

"CRUMB SWEPT UP"

Watch this column for a series of articles from Rev. T. DeWitt Talmage's book, "Crumbs Swept Up." We think you will find them both interesting and helpful. Dr. Talmage has written these articles in a way which makes them touch every phase of life, and we believe will be interesting to all the family. Let the preachers call the people's attention to these articles, and try to get a good number of new subscribers for the King's Highway now, as these articles begin. We have enough of them to continue a long time. The first one is entitled "Cut Behind."

EDITOR.

THE KILKENNY CATS

Among the beautiful hills of an inland county of Ireland, occurred a tragedy with which we are all familiar. It seems that one day, urged on by a malevolent and violent spirit, two cats ate each other up, leaving nothing but the tips of their tails. There never has been a more exhaustive treatment of any subject.

We were once disposed to take the whole account as apocryphal. We asked ourselves how it was possible. There are anatomical and mathematical laws denying it. Admit a moment, for the sake of argument, that they succeeded in masticating each other's heads, all progress must have ceased at that point, for the teeth of both parties having been destroyed, how could they have pursued their physiological investigations any further? Beside this, digestion could not have been going on in both their stomachs at the same time, for at the hour when the salivary fluid was passing from the parotid and submaxillary glands of cat number one upon cat number two, the pancreatic secretions in the latter would have been so neutralized that they could not have acted upon the organism of the former. (See Bardach on "Physiology"; Treviranus on "Uniformity of Phenomena"; Van Helmont on the "Cardiac Orifice"; Sylvius on "Chyle"; Martin Farquhar Tupper on "Solitude"; and Blumenbach on "Nisus Formativus.")

Furthermore: The conclusion of the Kilkenny story in regard to the uninjured extremities of the two cats would seem to prove the fallacy of the whole narrative, because the ferocity of felines which stopped not for ribs, back-bone, sirloin, and haunches, would have gone on till none would have been left to tell the tale.

Nevertheless, I must accept the historical accuracy of the statement. It is confirmed by the Fathers and contemporary witnesses, and by our own observation. In our boyhood, the housekeeper complained about a cat that was perpetually ravaging the milk-pans; and so we descended into the cellar with a bean-pole, expecting at one blow to wreak capital punishment upon the depredator. It was one of the vilest hours of our lives. Sitting in our study this morning, at peace with all the world, we shudder at the reminiscence. At our first stroke, the cat of ordinary dimensions swelled up into a monster, that with glaring eyes darted after us. We felt that our future usefulness, and the interests of the Reformed Dutch Church, with which we were then connected, depended upon the strength of our bean-pole, and with one terrific stroke we sent her back to the wall of the cellar. Each stroke of our weapon increased the circumference of her eyes, the height of her bristles, the length of her tail, and the agony of the encounter. Our bean-pole broke! but this only roused us to more determination. What a story it would be to tell, that a youth, fresh from scanning Virgil, and from parsing of Milton's Battle of Archangels, had been killed by a cat! That should never be! She came up with redoubled fury, the dirt flying from her paws, and her intensity of feeling on the

subject emphasized by a supernatural spit. We called out for reinforcements. The housekeeper came with broomstick to the charge. We gave her the field. We did not want to monopolize all the glory of the affray. We stood on the steps with every possible word of encouragement. We told her that the eyes of the world were upon her. We cried: "Give it to her!" All our sympathies were with the broomstick; and it is sufficient to remark that we won the day.

I have been ready ever since to believe the story of the Kilkenny cats. If any other cat, and in the same frame of mind, had met the one that we fought, they would not have stopped, they could not have been appeased, they would have clinched, gnawed, chewed up, ground to pieces, and devoured each other, and the melancholy event with which we opened this chapter would have been equalled if not surpassed.

But why go so far to look for Kilkenny cats, when we could, in three minutes, point you out a dozen?

Two men go to law about some insignificant thing. They retain counsel, enter complaints, subpoena witnesses, empanel juries, hear verdicts, make appeals, multiply costs. Adjournment after adjournment, vexation after vexation, business neglected, patience exhausted, years wasted, and on both sides the last dollar spent, the cats have interlocked their paws, clashed each other's teeth, opened each other's jaws, and gulped down each other's all! Extermination more complete than that of Kilkenny.

Two women slander each other. "You are a miserable creature!" says one. "You're another!" is the reply. Each one hauls out to public gaze all the frailties of her antagonist. They malign each other's hats as shocking, each other's hair as false, each other's teeth as bad specimens of dentistry. While Betsy is going up Fourth Street to denounce Hannah, Hannah is going down Fifth Street slashing Betsy. Oh! they do hate each other with a relish! If they should happen to come into physical encounter, the whole field of conflict would be strewn with chignons, frizettes, switches, pads, bustles, chests that had ceased to heave, false calves, Marie Antoinette slippers, and French heels. These two cats meet on cross-streets, and their eyes flare, and there is sudden dash, and the fur flies, and down the hill of respectability they roll together, over and over and over, covered with dirt and slush—now one on the top, now the other, now neither, for they have both vanished. Exeunt cats of Kilkenny!

A church is divided into two parties. What one likes the other abhors. They feel it their duty to stick to it. In the devotional meeting they pray at each other's inconsistencies, hoping that the prayer will go to heaven, but by the way of Deacon Rafferty's pew, just stopping a moment to give him a shaking. If one wants the church built on the hill, the other wants it down by the saw-mill. If the one wants the minister to avoid politics, the other would like to have him get up on the side of the pulpit and give three cheers for John Brown's knapsack, which is said to be still "strapped upon his back!" When Elder Bangs sits still in prayer, Elder Crank stands up to show his contempt for such behavior. If one puts ten cents on the plate, the other throws a dollar on the top of it, to show his abhorrence of such parsimony. The whole church catches the quarrelsome spirit, and begins to go down. One-half of the choir eats up the other half. The pew devours the pulpit, and the pulpit swallows the pew. The session take down the trustees, and the trustees masticate the session. The Sunday school and sewing-society show their teeth, and run out their claws, and get their backs up, and spit fire. And church coun-

cils assemble to stop the quarrel, and cry "Scat! scat!" to the infamous howlers. But the claws go on with their work, till there stands the old church by the wayside, windowless and forsaken! Nothing more nor less than a monument to the memory of the dead ecclesiastical cats of Kilkenny!

But why should I libel the cats by placing them in such disagreeable company? Old Tabby, the Maltese, with a blue ribbon about his neck, and a white spot on his face, ever since the day his mother took him tenderly by the nape of the neck and lifted him out of the ash-barrel, the place of his nativity, has been a pet of your family. He never had anything but a velvet paw for the children that mauled him, lifting him by the ears, or pulling him by the tail backward up and down the nursery. He ate out of the same saucer with the children, not waiting for a spoon. And when a pair of little feet stopped short in the journey of life, and the white lids covered the eyes like untimely snow on violets, and you went in one rainy day to look at the little bed on which the flaxen curls once lay, you found old Tabby curled up on the pillow, and he looked up as if he knew what was the matter.

Old Tabby is almost blind now. Mice may canter across the floor without disturbing his slumber. Many of the hands that stroked him are still now, and he knows it. After a while his own time will come, and, with all four paws stretched out stiff and cold, you will find him some morning dead on the door-mat. Then the children will come and wrap him up, and carry him out, and dig a hole, and bury him with a Sunday-school hymn, putting up a board at his head, with this epitaph written in lead-pencil:

Here lies old Tabby!

Requies—cat in pace!

Died in the tenth year of his age, and mourned by the whole family.

This head-board is erected by his surviving friends Madge and Charlie!

BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU SAY

In speaking of a person's faults,
Pray don't forget your own;
Remember those with homes of glass,
Should seldom throw a stone.
If we have nothing else to do
But talk of those who sin,
'Tis better we commence at home,
And from that point begin.

We have no right to judge a man
Until he's fairly tried;
Should we not like his company,
We know the world is wide.
Some may have faults—and who has not?
The old as well as young;
Perhaps we may, for aught we know,
Have fifty to their one.

I'll tell you of a better plan,
And find it works full well:
To try my own defects to cure,
Before of others tell;
And though I sometimes hope to be
No worse than some I know,
My own shortcomings bid me let
The faults of others go.

Then let us all, when we commence
To slander friend or foe,
Think of the harm one word may do
To those we little know.
Remember curses sometimes like
Our chickens, "Roost at home."
Don't speak of others' faults until
We have none of our own.

JOSEPH KRONTHAL