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A POET IN HIS DECLINE.

By EDWARD DUFFY.

In a large and luxuriously furnished apartment in a four story brown-stone house on State Street, in the city of Albany, and almost within a stone's throw of the great Capitol, sits, or walks, or reclines throughout the day a man of seventy years of age. With hair that is silvery white, a full beard that is gray-white, a form that is bent and emaciated, a step that is slow and tottering, and a cheek that is pallid and shrunken—his blue eyes yet full and lustrous alone indicate the strength and pride of other days. This man is John Godfrey Saxe, the poet.

It is only a few years since the verses of Saxe were eagerly accepted by the leading periodicals, and his services as a lecturer were everywhere popular. In his day he was a bright member of many a literary gathering, being known personally to all of the most prominent of contemporary poets and prose writers. He was the nation's wit and humorist, whose delicious rhymes brought to himself fame and a competence, and to many a household the cheerful smile or hearty laugh. Even across the sea he was known as "the Thomas Hood of America."

Yet alas! how intensely pathetic is the rounding out of this man's days! For some years he has been dead to all the world. Few people know that he is yet alive; few of his numerous former ardent admirers think of him now other than as one who has been, but who no longer moves among his kind. The


victim of a deep-seated, ever-present melancholy, his closing years are touchingly sad and uneventful, the never-ceasing care of the few relatives that are spared him even failing to rid him of the deep gloom in which unhappily his mind is now shrouded.

Up to the year 1875 John G. Saxe was a splendid and conspicuous specimen of virile manhood. He stood six feet two inches tall, proudly erect and muscular, with a large, round and finely poised head set upon broad and stalwart shoulders. The latest photograph of him, now possessed by his family, represents his face in profile—a broad, high, intellectual forehead, wavy brown hair in abundance, large, keen eyes set in deeply, and with strong and suggestive feature outlines set off by a mustache and "Burnside" whiskers. Less than a dozen years ago this picture was fully justified by its subject.

The beginning of the end was the poet's dreadful experience and remarkable escape from a revolting death in a Western railway disaster in the spring of 1875, while on his return to Brooklyn at the conclusion of a lecture tour in the South. The sleeping-car in which he had a berth was thrown down a steep embankment, and he was rescued therefrom by the merest chance. As he lay wedged in between the broken timbers, stunned and bruised, a fellow-passenger who had escaped bethought him of a sum of money which he had left behind him. On returning to the car,

DR. TALMAGE'S OUT-OF-TOWN SERMONS.

AUTHORIZED AND REVISED PUBLICATION OF THE SERMONS DELIVERED
BY REV. T. DE WITT TALMAGE, D.D., DURING HIS SUMMER
VACATION, JUNE—SEPTEMBER, 1886, AT VARIOUS
PARTS OF THE COUNTRY.

 *The reports of Dr. Talmage's sermons delivered during the past summer vacation, printed in the recent and current numbers of THE BROOKLYN MAGAZINE, are furnished for this publication under special arrangements with the Tabernacle pastor, and receive his personal authorization and revision in every instance.*

MEASURED BY YOUR OWN YARDSTICK.

DELIVERED ON BATTERY PARK GROUNDS, ASHEVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA, SUNDAY MORNING,
JULY 25, 1886.

TEXT: "With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again."—MATTHEW vii. 2.

In the greatest sermon ever preached—a sermon about fifteen minutes long, according to the ordinary rate of speech—a sermon on the Mount of Olives, the Preacher sitting while He spake, according to the ancient mode of oratory, the people were given to understand that the same yardstick that they employed upon others would be employed upon themselves. Measure others by a harsh rule and you will be measured by a harsh rule. Measure others by a charitable rule and you will be measured by a charitable rule. Give no mercy to others and no mercy will be given to you. "With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again."

There is a great deal of unfairness in the criticism of human conduct. It was to smite that unfairness that Christ uttered the words of the text, and my sermon will be a re-echo of the divine sentiments. In estimating the misbehavior of others we must take into consideration the pressure of circumstances. It is never right to do wrong, but there are degrees of culpability. When men misbehave or commit some atrocious wickedness we are disposed indiscriminately to tumble them all over the bank of condemnation. Suffer they ought

and suffer they must, but in difference of degree.

In the first place, in estimating the misdoing of others we must take into calculation the hereditary tendency. There is such a thing as good blood, and there is such a thing as bad blood. There are families that have had a moral twist in them for a hundred years back. They have not been careful to keep the family record in that regard. There have been escapades and maraudings and scoundrelisms and moral deficits all the way back, whether you call it kleptomania or pyromania or dipsomania, or whether it be in a milder form and amount to no mania at all. The strong probability is that the present criminal started life with nerve, muscle, and bone contaminated. As some start life with a natural tendency to nobility, and generosity, and kindness and truthfulness, there are others who start life with just the opposite tendency, and they are born liars, or born malcontents, or born outlaws, or born swindlers.

There is in England a school that is called the Princess Mary school. All the children in that school are the children of convicts. The school is supported by high patronage. I had the pleasure of being present at one of their anniversaries in 1879, presided over by the Earl of Kintore. By a wise law in England, after parents have committed a certain

To-day I invite you to a grander banquet than any I have mentioned. My Lord, the King, is the banqueter. Angels are the cup-bearers. All the redeemed are the guests. The halls of eternal love, frescoed with light, and paved with joy, and curtained with unfading beauty, are the banqueting place. The harmonies of eternity are the music. The chalices of heaven are the plate, and I am one of the servants coming out with both hands filled with invitations, scattering them everywhere; and of that, for yourselves, you might break the seal of the invitation and read the words written in red ink of blood by the trembling hand of a dying Christ, "Come now, for all things are ready."

After this day has rolled by and the night has come may you have rosy sleep, guarded by Him who never slumbers! May you awake in the morning strong and well! But, oh, art thou a despiser of God? Is the coming night the last night on earth? Shouldest thou be awakened in the night by something, thou knowest not what, and there be shadows floating in the room, and a handwriting on the wall, and you feel that your last hour is come, and there be a fainting at the heart, and a tremor in the limb, and a catching of the breath—then thy doom would be but an echo of the words of my text: "In that night was Belshazzar, the King of the Chaldeans, slain."

[On Sunday, August 15th, Dr. Talmage rested and did not preach.]

CHOOSING THE REAL GOD.

DELIVERED AT GRIMSBY, ONTARIO, CANADA, SUNDAY AFTERNOON, AUGUST 22, 1886.

TEXT: "Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me."—RUTH i. 16, 17.

Famine in Judah. Upon fields distinguished for fertility the blight came, and at the door of princely abodes. Want knocked. Turning his back upon his house and his lands, Elimelech took his wife Naomi and his two sons, and started for the land of Moab in search of bread. Getting into Moab, his two sons married idolaters—Ruth the name of one, Orpah the name of the other. Great calamities came upon that household. Elimelech died and his two sons, leaving Naomi, the wife, and the two daughters-in-law. Poor Naomi! in a strange land, and her husband and two sons dead. She must go back to Judah. She cannot stand it in a place where everything reminds her of her sorrow. Just as now, sometimes, you see persons moving from one house to another, or from one city to another, and you cannot understand it until you find out that it is because there were associations with a certain place that they could no longer bear. Naomi must start for the land of Judah; but how shall she get there? Between Moab and the place where she would

like to go there are deserts; there are wild beasts ranging the wilderness; there are savages going up and down, and there is the awful Dead Sea. Well, you say, she came over the road once, she can do so again. Ah! when she came over the road before she had the strong arms of her husband and her two sons to defend her; now they were all gone. The hour of parting had come, and Naomi must be separated from her two daughters-in-law, Ruth and Orpah. They were tenderly attached, these three mourners. They had bent over the same sick-bed; they had moved in the same funeral procession; they had wept over the same grave. There the three mourners stand talking. Naomi thinks of the time when she left Judah with a prince for her companion. Then they all think of the marriage festivals, when Naomi's two sons were united to these two women, who have now exchanged the wreath of the bride for the veil of the mourner. Naomi starts for the land of Judah, and Ruth and Orpah resolve to go a little way along with her. They have gone but a short distance when Naomi turns around and says to her daughters-in-law, "Go back. There may be days of brightness yet for you in your native land. I can't bear to take you away from your home and the homes of your kindred. I am old and troubled. Go not along with me. The Lord deal gently with you as ye have dealt with the dead and with me." But they persisted in going, and so the three travelled on

until after awhile Naomi turns around again and begs them to go back. Orpah takes the suggestion, and after a sad parting goes away ; but Ruth, grand and glorious Ruth, turns her back upon her home. She says, "I can't bear to let that old mother go alone. It is my duty to go with her." And throwing her arms around weeping Naomi, she pours out her soul in the tenderness, and pathos, and Christian eloquence of my text : "Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee : for whither thou goest, I will go ; and whither thou lodgest, I will lodge : thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God : where thou diest I will die, and there will I be buried : the Lord do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me."

Five choices Ruth made in that text, and five choices must we all make if we ever want to get to heaven.

In the first place, if we want to become Christians, we must, like Ruth in the text, choose the Christian's God. Beautiful Ruth looked up into the wrinkled face of Naomi and said, "Thy God shall be my God." You see it was a change of gods. Naomi's God was Jehovah ; Ruth's god was Chemosh, the divinity of the Moabites, whom she had worshipped under the symbol of a black star. Now she comes out from under that black-starred divinity, and takes the Lord in whom there is no darkness at all ; the silver-starred divinity to whom the meteor pointed down in Bethlehem ; the sunshiny God of whom the Psalmist wrote, "The Lord God is a sun." And so, my friends, if we want to become Christians we must change gods. This world is the Chemosh to most people. It is a black-starred god. It can heal no wounds. It can wipe away no sorrows. It can pay no debts. It can save no undying souls. It is a great cheat, so many thousand miles in diameter and so many thousand miles in circumference. If I should put this audience under oath, one half of them would swear that this world is a liar. It is a bank which makes large advertisement of what it has in the vaults and of the dividends that it declares, and tells us that if we want happiness, all we have got to do is to come to that bank and apply for it. In the hour of need we go to that bank to get happiness, and we find that the vaults are empty, and all reliabilities have absconded, and we are swindled out of everything. Oh thou black-starred Chemosh, how many are burning incense at thy shrine !

Now, Ruth turned away from this god Chemosh, and she took Naomi's God. Who was that ? The God that made the world and put

you in it. The God that fashioned the heavens, and filled it with blissful inhabitants. The God whose life-time study it has been to make you and all His creatures happy. The God who watched us in childhood, and led us through the gauntlet of infantile distresses—feeding us when we were hungry, pillowing us when we were somnolent, and sending His only Son to wash away our pollution with the tears and blood of His own eye and heart, and offering to be our everlasting rest, comfort, and ecstasy. A loving God. A sympathetic God. A great-hearted God. An all-encompassing God. A God who flings Himself on this world in a very abandonment of everlasting affection. The clouds, the veil of His face. The sea, the aquarium of His palace. The stars, the dew-drops on His lawn. The God of Hannah's prayer, and Esther's consecration, and Mary's broken heart, and Ruth's loving and bereft spirit. Oh, choose ye between Chemosh and Jehovah ! The one service is pain and disappointment ; the other service is brightness and life. I have tried both. I chose the service of God because I was ashamed to do otherwise. I felt it would be imbecile for me to choose Chemosh above Jehovah.

"O happy day that fixed my choice
On Thee, my Saviour and my God !
Well may this glowing heart rejoice,
And tell its raptures all abroad.

"O happy bond that seals my vow
To Him who merits all my love !
Let cheerful anthems fill His house,
While to His sacred throne I move.

"High Heaven, that heard the solemn vow,
That vow renewed shall daily hear ;
Till in life's latest hour I bow,
And bless in death a bond so dear."

Again, if we want to be Christians, like Ruth in the text, we must take the Christian's path. "Where thou goest, I will go," cried out the beautiful Moabites to Naomi, the mother-in-law. Dangerous promise that. There were deserts to be crossed. There were jackals that came down through the wilderness. There were bandits. There was the Dead Sea. Naomi says, "Ruth, you must go back. You are too delicate to take this journey. You will give out in the first five miles. You cannot go. You have not the physical stamina or the moral courage to go with me." Ruth responds, "Mother, I am going anyhow. If I stay in this land I will be overborne of the idolaters ; if I go along with you I shall serve God. Give me that bundle. Let me carry it. I am going with you, mother, anyhow."

And if we want to serve God we must do as Ruth did, crying out, "Where thou goest, I

will go." Never mind the Dead Sea. Afoot or horseback. If there be rivers to ford, we must ford them. If there be mountains to scale, we must scale them. If there be enemies to fight, we must fight them. It requires grit and pluck to get from Moab to Judah. Oh, how many Christians there are who can be diverted from the path by a quiver of the lip, indicative of scorn! They do not surrender to temptation, but they bend to it. And if in a company there be those who tell unclean stories, they will go so far as to tell something on the margin between the pure and the impure. And if there be those who swear in the room and use the rough word "damn," they will go so far as the word "darn," and look over the fence, wishing they could go farther; but as to any determination like Ruth's to go the whole road of all that is right, they have not the grace to do it. They have not in all their body as much courage as Ruth had in her little finger. Oh, my friends, let us start for heaven and go clear through! In the river that runs by the gate of the city we shall wash off all our bruises. When Dr. Chalmers printed his astronomical discourses they were read in the haylofts, in the fields, in the garrets, and in the palaces, because they advocated the idea that the stars were inhabited. Oh hearer! does not your soul thrill with the thought that there is another world beautifully inhabited? nay, more, that you, by the grace of God, may become one of its glorious citizens?

Again, I remark, if we want to become Christians, like Ruth in the text, we must choose the Christian's habitation. "Where thou lodgest will I lodge," cried Ruth to Naomi. She knew that wherever Naomi stopped, whether it were hovel or mansion, there would be a Christian home, and she wanted to be in it. What do I mean by a Christian home? I mean a home in which the Bible is the chief book, a home in which the family kneel in prayers, a home in which father and mother are practical Christians, a home in which on Sabbath, from sunrise to sunset, there is profitable converse and cheerful song and suggestions of a better world. Whether the wall be frescoed or not, or only a ceiling of unplanned rafters; whether marble lions are couchant at the front entrance or a plain latch is lifted by a tow-string, that home is the antechamber of heaven. A man never gets over having lived in such an early home. It holds you in an eternal grip. Though your parents may have been gone forty years, the tears of penitence and gladness that were wept at the family altar still glitter in your memory. Nay,

do you not now feel warm and hot on your hands the tears which that mother shed thirty years ago, when, one cold winter night, she came and wrapped you up in the bed and prayed for your welfare here and for your everlasting welfare before the throne?

Oh ye who are to set up your own home, see that it be a Christian home! Let Jesus make the wine at that wedding. A home without God is an awful place, there are so many perils to threaten it and God Himself is so bitterly against it; but "the Lord encampeth around about the habitation of the just." What a grand thing it is to have God stand guard at that door, and the Lord Jesus the family physician; and the wings of angels the canopy over the pillow; and the Lord of Glory a perpetual guest. You say it is important that the wife and the mother be a Christian. I say to you it is just as important that the husband and father be a Christian. Yet how many clever men there are who say, "My wife does all the religion of my house. I am a worldly man; but I have confidence in her, and I think she will bring the whole family up all right." It will not do, my brother. The fact that you are not a Christian has more influence on your family than the fact that your wife is a Christian. Your children will say, "Father's a very good man; he is not a Christian, and if he can risk the future, I can risk the future." Oh father and husband, join your wife on the road to heaven, and at night gather your family at the altar! Do you say, "I can't pray; I am a man of few words, and I don't think I could put half a dozen sentences together in such a prayer?" You can pray; you can. If your child were down with scarlet-fever, and the next hour were to decide its recovery or its death, you would pray in sobs, and groans, and paroxysms of earnestness. Yes, you can pray. When the eternal life of your household may depend upon your application, let your knees limber and go down; but if you still insist that you cannot compose a prayer, then buy or borrow a Prayer-Book of the Episcopal Church, and gather your family, and put your Prayer-Book on a chair, and kneel down before it, and in the solemn and hushed presence of God, gather up all your sorrows, and temptations, and sins, and cry out, "Good Lord, deliver us."

Again, I remark, if we want to become Christians, like Ruth in the text, we must choose Christian associations. "Thy people shall be my people," cried out Ruth to Naomi. "The folks you associate with, I want to associate with. They will come and see me,

and I will go and see them. I want to move in the highest of all circles, the circle of God's elect; and therefore, mother, I am going back with you to the land of Judah." Do you who are seeking after God—and I suppose there are many such in this presence—do you who are seeking after God prefer Christian society to worldly society? "No," you say; "I prefer the world's mirth, and the world's laughter, and the world's innuendo, and the world's paraphernalia." Well, this is a free country, and you shall have the right of choice; but let me tell you that the purest mirth, and the most untrammelled glee, and the greatest resilience of soul are inside Christian companionship, and not outside of it. I have tried both styles of companionship—the companionship of the world and the companionship of Christ; and I know by experience. I have been now so long in the sunshiny experience and society of Christian people, that when I am compelled to go for a little while amid intense worldly society I feel depressed. It is like going out of a June garden into an ice-house. Men never know fully how to laugh until they become Christians. The world's laughter has a jerk of dissatisfaction at the end; but when a man is consecrated to God, and he is all right for the world to come, then when he laughs, body, mind, and soul crackle. Let a group of ministers of the Gospel, gathered from all denominations of Christians, be together in a dining-hall, or in a social circle, and you know they are proverbially jocund. Oh, ye unconverted people, I know not how you can stand it down in that moping, bilious, saturnine, worldly association! Come up into the sunlight of Christian society—those people for whom all things are working right now, and will work right forever. I tell you that the sweetest japonicas grow in the Lord's garden; that the largest grapes are from the vineyards of Canaan; that the most sparkling floods break forth from the Rock of Ages. Do not too much pity this Ruth of my text, for she is going to become joint owner of the great harvest-fields of Boaz.

Once more: If we want to become Christians, we must, like Ruth in the text, choose the Christian's death and burial. She exclaimed, "Where thou diest will I die, and there will I be buried." I think we all, when leaving this world, would like to be surrounded by Christian influences. You would not like to have your dying pillow surrounded by caricaturists, and punsters, and wine-bibbers. How would you like to have John Leech come with his London pictorials, and Christopher North with his loose fun, and Tom Hood with

his rhyming jokes, when you are dying? No! No! No! Let me have a Christian nurse in my last sickness. Let me have a Christian physician to administer the medicines. Let it be a Christian wife, or parent, or child that watches the going out of the tides of my mortal existence. Let Christian men come in the room and read of the illuminated valley, and the extinguishment of grief, and drown the hoarse blasts of death with the strains of "Mount Pisgah" and "Saint Martin."

In our last moment we will all be children. Said Dr. Guthrie, the famous Scotch clergyman, "Sing me a bairn's hymn." Yes, we will all be children then. In that hour the world will stand confounded around us. Our friends may cry over us; tears will not help us. They may look sad; what we want is radiation in the last moment, thinking it will help them to die. In our last moment we want that bread which came down from heaven. Who will give it to us? Oh, we want Christian people in the room, so that if our hope begins to struggle they may say: "Courage, brother! all is well! Courage!" In that expiring moment I want to hear the old songs that we used to hear in church and prayer-meeting. In the last moment I want to hear the voice of some Christian friend pleading that the sins and shortcomings of my life may be forgiven, and the doors of heaven may be opened before my entranced spirit.

"Come, sing to me of heaven,
When I'm about to die;
Sing songs of holy ecstasy,
To waft my soul on high."

Yes; Christian people on either side the bed, and Christian people at the foot of the bed, and Christian people to close my eyes, and Christian people to carry me out, and Christian people to look after those whom I leave behind, and Christian people to remember me a little while after I am gone. "Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried."

Sometimes an epitaph covers up more than it expresses. Walking through Greenwood Cemetery, I have sometimes seen an inscription which impressed me how hard the sculptor and friends were trying to make out a good story in stone. I saw from the inscription that the man or woman buried had died without hope. The inscription told me the man was a member of Congress, or a bank president, or some prominent citizen, but said nothing about his soul's destiny. The body is nothing. The soul! The soul! And here by this inscription I see that this man was born in 1800 and died in 1875. Seventy-five years on earth, and no Christian hope! Oh, if in all the

cemeteries of your city the graves of those who have gone out of this world unprepared should sigh on the wind, who would have the nerve to drive through such a place? If all those who have gone out of this world unprepared could come back to-day and float through this air, telling the story of their discomfiture, this audience would fall flat on its face, asking to be rescued from the avalanche of horror.

My hearers, do you wonder that this Ruth of my text made the Christian's choice, and closed it with the ancient form of imprecation upon her own soul, if she ever forsook Naomi, "The Lord do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me"? They were to live together. Come the jackals, come the bandits, roll on thou Dead Sea! My hearers, would you not like to be with your Christian friends forever! Have there not

gone out persons from your household whom you would like to spend eternity with? They were mild, and loving, and gentle, and beautiful while here. You have no idea that the joys of heaven have made them worse. Choose their Christ, and you may have their heaven. They went in washed through the blood of the Lamb, and you must have the same glorious ablation. With holy violence I put my hands on you to-day, to push you on toward the immediate choice of this only Saviour. Have Him you must, or perish world without end. Elect this moment as the one of contrition and transport. Oh, give one intense, earnest, believing, loving gaze into the wounds opened for your eternal salvation!

Some of you I confront for the first and the last time until the judgment, and then we shall meet. Will you be ready?

A WEDDING IN A BALLOON.

One day, when I was living in Philadelphia, a celebrated balloonist was ushered into my study. He had just arrived from New York, with an invitation from one of my scientific friends, who wished me to come on to the Fifth Avenue Hotel, in the wicked city of New York (all Philadelphians think New York very wicked), and unite him in marriage with a most excellent lady of that city. The messenger said that after the marriage ceremony the wedding-party proposed to go up in a balloon from Central Park, the scientific friend before mentioned having made a costly piece of philosophical apparatus by which he expected to experiment on air currents as he ascended to the clouds.

The evening before the wedding I arrived at the Fifth Avenue Hotel, where effort was made to induce me to perform the ceremony in the balloon and up among the clouds. But I refused, saying that while I believed in the "higher law," I doubted the legality of a wedding performed so high up above the reach of municipal authority; besides that, my head is apt to get dizzy at a great height, and I might not be able to see straight enough to tie the knot; besides that, it is very risky for my church to have its pastor go so high up, lest, having got so finely started, he should not return, the memory of Elijah flashing across me; besides that, if I should slip and fall from a height of two or three miles, somebody standing underneath would be almost sure to get hurt. Of course I remembered the proverb that "matches are made in heaven," but I do

not believe it, for some of them are lucifer matches, and from the odor of brimstone I know they are made in the other place. Besides all these objections to performing the ceremony in the clouds, the reporters would get hold of it; and as it was a dull-time among them, I knew that what was left of me after the balloon peril they would finish.

Persisting in this idea, at two o'clock P.M., in the parlor of the Fifth Avenue Hotel, I united in wedlock as scientific a gentleman and as good a lady as the country holds. I was invited to go up to Central Park and see the wedding-party start on the balloon excursion. Having several hours before the rail-train started, I accepted the invitation. The newspapers had stated that I would perform the wedding as the balloon was being cut loose from the earth—the only time I ever knew the newspapers to be mistaken. The great natural amphitheatre in the park had been enclosed. At one dollar a head, the largest audience I ever saw were assembled on tip-toe of excitement. The housetops in proximity were covered with people anxious to see the bride and groom and minister and balloon. It was four o'clock when I arrived on the ground, unaccompanied; and arousing no suspicion as to who I was, I had an opportunity of gazing on the most amusing and side-splitting scene I ever witnessed.

The great balloon fastened to the earth swung and struggled and flopped, as much as to say, "Time to go; bring on your wedding-party." There were ten or fifteen re-