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# STRAINING AT GNATS

INCONSISTENCY.

lakes Use of an Ancient Epigram to Illustrate the Folly of Mankind. camel. Prone to Magnify Small Things, Heedless of the Great.

WASHINGTON, July 16 .-- In this discourse, founded on an ancient epigram repeated by Christ, Dr. Talmage illustrates the folly of being very particular thout insignificant things while neglectful of vast concerns. The text is Matthew xxiii, 24, "Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat and swallow a camel." A proverb is compact wisdom, knowledge in chunks, a library in a sentence, the electricity of many clouds discharged n one bolt, a river put through a mill race. When Christ quotes the proverb of the text, he means to set forth the lulicrous behavior of those who make a great bluster about small sins and have no appreciation of great ones. In my text a small insect and a large quadruped are brought into comparison-a gnat and a camel. You have in museum or on the desert seen the latter, a great awkward, sprawling creature, with back two stories high and stomach having a collection of reservoirs for desert travel, an animal forbidden to the Jews as food and in many literatures entitled "the ship of the desert." The gnat spoken of in the text is in the grub form. It is born in pool or pond, after a few weeks becomes a chrysalis and then after a few days becomes the gnat as we recognize But the insect spoken of in the text

My text shows you the prince of inconsistencies. A man after long observation has formed the suspicion that in a cup of water he is about to drink, there is a grub or the grandparent of a gnat. He goes and gets a sieve or strainer. He takes the water and pours it through the sieve in the broad light. He says, "I would rather do anything almost than drink this water until this larva be extirpated." This water is brought under inquisition. The experiment is successful. The water rushes through the sieve and leaves against the side of the sieve the grub or gnat. Then the man carefully removes the insect and drinks the water in placidity. But going out one day, and ert," the camel, which the Jews were forbidden to eat. The gastronomer has no compunctions of conscience. He suffers from no indigestion. He puts the camel's back, and gives one swallow and the dromedary disappears forever. He strained out a gnat, he swallowed a

Christ Did Not Flatter. out a gnat and swallow a camel." about the conventionalities of religion, but put no particular stress upon matters of vast importance, are photographed in the text. Church services ought to be grave and solemn. There is no room for frivolity in religious convocation, but there are illustrations, and there are hyperboles like that of Christ in the text that will irradiate with smiles any intelligent audience. There are men like those blind guides of the text who advowhich draw the corners of the mouth which have a tendency to draw the corners of the mouth up, and these men will go to installations, and to presbyteries, and to conferences, and to associations, their pockets full of fine sieves to strain at home every Sunday there are 50 peochurches a great dormitory, and their

ices today is not too much vivacity, but

sleepy eyed camel of the dry desert. In all our Sabbath schools, in all our Bible classes, in all our pulpits, we need to brighten up our religious message with such ChristEke vivacity as we find in the I take down from my library the biographies of ministers and writers of the past ages, inspired and uninspired, who have done the most to bring souls to Jesus Christ, and I find that, without a single exception, they consecrated their wit and their humor to Christ. Elijah used it when he advised the Baalites, as they could not make their god respond, to call louder, as their god might be sound asleep or gone a-hunting. Job used it when he said to his self conceited comforters. "Wisdom will die with you." Christ not only used it in the text, but when he ironically complimented the corrupt Pharisee.

saying, "The whole need not a physician." and when, by one word, he described the cunning of Herod, saving, ry's commentaries from the first page to Humor In Religion. humor as they are of saving truth, and there is not an aged man here who has statements which seemed to imply he ever read "Pilgrim's Progress" who does not remember that while reading it he seer of the poor. Careful to pay their smiled as often as he wept. Chrysostom, passage from Liverpool to New York, yet George Herbert, Robert South, George smuggling in their Saratoga trunk ten Whitefield, Jeremy Taylor, Rowland Hill,

of Christ. So it has been in all the ages, lar gold piece in his hand to punctuate the statement dents, Sharpen your wits until they are as Described in the text are all those who keen as scimiters and then take them in- are particular never to break the law of to this holy war. It is a very short bridge grammar and who want all their language an elegant speciment of syntax, bridge from eye to lip, and it is soon straining out all the inaccuracies of crossed over, and a smile is sometimes speech with a fine sieve of literary critjust as sacred as a tear. There is as icism, while through their conversation much religion, and, I think, a little more go slander and innuendo and profanity in a spring morning than in a starless and falsehood larger than a whole caramidnight. Religious work without any van of camels, when they might better humor or wit in it is a banquet with a fracture every law of the language and shock their intellectual taste, and better side of beef, and that raw, and no condiments and no dessert succeeding. People let every verb seek in vain for its nomina-C. A. Gambrill Mfg. Co., Proprietors, will not sit down to such a banquet. By and every noun for its government, all means remove all frivolity and all and let every preposition lose its way in pathos and all lightness and yulgarity, the sentence, and adjectives and partici-

ples and pronouns get into a grand riot worthy of the Fourth ward of New York on election day, than to commit a moral inaccuracy. Better swallow a thousand gnats than one camel. Wasted Lives.

Such persons are also described in the and vehemently refuse to swallow that ext who are very much alarmed about he small faults of others and have no Oh, how particular a great many peo alarm about their own great transgresple are about the infinitesimals while There are in every community they are quite reckless about the magniand in every church watchdogs who fee tudes! What did Christ say? Did he called upon to keep their eyes on others not exceriate the people in his time who and growl. They are full of suspicions. were so careful to wash their hands be-They wonder if this man is not dishonest, ore a meal, but did not wash their if that man is not unclean, if there is nearts? It is a bad thing to have unnot something wrong about the other clean hands. It is a worse thing to have man. They are always the first to hear an unclean heart. How many people of anything wrong. Vultures are always there are in our time who are very anxthe first to smell carrion. They are self ous that after their death they shall be appointed detectives. I lay this down as buried with their faces toward the east rule without any exception, that those and not at all anxious that during their people who have the most faults themwhole life they should face in the right selves are most merciless in their watchdirection, so that they shall come up in ing of others. From scalp of head to he resurrection of the just, whichever sole of foot they are full of jealousies and way they are buried! How many there hypercriticisms. They spend their life in are chiefly anxious that a minister of hunting for muskrats and mud turtles the gospel shall come in the line of apos instead of hunting for Rocky mountain tolic succession, not earing so much eagles, always for something mean inwhether he comes from Apostle Paul or stead of something grand. They look at Apostle Judas! They have a way of their neighbors' imperfections through a measuring a gnat until it is larger than microscope and look at their own imperfections through a telescope upside down. Human Inconsistency. Twenty faults of their own do not hurt Again, my subject photographs all them so much as one fault of somebody those who are abhorrant of small sins else. Their neighbors' imperfections are while they are reckless in regard to mag-

like gnats, and they strain them out; nificent thefts. You will find many a their own imperfections are like camels, merchant who, while he is so careful that and they swallow them. he would not take a yard of cloth or a But lest too many might think the spool of cotton from the counter without scape the scrutiny of the text, I have to paying for it, and who, if a bank cashier tell you that we all come under the dishould make a mistake and send in vine satire when we make the questions roll of bills \$5 too much, would dispatch of time more prominent than the quesmessenger in hot haste to return the tions of eternity. Come now, let us all surplus, yet who will go into a stock comgo into the confessional. Are not all pany, in which after awhile he gets contempted to make the question, Where trol of the stock, and then waters the shall I live now? greater than the ques stock and makes \$100,000 appear like tion, Where shall I live forever? How \$200,000. He only stole \$100,000 by the shall I get more dollars here? greate operation. Many of the men of fortune than the question, How shall I lay up ade their wealth in that way. treasures in heaven? the question, Ho-One of those men engaged in such unshall I pay my debts to man? greater righteous acts that evening, the evening than the question, How shall I meet my of the very day when he watered the obligations to God? the question, How stock, will find a wharf rat stealing a shall I gain the world? greater than the daily paper from the basement doorway question, What if I lose my soul? the and will go out and catch the urchin by question, Why did God let sin come into the collar and twist the collar so tightly the world? greater than the question, the poor fellow has no power to say that How shall I get it extirpated from my it was thirst for knowledge that led him nature? the question, What shall I do with the 20 or 40 or 70 years of my subto the dishonest act, but grip the collar tighter and tighter, saying: "I have been lunar existence? greater than the queslooking for you a long while. You stole tion, What shall I do with the millions my paper four or five times, haven't you, of cycles of my post terrestrial existence? you miserable wretch?" And then the Time-how small it is! Eternity-how vast old stock gambler, with a voice they can it is! The former more insignificant in near three blocks, will cry out, "Police, comparison with the latter than a gnat police!" That same man the evening of is insignificant when compared with a the day in which he watered the stock camel. We dodged the text. We said will kneel with his family in prayers and "That does not mean me, and that does thank God for the prosperity of the day, not mean me," and with a ruinous be then kiss his children good night with an nevolence we are giving the whole serair which seems to say, "I hope you all

mon away. will grow up to be as good as your fa-But let us all surrender to the charge. ther." Prisons for sins insectile in size, What an ado about things here! What but palaces for crimes dromedarian. No poor preparation for a great eternity! As mercy for sins animalcule in proportion, though a minnow were larger than a bebut great leniency for mastodon iniquity. hemoth, as though a swallow took wider A poor boy slyly takes from the basket circuit than an albatross, as though a of a market woman a choke pear-saving nettle were taller than a Lebanon cedar, some one else from the cholera-and you as though a gnat were greater than a smother him in the horrible atmosphere camel, as though a minute were longer of Raymond Street jail or New York than a century, as though time were Tombs, while his cousin, who has been skillful enough to steal \$50,000 from the ity, you make a candidate for the state Gulping Down Camels.

higher, deeper, broader than eternity. So the text which flashed with lightning of rit as Christ uttered it is followed by the crashing thunders of awful catastrophe to those who make the questions of time greater than the questions of the

future, the oncoming, overshadowing fu-ture. Oh! Eternity! Eternity! Eter-ADVERSITY AS A TEACHER.

It Is Wrestling Against Opposition That Makes Giants of Men. "Culture and character come through suffering," writes Rev. Newell Dwight Hillis, D. D., on the "Pains That Polish Perfection," in The Ladies' Home Journal. "Life is God's university. Happiness is the graduating point, but trouble and adversity are among the chosen teachers. The world is built for joy, but man comes to his full estate through the tutelage of sorrow. If man washes his eyes in tears and makes his garments white with blood, he, too, is promised the throne and scepter of the higher man-

"Suffering is an alchemist refining coarseness and transmuting bad into good, selfishness into sympathy. Steel is iron plus fire. Tools are steel plus gashing axes. Statues are marble plus the chisel, whose every stroke makes sparks fly. Manhood is nature plus the temptations that chisel out character. Bronze doors of old cathedrals are all of beaten handiwork, and character is hammered out on the anvil of adversity. Wine comes through crushing of grapes, and joy is a fine spirit oft distilled from bruised affections. Sin and selfishness dig great furrows in the face, so suffering is sent in to iron the lines out smooth,

again. "From Paul to Livingstone what heroic eader hath worn soft raiment? What Luther or Lincoln was reared in kings' palaces? It is wrestling against opposing winds that works toughness into trees and gianthood into men. If the poet's vision is ever fulfilled and we judge nust first, as veterans of the old guard, achieve our scars and hold our tattered flags in fierce battles upon a far off fron-

"Optimists always, let us not 'make believe' and play there are no troubles One form of folly is always to drag the corpse into the banquet. Another is to try and triumph over tragedies by avert-

ing our eyes. He Promotes Matrimony. Fred Harvey, a remarkable man who has been running the eating stations on the Santa Fe railroad ever since it was built, is responsible for a great deal of the growth and a great deal of the happiness in this part of the country. He has done more than any immigration society to settle up the southwest and still continues to provide wives for ranchmen cowboys, railway hands and other honest pioneers. He employs female waiters in all his 18 or 20 eating houses between Kansas City and Los Angeles. He imports them from the eastern states and is always careful in his selections, both as to appearance and character. Many of hem come out for their health, but if they are ordinarily attractive they are certain to receive a proposal of marriage before they have been here three months. For that reason Mr. Harvey's supply of waiters has to be renewed at brief and regular intervals, and the successful results of his matrimonial bureau are

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titled, "Who Is Your Schoolmaster?" by "Edward Eggelson." "The Hoosier Schoolmaster" was promptly forwarded, and it proved to be the desired book. Another firm of booksellers received request for a book on "soshel etikette" that owuld "learn a lady how to behave in fashionable sowsiety."

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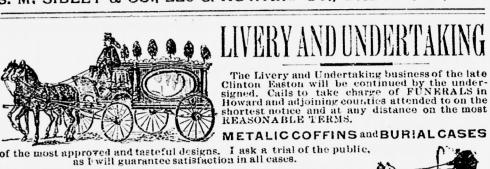
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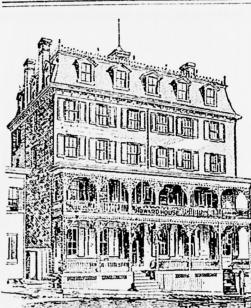
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12.25 P. M.—Accom. for Emory Grove.
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its back a hump of sanctimonious gloom,

[Copyright, Louis Klopsch, 1899.] a camel.

is in its very smallest shape, and it yet phabits the water, for my text is a misprint and ought to read "strain out a

hungry, he devours a "ship of the deslower jaw under the camel's forefoot, and his upper jaw over the hump of the

While Christ's audience was yet smiling at the appositeness and wit of his illustration-for smile they did, unless they were too stupid to understand the hyperbole—Christ practically said to them, "That is you." Punctilious about small things; reckless about affairs of great magnitude. No subject ever winced under a surgeon's knife more bitterly than did the Pharisees under Christ's scalpel of truth. As an anatomist will take a human body to pieces and put the pieces under a microscope for examina ion, so Christ finds his way to the heart of the dead Pharisee and cuts it out and puts it under the glass of inspection for all generations to examine. Those Pharisees thought that Christ would flatter them and compliment them, and how they must have writhed under the redhot words as he said, "Ye fools, ye whited sepulchers, ye blind guides, which strain There are in our day a great many gnats strained out and a great many camels swallowed, and it is the object of this sermon to sketch a few persons who are extensively engaged in that business. First, I remark that all those ministers of the gospel who are very scrupulous

cate only those things in religious service down and denounce all those things out the gnats, while in their own churches ple sound asleep. They make their somniferous sermons are a cradle and

the drawled out hymns a lullaby, while some wakeful soul in a pew, with her fan, keeps the flies off unconscious per sons approximate. Now, I say it worse to sleep in church than to smile in church, for the latter implies at least attention, while the former implies the indifference of the hearers and the stupid ity of the speaker. In old age, or from physical infirmity or from long watching with the sick, drowsiness will sometimes overpower one, but when a minister of the gospel looks off upon an audience and finds healthy and intelligent people struggling with drowsiness it is time for him to give out the doxology or pronounce the benediction. The great fault of church serv-

oo much somnolence. The one is an irritating gnat that may be easily strained out, the other is a great, sprawling and

"Go ye, and tell that fox." Matthew Henthe last corruscated with humor as summer clouds with heat lightning. John Bunyan's writings are as full of Ashael Nettleton, Charles G. Finney and all the men of the past who greatly advanced the kingdom of God consecrated their wit and their humor to the cause and I say to all our young theological stubetween a smile and a tear, a suspension

country, and their phraseology is very much the same, and the same men wrote them, methodically and infamously carrying out the huge lying about the grain crop from year to year and for a score of years. After awhile there will be a "corner" in the wheat market, and men who had a contempt for petty theft will burglarize the wheat bin of a nation and sommit larceny upon the American corncrib. And some of the men will sit in churches and in reformatory institutions trying to strain out the small gnats of scoundrelism while in their grain elevators and in their storehouses they are fattening huge camels which they expect after awhile to swallow. Society has to be entirely reconstructed on this subject We are to find that a sin is inexcusable in proportion as it is great. I know in our time the tendency is to charge re ligious frauds upon good men. They say, "Oh, what a host of frauds you have in the church of God in this day!" And when an elder of a church, or a deacon, or a minister of the gospel, or a superintendent of a Sabbath school turns out a defaulter, what display heads there are in many of the newspapers! Great primer type. Five line pica. "Another Saint Absconded," "Clerical Scoundrelism," "Religion at a Discount," "Shame on the Churches," while there are a thousand coundrels outside the church to one in side the church, and the misbehavior of

There is a good deal of uneasiness and

pervousness now among some people in

our time who have got unrighteous for-

tunes—a great deal of uneasiness about

dynamite. I tell them that God will put

under their unrighteous fortunes some

thing more explosive than dynamite-the

earthquake of his omnipotent indigna-

tion. It is time that we learn in America

that sin is not excusable in proportion as

it declares large dividends and has out-

riders in equipage. Many a man is riding

o perdition, postilion ahead and lackey

behind. To steal one copy of a newspa-

per is a gnat; to steal many thousands of

lealer who would not consent to steal a

basket of peaches from a neighbor's stall.

out who would not scruple to depress the

fruit market, and as long as I can re-

member we have heard every summer

the peach crop of Maryland is a failure,

and by the time the crop comes in the

misrepresentation makes a difference of

millions of dollars. A man who would

not steal one basket of peaches steals 50,-

Go down into the public library, in the

reading rooms, and see the newspaper re-

ports of the crops from all parts of the

000 baskets of peaches.

lollars is a camel. There is many a fruit

those who never see the inside of church is so great that it is enough to tempt a man to become a Christian to get out of their company. But in all circles, religious and irreligious, the tend ency is to excuse sin in proportion as i is mammoth. Even John Milton in his "Paradise Lost," while he condemns sa tan, gives such a grand description of him you have hard work to withhold your admirationn. Oh, this straining out of small sins like gnats and this gulping down great iniquities like camels! Don't Mind Small Things. This subject does not give the picture of one or two persons, but is a gallery in which thousands of people may see their likenesses. For instance, all those people who, while they would not rob their neighbors of a farthing, appropriate the money and the treasure of the public. A man has a house to sell, and he tells his customer it is worth \$20,000. Next day the assessor comes around and the owner says it is worth \$15,000. The govern-

ment of the United States took off the tax from personal income, among other reasons because so few people would tell the truth, and many a man with an income of hundreds of dollars a day made was about to be handed over to the oversilk dresses from Paris and a half dozen watches from Geneva, Switzerland, telling the custom house officer on the wharf, "There is nothing in that trunk but wearing apparel," and putting a five dol-

The New York Sun informs inquiring correspondents that it is the height of vulgarity to tuck the corner of one's napkin under one's chin at the table. Undoubtedly The Sun's advice is sound here. Once upon a time a man entered a poper tucking his napkin into his shirt col-"What will you have, sir," inquired the waiter, "a shave or a shampoo?"-Bos-A Boston firm of book publishers received by mail a request for a book en-

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