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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

was found with his hand lying on the open Bible. The summer insects had eaten the flesh from the hand, but the skeleton finger lay on these words: "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me, Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me." Yes, this book will become in your last days, when you turn away from all other books, a solace for your soul. Perhaps it will be your mother's Bible, perhaps the one given you on your wed-

ding day, its cover now worn out and its leaf faded with age; its bright promises will flash upon the opening gates of heaven.

"How precious is the Book divine,
By inspiration given;
Bright as a lamp its doctrines shine,
To guide our souls to heaven.

"This lamp, through all the tedious night
Of life, shall guide our way,
Till we behold the clearer light
Of an eternal day."

THE MIDNIGHT REVEL.

DELIVERED BEFORE AN OPEN-AIR MEETING, HELD AT MONONA, WISCONSIN, SUNDAY MORNING,
AUGUST 8, 1886.

TEXT: "In that night was Belshazzar, the King of the Chaldeans, slain."—DANIEL v. 30.

Feasting has been known in all ages. It was one of the most exciting times in English history when Queen Elizabeth visited Lord Leicester at Kenilworth Castle. The moment of her arrival was considered so important that all the clocks of the castle were stopped, so that the hands might point to that one moment as being the most significant of all. She was greeted to the gate with floating islands, and torches, and the thunder of cannon, and fireworks that set the night ablaze, and a great burst of music that lifted the whole scene into perfect enchantment. Then she was introduced in a dining-hall the luxuries of which astonished the world; four hundred servants waited upon the guests; the entertainment cost five thousand dollars each day. Lord Leicester made that great supper in Kenilworth Castle.

Cardinal Wolsey entertained the French ambassadors at Hampton Court. The best cooks in all the land prepared for the banquet; purveyors went out and travelled all the kingdom over to find spoils for the table. The time came. The guests were kept during the day hunting in the king's park, so that their appetites might be keen, and then in the evening, to the sound of the trumpeters, they were introduced into a hall hung with silk and cloth-of-gold, and there were tables aglitter with imperial plate, and laden with the rarest of meats, and ablush with the costliest of wines; and when the second course of the feast came it was found that the articles of food had been fashioned into the shape of men, birds, and beasts, and groups dancing, and jousting parties riding against each other with

lances. Lords and princes and ambassadors out of cups filled to the brim drank the health first to the King of England, and next to the King of France. Cardinal Wolsey prepared that great supper in Hampton Court.

But my text takes us to a more exciting banquet. Night was about to come down upon Babylon. The shadows of her two hundred and fifty towers began to lengthen. The Euphrates rolled on, touched by the fiery splendors of the setting sun; and gates of brass, burnished and glittering, opened and shut like doors of flame. The hanging gardens of Babylon, wet with heavy dew, began to pour from starlit flowers and dripping leaf a fragrance for many miles around. The streets and squares were lighted for dance, and frolic, and promenade. The theatres and galleries of art invited the wealth, and pomp, and grandeur of the city to rare entertainments. Scenes of riot and wassail were mingled in every street; and godless mirth and outrageous excess and splendid wickedness came to the King's palace to do their mightiest deeds of darkness.

A royal feast to-night at the King's palace! Rushing up to the gates are chariots upholstered with precious cloths from Dedan, and drawn by fire-eyed horses from Togarmah, that rear and neigh in the grasp of the chariot-eers; while a thousand lords dismount, and women dressed in all the splendor of Syrian emerald, and the color blending of agate, and the chasteness of coral, and the sombre glory of Tyrian purple, and princely embroideries brought from afar by camels across the desert and by ships of Tarshish across the sea. Open wide the gates and let the guests come in! The chamberlains and cup-bearers are all ready. Hark to the rustle of the silks and to the carol of the music! See the blaze of the

jewels! Lift the banners! Fill the cups! Clap the cymbals! Blow the trumpets! Let the night go by with songs, and dance, and ovation; and let that Babylonish tongue be palsied that will not say, "Oh, King Belshazzar, live forever!"

Ah, my friends! it was not any common banquet to which these great people came. All parts of the earth had sent their richest viands to that table. Brackets and chandeliers flashed their light upon tankards of burnished gold. Fruits, ripe and luscious, in baskets of silver entwined with leaves, plucked from royal conservatories. Vases inlaid with emerald and ridged with exquisite traceries, filled with nuts that were threshed from forests of distant lands. Wine brought from the royal vats, foaming in the decanter and bubbling in the chalices. Tufts of cassia and frankincense wafting their sweetness from wall and table. Gorgeous banners unfolding in the breeze that came through the opened window, bewitched with the perfume of hanging gardens. Fountains rising up from enclosures of ivory in jets of crystal, to fall in clattering rain of diamonds and pearls. Statues of mighty men looking down from niches in the wall upon crowns and shields brought from subdued empires. Idols of wonderful work standing on pedestals of precious stones. Embroideries stooping about the windows and wrapping pillars of cedar, and drifting on floor inlaid with ivory and agate. Music, mingling the thrum of harps, and the clash of cymbals, and the blast of trumpets in one wave of transport that went rippling along the wall and breathing among the garlands, and pouring down the corridors, and thrilling the souls of a thousand banqueters. The signal is given, and the lords and ladies, the mighty men and women of the land, come around the table. Pour out the wine! Let foam and bubble kiss the rim! Hoist every one his cup and drink to the sentiment: "Oh, King Belshazzar, live forever!" Be-starred headband and carcanet of royal beauty gleam to the uplifted chalices, as again and again and again they are emptied. Away with care from the palace! Tear royal dignity to tatters! Pour out more wine! Give us more light, wilder music, sweeter perfume! Lord shouts to lord, captain ogles to captain. Goblets clash, decanters rattle. There come in the obscene song, and the drunken hiccough, and the slaving lip, and the guffaw, of idiotic laughter, bursting from the lips of princes, flushed, reeling, bloodshot; while, mingling with it all, I hear, "Huzza, huzza, for great Belshazzar!"

What is that on the plastering of the wall?

Is it a spirit? Is it a phantom? Is it God? The music stops. The goblets fall from the nerveless grasp. There is a thrill. There is a start. There is a thousand-voiced shriek of horror. Let Daniel be brought in to read that writing. He comes in. He reads it: "Weighed in the balances and found wanting." Meanwhile the Assyrians, who for two years had been laying a siege to that city, took advantage of that carousal and came in. I hear the feet of the conquerors on the palace stairs. Massacre rushes in with a thousand gleaming knives. Death bursts upon the scene; and I shut the door of that banqueting hall, for I do not want to look. There is nothing there but torn banners, and broken wreaths, and the slush of upset tankards, and the blood of murdered women, and the kicked and tumbled carcass of a dead king. For "in that night was Belshazzar slain."

I learn from this that when God writes anything on the wall a man had better read it as it is. Daniel did not misinterpret or modify the handwriting on the wall. It is all foolishness to expect a minister of the Gospel to preach always things that the people like or the people choose. What shall I preach to you to-day? Shall I tell you of the dignity of human nature? Shall I tell you of the wonders that our race has accomplished? "Oh, no!" you say, "tell me the message that came from God." I will. If there is any handwriting on the wall it is this lesson: "Repent; accept of Christ and be saved." I might talk of a great many other things, but that is the message, and so I declare it. Jesus never flattered those to whom He preached. He said to those who did wrong and who were offensive in His sight, "Ye generation of vipers! ye whitened sepulchres! how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" Paul the Apostle preached before a man who was not ready to hear him preach. What subject did he take? Did he say, "Oh, you are a very good man, a very fine man, a very noble man"? No; he preached of righteousness to a man who was unrighteous; of temperance to a man who was the victim of bad appetites; of the judgment to come to a man who was unfit for it. So we must always declare the message that happens to come to us. Daniel must read it as it is. A minister preached before James I. of England, who was James VI. of Scotland. What subject did he take? The King was noted all over the world for being unsettled and wavering in his ideas. What did the minister preach about to this man who was James I. of England and James VI. of Scotland? He took for his text James 1:6: "He that

wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed." Hugh Latimer offended the King by a sermon he preached, and the King said, "Hugh Latimer, come and apologize." "I will," said Hugh Latimer. So the day was appointed, and the King's chapel was full of lords and dukes and the mighty men and women of the country, for Hugh Latimer was to apologize. He began his sermon by saying, "Hugh Latimer, bethink thee! Thou art in the presence of thine earthly king, who can destroy thy body. But bethink thee, Hugh Latimer, that thou art in the presence of the King of heaven and earth, who can destroy both body and soul in hell fire. Oh, King, cursed be thy crimes!"

Another lesson that comes to us is that there is a great difference between the opening of the banquet of sin and its close. Young man, if you had looked in upon the banquet in the first few hours you would have wished you had been invited there and could sit at the feast. "Oh, the grandeur of Belshazzar's feast!" you would have said; but you look in at the close of the banquet, and your blood curdles with horror. The King of Terrors has there a ghastlier banquet; human blood is the wine and dying groans are the music. Sin has made itself a king in the earth. It has crowned itself. It has spread a banquet. It invites all the world to come to it. It has hung in its banqueting-hall the spoils of all kingdoms and the banners of all nations. It has gathered from all music. It has strewn from its wealth the tables, and floors, and arches. And yet how often is that banquet broken up, and how horrible is its end! Ever and anon there is a handwriting on the wall. A king falls. A great culprit is arrested. The knees of wickedness knock together. God's judgment, like an armed host, breaks in upon the banquet, and "that night is Belshazzar, the King of the Chaldeans, slain."

Here is a young man who says, "I cannot see why they make such a fuss about the intoxicating cup. Why, it is exhilarating. It makes me feel well. I can talk better, think better, feel better. I cannot see why people have such a prejudice against it." A few years pass on, and he wakes up and finds himself in the clutches of an evil habit which he tries to break but cannot; and he cries out, "O Lord God, help me!" It seems as though God would not hear his prayer, and in an agony of body and soul he cries out, "It biteth like a serpent and it stingeth like an adder." How bright it was at the start! how black it was at the last!

Here is a man who begins to read French

novels. "They are so charming," he says; "I will go out and see for myself whether all these things are so." He opens the gate of a sinful life. He goes in. A sinful sprite meets him with her wand. She waves her wand, and it is all enchantment. Why, it seems as if the angels of God have poured out phials of perfume in the atmosphere. As he walks on he finds the hills becoming more radiant with foliage and the ravines more resonant with falling water. Oh, what a charming landscape he sees! But that sinful sprite with her wand meets him again; but now she reverses the wand, and all the enchantment is gone. The cup is full of poison. The fruit turns to ashes. All the leaves of the bower are forked-tongued hissing serpents. The flowing fountains fall back in a dead pool, stenchful with corruption. The luring songs become curses and screams of demoniac laughter. Lost spirits gather about him, and feel for his heart, and beckon him on with, "Hail, brother! Hail, blasted spirit, hail!" He tries to get out. He comes to the front door where he entered and tries to push it back, but the door turns against him; and in the jar of that shutting door he hears these words, "This night is Belshazzar, the King of the Chaldeans, slain." Sin may open bright as the morning; it closes dark as the night.

I learn further from this subject that Death sometimes breaks in upon a banquet. Why did he not go down to the prisons in Babylon? There were people there that would like to have died. I suppose there were men and women in torture in that city who would have welcomed death. But he comes to the palace; and just at the time when the mirth is dashing to the tip-top pitch Death breaks in at the banquet. We have often seen the same thing illustrated. Here is a young man just come from college. He is kind. He is loving. He is enthusiastic. He is eloquent. By one spring he may bound to heights toward which many men have been struggling for years. A profession opens before him. He is established in the law. His friends cheer him. Eminent men encourage him. After awhile you may see him standing in the American Senate or moving a popular assemblage by his eloquence as trees are moved in a whirlwind. Some night he retires early. A fever is on him. Delirium, like a reckless charioteer, seizes the reins of his intellect. Father and mother stand by and see the tides of life going out to the great ocean. The banquet is coming to an end. The lights of thought, and mirth, and eloquence are being extinguished. The garlands are snatched from

the brow. The vision is gone. Death at the banquet!

We saw the same thing on a larger scale illustrated at the last war in this country. Our whole nation had been sitting at a national banquet—North, South, East, and West. What grain was there but we grew it on our hills? What invention was there but our rivers must turn the new wheel and rattle the strange shuttle? What warm furs but our traders must bring them from the Arctic? What fish but our nets must sweep them for the markets? What music but it must sing in our halls? What eloquence but it must speak in our Senates? Ho! to the national banquet, reaching from mountain to mountain and from sea to sea. To prepare that banquet the sheepfolds and the aviaries of the country sent their best treasures. The orchards piled up on the table their sweetest fruits. The presses burst out with new wines. To sit at that table came the yeomanry of New Hampshire, and the lumbermen of Maine, and the tanned Carolinian from the rice-swamps, and the harvesters of Wisconsin, and the Western emigrant from the pines of Oregon, and we were all brothers—brothers at a banquet. Suddenly the feast ended. What meant those mounds thrown up at Chickahominy, Shiloh, Atlanta, Gettysburg, South Mountain? What meant those golden grain fields turned into a pasturing ground for cavalry horses? What meant the corn-fields gullied with the wheels of the heavy supply train? Why those rivers of tears, those lakes of blood? God was angry. Justice must come. A handwriting on the wall! The nation has been weighed and found wanting. Darkness! Darkness! Woe to the North! Woe to the South! Woe to the East! Woe to the West! Death at the banquet!

I have also to learn from the subject that the destruction of the vicious and of those who despise God will be very sudden. The wave of mirth had dashed to the highest point when that Assyrian army broke through. It was unexpected. Suddenly, almost always, comes the doom of those who despise God and defy the laws of men. How was it at the deluge? Do you suppose it came through a long northeast storm, so that people for days before were sure it was coming? No; I suppose the morning was bright; that calmness brooded on the waters; that beauty sat enthroned on the hills; when suddenly the heavens burst, and the mountains sank like anchors into the sea, that dashed clear over the Andes and the Himalayas. The Red Sea was divided. The Egyptians tried to cross

it. There could be no danger. The Israelites had just gone through; where they had gone, why not the Egyptians? Oh, it was such a beautiful walking-place! a pavement of tinged shells and pearls, and on either side two great walls of water, solid. There can be no danger. Forward, great host of the Egyptians! Clap the cymbals and blow the trumpets of victory! After them! We will catch them yet, and they shall be destroyed. But the walls of solidified water begin to tremble. They rock. They fall. The rushing waters! The shriek of drowning men! The swimming of the war horses in vain for the shore! The strewing of the great host on the bottom of the sea, or pitched by the angry wave on the beach—a battered, bruised, and loathsome wreck! Suddenly destruction came. One half hour before they could not have believed it. Destroyed and without remedy.

I am just setting forth a fact which you have noticed as well as I. Ananias comes to the apostle. The apostle says, "Did you sell the land for so much?" He says, "Yes." It was a lie. Dead! As quick as that! Sapphira, his wife, comes in. "Did you sell the land for so much?" "Yes." It was a lie, and quick as that she was dead! God's judgments are upon those who despise and defy Him. They come suddenly.

The destroying angel went through Egypt. Do you suppose that any of the people knew that He was coming? Did they hear the flap of His great wing? No! No! Suddenly, unexpectedly, He came.

Skilled sportsmen do not like to shoot a bird standing on a sprig near by. If they are skilled they pride themselves on taking it on the wing, and they wait till it starts. Death is an old sportsman, and he loves to take men flying under the very sun. He loves to take them on the wing.

Are there any here who are unprepared for the eternal world? Are there any here who have been living without God and without hope? Let me say to you that you had better accept of the Lord Jesus Christ, lest suddenly your last chance be gone. The lungs will cease to breathe, the heart will stop. The time will come when you shall go no more to the office, or to the store, or to the shop. Nothing will be left but death, and judgment, and eternity. Oh, flee to God this hour! If there be one in this presence who has wandered far away from Christ, though he may not have heard the call of the Gospel for many a year, I invite him now to come and be saved. Flee from thy sin! Flee to the stronghold of the Gospel!

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