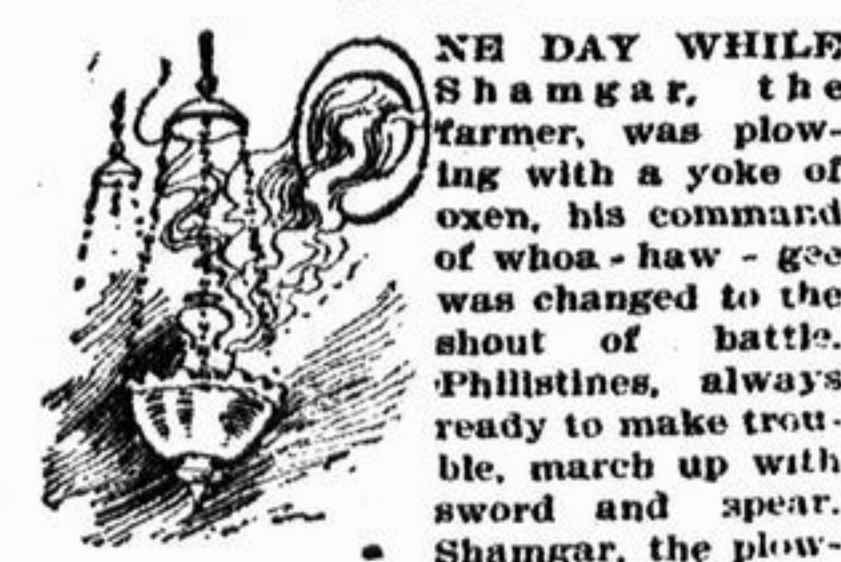


# THE TALMAGE SERMON

## ONE HEROIC CHARACTER IN JEWISH HISTORY.

"After Him Was Shamgar, Which Slew of the Philistines Six Hundred Men with an Ox-Goad" — Judges Chapter 3, Verse 21.



ONE DAY WHILE Shamgar, the farmer, was plowing with a yoke of oxen, his command of whom - haw - gee was changed to the shout of battle. Philistines, always ready to make trouble, march up with sword and spear. Shamgar, the plowman, had no sword, and would not probably have known how to wield it if he had possessed one. But fight he must, or go down under the stroke of the Philistines. He had an ox-goad—a weapon used to urge on the lazy team; a weapon about eight feet long, with a sharp iron at one end to puncture the beast, and a wide iron chisel, or shovel, at the other end with which to scrape the clumps of soil from the plowshare. Yet, with the iron prong at one end of the ox-goad and the iron scraper at the other, it was not such a weapon as one would desire to use in battle with armed Philistines. But God helped the farmer, and leaving the oxen to look after themselves, he charged upon the invaders of his homestead. Some of the commentaries, to make it easier for Shamgar, suggest that perhaps he led a regiment of farmers into the combat, ox-goad up and down, and this way and that the Lord does not need any of you to help in making the Scriptures, and Shamgar, with the Lord on his side, was mightier than six hundred Philistines with the Lord against them. The battle opened. Shamgar, with muscle strengthened by open air, and plowman's, and reaper's, and thresher's toll, uses the only weapon at hand, and he swings the ox-goad up and down, and this way and that; now stabbing with the iron prong at one end of it, and now thrusting with the iron scraper at the other, and now bringing down the whole weight of the instrument upon the heads of the enemy. The Philistines are in a panic, and the supernatural forces come in, and a blow that would not under other circumstances have prostrated or slain, left its victim lifeless; until when Shamgar walked over the field, he counted one hundred dead, two hundred dead, three hundred dead, four hundred dead, five hundred dead, six hundred dead—all the work done by one man with an ox-goad, with an iron prong at one end and an iron shovel at the other. The fame of this achievement by this farmer with an awkward weapon of war, spread abroad, and Shammgar's name until he was hoisted into the highest place of power, and became the third of the mighty Judges of Israel. So you see that Cincinnati was not the only man lifted from plow to throne.

For what reason was this unprecedented and unparalleled victory of a farmer's ox-goad put into this Bible, where there was no spare room for the unimportant and the trivial?

It was, first of all, to teach you, and to teach me, and to teach all men since then, and to teach all ages to come, that in the war for God, and against sin, we ought to put in the best weapon we happen to have on hand. Why did not Shamgar wait until he could get a war charger, with neck arched and back caparisoned, and nostrils sniffling the battle afar off, or until he could get war equipment, or could drill a regiment, and wheeling them into line, command them forward to the charge? To wait for that would have been defeat and annihilation. So he takes the best weapon he could lay hold of, and that is an ox-goad. We are called into the battle for the right, and against wrong, and many of us have not just the kind of weapon we would prefer. It may not be a sword of argument, it may not be the spear of chastising wit. It may not be the utterance of denunciation. But there is some thing we can do, and some "over" we can wield. Do not wait for what you have not, but use what you have. Perhaps you have not eloquence, but you have a smile. Well, a smile of encouragement has saved more souls than you could count in a year, if you counted all the time. You cannot give ten thousand dollars, but you can give as much as the widow of the Gospel, whose two mites, the smallest coins of the Hebrews, were bestowed in such a spirit as to make her more famous than all the contributions that ever endowed all the hospitals and universities of all Christendom, of all time. You have very limited vocabulary, but you can say "yes" or "no," and a firm "yes" or "no," has traversed the centuries, and will traverse all eternity, with good influence. You may not have the courage to confront a large assembly, but you can tell a Sunday school class of two—a boy and a girl—how to find Christ, and one of them may become a William Carey, to start influences that will redeem India, and the other a Florence Nightingale, who will illumine battlefields covered with the dying and the dead.

Again my subject springs upon us the thought that in calculating the prospects of religious attempt, we must take omniscience, and omniscience, and omnipotence, and all the other attributes of God into the calculation. Where do you see on that plowed field of my text? One hearer says: "I see Shamgar." Another hearer says: "I see six hundred Philistines." My hearer, you have missed the chief personage on that battlefield of plowed ground. I also see Shamgar, and six hundred Philistines, but more than all and mightier than all, and more overwhelming than all, I see God. Shamgar with his unaided arm, however muscular, and with that humble instrument made for agricultural purposes, and never constructed for combat, could not have wrought such victory. It was omnipotence above and beneath, and back of and at the point of the ox-goad. Before that battle was over the plowman realized this, and all the six hundred Philistines realized it, and all who visited the battlefield afterward appreciated it. I want in heaven to hear the story, for it can never be

fully told on earth—perhaps some day may be set apart for the rehearsal, while all heaven listens—the story of how God blessed awkward and humble instrumentality. Many an evangelist has come into a town given up to worldliness. The pastors say to the evangelist: "We are glad you have come, but it is a hard field and we feel sorry for you. The members of our churches play progressive euchre, and go to the theater, and bet at the horse races, and gaiety and fashion have taken possession of the town. We have advertised your meetings, but are not very hopeful. God bless you." This evangelist takes his place on platform or pulpit. He never graduated at college, and there are before him twenty graduates of the best universities. He never took one lesson in elocution, and there are before him twenty trained orators. Many of the ladies present are graduates of the highest female seminaries, and one slip in grammar or one mispronunciation will result in suppressed giggle. Amid the general chill that pervades the house, the unpretending evangelist opens his Bible and takes for his text: "Lord, that my eyes may be opened." Opera glasses in the gallery curiously scrutinize the speaker. He tells in plain language the story of the blind man, tells two or three touching anecdotes and the general chill gives way before a strange warmth. A classical hearer who took the first honor at Yale, and who is a prince of propeties, finds his spectacles becoming dim with a moisture suggestive of tears. A worldly mother who has been bringing up her sons and daughters in utter godlessness, puts her handkerchief to her eyes and begins to weep. Highly educated men who came to criticize and pick to pieces, and find fault, bow on their gold-headed canes. What is that sound from under the gallery? It is a sob, and sobs are catching; and all along the wall, and all up and down the audience there is deep emotion, so that when the close of the service anxious souls are invited to special seats, or the inquiry room, they come up by scores, and kneel and repent, and rise up pardoned; the whole town is shaken, and places of evil amusement are sparsely attended, and rum holes lose their patrons, and the churches are thronged, and the whole community is cleansed, and elevated, and rejoiced. What power did the evangelist bring to bear to capture that town for righteousness? Not one brilliant epigram did he utter. Not one graceful gesture did he make. Not one rhetorical climax did he pile up. But there was something about him that people had not taken in the estimate when they prophesied the failure of that work. They had not taken into calculation the omnipotence of the Holy Ghost. It was not the flash of a Damascus blade. It was God, before and behind, and all around the ox-goad. When people say that crime will triumph, and the world will never be converted because of the seeming insufficiency of the means employed, they count the six hundred armed Philistines on one side, and Shamgar, the farmer, awkwardly equipped, on the other side; not realizing that the chariots of God are twenty thousand, and that all heaven, cherubim, seraphim, archangels, Deity, is on what otherwise would be the weak side. Napoleon, the author of the saying, "God is on the side of the heaviest artillery," lived to find out his mistake; for at Waterloo the one hundred and sixty guns of the English overcame the two hundred and fifty guns of the French. God is on the side of the right, and one man in the right will eventually be found stronger than six hundred men in the wrong. In all estimates of any kind of Christian work, do not make the mistake every day made of leaving out the Head of the Universe.

Again, my subject springs upon us the thought that in God's service it is best to use weapons that are particularly suited to us. Shamgar had, like many of us, been brought up on a farm. He knew nothing about javelins, and bucklers, and helmets, and breastplates, and greaves of brass and catapults, and ballistae, and iron scythes fastened to the axes of chariots. But he was familiar with the fall of the threshing floor, and knew how to pound with that; and the ax of the woods, and knew how to hew with that; and the oxgoad of the plowman, and knew how to thrust with that. And you and I will do best to use those means that we can best handle; those weapons with which we can make the most execution. Some in God's service will do best with the pen; some with the voice; some by extemporaneous speech for they have the whole vocabulary of the English language half way between their brain and tongue; and others will do best with manuscript spread out before them. Some will serve God by the plow, raising wheat and corn and giving liberally of what they sell to churches and missions; some as merchants, and out of their profits will dedicate a tenth to the Lord; some as physicians, prescribing for the world's ailments; and some as attorneys, defending innocence, and obtaining rights that otherwise would not be recognized; and some as sailors, helping to bring the good news to the ends of the earth; and some as teachers and pastors. The kingdom of God is dreadfully retarded by so many of us attempting to do that which we cannot do; reaching up for broadsword or falchion, or bayonet, or scimitar, or Enfield rifle or Paikhan's gun, while we ought to be content with an ox-goad. I thank God that there are tens of thousands of Christians whom you never heard of, and never will hear of until you see them in the high places of heaven, who are now in a quiet way in homes, and schoolhouses, and in praying circles, and by sick beds, and up dark alleys saying the saying word, and doing the saying deed; the aggregation of their work overpowering the most ambitious statistics. In the grand review of heaven, when the regiments of hosts, there will be whole regiments of nurses, and Sabbath school teachers, and tract distributors, and unpretending workers, before whom, as they pass, the kings and queens of God and the Lamb will lift flashing coronet, and bow down in recognition and reverence. The most of the Christian work for the world's redemption and salvation will be done by people of one talent and two talents, while the ten-talent people are up in the astronomical observatories studying other worlds, though they do little or nothing for the redemption of this world; or are up in the rarified realms of "Higher Criticism," trying to find out that Moses did not write the Pentateuch, or to prove that the throat of the whale was not large enough to swallow the minister who declined to call to Nineveh, and apologizing for the

Almighty for certain inexplicable things they have found in the scriptures. It will be found out at the last that the Krupp guns have not done so much to capture this world for God as the ox-goads.

Go out against the Philistines. We must admit the odds are against us—six hundred, those devoted to worldliness and sin, and dissipation, when compared with the dollars devoted to holiness and virtue—six hundred to one. The houses set apart for vice, and despoilation and ruin, as compared with those dedicated to good, six hundred to one. Of printed newspaper sheets scattered abroad from day to day, those depraving as compared with those elevating, are six hundred to one. The agencies for making the world worse compared with the agencies for making the world better, six hundred to one. But Moses in his song, chants, "How should one chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight?" and in my text one ox-goad conquers six hundred uplifted battleaxes; and the day of universal victory is coming, unless the Bible be a fabrication, and eternally a myth, and the chariots of God are unwhirled on the golden streets, and the last regiment of the celestial hosts lies dead on the plains of heaven. With us, or without us, the work will be done. Oh, get into the ranks somewhere, armed somehow; you with a needle, you with a pen, you with a good book; you with a loaf of bread for the hungry; you with a vial of medicine for the sick; you with a pair of shoes for the barefooted; you with word of encouragement for the young man trying to get back from evil ways; you with some story of the Christ who came to heal the worst wounds and pardon the worst wanderer home. I say to you as the watchman of London used to say at night, to the householders before the time of street lamps came: "Hang out your light!" "Hang out your light!"

### A SNAKE THIEF.

How a Reptile Stole the Milk from a Fine Jersey Cow.

W. L. Hewey, living up in the Cross Lake country, has a fine Jersey cow, which usually keeps the family supplied with an abundance of milk, says a Shreveport (La.) paper. On Monday last Hewey noticed a falling off in the milk supply and for every day thereafter there has been a steady diminution. Thinking that perhaps the pasturage did not furnish sufficient nourishment for the cow, Hewey began to give her an extra quantity of food at night, but in vain. Every evening she returned to the pen with an empty bag. At last Hewey came to the conclusion that some negro in the neighborhood must be in the habit of milking the cow before she left the pasture; so he set about discovering the guilty party. Yesterday his investigations were rewarded, the thief proving to be a singular one, indeed. In the middle of the afternoon Hewey went into the pasture, taking his stand behind a big oak tree whence he could keep an eye on the cow without being himself observed. For a long time there seemed no chance of solving the mystery, as no one appeared in the pasture. Finally Hewey was about to give up the search as a bad job, and drive the cow to the pen, when he saw a big black-and-white snake glide out from the thicket behind him and make its way across the pasture to the Jersey. Following after as rapidly as he could, what was his astonishment to behold the snake wrap itself around the Jersey's hind legs, holding them hard and fast, and then grasp hold of the bag, sucking away at the teats like a hungry calf. Hewey is a new man to this section, and this singular conduct on the part of a reptile surprised him beyond measure. Since consulting with his neighbors, however, he has ascertained that the snake, called a "cow-sucker," is a very common variety, causing much loss among cattle-raisers and milk men in this section.

### The Letters of Erasmus.

The letters of Erasmus are a rich mine full of materials for the study of the sixteenth century in many aspects and not only in its religious controversies. We have an insight into courtly, social and literary life. The paid tutor in the prince's house had now become a regular institution. We see the value of a dedication to a wealthy patron. We have a vivid picture of what traveling must have been, the difficulty of procuring carriages, the slow pace by horseback, the wretched taverns.

How we pity poor Erasmus in that journey from Basle to Louvain, with his frail constitution, arriving at Aix after a fearful shaking on bad roads and being regaled with cold carp by the preceptor and next day at the vice provost's with nothing but eels and "bacalao"—salt cod, almost raw! Though suffering much from illness aggravated by the journey he managed to reach Louvain, where his miseries culminated in an attack of what was supposed to be the plague and hardly any one would come near him. He concludes, however, thus: "I send doctors to the devil, commend myself to Christ, and am well in three days."—The Gentleman's Magazine.

### The Metastasis of Fortune.

Many years ago a certain magnate in the west of England—doctor of divinity and chairman of the Quarter Sessions—was also an enthusiastic geologist. One day a farmer, who had seen him presiding on the bench, was riding along a quiet road when he discovered the magistrate seated by the roadside on a heap of stones which he was engaged in breaking with a small hammer in the course of a hunt for fossils. The farmer reined up his horse and for a moment gazed open-mouthed; then shaking his head over the changeableness of all things human, exclaimed in tones of the deepest commiseration: "What doctor! be you come to this already?"

A man who gets the mitten is apt to be guilty of contempt of court.

# MIRROR OF FASHION.

## LATEST EDITIONS IN WOMAN'S WEARING APPAREL.

One of the Newest Frocks for Girls—The Empire Fan—The Correct Swing—The Greatest Charm of the Skirt—Notes of the Modes.



HIS PRETTY frock, with the fashionable yoke blouse effect, is one of the newest styles for girls. Pretty figured challis in old-pink and pale-blue on a cream-colored ground is here shown, daintily decorated with old-pink satin ribbon and creamy lace insertion. The blouse portions of waist are stylishly adjusted over a comfortably fitted body-lining. The upper portions of which are covered with the material and exposed to square yoke depth. The yoke is outlined above the fullness and over the shoulders by a decoration of insertion laid over the satin ribbon. The standing collar is covered with ribbon and insertion to match. Full puffs are becomingly arranged over fitted sleeves that are trimmed at cuff depth with ribbon under insertion. The full skirt is gathered at the top and sewed to the lower edge of the body, the blouse almost entirely hiding the seam. The stylish waist decoration here shown consists of a crushed ribbon belt, with rosettes placed on each side of front, the single ends falling over the skirt. The waist closes in center back invisibly to silk or woolen materials, as preferred. The design is well adapted to the pretty cotton fabrics now being prepared for the coming season, and can be handsomely decorated with ribbon and lace, or completed as plainly as desired. The yoke and fitted lower portions of sleeves can be omitted, if desired, to be worn with a gimp.

Empire Fan—Empire fans of the most delicate and elegant design are now made and vic-

shoulders. The dress goods is scarlet surah, made in plain godet skirt lined with white moire. The waist has draped fronts and is worn inside the skirt, the sleeves being very full puffs that do not extend below the elbow. White suede mousquetaires are worn.

The Correct Swing—The greatest charm about the fashionable skirt is its definiteness. It is possible for every woman to know exactly how her skirt should look and if it has not the correct swing it is because the wearer is too careless or too economical to make it so. There is no use trying to make a fashionable skirt out of last year's old one. Better



economize some other way than attempt it. People who live in the city find it very profitable to buy separate skirts ready made. The only difficulty is to get the right length and this is sometimes solved for a short person by going to the misses' department. A very nice black serge can be purchased for \$5 and moire silk sometimes sells for as low as \$12. This is because moire silk is going out of fashion for skirts.



WOOD BROWN CREPON PINK WITH ROSE BODICE



is no need of them on the dress, which is plain but for a white satin ribbon belt with long flowing ends and but for the rich white guipure over the then cut away the net. That is the best way to accomplish "scattering." While spangles might add to the beauty of the fan presented herewith there

Satin is more fashionable and another material which is something on the crepon order, moire poplin. Very few skirts are trimmed around the bottom and when they are it is with a narrow band of velvet or satin or passementerie. The above gown is a crepon in an old green shade, with a band of black satin around the bottom of the skirt and a strip across the front of the bodice. It is a pretty receiving costume.

Fashion Notes—Skirts cut on the bias, that is, so that the stripe will run in diagonal fashion, are among the novelties. Embroidery done on the fabric is a possession that every woman cannot hope for, unless she is herself skilled with her needle. This work, however, in view of the recent interest in embroidery, an interest that is shared alike by all classes of women, is likely to develop into some home-made concoctions that will be not only original in themselves but of great beauty and value in the line of art needlework. The use of ribbons is universal, and the variety to choose from is endless. Striped or broadened gauze edged velvet ribbons, velvet-edged gauze ribbons, broadened in velvet, and taffeta with broadened stripes are among the novelties. The Dresden ribbons are growing more popular, and summer dresses of silk and wool will be profusely trimmed with them. Ribbon ruchings are made by plaiting two or two-and-a-half inch ribbon in box-plaits at one edge. This is set upon wide, turned-over collars of velvet. Some of these collars have revers extending to the waist-line, and the ribbon plaiting is graduated to about half its width as it extends down the front. Gauze ribbon ruchings are very much liked for trimmings, especially in black or dark materials. There is nothing softer and prettier than a gauze ruching of black for the collar of a cape or a wrap. Collars of ribbon and lace are in general use. The one object in making up these collars is to evolve some original idea either in shape, trimming or combination.

# JEWELRY FOR MEN.

## Fashionable Young Swells Who Spend Fortunes in Adornment.

Nowadays men wear nearly as much jewelry as do women. Rings, pins, chains, bracelets, and even necklaces are worn; in fact, all but ear-rings. Showy designs in jewelry, however, are confined to a small set in town. Edmund Russell, besides his numerous scarfpins and studs, wears a rather unique bit of ornament. From four jeweled rings on the fingers of his left hand extend fine gold chains, which are attached to diamonds. This bauble covers half the back of his hand, and is held in place by another chain which passes twice around the wrist.

A German count often seen on Broadway wears a scarfpin which well-nigh hides his scarf, says the New York Sunday Advertiser. It is a heart-shaped opal set in diamonds, and fairly outshines the glistering sun. As a balance-wheel he sports a fob perhaps two inches in diameter, made of frosted gold, incrustated with diamonds. Large turquoise studs set in jewels are quite common. But the jewelers say that though the fashions of well-dressed men always run in small, modest designs, rich foreigners, such as Spaniards and Cubans, delight in large, expensive designs for rings and scarfpins. Specimen pearls of large size are much in vogue for sleeve links and pins. A Broadway dealer had an enormous diamond-studded horseshoe pin which he thought a drug on his hands. However, a well-known "horsey" individual saw it the other day, raved over it and paid the high price asked without a murmur. Designs at present run on outing ideas—yachting, tennis, baseball and golf emblems. Though some few exquisites may demand jewels whose size makes them only suitable for lovely women, the consensus of opinion is that good taste will prevent a general copying of the examples set by London swells. Not long ago a typical westerner, with a big sombrero on his head and a brace of pistols in his belt, was arrested in the tenderloin to keep him from losing a diamond watchchain worth thousands. Apart from his strange dress he was no more peculiar than the swell who swings gayly along dressed in the height of fashion, with his hands covered with jeweled rings, and perhaps a heavy bracelet, bespeaking efficiency, on his wrist. Let us hope we will be saved the pain of seeing men adopt the jewels of women, despite the fact that the gentler sex are infringing on the fashions of masculine dress.

### CHINESE MARTINETS.

Some of the Strange Things Which the Philanthropist Observes. If a man falls dead in the street, where he falls there he will remain until the knowledge of his death reaches the officials in some roundabout manner, for to go to see if anything could be done or to move the body to a sheltered spot would at once implicate the too-enthusiastic philanthropist. So, too, may one look in vain for aid in the case of personal injury, even in one's own house, the mere sight of blood from a cut finger often serving to precipitate all the servants to their own quarters below stairs, where they remain in a stolid, unconcerned manner, behaving in the way least likely to cause suspicion to rest upon themselves in the event of the injury's proving fatal. It is stated that when the history of the present dynasty comes to be written, it will be recorded that when the Emperor Chia Ching was attacked by conspirators while passing in his chair through the streets of the capital, only six persons out of the large crowds present came forward to help their sovereign in the moment of danger. If so little altruism is shown to the "Son of Heaven," it may be imagined how much is likely to be displayed toward an ordinary human being. To be seen near a man recently dead renders a Chinaman liable to be suspected of some interest in his death, and suspicion means official execution, for lying in China is an art and not a sin, in spite of the Confucian classics. Thus we see that, just as the wire runs throughout the body of the clay images hawked in Chinese streets, connecting each limb to the body, so does there run throughout the body corporate of the Chinese people the fixed principle of mutual fear and distrust, of terror of their rulers and indifference to all around them.

### Fortunes in Advertising.

Moses P. Handy in Chicago Times-Herald: Another man who bears similar testimony, tells me that his concern, which began by investing \$10,000 a year in advertising, increased the amount every year according to their increase of business, and this year expects to spend \$1,000,000. Still another, who confined himself entirely to the newspapers and magazines in the exploitation of his specialty, never having touched a dead wall, a fence or the broad side of a barn with poster or paint brush, and never employing a salesman, has a cool million salted down in real estate, keeps his yacht and spends most of the year abroad in luxurious living. Many other men of my acquaintance resting in ease and wealth have told me stories of their own experience with the same moral. Some day I am going to print these stories and give the names of the heroes.

### A Brain-Waving Task.

First Business Man—Mercy, George! What's the matter? Another bank gone, or what? Never saw you look so haggard and worried and careworn. Second Business Man (weakly)—Nothing wrong. I've been trying to figure my way out of the income tax.

### Spring.

Hunter—I saw large flocks of wild geese flying northward early in March. Farmer—Hah! If they were wild, they would stay so by the thousands.