

## THE EAR AND THE HUSK.

Rev. T. DeWitt Talmage Finds a New Parallel.

The Body and Soul of Man Typified by the Ear of Corn in the Husk—Is the Ear Husk for the Master?

The following discourse was delivered by Rev. T. DeWitt Talmage in the Brooklyn tabernacle from the text: "As a shock of corn cometh in his season." Job v. 28.

This is the time of the year for husking corn. If you have recently been in the fields of Pennsylvania, or New Jersey, or New York, or New England, or in any of the country districts, you know that the corn is all cut. The sharp knife stuck through the stalks and left them all along the fields until a man came with a bundle of straw and twisted a few of these wisps of straw into a band, and then, gathering up as much of the corn as he could compass with his arms, he bound it with this wisp of straw, and then stood it in the field in what is called a shock. There are now at least two billion bushels of corn either standing in the shock or having been already husked. The farmers gather, one day on one farm, and they put on their rough husking apron, and they take the husking peg, which is a piece of iron with a leather loop fastened to the hand, and with it un-sheathe the corn from the husk and toss it into golden heap. Then the wagons come along and take it to the corn-crib.

About corn as an important cereal or corn as a metaphor the Bible is constantly speaking. You know about the people in Egypt coming to buy corn of Joseph, and the foxes on fire running into the "standing corn," and about the oxen treading out the corn, and about the seven thin ears of corn that in Pharaoh's dream devoured the seven good ears, and the "parched corn" handed to beautiful Ruth by the harvesters of Bethlehem, and Abigail's five measures of "parched corn" with which she hoped to appease the enemies of her drunken husband, and David's description of the valleys "covered over with corn," and "the handful of corn in the earth," and "the full corn in the ear," and Christ's Sabbath morning walk through corn fields, and the disciples "plucking ears of corn," and so I am not surprised to find corn-husking time referred to in my text: "As a shock of corn cometh in his season."

How vividly to all those of us who were born in the country comes the remembrance of husking time. We waited for it as for a gala day of the year. It was called a frolic. The trees for the most part having shed their foliage, the farmers waded through the fallen leaves and came through the keen morning air to the gleeful company. The frosts which had silvered everything during the night began to melt off the top of the corn-shocks. While the farmers were waiting for others, they stood blowing their breath through their fingers, or thrasing their arms around their body to keep up warmth of circulation. Roaring mirth greeted the late farmer as he crawled over the fence. Joke and repartee and rustic salutation abounded. All ready, now! The men take hold of the shock of corn and hurl it prostrate, while the moles and mice which have secreted themselves there for warmth, attempt to escape. The wither of straw is unwound from the corn-shock, and the stalks, heavy with the wealth of grain, are rolled into two bundles, between which the husker sits down. The husking-peg is thrust in until it strikes the corn, and then the fingers rip off the sheathing of the ear, and there is a crack as the root of the corn is snapped off from the husk, and the grain disengaged is hurled up into the sunlight. The air is so tonic, the work is so very exhilarating, the company is so blithe, that some laugh, and some shout, and some sing, and some banter, and some tease a neighbor for a romantic ride along the edge of the woods in an eventide, in a carriage that holds but two, and some prophesy as to the number of bushels to the field, and others go into competition as to which shall rifle the most corn-shocks before sun-down. After a while the dinner-horn sounds from the farmhouse, and the table is surrounded by a group of jolly and hungry men. From all the pantries and cellars and the perches of fowl on the place the richest dainties come, and there is a carnival and neighborhood reunion, and a scene which fills our memory, part with smiles, but more with tears, as we remember that the farm belongs now to other owners, and other hands gather in the fields, and many of those who mingled in that merry husking scene have themselves been reaped, "like a shock of corn cometh in his season."

There is a difference of opinion as to whether the Orientals knew anything about the corn as it now stands in our fields; but recent discoveries have found out that the Hebrews knew all about Indian maize, for there have been grains of corn picked up of ancient crypts and exhumed from hiding places where they were put down many centuries ago, and they have been planted in our time and have come up just such Indian maize as we raise in New York and Ohio; so I am right when I say that my text may refer to a shock of corn just as you and I bound it, just as you and I threw it, just as you and I husked it. There may come some practical and useful and comforting lessons to all of our souls while we think of coming in at last "like a shock of corn coming in his season."

It is high time that the king of terrors were thrown out of the Christian vocabulary. A vast multitude of people talk of death as though it were the master of disasters, instead of being to a good man the blessing of blessing. It is moving out of a cold vestible into a warm temple. It is migrating into groves of solitude and perpetual fruitage. It is a change from bleak March to rosy June. It is a change of man-

acles for garlands. It is the transmuting of the iron handcuffs of earthly incarceration into the diamonded wrists of a bridal party, or, to use the suggestion of my text, it is only husking time. It is the tearing off of the rough sheath of the body that the bright and the beautiful soul may go free. Coming in "like a shock of corn cometh in his season." Christ broke up a funeral procession at the gate of Nain by making a resurrection day for a young man and his mother. And I would that I could break up your sadness and halt the long funeral procession of the world's grief by some cheering and cheerful and view of the last transition.

We all know that husking time is a time of frost. Frost on the fence. Frost on the stubble. Frost on the ground. First on the bare branches of the trees. Frost in the air. Frost on the hands of the huskers. You remember we used to hide between the corn stalks so as to keep off the wind, but you remember how shivering was the body and how painful was the cheek, and how benumbed were the hands. But after awhile the sun was high up and the frosts went out of the air, and hilarities awakened the echoes, and joy from one corn shock went up "Aha, aha!" and was answered by joy from another corn shock, "Aha, aha!" So we all realize that the death of our friend is the nipping of many expectations, the freezing, the chilling, the frost of many of our hopes. It is far from being a south wind. It comes out of the frigid north, and when they go away from us we stand benumbed in body and benumbed in mind and benumbed in soul. We stand among our dead neighbors, our dead families, and we say: "Will we ever get over it?" Yes, we will get over it amid the shoutings of Heavenly reunion, and we will look back to all these distresses of bereavement only as the temporary distresses of husking time. "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." "Light, and but for a moment," said the apostle as he clasped his hands, "light, and but for a moment." The chill of the frosts followed by the gladness that cometh in "like a shock of corn cometh in his season."

Of course, the husking time made rough work with the ear of corn. The husking peg had to be thrust in, and the hard thumb of the husker had to come down with the swathing of the ear, and then there was a pull and there was a ruthless tearing, and then a complete snapping off before the corn was free, and if the husk could have spoken it would have said: "Why do you lacerate me? Why do you wrench me?" Ah, my friends, that is the way God has arranged that the ear and the husk shall part, and that is the way He has arranged that the body and soul shall separate. You can afford to have your physical distresses when you know that they are only forwarding the soul to liberation. Every rheumatic pain is only a plunge of the husking peg. Every neuralgic twinge is only a twist by the husker. There is gold in you that must come out. Some way the ship must be launched for heavenly voyage. You must let the heavenly Husbandman husk off the mortality from the immortality. There ought to be great consolation in this for all who have chronic ailments, since the Lord is gradually and more mildly taking away from you that which hinders your soul's liberation, doing gradually for you what for many of us in robust health perhaps He will do in one fell blow at the last. At the close of every illness, at the close of every paroxysm, you ought to say: "Thank God, that is all past now; thank God, I will never have to suffer that again. Thank God, I am so much nearer the hour of liberation. You will never suffer the same pain twice. You may have a new pain in an old place, but never the same pain twice. The pain does its work and then it dies. Just so many plunges of the crowbar to free the quarry stone for the building. Just so many strokes of the chisel to complete the statue. Just so many pangs to separate the soul from the body. You who have chronic ailments and disorders are only paying installments that which some of us will have to pay in one payment when we pay the debt of nature. Thank God, therefore, ye who have chronic disorders that you have so much less suffering at the last. Thank God that you will have so much less to feel in the way of pain at the hands of the heavenly Husbandman when the "shock of corn cometh in his season."

Perhaps now this may be an answer to a question which I asked one Sabbath morning, but did not answer: Why is it that so many really good people have so dreadfully to suffer? You often find a good man with enough pains and aches and distresses, you would think, to discipline a whole colony, while you will find a man who is perfectly useless going about with easy digestion and steady nerves and shining health, and his exit from the world is comparatively painless. How do you explain that? Well, I noticed in the husking time that the husking-peg was thrust into the corn, and then there must be a stout pull before the swathing was taken off the ear and the full, round, healthy, luxuriant corn was developed, while on the other hand, there was corn that hardly seemed worth husking. We threw that into a place all by itself, and we called it "nubbins." Some of it was mildewed, and some of it was mice-nibbled, and some of it was great promise and no fulfillment. All corn and no corn. Nubbins! After the good corn had been driven up to the barn we came around with the corn-basket and we picked up these nubbins. They were worth saving, but not worth much. So all around us there are people who amount to comparatively nothing. They develop into no kind of usefulness. They are nibbled on one side by the world, and nibbled on the other side by the devil, and mildewed all over. Great promise and no fulfillment. All corn and no corn. Nubbins! They are worth saving.

I suppose many of them will get to Heaven, but they are not worthy to be mentioned in the same day with those who went through great tribulations into the kingdom of our God. Who would not rather have the pains of this life, the misfortunes of this life—who would not rather be torn, and wounded, and lacerated, and wrench, and husked, and at last go in amid the very best grain of the granary, than to be pronounced not worth husking at all? Nubbins! In other words, I want to say to you people who have distress of body, and distress in business, and distress of all sorts, the Lord has not any grudge against you. It is not derogatory, it is complimentary. "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth," and it is proof positive that there is something valuable in you, or the Lord would not have husked you.

You remember also, that in the time of husking it was a neighborhood reunion. By the great fireplace in the winter, the fires roaring around the glorious back-logs on an old-fashioned hearth, of which the modern stoves and registers are only the degenerate descendants, the farmers used to gather and spend the evening, and there would be much sociality; but it was not anything like the joy of the husking time, for then the farmers came, and they came in the very best humor, and they came from beyond the meadow, and they came from beyond the brook, and they came from regions two and three miles around. Good spirits reigned supreme, and there were great handshakings, and there was carnival, and there was the recital of the brightest experiences in all their lives, and there was a neighborhood reunion the memory of which makes all the nerves of my body tremble with emotion as the strings of a harp when the fingers of the player have swept the chords. The husking time was the time of the neighborhood reunion, and so Heaven will be just that. There could come up! They slept in the old village churchyard. There they come up! They reclined amid the fountains and the sculpture and the parterres of a city cemetery. There they come up! They went down when the ship founded off Cape Hatteras. They come up from all sides—from Potter's field and out of the solid masonry of Westminster abbey. They come up! They come up! All the hindrances to their better nature husked off. All their spiritual despondencies husked off. All their hindrances to usefulness husked off. The grain, the golden grain, the God-fashioned grain, visible and conspicuous. Some of them on earth were such disagreeable Christians you could hardly stand it in their presence. Now in Heaven they are so radiant you hardly know them. The fact is all their imperfections have been husked off. They did not mean on earth to be disagreeable. They meant well enough, but they told you how sick you looked; and they told you how many hard things they heard about you; and they told you how often they had to stand up for you in some battles until you wished almost that they had been slain in some of the battles. Good, pious, consecrated, well-meaning disagreeables. Now, in Heaven all their offensiveness has been husked off. Each one is as happy as he can be. Everyone meets as happy as he can be. Heaven one great neighborhood reunion. All kings and queens, all songsters, all millionaires, all banqueters. God, the Father, with His children all around Him. No "good" in all the air. No gray cut in all the hills. River of crystal rolling over bed of pearl, under arch of chrysoprase into seas of glass mingled with fire. Stand at the gate of the granary and see the grain come in; out of the frosts into the sunshine, out of the darkness into the light, out of the tearing and the rippling and the twisting and the wrenching and lacerating and the husking time of earth into the wide open door of the King's granary, "like a shock of corn cometh in his season."

"But," says someone, "do you really think I would be at home in that spiritual society if I should reach it?" I think you would. I know you would. I remember that in the husking time there was great equality of feeling among the neighbors. There at one corn-shock a farmer would be at work who owned two hundred acres of ground. The man who he was talking with had to stand up for you in some battles until you wished almost that they had been slain in some of the battles. Good, pious, consecrated, well-meaning disagreeables. Now, in Heaven all their offensiveness has been husked off. Each one is as happy as he can be. Everyone meets as happy as he can be. Heaven one great neighborhood reunion. All kings and queens, all songsters, all millionaires, all banqueters. God, the Father, with His children all around Him. No "good" in all the air. No gray cut in all the hills. River of crystal rolling over bed of pearl, under arch of chrysoprase into seas of glass mingled with fire. Stand at the gate of the granary and see the grain come in; out of the frosts into the sunshine, out of the darkness into the light, out of the tearing and the rippling and the twisting and the wrenching and lacerating and the husking time of earth into the wide open door of the King's granary, "like a shock of corn cometh in his season."

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Following the defeat of the Government on a Proposition by M. Brison.

DETROIT, Mich., Nov. 29.—A Toledo (O.) dispatch says that the lumber firm of Bills & Koch has assigned its business to E. W. Loud, of Detroit, on a claim of \$34,000 for cash procured on accommodation paper. Other creditors have since filed claims swelling the total liabilities to \$150,000. Assets thus far are estimated at \$88,000.

The Ketcham national bank has a

claim of \$6,000. Mr. Bills, senior member of the firm, is also interested in a

bank and lumber business with his

brother-in-law, L. B. Church, at Alma and Ithaca, Mich., which is transacted under the name of Church, Bills & Co.

It is said that Mr. Bills has been unfortunate in wheat speculation. He has

drawn from the business of Bills & Koch within the last few days over

\$25,000 in cash.

TECUMSEH, Mich., Nov. 29.—The

bank of O. P. Bills & Co. at this place

closed its doors Monday morning. Mr.

Bills, the senior partner, is also interested in a

Toledo house, and has large

investments in shipping. Mr. Bills re-

fuses to make any statement other

than that the bank is all right.

FRENCH CABINET RESIGNS.

Following the Defeat of the Government on a Proposition by M. Brison.

PARIS, Nov. 29.—In the chamber of

deputies M. Brison, chairman of the

committee on the Panama investiga-

tion, demanded of the government that an autopsy be held on the body of the late Baron Reinach. M. Ricard, minister of justice, replied that the law did not permit it. A division was taken as to sus-

taining M. Ricard and the government

was defeated. The resignation of the

ministry was at once announced.

LONDON, Nov. 29.—Dispatches re-

ceived from Paris indicate that the mu-

nicipal crisis is not serious. It is

thought President Carnot will insist on

Premier Loubet's holding office. The

government, nevertheless, stands dis-

credited; and it will perhaps go out of

existence very soon—if, indeed, this set-

back does not end its existence. But if

it stand for the present it will at best

be merely a stop-gap.

## BURNED TO DEATH.

Several Fires in Which Lives Were Lost—Two Children Cremated in Chicago.

CHICAGO, Nov. 29.—Alice and Clifford Vessey, two children, the former 8 and the latter 6 years of age, were burned to death by a fire at 36 Edgewood avenue Monday. Their mother, who attempted to rescue them, was severely burned and James Heaney was badly injured by broken glass.

The home of the family is a story and a half-frame building, in the attic of which the two children were asleep. A lighted kerosene lamp was in the room and it is believed that this was overturned in some manner, setting fire to the house. The blaze was not discovered until it had gained great headway. In the excitement the children were forgotten until the other occupants of the house had reached the sidewalk.

Then the mother remembered them, and with the frantic cry: "My children are still in the house," rushed into the building only to be driven back by the flames which, by this time, were licking up the whole interior. Her hair caught fire and her face and neck were severely burned. The flames which enveloped the mother were quickly extinguished by the crowd which had gathered and she was taken to the house of a friend where her injuries could be dressed.

When the firemen reached the little attic-room where the children had been sleeping a horrible sight confronted them. On the floor near a burned table lay the charred fragments of the body of a child. When the firemen attempted to raise the little form it crumbled like charcoal. This body was that of Willie Vessey. It is supposed that the little fellow was awakened by the flames and tried to get out and met his death in the attempt. Amid the charred fragments of the bed lay the little girl, Alice Vessey. She, too, had been burned until she was wholly unrecognizable, and it was with the greatest difficulty that her remains could be gathered up.

MILWAUKEE, Nov. 29.—After setting fire to a carpet at his home, No. 114 Locust street, Monday morning Edward Seykora lay down in the flames and was burned to death. Seykora, who was 34 years of age, was alone in the house. Shortly after 9 o'clock neighbors discovered smoke issuing from the house. When the firemen reached there they found Seykora's dead body in the midst of the fire. The flames did little damage to the house, burning only the carpet and a hole in the floor. Seykora was an invalid and had been confined to the house for four years.

MIDDLETON, Conn., Nov. 29.—Three men and two women were burned to death here Saturday night in a tobacco barn owned by John Hubbard on the old fair grounds. The victims were umbrella menders. It is supposed they were drunk and set fire to a small amount of hay, the only contents of the barn. The barn was totally destroyed. The fire apparatus were unable to reach the structure, which was fully involved.

MILAN, Tenn., Nov. 29.—The residence of Samuel Yates near this city, was destroyed by fire. Yates perished in the flames. He was a miser and was reputed to have a large sum of money concealed in the house. The origin of the fire is unknown.

## HE SPECULATED IN WHEAT.

Collapses of a Toledo Firm—Michigan Bank Also Dragged Down.

DETROIT, Mich., Nov. 29.—A Toledo (O.) dispatch says that the lumber firm of Bills & Koch has assigned its business to E. W. Loud, of Detroit, on a claim of \$34,000 for cash procured on accommodation paper. Other creditors have since filed claims swelling the total liabilities to \$150,000. Assets thus far are estimated at \$88,000.