

TALMAGE'S SERMON.

TALKS ON WOMAN'S WRONGS AND HER OPPORTUNITIES.

Vashiti the Veiled, the Silent and the Righteous—The Bold Woman and the Modest Woman—Waiting for the Divine Hand to Soothe.

Woman Sacrificed.

In his sermon last Sunday, starting from a brilliant Bible scene, Dr. Talmage discoursed upon woman's opportunities and the wrongs she sometimes suffers. His text was Esther i, 11, 12: "To bring Vashiti the queen before the king with the crown royal to show the people and the princess her beauty, for she was fair to look on. But the queen Vashiti refused to come at the king's commandment by her chamberlains, therefore was the king very wroth, and his anger burned in him."

We stand amid the palaces of Shushan. The pinnacles are afire with the morning light. The columns rise festooned and wreathed, the wealth of empires flashing from the grooves, the ceilings adorned with images of bird and beast and scenes of prowess and conquest. The walls are hung with shields and emblazoned until it seems that the whole round of splendor is exhausted. Each arch is a mighty leap of architectural achievement. Golden stars shining down on glowing arabesque. Hangings of embroidered work in which mingle the blueness of the sky, the greenness of the grass, and the whiteness of the sea foam. Tapestries hung on silver rings, welding together the pillars of marble. Pavilions reaching out in every direction. These for repose, filled with luxuriant couches, into which weary limbs sink until all fatigue is submerged. These for carousal, where kings drink down a kingdom at one swallow. Amazing spectacle! Light of silver dripping down over stains of ivory on shields of gold. Floors of stained marble, sunred and night black, and inlaid with gleaming pearl. Why, it seems as if a heavenly vision of amethyst and jacinth and topaz and chrysanthemums had descended and alighted upon Shushan. It seems as if a bower of celestial glory had dashed clear over heaven's battlements upon this metropolis of Persia.

In connection with this palace there is a garden where the mighty men of foreign lands are seated at a banquet. Under the spread of oak and linden and acacia the tables are arranged. The breath of honey-suckle and frankincense fills the air. Fountains leap up into the light, the spray struck through with rainbow coloring in crystallized baptism upon flowering shrubs, then rolling down through channels of marble and widening over here and there into pools swirling with the fair tribes of foreign aquarians, bordered with scarlet anemones, honeysuckles and many colored primroses. Meats of rarest bird and beast smoking up amid wreaths of aromatic. The vases filled with apricots and almonds. The baskets piled up, with apricots and dates and figs and oranges and pomegranates. Melons tastefully twined with leaves of acacia. The bright waters of Eulæus filling the urns and sweating outside the rim in flashing beads amid the traceries. Wine from the royal vats of Ispanah and Shiraz in bottles of tinged shell and by shaped cups of silver and flagons and tankards of solid gold. The music rises higher, and the revelry breaks out into wilder transport, and the wine has flushed the cheek and touched the brain, and louder than all other voices are the hiccup of the inebriates, the gable of fools and the song of the drunkards.

Vashiti the Sacrificed.

In another part of the palace Queen Vashiti is entertaining the princesses of Persia at a banquet. Drunken Ahasuerus says to his servants, "You go out and fetch Vashiti from that banquet with the women and bring her to this banquet with the men and let me display her beauty." The servants immediately start to obey the king's command, but there was a rule in oriental society that no woman might appear in public without having her face veiled. Yet here was a mandate, that no one dare dispute, demanding that Vashiti come in unveiled before the multitude. However, there was in Vashiti's soul a principle more regal than Ahasuerus, more brilliant than the gold of Shushan, of more wealth than the realm of Persia, which commanded her to disobey this order of the king, and so all the righteousness and holiness and modesty of her nature rises up into one sublime refusal. She says, "I will not go into the banquet unveiled." Of course Ahasuerus was infuriate, and Vashiti, robbed of her position and her estate, is driven forth in poverty and ruin to suffer the scorn of a nation, and yet to receive the applause of after generations who shall rise up to admire this martyr to kingly insolence. Well, the last vestige of that feast is gone, the last garland has faded, the last arch has fallen, the last tankard has been destroyed, and Shushan is a ruin, but as long as the world stands there will be multitudes of men and women familiar with the Bible who will come into this picture gallery of God and admire the divine portrait of Vashiti the queen, Vashiti the veiled, Vashiti the sacrifice, Vashiti the silent.

Noble Women.

In the first place, I want you to look upon Vashiti the queen. A blue ribbon, rayed with white, drawn around her forehead, indicated her queenly position. It was no small honor to be queen in such a realm as that. Hark to the rustle of her robes! See the blaze of her jewels! And yet, my friends, it is not necessary to have palace and regal robe in order to be queenly. When I see a woman with strong faith in God putting her foot upon all meanness and selfishness and godless display, going right forward to serve Christ and the race by a grand and glorious service, I say, "That woman is a queen," and the ranks of heaven look over the battlements upon the coronation, and whether she come up from the shanty or the common or the mansion of the fashionable queen I greet her with the shout "All hail! Queen Vashiti!" What glory was there on the brow of England, or Margaret of France, or Catherine of Russia compared with the worth of some of our Christian mothers, many of them gone into glory, or of that woman mentioned in the Scriptures who put all her money into the Lord's treasury; or of Jephthah's daughter, who made a demonstration of unselfish patriotism; or of Abigail, who rescued the herds and flocks of her husband; or of Ruth, who toiled under a tropical sun for poor, old, helpless Naomi; or of Florence Nightingale, who went at midnight to stand the battle-wounds of the Crimean; or of Mrs. Adelina Patti, who kindled the lights of salvation amid the darkness of Burma; or of Mrs. Hemans, who poured out her holy soul in words which will forever be associated with hunter's horn, and captive's chain, and bridal bower, and lute's troub, and curfew's knell at the dying day, and scores and hundreds of women unknown on earth who have given water to the thirsty and bread to the hungry and medicine to the sick and smiles to the discouraged—their footsteps heard along dark lane and in government hospital and almshouse corridor and by prison gate? There may be no royal robe; there may be no palatial surroundings. She does not

need them, for all charitable men will unite with the crackling lips of fever struck hospital and plague blotched Lazarus in greeting her as she passes: "Hail! Hail! Queen Vashiti!"

Vashiti Veiled.

Again, I want you to consider Vashiti the Veiled. Had she appeared before Ahasuerus and his court on that day with her face uncovered she would have shocked all the delicacies of oriental society, and the very men who in their intoxication demanded that she come in their sober moments would have despised her. As some flowers seem to thrive best in the dark lane and in the shadow and where the sun does not seem to reach them, so God appoints to most womanly natures a retiring and unobtrusive spirit. God once in awhile does call an Isabella to a throne, or a Miriam to strike the timbrel at the front of a host, or a Marie Antoinette to quell a French mob, or a Deborah to stand at the front of an armed battalion, crying out: "Up! Up! This is the day in which the Lord will deliver Sisera into thine hand." And when women are called to such outdoor work and to such heroic positions, God prepares them for it, and they have iron in their souls and lightning in their eye, and whirlwinds in their breath, and the borrowed strength of the Lord omnipotent in their right arm. They walk through furnaces as though they were hedges of wild flowers and cross seas as though they were shimmering sapphires, and all the harpies of hell down to their dungeon at the stamp of her womanly indignation. But these are the exceptions. Generally Dorcas would rather make a garment for the poor boy, Hepzibah would rather fill the trough for the camel, Hannah would rather make a coat for Samuel, the Hebrew maid would rather give a prescription for Naaman's leprosy, the woman of Sarepta would rather carry a letter for the inspired apostle, Mother Lois would rather educate Timothy in the Scriptures.

When I see a woman going about her daily duty—with cheerful dignity presiding at the table, with kind and gentle but firm disciplining presiding in the nursery, going out into the world without any blast of trumpets, following in the footsteps of him who went about doing good—I say, "This is Vashiti with a veil an." But when I see a woman of unblushing boldness, loud voiced, with a tongue of infinite clatter, with arrogant look passing through the streets with the step of a walking beam, garly arrayed in a very hurricane of millinery, I cry out, "Vashiti has lost her veil!" When I see a woman of comely features, and of adroitness of intellect, and endowed with all that the schools can do for one, and of high social position, yet moving in society, with superciliousness and hauteur, as though she would have people know their place, and an undefined combination of glib and strut and rhodomantle, endowed with alltopian quantities of talk, but only homeopathic infinitesimals of sense, the terror of dry goods clerks and railroad conductors; discoverors of significant meanings in plain conversation, prodigies of badinage and innuendo, I say: "Look! Look! Vashiti has lost her veil!"

A Broken Heart.

Again, I want you to consider Vashiti the sacrifice. Who is this I see coming out of that palace gate of Shushan? It seems to me that I have seen her before. She comes homeless, houseless, friendless, trudging along with a broken heart. Who is she? It is Vashiti the sacrifice. Oh, what a change it was from royal position to a wayfarer's crust! A little while ago, approved and sought for; now, none so poor as to acknowledge her acquaintance. Vashiti the sacrifice! Ah, you and I have seen it many a time!

Boys, think of the old home where were father and mother and the charming sisters and brothers whose whole aim was to keep home happy and make life a pleasure rather than a burden. You remember father's corner behind the great fire-place, do you not? See him as he sits and nods in the twilight of the dim fire and dreams of the days when his boys will be Senators and not have to stand the bitter trials of the dark forest or the treeless prairies.

Perchance he has toiled all day in the clearing vigorously battling with nature for the ascendency of the arts of man. He did these things you know and all for you, too. His trials were bitter. His aims were noble. His object was happiness prompted by a motive of love. The home was crude as compared with the gorgeous palaces of these days. But joy was there because father was, and love because mother was. Yes, see her as she sits at her work over in the other corner. She is the perfect embodiment of happiness. Her boys and girls are all at home. They are yet in their innocence and she knows their every thought and observes with pride their every act.

Father and mother, brothers and sisters. The Old Home. What depths of meaning lie in those words. There is comfort in them. They recall all that built up into noble men whose lives are an honor to the earth made happy by our presence. They recall the innocent prattle of younger brothers and sisters and the kindly directed efforts of the seniors to secure the joy and peace that comes from the fraternity of home. They are yet in their innocence and she knows their every thought and observes with pride their every act.

The dim old forest and the wide expanding prairie are there, too. The low murmuring rill with its beautiful song is there. What is not there? We were all there when we were young, but now we are old and all that we can do is to recall, recall.

Do this, boys, and see if you do not appreciate more fully all that you are and have. It is but just that you should affectively look upon the past.

Sympathy that Was Wasted.

A tired-looking little woman, with her thin cape spread out to protect her burden from the rain, splashed through the mud and entered a street as were gathered around them and the soldiers who were gathered around them were no doubt talking of their homes and of the long march they had taken and the battles they were to fight, but after awhile I saw these camp fires begin to lower, and they continued to lower until they were all gone out and the army slept. It was impossible in the darkness when I thought of how great that sleep.

"Keep still, dear!" she sighed, in a weak, tired voice, when a slight disturbance under the cape was observable.

"Why don't some of you fellows give that woman with a baby a seat?" growled a fat man who was hanging to a strap.

Two or three men sprang up, and each insisted that she should take his seat. She sank into one of the vacant places, thanked the man who had made way for her, and a frowsy-headed terrier sprang from under her cape and sat in her lap, while he barked at the fat man.

Belief in Omens.

In former times belief in omens was an article of religious faith and belief in them exists to a considerable extent in some countries to this day.

When the pious mother of James I. of Spain wished to select a name for her child, she surrounded his cradle with twelve lighted tapers, each bearing an apostle's name; it was decided that the saint whose taper burned longest was the one who would thus signify his intention of becoming the infant's special patron. St. James' light outlasted that of his brother apostles, and to St. James was the child therefore dedicated. This was in the thirteenth century, but the same spirit of pious superstition survived long afterward.

The Puritans believed in casting lots, and in opening the Bible and receiving as an oracle the first words on which their eyes fell and the early Methodists practised the same description of divination.

The reformer, excommunicated by his contemporaries, fastened in a pillory, the slow

fires of public contempt burning under him, ground under the cylinders of the printing press, yet calmly waiting for the day when pity of soul and heart of character will get the sanction of earth and the plaudits of heaven. Affliction, endurance, privation, and complaint—the sharpness of the pain, and the violence of the storm, and the heft of the chain and of the darkness of night. Waiting until a divine hand shall be put forth to soothe the captive. A wife abused, persecuted and a perpetual exile from every earthly comfort—waiting, waiting until the Lord shall gather all his dear children in a heavenly home and no poor Vashiti will ever be thrust out from the palace gate of heaven. Jesus, in silence and answering not a word, drinking the gall, bearing the cross, in prospect of the rapturous consummation when.

Angels thronged his chariot wheel
And bore him to his throne.
Then swept their golden harps and sung
The glorious work is done.

A woman, does not this story of Vashiti the veiled, the silent, move your soul? My sermon converges into the one absorbing hope that none of you may be snatched out of the palace gate of heaven. You can endure the hardships and the privations and the crutches and the misfortunes of this life, if you can go through the everlasting covenant, you go through these gates or never get at all. God forbid that you should at last be snatched from the society of angels and banished from the earth.

As long as it remains true that as a man sov, so shall he reap; it behoves him to get all foul weed seed out of his seed grain. Some practice "swimming" it out, but the heaviest seeds

merely wasted. It is much the same with the dairy. There is no large margin of profit in making butter and cheese at present prices, and the question how to dispose of the by products left after these are made usually decides whether the result shall be on the loss or on the profit side. Making curd cheese without rennet from the skin milk is a profitable way to use it. Almost every city or village would dispose of a large quantity every day if it were placed on market. Besides this, feeding skim milk to fowls, to pigs and to the cows are good ways to dispose of it. Which will be most profitable must depend on circumstances.

Removing Foul Seeds from Grain.

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