

FIVE-MINUTES' SERMON.

THE GREAT VALUE OF TIME. She departed not from the temple, by fasting and prayers, serving day and night. (Luke 2, 37).

What glorious praise does the Holy Ghost give to St. Ann in the gospel of to-day! He praises her as a woman who is occupied day and night in the service of God, and in the salvation of her soul.

My dear Christians, we, too, have received the precious gift of time, that it may be used for eternity, but, alas! how many there are who do not know how to appreciate this admirable gift and do not wish to use it for the purpose for which it is given.

Yes, beloved Christians, for you, also, a day and an hour will come, when you will think and judge of the great value of time, as do the saints in Heaven and the damned in hell.

Oh! that we would learn true wisdom, and no longer abuse the precious gift of time to our own destruction, and to the making more difficult the account of our stewardship!

Then they returned to their home, after having visited the shrine of the Blessed Virgin and prayed for the safety of him who was gone forth, as they thought, into the very jaws of death.

Gratifying Improvement. My face was covered with pimples and blackheads when I began taking Hood's Sarsaparilla, but after the use of this medicine a short time I was entirely cured.

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OUR BOYS AND GIRLS. THE JAWS OF DEATH.

A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand, but it shall not come nigh thee.—Ps. xc. 7.

In the sixteenth century, when the conquest of the New World opened a new vista of splendor and glory to the merchant and soldier, the one eager of acquiring wealth and the other stirred by the longing for a brilliant campaign, there lived on the coast of Portugal a rich merchant named Vasco di San Estevano.

Now, the secret of the virtues for which he was renowned in the town was, that when a little child his father had one day the honor of offering hospitality to the heroic Father of the poor, St. John of God, then revered throughout the length and breadth of Spain and Portugal for his saintly life and power of working miracles; and the saint had blessed the little child and made him promise that if he were ever very rich he would always give at least a third of his income to the poor, and that on Christmas Day he would feed and clothe seven poor children, in honor of the infant Jesus and the seven swords of sorrow which pierced the heart of His most holy Mother when she saw her dear Son suffering.

Vasco di San Estevano had faithfully kept his promises; and more than that, he brought up his children to follow his example, and every Christmas Day twenty-one children came to his house to be fed and receive an outfit of clothes—seven for Vasco, and seven each for his son and daughter.

When Vasco heard of the wealth of the newly discovered countries, of the precious stones, the gold, the rare minerals and scented woods, he resolved to try his luck also, not only to enrich his son and daughter, but also that he might have more abundant store for the afflicted poor of his native country.

His wife and children did all they could to dissuade him from carrying out his plan. They had heard that there were strange, dark people in the new countries, who fought like wild beasts to defend themselves from the invaders; and, indeed, they had known more than one family whose son had gone out buoyant with hope and expectation of returning laden with riches, who had laid down his life away in that foreign land—unknown, uncared for, perhaps in the hands of the cruel barbarians, or all alone, with no one to help him in his dying hour.

But Vasco was determined to go, the more so as his brother, a priest, had been sent out by his superiors as a missionary.

"At least I shall find lago," he said. "No news has been had of him for a long time, and I am anxious for his safety, as the savages would fall on the missionaries first of all, and he is my only brother."

So he put his house in order, made his will, and gave many orders to his wife and children before starting.

"Be sure, whatever else you forget," he said over and over again, "you keep my promises to the holy man of God and feed the twenty-one poor children on Christmas Day, and bid them pray for me, for it may be that I shall stand in great need of their prayers."

His wife and children clung to him weeping, begging him to put off going; and had it not been for his brother he might even have done so at the last moment. With tears in his eyes, he gently put his loved ones away from him, saying:

"When my mother was dying, we promised to love each other as she had loved us; and would she not have gone after him even to the very end of the world?"

So saying, he stepped into the boat which was to bear him alongside the ship, and left his wife and children weeping by the seashore.

For a moment, the wife, in her agony, almost decided to throw herself into the sea, that she might come back to her; but, stayed by the hand of Divine Providence, she turned to her sorrowing children and tried to comfort them with hopes of the glad return of their dear one.

Then they returned to their home, after having visited the shrine of the Blessed Virgin and prayed for the safety of him who was gone forth, as they thought, into the very jaws of death.

Meanwhile Vasco arrived, after a long and stormy voyage, at the northern coast of South America. Here he found numbers of adventurers from all parts of Europe, all drawn thither by the report of the boundless wealth to be found in the new country. The merchant made inquiries of every one he met, but for a long time could hear nothing of his brother. At last a Spaniard, who had travelled far into the country, said he had heard of a party of missionaries who were making for the west coast, to an important city of the natives, called by them Calavera, and by the Spaniards Sant' Iago di Huesava. From the description the man gave of the missionaries, the merchant felt sure that his brother be-

longed to the party, and he resolved at once to push on to Sant' Iago di Huesava. It was no easy matter; the country was unknown to him, and for the moment there was no one going that way, and Vasco was obliged to set out accompanied only by his faithful servant José, who had attended him on the voyage. The Spaniard gave them full directions, and warned them of the many dangers to be encountered on the way; and, trusting in the help of Divine Providence, they started, with a compass and chart of the heavens, for the west coast.

It was difficult, as the Spaniard had said. In the first place, they had to pass through thick forests, so overgrown that they could hardly make their way through the thick brushwood and brambles, and every now and then a strange beast or hissing snake would start up almost from underneath their very feet, and dart away into the wood. Though they were brave men, the thought of passing the night in the forest was anything but agreeable to them, for the trees were no safe resting-place for them, seeing that the deadly snakes themselves coil round the trunks. Night came on, and they agreed to rest in the branches of a tree, taking it in turns to watch. Neither of them slept much, and with the first glimmer of light they started again on their journey, wandering through the thick forest; fifteen days they wended their way through the plains, and at length reached the mountains which separated them from the coast. Four days were spent in ascending the rugged mountain side, and at last reaching the summit, they looked down and saw a city stretching out from the foot of the mountain to the seashore. They knelt down and thanked God for delivering them through so many dangers; and recommending themselves to His protection, began the descent, which was very easy, and occupied only a few hours.

Their arrival in the city caused some sensation; the inhabitants came out to look at them, and made signs to them, and seemed quite friendly. One little boy came up to them and took their hands and smiled, and seemed so pleased that they thought he must have been some of their race before, and tried to make him understand by signs that they were seeking their fellow-countrymen. He was puzzled for a little while, then darted off, and in a few minutes returned, followed by a Franciscan missionary. To their great joy he informed them that Vasco's brother was there, but very ill, and had been taken up to a little house on the mountain for the sake of change of air, as he had been suffering from a fever. He told them, moreover, that there were other Portuguese in the town; that they were not disliked by the natives, and had already a considerable large class of catechumens.

After they had rested, the missionary took them up to the house on the mountain side, where Vasco had the great joy of embracing his brother.

Vasco spent some months with his brother, trading with the natives, meantime, in precious stones, of which he bought a great collection to take home to Portugal.

At last, however, he bethought himself of his wife and children, and resolved to return at the end of December, spending Christmas Day, perhaps the last on earth, with his dearly loved brother. On the day itself, they descended into the town, heard Mass, and received Holy Communion, and then the party of missionaries, Vasco, and José, went up the hillside to talk quietly together without interruption. They had so much to say to each other, so many messages to send home to their superiors and brothers. It was a calm, peaceful day; they sat on the grass, and held sweet communion together. Vasco was wondering what his dear ones at home were doing, and if they were thinking of and praying for him, when José suddenly cried:

"Look far out on the sea: what is that great dark cloud?"

They gazed out as far as they could see, at what seemed to be a great cloud, but as it came nearer and nearer they heard the rushing of water, and saw that it was a wave of gigantic height rolling on toward the land. The people on the shore had seen it also, and were running to warn their fellow-citizens. Soon the inhabitants of the

city came rushing out in the direst confusion; women with children in their arms, men with bundles of their goods, their most precious possessions, anything that they could lay their hands on in their terror. But the great wave came rolling on, and with a thundering roar, like the booming of cannon, swept over the city, carrying away houses, people, animals, even the little hut used as a chapel.

Very few of the inhabitants of the city had gained a sufficient height on the mountain to be saved; about twenty in all were spared, and they had lost all their possessions. Never had Vasco witnessed such a terrible sight: thousands of men, women, and children swept away as lightly as the down is blown across the moors by the wind.

The men who were saved, however, told the Portuguese that this calamity was not unprecedented; twice in their own lifetime on different parts of the coast, only much farther south; they had imagined themselves in all security so near the north. There was no hint left now but to push on toward the northern coast, which they did much more quickly than they had come, thanks to the natives, who knew every inch of the country. There they found a ship, and Vasco embarked with José for Portugal, leaving his brother and the missionaries to carry on their noble work of evangelizing the nations.

In three months Vasco was safe home again; he had been so long absent that his wife and children were growing very uneasy. He had no means of sending them a letter which would arrive before himself, and one evening when they were seated around the table at supper Vasco walked in. Oh! how pleased they were to see him; never did father receive a warmer welcome. They sat up all night, hearing his adventures, and thanking God for bringing him safely home again. When he told of the great wave sweeping away the town on Christmas Day, they exclaimed:

"On Christmas Day we were so anxious and unhappy that we redoubled our prayers, and instead of twenty-one children we summoned fifty to our dinner-table, and begged them all to pray for our dear one."

Vasco stayed at home after that; he grew very rich indeed, and had the happiness of living to see his son and daughter married, and of seeing his children's children around him. And to this day, in the family of San Estevano, every Christmas Day, fifty poor children are fed and clothed in honor of the infant Jesus, and to keep the promise made to the servant of God and Father of the poor, St. John of God.

CHATS WITH YOUNG MEN.

"Manners make the man" is a proverb. It is not always true. Sometimes the rude cultivate the habits of the gentle hoping to make profit by the deception, but inwardly they are still rude. Nevertheless, as a rule a person is as he appears to those who know him well. His manners are the expression of his emotions. It is well, therefore, to pay attention to outward demeanor, that it may be the correct interpreter of courteous thoughts and that it may make upon our acquaintances a good impression.

The Ways of Nice Society

Without doubt, what are called the manners of society are not only a part of gentlemanhood, but are extremely convenient. I am not about to indicate these rules, but I may suggest that in all matters of dress, of care of the person, of carriage, of command of the features and voice and eyes, and of what are called the ways of good society, it is of great use to be well informed. They will not take you one step on the way to Christian manliness, but they will smooth it, and the lack of them may block it altogether. The main dependence must be on the things we have considered. If one is centrally true, kind, honorable, delicate, and considerate, he will almost without fail have manners that will take him into any circle where culture and taste prevail over folly.

Still, this inward seed needs fostering. It should levy on all graceful forms, on practice and discipline, on observation, on fashion even, and made them subservient to its native grace. Watch those of excellent reputation in

manners. Keep your eyes open when you go to the metropolis, and learn its grace; or, if you live in the city, when you go to the country, mark the higher quality of simplicity. Catch the temper of the great masters of literature; the nobility of Scott, the sincerity of Thackeray, the heartiness of Dickens, the tenderness of MacDonald, the delicacy of Tennyson, the grace of Longfellow, the repose of Shakespeare.

Manners in this high sense, and so learned, take one far on in the world. They are irresistible. If you meet the king he will recognize you as a brother. They are a defense against insult. All doors fly open when he who wears them approaches. They cannot be bought. They cannot be learned as from a book; they come from within, and from a within that is grounded in truth, honor, delicacy, kindness, and consideration.

Brothers' Treatment of Sisters. It is natural enough that a young man should pay attention to some other young man's sister. There are even Biblical and profane historical precedents for this custom. Jacob, for instance, "waited on" Rachel when he might have played the cymbals for the amusement of his sisters, and Ruth was courted quite in the modern fashion.

We are aware that all traditions, all precedents are in favor of this habit of regarding a man's own sisters as out of the question when concert and theater tickets, boxes of candy and bouquets are in order. But there is no reason why a young man's sister should be entirely neglected. The young man—even when his thoughts turn to the daughter of his future mother-in-law—ought to remember that his sisters are women, with the desire of those small attentions from those they love which every normal woman has.

A brother might occasionally spare an evening for his sister's amusement. One hears a great deal of sisterly devotion, but seldom of brotherly devotion. And there would be less jealousy and misunderstandings between young wives and sisters-in-law, if the brother—the average brother—were more careful before marriage to show his sisters that he holds them worthy at least of some of the attention he lavishes on the sweetest of her sex. Sisters, as a rule, love their brothers with an almost unreasonable love. They idolize them; they serve them; they pamper them; they often work for them. And yet the brother who will ungrudgingly show his sister those little attentions which women crave, but do not ask for, is a rarity.

Mary, who has shielded Dick many times from the paternal wrath, given him pocket-money from her scanty store, walked down stairs on cold nights to open the door for him, after the sacred hour of ten, never receives books or boxes of candy or invitations to partake of the crisp ice cream or the succulent oyster. No, these are for other girls. Mary must stand and wait while her superior brother tells her how great he will be some day. How lovely Angelica—that tow-headed girl who was so stupid at school!—is in his eyes.

Life would be made happier and there would be a glow and a sympathy in Catholic families if the natural virtues were cultivated—and one virtue which is not cultivated as carefully as it ought to be is that which leads some brothers to treat their sisters with

courtesy, reverence and tenderness—for love ought to have an outward form.

Brothers are not to be blamed in many cases for their lack of courtesy shown to their sisters. It is all the fault of their early training. Mothers should strive to teach their sons from their earliest years the little courtesies due their sisters, particularly in attending them to church, entertainments and social gatherings. We often see brothers and sisters at church, entertainments and public places, but not together. The girls with their own friends, and the boys with theirs. Then the daughters, as they grow older, have their social gatherings of friends at their homes, but brother stays or is kept in the background, never meets his sister's friends, and gradually the breach widens between brother and sister. In this case the boy is not entirely to blame. But where a boy has been properly trained from his earliest years to be kind and courteous to his sister, when her company at their home has been his company, and vice versa, and when a sister daily strives, often by self-sacrifice, to make that home as comfortable and enjoyable a one for her brother as their circumstances will allow, then we must admit that lack of courtesy and attention from such a brother proves him to be an ingrate not worthy of the name of brother.—The New World.

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