

A Ball Of Fat

Ecclesiastes 9:14-16 14 There was a little city, and few men within it; and there came a great king against it, and besieged it, and built great bulwarks against it:

15 Now there was found in it a poor wise man, and he by his wisdom delivered the city; yet no man remembered that same poor man.

16 Then said I, Wisdom is better than strength: nevertheless the poor man's wisdom is despised, and his words are not heard.

I read a number of years ago a book by Guy de Maupassant, "Boule de Suif", which the translator had rendered "A Ball Of Fat". The story is set during the Franco-Prussian war about a group of French residents who left their city and headed toward Le Havre in a stagecoach. and the passengers, there are ten of them, they constitute kind of a representation of all of the French population during the nineteenth century.

Well, due to bad weather the coache has only covered a few miles by midday. Initially these guys snubbed the ball of fat, Elizabeth, but their attitudes changed when she digs out a beautiful picnic basket full of lovely food and shares it with the hungry travelers. Now the village the carriage stops at, a local coach housen, and the occupants hearing a German voice realize they have blundered into Prussian held territory. A Prussian officer detains the party indefinitely, but they don't know why. The next few days they become impatient. Finally the boule de suif tells them they're being detained until she agrees to sleep with the officer.

She is repeatedly called before the officer and always returned in a heightened state of agitation. First of all they support her, but then they get mad at her because she's not doing that so they can leave. Well, so she finally gives in after they bug her enough and then they are allowed to leave the next day.

As they continue on their way to Le Havre these representatives of virtue, including two nuns, by the way, ignore the Boule de Suif and turn to a polite topics of conversation. They look at her scathingly, and don't even acknowledge her. They refuse to share their food with her the way she did with them earlier. This woman seethes with rage against the other passengers, and finally weeps for her lost dignity.

This was and is a heart-rending story which illustrates the deep heart problems described in this passage (Ecclesiastes 9:14-16). People run to wherever they can for any source of help and rescue, even a lowly one, but as soon as the help arrives they throw away the one who helped them. They throw them to the curb, but be of good cheer. Men may quickly forget, but God never does. He knows those who are his.

Second Timothy 2:19, "there's a book of remembrance before him for those who fear the Lord". In Malachi 3, "and their names are written in heaven", and

Luke 10:20, “rejoice in that and also remember to remember the small ones who do big things”.

You Ponder That