

THE SAFETY OF OUR YOUNG MEN

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The Safety of Our Young Men by A. H. Tuttle

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REV. A. H. TUTTLE, D.D.

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By Rev. A. H. TUTTLE, D. D.



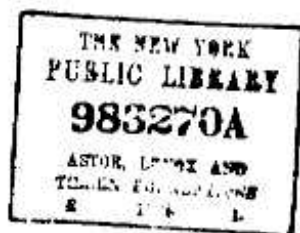
Being a SERMON *Delivered*
in the METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH
of SUMMIT, NEW JERSEY,
on NOVEMBER *the* SEVENTEENTH

M C M I

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President





THE SAFETY OF OUR YOUNG MEN.

2 Saml. xviii 29, Is the
young man Absalom safe?



A**FTER** the frightful battle in which the revolting hosts of Israel, under the leadership of Absalom, were defeated by the king's loyal troops, David's first inquiry was concerning the safety of his wayward but idolized son. But Absalom was dead; his body pierced through by the javelin of Joab, and cast into a dishonored grave.

Then the heart-broken father went up over the gates of Mahanaim, where he had taken refuge, and uttered that bitter wail, which has rolled down the ages and thrilled the heart of many an anxious

father. "O my son Absalom! my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!"

But it is not of David's son that I wish to speak particularly this morning, but of yours and mine. I want to try and persuade you to ask in all seriousness, Is my son safe? And then, aware of his peril, to search for the most efficient means for his security. If I can succeed in this, I have done much to save you the bitter anguish of David's lament.

I. First then, we seek the reason of the insecurity of our young men.

It was not the battle in the woods of Ephraim that was the cause of Absalom's ruin. That was only the spark that touched the stick of dynamite that lay hidden in the elements of the young man's character. We must go behind the dart of Joab and search into those elements, if we would discover the secret of his peril. The history before us vividly illustrates the facts peculiar to young manhood, which make it extremely perilous. We will gather up its chief suggestions.

1.



YOUNG manhood is the period of life when the great character lines become fixed, which will determine the man's entire earthly career as the steel rails hold the engine to a fixed course. Childhood and youth is the time for receiving impressions and for development. Then the clay is soft and pliable. But as it approaches young manhood, it hardens and before that period is closed, it takes the form which unless broken up by some power supernatural, it will hold forever. Partly by the pressure of the unknown quality within us and partly by external necessities, the central principle of a man's character is fixed finally and irrevocably between the age of twenty-three and thirty-five. I know that the period varies. Some men are mature sooner than others. And some never get out of childhood at all, though they live to threescore years and ten. Perhaps it would be more accurate for us to say that the period of young manhood does not cease till we strike

our fortieth year. But however uncertain we are in fixing a variable measurement, there is no uncertainty in our minds as to the great fact we are trying to state, namely that the determining principle of a man's character, the quality, magnitude and velocity of his dominant passions, his ideals and the bent of his will get their final shape before he begins his fourth decade.

Of course I do not mean to say that the ruling character of the inner man is always discovered by that time. The soil that seems impoverished may be only fallow. Many a barren heart when broken up by God's plowshare, letting in the sunshine and air and moisture, has grown fruit of surprising richness. That mountain gorge seems useless enough, till the storm plays about the heights. Then it becomes the bed of a rushing torrent. At thirty-nine the Galena tanner was a discouraged man and the despair of those who loved him best. It took the storm of war to reveal what lay concealed in him. There are doubtless dormant energies hidden in many of us, which wait the fitting occasion to bring them out. It may be long