer sketched the body of a jackass with his, the judge's, head and face attached as a specimen and was promptly fined $25 for contempt of court.

Depot Master—Don't you see that notice? "Gentlemen not allowed to smoke in this room." Seedy Individual—It doesn't apply to me. Depot Master—Why not? Seedy Individual—Because I'm no gentleman.

THEY tell this story of Congressman Herbert of Alabama: His youngest daughter, who is at a Washington boarding school, was entertaining two young lady friends from her home. One day the Congressman called and sent up word that he had come to take his daughter and "the young ladies from Alabama" to the matinee. Pretty soon Miss Herbert and a dozen bright girls, all from Alabama, came rushing down stairs, exclaiming: "Oh, how perfectly lovely of you, Mr. Herbert, to take us all." The Congressman made the best of the situation and paid the bill gracefully.

A VIOLENT crank is apt to give one a turn.

"What Drug Will Scour These English Hence?"

Wicked Macbeth, who murdered good King Duncan, asked this question in his despair. Thousands of victims of disease are daily asking "What will scour the impurities from my blood and bring me health?" Dr. Pierce's Golden Medical Discovery will do it. When the purple life-tide is sluggish, causing drowsiness, headache and loss of appetite, use this wonderful vitalizer, which never fails. It forces the liver into perfect action, drives out superfluous bile, brings the glow of health to the cheek and the natural sparkle to the eye. All druggists.

"It is the little things that tell," says an old adage. Yes, especially the little brothers.

A Pleasure Shared by Women Only.

Malherbe, the gifted French author, declared that of all things that man possesses, women alone take pleasure in being possessed. This seems generally true of the sweeter sex. Like the ivy plant, she longs for an object to cling to and love—to look to for protection. This being her prerogative, ought she not to be told that Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription is the physical salvation of her sex? It banishes those distressing maladies that make her life a burden, curing all painful irregularities, uterine disorders, inflammation and ulceration, prolapsus and kindred weaknesses. As a nervine, it cures nervous exhaustion, prostration, debility, relieves mental anxiety and hypochondria, and promotes refreshing sleep.

Mayen't diamonds and rubies be correctly called strata-gems?

When everything else fails, Dr. Sage's Catarrh Remedy cures.

Opal is the latest Parisian white.

Some Foolish People

Allow a cough to run until it gets beyond the reach of medicine. They often say, "Oh, it will wear away," but in most cases it wears them away. Could they be induced to try the successful medicine called Kemp's Balsam, they would immediately see the excellent effect after taking the first dose. Large bottles, 50 cents and $1.00. *Trial size free.* At all Druggists'.

Do what you ought, let come what may.

Itching Piles.

Symptoms—Moisture; intense itching and stinging; worse by scratching. If allowed to continue tumors form, which often bleed and ulcerate, becoming very sore. SWAYNE'S OINTMENT stops the itching and bleeding, heals ulceration, and in many cases removes the tumors. Equally efficacious in curing all Skin Diseases. DR. SWAYNE & SON, Philadelphia. Sent by mail for 50 cts. Also sold by druggists.

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