'TIS SWEET TO DREAM.

BY J. F. HOWARD.

'Tis sweet to dream of rest and sleep
When fever tires the brain,
'Tis sweet to dream of early days
That never come again.

'Tis sweet to think of spring's green leaves,
When nights are drear and wild,
'Tis sweet to think, when far away,
Of home and wife and child.

Dream on, oft-disappointed soul—
Dream on, dream on, dream on;
Reality can ne'er be thine—
Dream on, dream on, dream on.

No absent ones, no long-loved home
Have we—dream on, dream on;
Our mind must form its joys alone—
Dream on, dream on, dream on.

HAVANA, Ill.

AN OPTIMIST;

—OR—

Amzi Crow, Farm Hand and Philosopher.

BY JEANETTE L. GILDER.

CHAPTER I.

AMZI CROW was an optimist. There could be no doubt on the subject, yet I should not like to have told him so to his face, for I am afraid that, with his limited knowledge of what he described as "dixonary words," he would have thought that I was calling him hard names. Amzi was an old colored man who lived with his family in Rosetown and farmed "on sheers" for the Widow Hance, who owned a well-kept farm on the Recklesstown pike. Ever since she had been left a widow, Mrs. Hance had had a great deal of trouble with her farm. All the good farmers in her neighborhood had farms of their own which kept them busy, so she could get none of them to help her. When she put on her best silk gown and got her last year's bonnet out of its box in the big mahogany wardrobe in the "spare-room," and went to Philadelphia in quest of "help," she always came home completely discouraged. The advertisements that took her to Philadelphia were the most alluring that could be imagined, but when she saw the "competent farmer" who could take "entire charge," she usually found him to be an incompetent person who could not be trusted to do more than drive the cows home or scare the crows from the field.

Her success nearer home was little better. She hired a man and his wife from Recklesstown, and found some comfort in the arrangement, for the wife was an excellent cook and laundress. The husband, however, as the husbands of so many hard-working women are, was lazy, and never did anything that he could shirk; still he was a man in the house, and that was something. Mrs. Hance was a pretty good overseer, and she got along fairly well while this arrangement lasted, but that was not for very long.

One stormy winter evening she was sitting alone in her little front parlor listening to the pattering of the rain on the tin roof of the lean-to across the hall, when she heard a stumbling step on the piazza, and then a thud as though some heavy body had been thrown against the front door. The cat that shared the genial warmth of the fire with its mistress sprang into the corner and arched its back to the limit of its skin, while Mrs. Hance dropped her knitting and stood as if rooted to the spot. She was entirely alone in the house, Martha having been called away by the illness of a daughter, and Daniel having gone into Recklesstown to make some purchase, the next day being Sunday.

Mrs. Hance was not as great a coward as some women, nor was she as brave as others, and she told me, in narrating the incident, that it was several minutes before she could make up her mind to go to the door. Even then she had not the courage to open it, but called out in her most impressing voice, "Who's there?" There was a sound of something heavy rolling about; she repeated her exclamation, and then a thick, uncertain voice replied:

"It's Dan'l—your protector."

At first she was inclined to leave him outside in the storm, but her humanity got the better of her judgment, and she opened the door, whereupon her "protector" rolled in upon the mat—the most thoroughly intoxicated man that Mrs. Hance, with her limited experience, had ever seen. It took no little ingenuity and strength to get him in to the lean-to, where she locked him up as securely as the primitive fastenings permitted. Then, trembling in every limb, exhausted and thoroughly alarmed, for she did not know what a man in his condition might be capable of doing, she locked herself in the parlor and sat there throughout the longest night of her experience.

With the first breaking of dawn, she stepped out into the hall where she was greeted by the deep, heavy breathing of the intoxicated man in the lean-to. Putting on her sun-bonnet she went out over the wet grass to the barn, and there hitching old Kitty to the farm wagon, she drove to Recklesstown for the constable. That functionary returned with her, much against his will, and with the assistance of another man got Dan'l into a car; and drove him to the Town House,

"IT'S DAN'L, YOUR PROTECTOR."

leaving Mrs. Hance for the time being without a protector.

It was about a week after this episode that she heard of Amzi Crow. "He is the salt of the earth," said Dr. Bloodgood, who recommended him to her, "and he has the great merit of always seeing the bright side of things." Mrs. Hance had about made up her mind that she would never have another colored "protector," but what she heard of Amzi was so attractive that she determined to send for him and see how he impressed her.

He came up to the farm one evening as soon as he had "tidied" himself up a bit after a hard day's work. He had on white trousers that were very tight about the thighs and very loose about the ankles. They did not reach the tops of his calf-skin shoes by several inches, and, as socks were a luxury he did not indulge in in summer, there was a good deal of brown skin exposed to view as he

"THANK'EE, MA'AM."

walked. His coat might have been almost any color originally, but it had faded to an olive green. On his head was a well-worn derby of a low-crowned, wide-rimmed pattern which had once been the mode. It was battered and greasy beyond description, but, almost defaced by contact with Amzi's wool, the name of a fashionable New York hatter could be made out in the crown. Perhaps it was because some one had told him that this maker's name was a good one, or because the hat had been given him by Dr. Bloodgood's brother-in-law, a New York man, that Amzi was so much attached to it. When he came into Mrs. Hance's kitchen he removed this hat carefully from his head, and held it tenderly in his hands while he talked with her.

She was favorably impressed by him at once, for though he could hardly have been called a handsome man, even of his race, he had an honest, open countenance, particularly about the mouth. His nose was the broadest of its kind—a discouraging nose for the influenza, I should say, but admirably adapted for scenting new-mown hay, or any strong odors about the house. Not a particularly keen nose, but a homely, useful nose, that made up in breadth what it lacked in prominence. His eyes were not large, and their whites had that peculiar reddish yellow color noticeable in the eyes of negroes; but their expression was benevolent. Amzi's figure betokened strength rather than elegance. He was tall and brawny, and his arms were unusually long. Ordinarily as gentle as a child, I should think that if unjustly attacked those long arms and sinewy hands of his would be as deadly as a gorilla's. There was a great deal of gray in his hair and in his scraggy beard. One's belief in the Darwinian theory was strengthened by his appearance, and I cannot say that his intellectual development altogether contradicted it. But he was a good man, and did his duty according to his light.

"Well, Amzi," said Mrs. Hance, "I hear good accounts of you from Dr. Bloodgood."

"Thank'ee ma'am," replied the negro, twisting his hat. "Dr. Bloodgood hes a good word to say fer every one. He don't 'spise a man 'cause he's pore, no, he don't—he don't 'spise a man 'cause he's pore, Dr. Bloodgood don't—that's so, he don't."

How long Amzi would have gone on with his reflections there is no telling. It was a trick of his to slowly ring the changes on his last words, but Mrs. Hance, who always liked to get to the point without waste of time, began at once to explain what his duties would be if he came to her. He listened attentively, and then replied:

"I'd like to try, Mis' Hance. I'd rather have one steady job than half a dozen onsteady ones, I would; I don't like onsteady jobs, nohow; they're mighty uncertain, they are—that's so—mighty uncertain; but," he added, as though he hadn't been quite fair to them, "they're better than nothin'. Yes, an onsteady job is better than no job—that's so. I'd like to take your farm on sheers, Mis' Hance, 'cause it's a big farm, an' half a big farm is more'n half a little one, so it is."

"I shall want you to sleep at the house, Amzi," said Mrs. Hance. "How can you arrange that, and you a married man?"

"I can 'range that, Mis' Hance, easy 'nough. It won't take no 'rangin' this summer, no way, for Sally, that's my wife, is a confessed cook, she is, an' she cooks to Raspberry Park in the summer time. In the winter she spends most of her time visitin' her 'lations. Sally's got a power o' 'lations. I never seen one woman with so many—all her own, too—none o' mine. She's a wonderful woman for nussin'. They all want her when they're sick, an' bein' there's so many there's almost always one of 'em got suthin' the matter, but Sally kin pull 'em through. She saved my life last summer was a year—her an' Dr. Bloodgood; I was awful low—abscesses on me intrills—but Sally's nussin' and Dr. Bloodgood's doctorin' pulled me through."

So it was agreed that Amzi should take the farm on shares. "Never in my life," said Mrs. Hance, "did I have such comfort. Nothing went wrong, or rather nothing stayed wrong. If the pump-handle broke, Amzi patched it up and said he thought it worked better than before. If the rain poured down on the hay, he turned it over and over when the sun came out, remarking cheerily that the rain 'kinder freshened it up.'"

He never saw the dark side of things, but always tried to make the best of everything. He bore malice toward no man, or only one, who was a confirmed gossip, and did not hesitate to lie about his neighbors when he wanted to make a point. Amzi looked almost wicked when he spoke of this man.

"That Job Perkins," he said, "is bound to git his come-up-ins. I never knowed a man to lie like him without gittin cotched some way. He don't have no luck. Everythin' goes agin him. His hoss died last year just for nuthin but 'cause it was his'n. He said it had been pizened, but it hadn't. It was just his come-up-ins. Now he's got the chills, and his wife scrubbing the floor yesterday run a splinter two inches long under her thumb nail. She had it cut out by the Doctor, and now she has to have her thumb done up in a poultice and carry it roun' like it was a bady. It's all his come-up-ins—that's just what it is, nothin' else, that's so." And Amzi shook his head reflectively.

While Amzi was very communicative as far as his own affairs were concerned, he had an idea that he proved his loyalty to his employer by being close-mouthed in matters that pertained to her business. I met him one day as he was pitching hay in the meadow along the roadside, and for the sake of engaging him in conversation I inquired the price of hay. His voice had that peculiar up-and-down quality assumed on the negro minstrel stage, and I could never resist the temptation to draw him out.

Amzi stuck the prongs of his pitchfork in the ground, and pushing back his old straw hat (the derby was "dress-up" occasions), hesitated a moment, then slowly: "The price o' hay depends upon different things. Last year's hay is allus dearer'n this year's hay, and whatsumever last year's hay was, this year's hay'll be cheaper—that is, it would be cheaper only this year's hay is better'n last year's hay, so this year's hay will be dearer'n last year's hay."

"What was the price of last year's hay?" I asked.

He let go his hold on the pitchfork, and, bringing his brown forefinger down into the pink, seamed palm of his left hand, and wrinkling his forehead so that it looked like a brown piece of corduroy, he said, with a cunning gleam in his eye:

"Ontrusty men got hold o' last year's hay an' sol' it fo' the price o' this year's hay, that's good hay. Some men hain't got no princip'l, they hain't."

"But what did Mrs. Hance get for last year's hay?" I persisted.

Amzi's face brightened, for he saw a way out of the difficulty.

"What did Mis' Hance get fo' last year's hay?" said he. "Why, last year's hay was oats."

CHAPTER II.

The next farm to that of Mrs. Hance belonged to Squire Pusley, a widower, who was considered well off as farmers go. He was a mean sort of a man, but honest—a not unusual sort of combination—and he held a mortgage on Mrs. Hance's farm, for her husband lived better than farmers are apt to live, and it cost him a good deal to do it. Believing that he would be able to pay it back without difficulty, he borrowed money of Squire Pusley and gave him a mortgage on the farm. An attack of pneumonia carried him off in his early prime, so that he really left an inheritance of debt to his wife. She was a plucky woman and a good farmer, and, given time, Squire Pusley would be paid.

But the Squire was not anxious for his principal so long as his interest was paid regularly, for he enjoyed the privilege of calling for it himself. Mrs. Hance had never given the Squire much encouragement to call, so these semi-annual occasions were the only ones that found him in the little front parlor of the widow's farm house. He was the opposite of the late Mr. Hance in every way—in character as well as appearance—and he knew it, but as their farms adjoined each other, he thought it would be a good thing to marry the widow and throw them into one.

One pleasant evening early in the summer, when the honeysuckles that clustered at the front of the house were sending their sweetest perfume through the open window into the little parlor, Mrs. Hance saw Squire Pusley coming gayly up the path, as gayly, that is, as his age and labor-stiffened joints would allow. She noticed that he was in gala-day attire, and that there was actually a bit of lilac in his buttonhole. Nothing could be further apart than flowers and Squire Pusley, and Mrs. Hance said this to herself as she saw him approach. His were mean features, and his expression robbed them of none of their meanness.

"I knew this was collection day, Squire," said Mrs. Hance, ushering him into the parlor, "and I am ready for you. Here's your interest," and she drew an envelope with the money in it from her pocket and handed it to the caller. The Squire took it in his horny fingers and, opening the envelope, counted it carefully and then wrote a receipt and handed it to the widow, who stood waiting for him to take his leave. But he was in no hurry.

"Mis' Hance," said he, "it wa'n't only the interest money that brought me over here this evenin'. It was sumthin' else. Can't you guess what?" said he, trying to look sentimental, but succeeding so badly that Mrs. Hance exclaimed:

"Yes, I know. That meadow fence is down again, and my pigs have got into your clover. Amzi was too busy with the hay to do anything with the fence today, but he will put it up the first thing in the morning."

"No, Mis' Hance, 'twa'n't that that brought me this evenin'. I'm a plain-spoken man, Mis' Hance, an' I don't go round the long road when I can cut 'cross lots. You're a widder, an' I'm a widower, our lan's jine. Why shouldn't our han's jine?"

Squire Pusley had been preparing this speech for a long time, and he rattled it off very glibly. Mrs. Hance was not prepared, however, and she stared in stolid amazement at the old man. At last she said:

"I think there must be some mistake, Squire Pusley; I do not understand you."

"My meanin's plain enough," said the Squire, rather tartly, for her manner was not encouraging. "Will you marry me? That's the plain English of it."

"To be equally plain, Squire Pusley, I

"WILL YOU MARRY ME? THAT'S THE PLAIN ENGLISH OF IT."

will not, and I am surprised that you dare ask me such a question."

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

PLAGUES OF THE CITIES.

STRONG DISCOURSE PREACHED BY REV. TALMAGE.

Baleful Amusements the Subject—A Great Concourse Present—The Speaker Specifies Amusements That Are Harmful and Those That Are Not.

The series of sermons Dr. Talmage is preaching on "The Plagues of the Cities" is attracting general attention. This sermon, which is the fourth of the series, is on "Baleful Amusements." The text was II. Samuel, ii, 14: "Let the young men now arise and play before us."

There are two armies encamped by the pool of Gibeon. The time hangs heavily on their hands. One army proposes a game of sword fencing. Nothing could be more healthful and innocent. The other army accepts the challenge. Twelve men against twelve men, the sport opens. But something went adversely. Perhaps one of the swordsmen got an unlucky clip, or in some way had his ire aroused, and that which opened in sportfulness ended in violence, each one taking his contestant by the hair, and then with the sword thrusting him in the side, so that that which opened in innocent fun ended in the massacre of all the twenty-four sportmen. Was there ever a better illustration of what was true then, and is true now, that that which is innocent may be made destructive?

What of a worldly nature is more important and strengthening and innocent than amusement, and yet what has counted more victims? I have no sympathy with a straitjacket religion. This is a very bright world to me, and I propose to do all I can to make it bright for others.

I never could keep step to a dead march. A book years ago issued says that a Christian man has a right to some amusements. For instance, if he comes home at night weary from his work, and feeling in need of recreation, puts on his slippers, and goes into his garret and walks lively round the floor several times there can be no harm in it. I believe the church of God has made a tremendous mistake in trying to suppress the sportfulness of youth and drive out from men their love of amusement. If God ever implanted anything in us he implanted this desire.

But instead of providing for this demand of our nature, the church of God has, for the main part, ignored it. As in a riot, the mayor plants a battery at the end of the street, and has it fired off so that everything is cut down that happened to stand in the range, the good as well as the bad, so there are men in the church who plant their batteries of condemnation and fire away indiscriminately. Everything is condemned. But my Bible commends those who use the world without abusing it, and in the natural world God has done everything to please and amuse us. In poetic figure we sometimes speak of natural objects as being in pain, but it is mere fancy. Poets say the clouds weep, but they never yet shed a tear; and the winds sigh, but ther never did have any trouble; and that the storm howls, but it never lost its temper. The world is a rose and the universe a garland.

And I am glad to know that in all our cities there are plenty of places where we may find elevated, moral entertaiment. But all honest men and good women will agree with me in the statement that one of the worst plagues of these cities is corrupt amusement. Multitudes have gone down under the blasting influence never to rise. If we may judge of what is going on in many of the places of amusement by the Sodomic picture on board fences and in many of the show windows there is not a much lower depth of profligacy to reach. At Naples, Italy, they keep such pictures locked up from indiscriminate inspection. Those pictures were exhumed from Pompeii and are not fit for public gaze. If the effrontery of bad places of amusement in hanging out improper advertisements of what they are doing night by night grows worse in the same proportion, in fifty years New York and Brooklyn will beat not only Pompeii, but Sodom.

To help stay the plague now raging I project certain principles by which you may judge in regard to any amusement or recreation, finding out for yourself whether it is right or whether it is wrong.

I remark in the first place that you can judge of the moral character of any amusement by its healthful result or by its baleful reaction. There are people who seem made up of hard facts. They are a combination of multiplication tables and statistics. If you show them an exquisite picture they will begin to discuss the pigments involved in the coloring. If you show them a beautiful rose they will submit it to a botanical analysis, which is only the post-mortem examination of a flower. They have no rebound in their nature. They never do anything more than smile. There are no great tides of feeling surging up from the depths of their soul in billow after billow of reverberating laughter. They seem as if nature had built them by contract and made a bungling job of it.

But, blessed be God, there are people in the world who have bright faces, and whose life is a song, an anthem, a pæan of victory. Even their troubles are like the vines that crawl up the side of a great tower, on the top of which the sunlight sits, and the soft airs of summer hold perpetual carnival. They are the people you like to have come to your house; they are the people I like to have come to my house. If you but touch the hem of their garments you are healed.

Now it is these exhilerant and sympathetic and warm hearted people that are most tempted to pernicious amusements. In proportion as a ship is swift it wants a strong helmsman; in proportion as a horse is gay it wants a stout driver; and these people of exuberant nature will do well to look at the reaction of all their amusements. If an amusement sends you home at night nervous so that you cannot sleep, and you rise up in the morning, not because you are slept out but because your duties drag you from your slumber, you have been where you ought not to have been. There are amusements that send a man next day to his work bloodshot, yawning, stupid, nauseated; and they are wrong kinds of amusement. They are entertainments that give a man disgust with the drudgery of life, with tools beacause they are not swords, with working aprons because they are not robes, with cattle because they are not infuriated bulls of the arena.

If any amusement sends you home longing for a life of romance and thrilling adventure, love that takes poison and shoots itself, moonlight adventures and hair-breadth escapes, you may depend upon it that you are the sacrificed victim of unsanctified pleasure. Our recreations are intended to build up, and if they pull us down as to our moral or as to our physical strength you may come to the conclusion that they are obnoxious.

There is nothing more depraving than attendance upon amusements that are full of innuendo and low suggestion. The young man enters. At first he sits far back, with his hat on and his coat collar up, fearful that somebody there may know him. Several nights pass on. He takes off his hat earlier and puts his coat collar down. The blush that first came into his cheek when anything indecent was enacted comes no more to his cheek. Farewell, young man! You probably started on the long road which ends in consummate destruction. The stars of hope will go out one by one, until you will be left in utter darkness. Hear you not the rush of the maelstrom, in whose outer circle your boat now dances, making merry with the whirling waters? But you are being drawn in, and the gentle motion will become terrific agitation. You cry for help. In vain! You pull at the oar to put back but the struggle will not avail! You will be tossed and dashed and shipwrecked and swallowed in the whirlpool that has already crushed in its wrath ten thousand hulks.

Young men who have just come from country residence to city residence will do well to be on their guard and let no one induce you to places of improper amusement. It is mightily alluring when a young man long a citizen, offers to show a new comer all around,

I saw a beautiful home, where the bell rang violently late at night. The son had been off in sinful indulgences. His comrades were bringing him home. They carried him to the door. They rang the bell at 1 o'clock in the morning. Father and mother came down. They were waiting for the wandering son, and then the comrades, as soon as the door was opened, threw the prodigal headlong into the doorway, crying: "There he is, drunk as a fool! Ha, ha!" When men go into amusements they cannot afford they first borrow what they cannot earn, and then they steal what they cannot borrow. First they go into embarrassment, and then into lying, and then into theft; and when a man gets as far on as that he does not stop short of the penitentiary. There is not a prison in the land where there are not victims of unsanctified amusements.

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

Passing along the street some night you hear a shriek in a grog shop, the rattle of the watchman's club, the rush of the police. What is the matter now? Oh, this reckless young man has been killed in a grog shop fight. Carry him home to his father's house. Parents will come down and wash his wounds and close his eyes in death. They forgive him all he ever did, although he cannot in his silence ask it. The prodigal has gone home at last. Mother will go to her little garden and get the sweetest flowers, and twist them into a chaplet for the silent heart of the wayward boy, and push back from the bloated brow the long locks that were once her pride. And the air will be rent with the agony. The great dramatist says, "How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is to have a thankless child."

I go further, and say those are unchristian amusements which become the chief business of a man's life. Life is an earnest thing. Whether we were born in a palace or hovel, whether we are affluent or pinched, we have to work. If you do not sweat with toil, you will sweat with disease. You have a soul that is to be transfigured amid the pomp of a judgment day; and after the sea has sung its last chant and the mountain shall have come down in an avalanche of a rock, you will live and think and act high on a throne where seraphs sing, or deep in a dungeon where demons howl. In a world where there is so much to do for yourselves, and so much to do for others, God pity that man who has nothing to do.

I go further, and say that all those amusements are wrong which lead into bad company. If you go to any place where you have to associate with the intemperate, with the unclean, with the abandoned, however well they may be dressed, in the name of God quit it. They will despoil your nature. They will undermine your moral character. They will drop you when you are destroyed. They will give not one cent to support your children when you are dead. They will weep not one tear at your burial. They will chuckle over your damnation.

I had a friend at the West—a rare friend. He was one of the first to welcome me to my new home. To fine personal appearance he added a generosity, frankness and ardor of nature that made me love him like a brother. But I saw evil people gathering around him. They came up from the saloons, from the gambling hells. They plied him with a thousand arts. They seized upon his social nature, and he could not stand the charm. They drove him on the rocks, like a ship full winged, shivering on the breakers. I used to admonish him. I would say, "Now I wish you would quit these bad habits and become a Christian." "Oh," he would reply, "I would like to, I would like to, but I have gone so far I don't think there is any way back." In his moments of repentance he would go home and take his little girl of 8 years, and embrace her convulsively, and cover her with adornments, and strew around her pictures and toys and everything that could make her happy; and then, as though hounded by an evil spirit, he would go out to the flaming cup and the house of shame, like a fool to the correction of the stocks.

I was summoned to his deathbed. I hastened. I entered the room. I found him, to my surprise, lying in full every-day dress on top of the couch. I put out my hand. He grasped it excitedly and said, "Sit down, Mr. Talmage, right there," I sat down. He said: "Last night I saw my mother, who has been dead for twenty years, and she sat just where you sit now. It was no dream. I was wide awake. There was no delusion in the matter. I saw her just as plainly as I see you. Wife, I wish you would take these strings off of me. There are strings all around my body. I wish you would take them off of me." I saw it was delirium.

"Oh," replied his wife, "my dear, there is nothing there, there is nothing there." He went on, and said; "Just where you sit, Mr. Talmage, my mother sat. She said to me, 'Henry, I do wish you would do better.' I got out of bed, put my arms around her, and said: 'Mother, I want to do better. I have been trying to do better. Won't you help me to do better? You used to help me.' No mistake about it, no delusion. I saw her—the cap, and the apron, and the spectacles, just as she used to look twenty years ago; but I do wish you would take these strings away. They annoy me so. I can hardly talk. Won't you take them away?" I knelt down and prayed, conscious of the fact that he did not realize what I was saying. I got up. I said, "Good-by; I hope you will be better soon." He said, "Good-by, good-by."

That night his soul went to the God who gave it. Arrangements were made for the obsequies. Some said, "Don't bring him in the church; he was too dissolute." "Oh," I said, "bring him. He was a good friend of mine while he was alive, and I shall stand by him now that he is dead. Bring him to the church."

As I sat in the pulpit and saw his body coming up through the aisle I felt as if I could weep tears of blood. I told the people that day: "This man had his virtues, and a good many of them. He had his faults, and a good many of them, but if there is any man in this audience who is without sin let him cast the first stone at this coffin lid." On one side the pulpit sat the little child, rosy, sweet-faced, as beautiful as any little child that sat at your table this morning, I warrant you. She looked up wistfully, not knowing the full sorrows of an orphan child. Oh, her countenance haunts me to-day like some sweet face looking upon us through a horrid dream. On the other side of the pulpit were the men who had destroyed him. There they sat, hard visaged, some of them pale from exhausting disease, some of them flushed until it seemed as if the fires of iniquity flamed through the cheeks and crackled the lips. They were the men who had done the work. They were the men who had bound him hand and foot. They had kindled the fires. They had poured the wormwood and gall into that orphan's cup. Did they weep? No. Did they sigh repentingly? No. Did they say, "What a pity that such a brave man should be slain?" No, no; not one bloated hand was lifted to wipe a tear from a bloated cheek. They sat and looked at the coffin like vultures gazing at the carcass of a lamb whose heart they had ripped out! I cried in their ears as plainly as I could, "There is a God and a judgment day!" Did they tremble? Oh, no, no! They went back from the house of God, and that night, though their victim lay in Oakwood cemetery, I was told that they blasphemed, and they drank, and they gambled, and there was not one less customer in all the houses of iniquity. This destroyed man was a Samson in physical strength, but Delilah sheared him, and the Philistines of his companionship dug his eyes out and threw him into the prison of evil habits. But in the hour of his death he rose up and took hold of the two pillard curses of God against drunkenness and uncleanness, and threw himself forward, until down upon him and his companions there came the thunders of an eternal catastrophe.

Again, any amusement that gives you a distaste for domestic life is bad. How many bright domestic circles have been broken up by sinful amusements! The father went off, the mother went off, the child went off. There are to-day the fragments before me of blasted households. Oh, if you have wandered away, I would like to charm you back by the sound of that one word, "home." Do you not know that you have but little more time to give to domestic welfare? Do you not see, father, that your children are soon to go out into the world, and all the influence for good you are to have over them you must have now? Death will break in on your conjugal relations, and alas! if you have to stand over the grave of one who perished from your neglect!

I saw a wayward husband standing at the deathbed of his Christian wife, and I saw her point to a ring on her finger and heard her say to her husband, "Do you see that ring?" He replied, "Yes, I see it." "Well," said she, "do you remember who put it there?" "Yes," said he, "I put it there," and all the past seemed to rush upon him. By the memory of that day when, in the presence of men and angels, you promised to be faithful in joy and sorrow, and in sickness and in health; by the memory of those pleasant hours when you sat together in your new home talking of a bright future; by the cradle and the joyful hour when one life was spared and another given; by that sick bed, when the little one lifted up the hands and called for help, and you knew he must die, and he put one arm around each of your necks and brought you very near together in that dying kiss; by the little grave in Greenwood that you never think of without a rush of tears; by the Bible, where, amidst stories of heavenly love, is the brief but expressive record of births and deaths; by the neglects of the past, and by the agonies of the future; by a judgment day, when husbands and wives, parents and children, in immortal groups, will stand to be caught up in shining array or to sink down into darkness; by all that, I beg you give to home your best affections.

Ah, my friends, there is an hour coming when our past life will probably pass before us in review. It will be our last hour. If from our death pillow we have to look back and see a life spent in sinful amusement there will be a dart that will strike through our soul sharper than the dagger with which Virginius slew his child. The memory of the past will make us quake like Macbeth. The iniquities and rioting through which we have passed will come upon us, weird and skeleton as Meg Merrilies. Death, the old Shylock, will demand and take the remaining pound of flesh, and the remaining drop of blood, and upon our last opportunity for repentance and our last chance for Heaven the curtain will forever drop.

"FOLLOW my baton and go with me," shouted the conductor. "Don't turn out on our account; we are only killing time." replied the chorus.—*Texas Siftings.*