BIRMINGHAM ECCENTRIC.

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It is easier to be wrong than it is to be president.

A man may be a complete master of himself and yet have nothing to boast of.

Diamonds are usually possessed by others—when they happen to be trumps.

Beer, a scientist says, fattens a man's voice. It will also give him a pair of "round feet."

Admiral Sampson is materially assisting the Spaniards to remember lots of things, the Maine included.

What with the wheat scarcity in the peninsula, the blockade at Havana and Dewey and the insurgents at Manila, a Spaniard and a square meal are two substantives that hardly ever get together nowadays.

Capt. Philip, commander of the United States battleship Texas, positively denies that he was killed or seriously injured during the bombardment of Santiago. Under the circumstances Capt. Philip's denial ought to have great weight.

Postmaster Taylor of Scarva, County Down, Ireland, who is now about 116 years old, has been postmaster to the good people of Scarva for 70 years. Such longevity as that of Mr. Taylor would be very discouraging in American postoffices to about ninety-nine per cent of the postmaster's fellow-townsmen.

In Massachusetts the savings bank deposits average $200 per head of the whole population. This is largely due to the facilities for depositing small savings. These are absent in other states, and it is estimated by Edward Atkinson that if postal savings banks were established in twenty years the average deposits in the United States might be $100 per capita, an aggregate sum of $7,500,000,000.

The factory laws of New Jersey, which have never been well enforced, are being utterly defied by a number of employers in Passaic. Men, women and children are compelled to work from 6:30 a. m. until 9 and 10 at night without extra compensation. Children are thus kept away from night school, their only chance of securing some education. Men are starving in the streets. The workers are supposed to have one hour for dinner, but it is said they only are allowed fifteen minutes. Four dollars per week is a high and unusual wage, the average being $1.25. These white slaves live twenty-five and thirty in a room.

Every month there is a statement of the number of business failures; but we look in vain for a statement of the causes of failure. It might not be pleasant reading, but it would certainly be instructive. We are told that some men fail because they are too honest to practice the tricks of trade, and others because they are too mean to gain and keep confidence; some because they do not give full attention to their business, and others because they drive business recklessly. Some lines of trade are overcrowded. In others the strong and shrewd push the weak to the wall, and small operators are "frozen out" by large ones. Competition, which is said to be "the life of trade," is often its death.

From the annual meeting of the American Medical Association at Denver comes a message of hope to every consumptive sufferer in the world. It was contained in a paper on "Surgery of the Lung" read before the assembled representatives of American medical science by a no less prominent physician than Dr. J. B. Murphy of Chicago. "I can with safety say," said he, "that unless the lung is entirely gone a permanent cure can be effected." This was the essential deduction from his technical treatise on the treatment of tuberculosis by collapsing the lung by the introduction of nitrogen gas into the pleural cavity. This in unscientific parlance gives the lung a rest, and nature effects the cure. Without discussing the scientific problem which Dr. Murphy says has been fully demonstrated by successful experiment, we can only express the hope that all he claims for his discovery may prove true. Pulmonary troubles bring darkness and sorrow to myriads. The disease is so subtle, its symptomy so illusive, its progress so stealthy and the prescriptions for its cure so varied and deceptive that anything absolutely in the nature of an absolute remedy must be hailed as the greatest boon to infected humanity vouchsafed by modern medical science. The name of the man who robs the bacilli of tuberculosis of their terrors is entitled to a place beside those of Hervey and Jenner.

Your revolutionist is a man that's ag'in it, whatever it is. The Madrid person of that kind would have kicked if the government had backed down. Now that the government fights and loses, he is more bloodthirsty than ever and wants chaos instead of government. Nobody can see how that might improve matters, but that doesn't matter—if he can't have foreign blood he wants the Spanish kind. In Paris this sort of thing is the rising of the commune. In Madrid it is the rising of ignorance, prejudice, malice, cruelty and all unholiness.

Here are two new illustrations of the pitifulness that is in the heart of little girls: Annie wanted the water for the kittens to be drowned in; Mary kept a light burning all night in the room where the new puppy was to sleep, that he might not suffer from fear and homesickness, as once she had done in the darkness of a strange house.

If Yvette Guilbert really wishes Spain the success she is praying for she might loan the poor country some of those good American dollars she bunkoed out of our people.

TALMAGES SERMON.

"PLEASURES OF LIFE" SUNDAY'S SUBJECT.

From the Text Judges XVI: 25, as Follows: "And It Came to Pass When Their Hearts Were Merry That They Said, 'Call for Samson.'"

There were three thousand people assembled in the Temple of Dagon. They had come to make sport of eyeless Samson. They were all ready for the entertainment. They began to clap and pound, impatient for the amusement to begin, and they cried, "Fetch him out! Fetch him out!" Yonder I see the blind old giant coming, led by the hand of a child into the very midst of the temple. At his first appearance there goes up a shout of laughter and derision. The blind old giant pretends he is tired and wants to rest himself against the pillars of the house, so he says to the lad who leads him, "Bring me where the main pillars are." The lad does so. Then the strong man puts his hands on one of the pillars, and, with the mightiest push that mortal ever made, throws himself forward until the whole house came down in thunderous crash, grinding the audience like grapes in a wine-press. "And so it came to pass, when their hearts were merry, that they said, Call for Samson, that he may make us sport. And they called for Samson out of the prison-house; and he made them sport." In other words there are amusements that are destructive and bring down disaster and death upon the heads of those who practice them. While they laugh and cheer, they die. The three thousand who perished that day in Gaza are nothing compared with the tens of thousands who have been destroyed, body, mind and soul by bad amusements and by good amusements carried to excess.

In my sermons you must have noticed that I have no sympathy with ecclesiastical strait-jackets, or with that wholesale denunciation of amusements to which many are pledged. I believe the church of God has made a tremendous mistake in trying to suppress the sportfulness of youth and drive out from men their love of amusement. If God ever implanted anything in us, he implanted this desire. But instead of providing for this demand of our nature, the church of God has for the main part ignored it. As in a riot the mayor plants a battery at the end of the street and has it fired off, so that everything is cut down that happens to stand in the range, the good as well as the bad, so there are men in the church who plant their batteries of condemnation and fire away indiscriminately. Everything is condemned. They talk as if they would like to have our youth dress in blue uniform, like the children of an orphan asylum, and march down the path of life to the tune of the "Deaf March in Saul." They hate a blue sash, or a rosebud in the hair, or a tasseled galter, and think a man almost ready for the lunatic asylum who utters a conundrum.

Young Men's Christian associations of the country are doing a glorious work. They have fine reading rooms, and all the influences are of the best kind, and are now adding gymnasiums and bowling alleys, where, without any evil surroundings, our young men may get physical as well as spiritual improvement. We are dwindling away to a narrow-chested, weak-armed, feeble-voiced race, when God calls us to a work in which he wants physical as well as spiritual athletes. I would to God that the time might soon come when in all our colleges and theological seminaries, as at Princeton, a gymnasium shall be established. We spend seven years of hard study in preparation for the ministry, and come out with bronchitis and dyspepsia and liver complaint, and then crawl up into the pulpit, and the people say, "Don't he look heavenly!" because he looks sickly. Let the church of God direct, rather than attempt to suppress the desire for amusement. The best men that the world ever knew have had their sports. William Wilberforce trundled hoop with his children. Martin Luther helped dress the Christmas tree. Ministers have pitched quoits, philanthropists have gone a-skating, prime ministers have played ball.

Our communities are filled with men and women who have in their souls unmeasured resources for sportfulness and frolic. Show me a man who never lights up with sportfulness and has no sympathy with the recreations of others, and I will show you a man who is a stumbling block to the kingdom of God. Such men are caricatures of religion. They lead young people to think that a man is good in proportion as he groans and frowns and looks sallow, and that the height of man's Christian stature is in proportion to the length of his face. I would trade off five hundred such men for one bright-faced, radiant Christian on whose face are the words, "Rejoice evermore!" Every morning by his cheerful face he preaches fifty sermons. I will go further and say that I have no confidence in a man who makes a religion of his gloomy looks. That kind of a man always turns out badly. I would not want him for the treasurer of an orphan asylum. The orphans would suffer.

Among forty people whom I received into the church at one communion, there was only one applicant of whose piety I was suspicious. He had the longest story to tell; had seen the most visions, and gave an experience so wonderful that all the other applicants were discouraged. I was not surprised the year after to learn that he had run off with the funds of the bank with which he was connected. Who is this black angel that you call religion—wings black, feet black, feathers black? Our religion is a bright angel—feet bright, eyes bright, wings bright, taking her place in the soul. She pulls a rope that reaches to the skies and sets all the bells of heaven a-chiming. There are some persons who, when talking to a minister, always feel it politic to look lugubrious. Go forth, oh people, to your lawful amusement. God means you to be happy. But, when there are so many sources of innocent pleasure, why tamper with anything that is dangerous and polluting? Why stop our ears to a heaven full of songsters to listen to the hiss of a dragon? Why turn back from the mountain-side all abloom with wild flowers and adash with the nimble torrents, and with blistered feet attempt to climb the hot sides of Cotopaxi?

Now, all opera houses, theaters, bowling alleys, skating rinks and all styles of amusement, good and bad, I put on trial today and judge of them by certain cardinal principles. First, you may judge of any amusement by its healthful result or by its baneful reaction. There are people who seem made up of hard facts. They are a combination of multiplication tables and statistics. If you show them an exquisite picture they will begin to discuss the pigments involved in the coloring; if you show them a beautiful rose, they will submit it to a botanical analysis, which is only the post mortem examination of a flower. They never do anything more than feebly smile. There are no great tides of feeling surging up from the depth of their soul in billow after billow of reverberating laughter. They seem as if nature had built them by contract and made a bungling job of it. But, blessed be God, there are people in the world who have bright faces and whose life is a song, an anthem, a paean of victory. Even their troubles are like the vines that crawl up the side of a great tower on the top of which the sunlight sits and the soft airs of summer hold perpetual carnival. They are the people you like to have come to your house; they are the people I like to have come to my house. Now it is these exhilarant and sympathetic and warm-hearted people that are most tempted to pernicious amusements. In proportion as a ship is swift it wants a strong helmsman; in proportion as a horse is gay it wants a strong driver; and these people of exuberant nature will do well to look at the reaction of all their amusements. If an amusement sends you home at night nervous so you cannot sleep, and you rise in the morning, not because you are slept out, but because your duty drags you from your slumbers, you have been where you ought not to have been. There are amusements that send a man next day to his work blood-shot, yawning, stupid, nauseated, and they are wrong kinds of amusements. There are entertainments that give a man disgust with the drudgery of life, with tools because they are not swords, with working aprons because they are not robes, with cattle because they are not infuriated bulls of the arena. If any amusement sends you home longing for a life of romance and thrilling adventure, love that takes poison and shoots itself, moonlight adventures and hair-breadth escapes, you may depend upon it that you are the sacrificed victim of unsanctified pleasure. Our recreations are intended to build us up, and if they pull us down as to our moral or as to our physical strength, you may come to the conclusion that they are obnoxious.

How brightly the path of unrestrained amusement opens! The young man says: "Now I am off for a night's time. Never mind economy; I'll get money somehow. What a fine road! What a beautiful day for a ride! Crack the whip, and over the turnpike! Come, boys, fill high your glasses! Drink! Long life! Health, plenty of rides just like this!" Hard-working men hear the clatter of the hoofs and look up and say, "Why, I wonder where those fellows get their money from. We have to toil and drudge. They do nothing." To these gay men life is a thrill and an excitement. They stare at other people and in turn are stared at. The watch-chain jingles. The cup foams. The cheeks flush, the eyes flash. The midnight hears their guffaw. They swagger. They jostle decent men off the sidewalk. They take the name of God in vain. They parody the hymn they learned at their mother's knee; and to all pictures of coming disaster they cry out: "Who cares!" And to the counsel of some Christian friend: "Who are you?" Passing along the street some night you hear a shriek in a grog-shop, the rattle of the watchman's club, the rush of the police. What is the matter now? Oh, this reckless young man has been killed in a grog-shop fight. Carry him home to his father's house.

Let me say to all young men, your style of amusement will decide your eternal destiny. One night I saw a young man at a street corner, evidently doubting as to which direction he had better take. He had his hat lifted high enough so you could see he had an intelligent forehead. He had a stout chest; he had a robust development. Splendid young man. Cultured young man. Honored young man. Why did he stop there while so many were going up and down? The fact is that every man has a good angel and a bad angel contending for the mastery of his spirit. And there was a good angel and a bad angel struggling with that young man's soul at the corner of the street. "Come with me," said the good angel. "I will take you home. I will spread my wing over your pathway. I will lovingly escort you all through life. I will bless every cup you drink out of, every couch you rest on, every doorway you enter. I will consecrate your tears when you weep, your sweat when you toil, and at the last I will hand over your grave into the hand of the bright angel of a Christian resurrection. In answer to your father's petition and your mother's prayer I have been sent of the Lord out of heaven to be your guardian spirit. Come with me"; said the good angel, in a voice of unearthly symphony. It was music like that which drops from a lute of heaven when a seraph breathes on it. "No, no," said the bad angel, "come with me; I have something better to offer; the wines I pour are from chalices of bewitching carousal; the dance I lead is over floor tesselated with unrestrained indulgences; there is no God to frown on the temples of sin where I worship. The skies are Italian. The paths I tread are through meadows dafield and primrosed; come with me." The young man hesitated at a time when hesitation was ruin, and the bad angel smote the good angel until it departed, spreading wings through the starlight upward and away, until a door flashed open in the sky and forever the wings vanished. That was the turning point in that young man's history; for the good angel flown, he hesitated no longer, but started on a pathway which is beautiful at the opening, but blasted at the last. The bad angel, leading the way, opened gate after gate, and at each gate the road became rougher and the sky more lurid, and, what was peculiar, as the gate slammed shut it came to with a jar that indicated that it would never open. Passed each portal, there was a grinding of locks and a shoving of bolts; and the scenery on either side the road changed from gardens to deserts, and the June air became a cutting December blast, and the bright wings of the bad angel turned to sackcloth and the eyes of light became hollow with hopeless grief, and the fountains, that at the start had tossed wine, poured forth bubbling tears, and foaming blood, and on the right side of the road there was a serpent, and the man said to the bad angel, "What is that serpent?" and the answer was, "That is the serpent of stinging remorse." On the left side of the road there was a lion, and the man asked the bad angel, "What is that lion?" and the answer was, "That is the lion of all-devouring despair." A vulture flew through the sky, and the man asked the bad angel, "What is that vulture?" and the answer was, "That is the vulture waiting for the carcasses of the slain." And then the man began to try to pull off of him the folds of something that had wound him round and round; and he said to the bad angel, "What is it that twists me in this awful convolution?" and the answer was, "That is the worm that never dies;" and then the man said to the bad angel, "What does all this mean? I trusted in what you said at the corner of the street that night; I trusted it all, and why have you thus deceived me?" Then the last deception fell off the charmer, and it said: "I was sent forth from the pit to destroy your soul; I watched my chance for many a long year; when you hesitated that night on the street I gained my triumph; now you are here. Ha! ha! You are here. Come, now let us fill these two chalices of fire and drink together to darkness and woe and death. Hail! hail!" Oh, young man, will the good angel sent forth by Christ or the bad angel sent forth by sin, get the victory over your soul? Their wings are interlocked this moment above you, contending for your destiny, as above the Apennines eagle and condor fight mid-sky. This hour may decide your destiny. God help you! To hesitate is to die!

A WOMAN'S REVENGE.

How She Treated Her Husband's Guests to Rawhide Soup.

One of the most prominent figures on the Supreme bench of Louisiana in ante-bellum days was a certain Judge B., whose locale was the parish of St. Landry, says the Philadelphia Times. The judge was a man of old-school elegance, his wife was one of the most brilliant women of her day in the state. Their St. Landry home was noted for the elegance of its appointments no less than for the grandeur of its hospitality. Their entertainments were noted throughout the countryside. More than one white haired man prominent in latter-day Louisiana politics can tell you that he proposed to his wife at a ball at Judge B.'s, and if you should care to know the wife can describe the elegant gowns all the ladies and particularly Mrs. B. wore on that occasion. These would make pleasant stories. I am to tell you one of another sort. Upon a certain occasion Judge B. gave a dinner to the bar of St. Landry. When the guests arrived they found everything awaiting their reception. In the drawing room a bright wood fire glowed behind polished brasses; waxen tapers gleamed from silver candelabra to be multiplied and reflected again and again from surrounding mirrors. The judge greeted them with his usual magnificent courtesy of manner, while his wife, attired in a trailing gown of black velvet and rare old lace, with diamonds sparkling from her hair and her throat and her hands, seemed more than ever brilliant, beautiful and gracious. When presently a slave held the door open and ushered their guests into the dining hall, the elegance of the occasion seemed complete. Snowiest linen, frallest china, brightest crystal, most polished silver adorned the board. With that rare grace which was at all times her distinguishing charm, Mrs. B. dished the soup from the steaming silver urn, her brilliant wit and clever repartee scintillating the while. As each guest was served his glance fell upon a plate of palest amber liquid, with tiny, indistinguishable bits of something floating therein. Finally the hostess lifted her spoon and, with a graceful wave of her hand, gave the signal to begin. There was a smile upon her parted lips as she said: "Gentlemen, I have prepared a new soup for your delectation today. I trust it may please your palate. Should you like the recipe I can tell you it is made from the cowhide with which Judge B. whipped me this morning."

She Knew.

The following story is told of a precocious little girl of 10. She is the daughter of a well known lady of considerable charms, whom the family doctor was visiting for influenza. He felt her pulse gravely and tenderly, holding her wrists after the orthodox manner of a ladies' doctor, as he sat beside her in the drawing room. As he did so he became aware that the child had her great grave eyes, full of inquiry, fixed upon him. "You don't know what I am doing," said the medical man lightly to the young lady. "Yes—I do," was the portentously solemn reply. "You are making love to my mother."

That's Why.

"They say the war has practically killed the theatrical business in the east." "Yes, the people who used to go and yell every time Old Glory was mentioned or a patriotic air was played don't want to get out where it can be seen that they are still at home, now that war has been declared."

It Depends.

"Is the crying of an infant in the night," asked the newest boarder, "a call to arms?" "Sometimes," admitted the Cheerful Idiot. "And, again, it may be only a bottle cry. It all depends."

His Weak Point.

The man of Granville, N. Y., who hanged himself because his wife wouldn't neglect her infant to read the Bible to him, might have been tremendously good, but he surely wasn't orthodox.—Judge.

A caterpillar in the course of a month will devour 600 times its own weight in food.

BUSTLING KEY WEST.

WAR TALK AND FLAGS OF TWO NATIONS.

Old Glory and the Cuban Colors Float in Huge Dimensions from Every Building in the Town—Harbor Choked with Torpedoes.

(Key West Letter.)

CONDITIONS in Key West are most peculiar in consequence of the war. It is hard for a stranger in the town to realize just what normal conditions are in the place. Now everything is given over to the army, the navy and the press. People of an inland city far removed from the scene of operations hardly realize what a correspondent means when he says the "war spirit runs high." It does run high at Key West. Residents of the town, of which it has 25,000, gather along the wharves and watch the incoming boats. From five to ten people occupy the observatories on the top of Hotel Key West and Federal building. Night and day these people have their marine glasses and telescopes turned out across the harbor, and for two or three hours in advance of her arrival ships are announced to the populace. Before they can approach the harbor closer than ten miles they are overhauled repeatedly by torpedo boats and the big government cruisers in front of Key West. In front of every house in Key West—and every store there floats the flag of the insurgents, surmounted by the Stars and Stripes. It is a broad assertion to make of a town of 25,000 people, but that it is absolutely true is shown by the fact that a ride about the town of two hours failed to disclose a house not so decorated. They are big flags, too, not the small kind usually used for decorations.

The town itself is clean and beautifully paved by nature. The streets look as though asphaltum had been laid everywhere, but a disagreeable dust is raised by the carriage wheels. However, this is "clean dust," brushes off easily and does not begrime face or clothing. On the one side of the island is what is called the "blight," and this is simply a big bay but two feet deep with a coral bottom. Whenever the enterprising resident wishes to acquire a corner lot he collects enough dirt and dislodges coral to fill in enough of the bay for his lot. As a consequence some lots face coral streets, while the other three sides are touched by water.

The possibilities of war were brought forcibly before the residents of the town when the government leased a large convent and tobacco warehouse with the intention of converting them into hospitals for the reception of sick and wounded soldiers and sailors. Work on the alterations of these buildings will go steadily forward as rapidly as the liberal expenditure of money renders possible. Out near the barracks the colored troops are in camp. But the scene of greatest activity is at the wharves. Everything naturally centers about the naval station and the Federal building. From the naval station runs a narrow-gauge railway, leading out to the coaling wharf in the harbor on a system of long piles. As rapidly as the government steamers bring supplies and ammunition from Tampa and other Southern ports they are placed in the station, and when needed transferred to the ships of Admiral Sampson's fleet.

One of the interesting things to be seen is the laying of mines in the harbor. Just where the mines are and where the keyboard is which controls the powerful explosives they contain no one knows, and yet everybody

CUSTOM HOUSE AT KEY WEST.

knows. It is one of those things which the civilian finds to his advantage to forget. Not that any one threatens you with dire consequences for inquiring into such things, but there is a feeling prevailing that many things should be forgotten as soon as learned. The mines are of several varieties, each having a technical name, but, for landsmen, they are best described by saying that some of them are attached to the coral bottom of the harbor, some float on the surface, some are exploded by an eletric spark and others are exploded by contact. As another protection from a hostile fleet, all of the Goverment buoys have been misplaced, and many have been taken from the harbor entirely. Only the experienced pilot, who has wormed his way for years in among the treacherous coral reefs, can tell how effective this provision is.

In the inner harbor, not far from the Government's man-of-war harbor, lie the prizes which have been brought in by the fleet. They make a gallant array, and there was much disappointment and chagrin among naval men when the news of the President's proclamation reached Key West with the deduction that all but the few last prizes would have to be released. Each prize was brought into the harbor by a "prize crew" selected from the crew of her captor. In the harbor they were turned over to the United States marshal and he placed a deputy in charge of each, backed by a squad of marines.

Thin Gold Leaves.

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How to Use Kneipp Malt Coffee in addition to other Coffee—For six cups of coffee (2 1-2 pints of water) take two heaping tablespoons full of ground Kneipp Malt Coffee and after boiling the same five minutes as above indicated, add two tablespoons full of ground coffeebeans, let it boil up for a few seconds longer, then let it settle about five minutes. This mixed coffee will settle slower than pure Kneipp Malt Coffee. Use cream and sugar or boiled milk to suit your taste.

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