FIVE-MINUTE'S SERMON.

Third Sunday in Advent.

THE VICE OF SCANDAL.

And he confessed, and did not deny."-

Brethren: It is too bad that Cath-

olic laymen do not realize the important mission God has confided to them

in the workings of His Church among

men. How much they can and ought to do, not only for the salvation of

their fellow Catholics, but for those outside the Church, is a fact seldom

considered. Yet this is a truth : Cath-

olic laymen by their good example, owing to the peculiar and daily op-

portunities thrown away, can bring back to the practice of faith not only

negligent Catholics, but also many honest Protestants whom a priest

could never reach.

Now, Catholic men, God has given

you a great and precious gift when He blessed you with a divine faith, and

it is a gift for which you will some day

have to render an account. It is true

you are not called upon to go out on

the streets and proclaim before the public the faith that is in you, to boast

of your Catholicity; but you are obliged to confess before all men, by

your example, by the modesty of your conduct, by the purity of your speech,

by your honesty in business, by your

charity to the poor, by your respect and reverence for God and things holy

that you belong body and soul to a

and abhors iniquity. This is the con-fession you are called upon to make,

guide. You have principles founded

on that faith which will always direct

you in the right path. You have the examples of the heroic lives of the

saints to encourage you, and the advice and counsel of earnest bishops

and priests to instruct and assist you

Where others are weak you are strong,

strengthened with sacramental grace,

But the great folly with many Cath-

nselves, enjoy life to the full, and

olic men is this, that they fancy their

only work on earth is to look out for

then by some miracle of God's mercy

scramble into heaven as best they can.

Let every man take care of himself,

is a false and heathen maxim, and one

unworthy of a Christian to whom God

with a faith that is divine.

has freely given the faith.

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Besides this, brethren, while there are many who do not confess the faith openly and honestly, who by their want of uprightness fail to make the influence of their faith affect those about them, there is still another class who may be said to actually deny their faith. That sounds strange to your Catholic hearts, but, brethren, thank God there are few who squarely and openly deny their faith, and such a denial is usually preceded by a total rejection of nearly all the command-

But there are many who practically deny it, many who turn a deaf ear to its moral teaching, many to whom the faith is a kind of problem, an hypothesis, true enough in theory but too exacting in practice. They are the Catholic men who rarely approach the sacraments; they are the Cathomen who feel no ren Mass; they are the Catholic men who make light of religious observances. The men who, when they come together, aping the manners and the swagger of the worldly minded, con-sider it a smart thing to boast of and joke about how careless and how in-different they are to the practices of their faith. This is particularly a mean and cowardly fault in some young men who, while believing in their hearts, converse and act as if they did not believe. Brethren, your faith is too precious a treasure to be treated lightly, and the things con-nected with it are too sacred not to prize it highly. Your calling as Cath-olic laymen demands that you should

first cherish it yourselves and then make its influence felt by others. It is often a mystery how a cold has been "caught." The fact is, however that when the blood is poor and the system depressed, one becomes peculi-arly liable to diseases. When the appetite or the strength fails, Ayer's Sarsaparilla should be taken without

delay.

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W. R. ALGER,

Insurance Agent.

Halifax, N. S.

Halifax, N. S.

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PARMELEE'S PILLS possess the power of acting specifically upon the diseased organs, stimulating to action the dormant energies of the system, thereby removing disease. In fact, so great is the power of this medicine to cleanse and purity, that diseases of almost every name and nature are driven from the body. Mr. D. Carswell, Carswell P. O., Ont, writes: "I have tried Parmelee's Pills and find them an excellent medicine, and one that will sell well.

OUR BOYS AND GIRLS.

You Lose the Esteem and Respect of Befined People.

"It is unfortunate that slang phrases are so easily slipping into our every day conversation, and taking apparently so fixed a place in our talk," writes Edward W. Bok in the December Ladies' Home Journal.

"And the worst of it is that so many recome are using slang entirely unconpeople are using slang entirely uncon-scious of the fact that they are doing so. If the common usage of slang were confined to a particular order of girls, it would, perhaps, serve as an indicator of character, and pass unnoticed. It would, at least, not touch the sensibilities of gentle folk. But it is not so confined. Slang is invading the very nicest of circles: it is beginning to influence the talk of our mos carefully-reared girls. And this is why the habit should receive closer attention. Girls are forgetting that slang phrases and refinement are absolutely foreign to each other. A slang phrase may be more expressive than a term of polite usage, but it is never impressive, except to impress un favorably. It is high time that our girls should realize that they should speak the English language their conversation, and not the dialect of the race-track, nor the lingo of the base ball field. A girl may cause a smile by the apt use of some slang phrase. But, inwardly, those who applaud her place her, at the same time, in their estimation. No girl ever won an ounce of respect by being faith that teaches uprightness of life stangy. On the contrary, many a girl, unconscious of the cause, has found and this is the confession which many herself gradually slipping out of people's respect by the fact that her talk was dotted with slang phrases. Catholic men in our day fail to make, and by their failure bring discredit upon the religion of Christ, disgrace upon the Church and ruin upon their 'Oh, she is clever,' said a woman not long ago, of a girl who could keep a You do not realize, brethren, your own power to influence others. See what advantage you possess. You have a faith that is unerring. You have a religion that is an in-

of the jester is never long."

A Story of Mozart. The old German professor who lives next door is fond of relating stories— stories flavored with bits of life in dear 'Vaterland," bearing good will from soul to soul and tenderness of heart as well, but the story of Mozart and the little wooden shoe is a favorite, and as interesting, if not as wonderful, as the mythical tale of Cinderella and the glass slipper. In the days when Mozart was composer to the Imperial Court at Vienna there came to the palace a young peasant woman, de-

irous of seeing the great musician. Mozart instantly remembered her as former servant in his father's family, and received her with kindness. But the grandeur with which she found Mozart surrounded awed and frightened her, and it was with much

would present her with a gift.
The story says that Mozart was equally touched and amused by the simple faith of the little servant maid, and on learning that her marriage was to take place at no distant day, bade things of faith. her, with a merry smile, to return to her home and tetch him one of her little

wooden shoes. She departed, wondering much and not a little disappointed, but, nevertheless, she brought the little wooden shoe

to Mozart. wonder out of that little wooden shoe. With file and plane the ugly uneven ness was brought to a smooth, delicate perfectness, so perfect that by a touch it gave forth a low, melodious hum. Strings were drawn taut across the toned, and lo! the little wooden shoe

with melody and music rang. And Mozart gave a great concert and the vast hall was not sufficient to give standing-room to the people who came to listen to the music of the little wooden shoe. And the marriage gift that Mozart presented to the little maid servant was a royal one indeed -the proceeds of the wonderful con-cert.-Our Young People.

Beethoven's Last Concert. The last days of Beethoven, as of many other men of genius, were clouded and unhappy. For twenty-five years before he died he had been deaf—a double calamity for a musician, and toward the end of his life his small savings were gone and his genius remained unappreciated. In consequence, his temper became irritable and few sought his company. There was one person, however, whom he dearly loved-a reckless young nephew, who, in his own wild fashion, fully returned his uncle's generous

affection.
In 1827 this nephew wrote to Beethoven from Vienna, saying that he had got into trouble with the police, and begging his uncle to come post-haste and extricate him. The old musician started at once, but after travelling part of the distance his money was ex-hausted and he had to continue the strength failed him utterly, and he was forced one evening to ask hospital-

piano, the sons brought forth their in struments and the mother and daughters took up their knitting. But the music had hardly begun when the knit-ting stopped. The eyes of the performers were moist and tears coursed freely down the cheeks of the women. Their guest alone seemed unaffected, for he could not hear the sweet strains that moved them to their utmost being. He could only gaze with yearning on the emotion of his new found friends.

When the music was ended Beethoven held out his hand for a sheet of the music, saying: "I could not hear you, friends, but I would like to know who wrote this piece which has so stirred your hearts." It proved to be the "Allegretto" from Beethoven's Symphony in A. It was now the stranger's turn to weep. "Ah!" he exclaimed, "I wrote it! I am Beethowen's Correlate the finish the piece."

went to the piano, and far into the night he played and improvised for the delight of his humble admirers. It was his last performance. The next morning Beethoven was unable to rise, and a few days later he passed peacefully away.

seemed to have returned to him.

CHATS WITH YOUNG MEN.

At the recent Glasgow convention of the Catholic Young Men's Societies of Great Britain, Prof. Stack read a paper of which this is a summary : Dangerous Literature.

It will be advisable (1) to consider the different dangers that lurk in Literature; (2) to review briefly the various classes of Literature; and (3) to lay down some principles for practical guidance.

And first as to the meaning of the phrase "Dangerous Literature," I assume that it is the wish of those at whose behest I have undertaken to treat my subject that I should take the word "Literature" in a very wide sense. a girl, which has as its only basis the cap and bells of the jester. The life For practical purpose we may consider it to mean "reading matter" in gen-With regard to the adjective "dangerous," we know that it implies the presence of some special element of risk. We also know that, as far at least as its direct and moral influence is concerned, Literature can affect human beings only, and addresses itself, not to their bodily constitution, but rather to their minds and hearts. It will, then, be sufficient for us to confine our attention to the following points:-1, dangers to faith; dangers to morality; 3, dangers to

man's mental constitution. I put dangers to faith first because they are not only the most important in themselves, but also the most far-reaching in their consequences. Whatever tends to destroy or weaken our faith, tends to the same degree to damage our moral and intellectual being; and this too, over and above the hurt which promise made by him to a little servant maid that on her wedding day he would present her with a gift. olic Christianity, displays only too clearly various forms of unbelief. And this continual presentment of false views cannot but tend to weaken or lestroy the true conception of the

We now turn to the consideration of the dangers to morality. These are closely connected with the want of Historical Novel and the Hystorical faith, and naturally vary in character according to the varying forms of unbelief; but in all alike a certain com-mon element of danger presents itself. And then a transformation resulted. Owing to the absence of a definite and writer and the prejudices of the public. It was Mozart's own hand that wrought authoritative standard of teaching, the This is especially the case with novels individual is driven back upon himself, and forced to combine in his own person the incompatible functions of advocate and judge. A comparative-Literature suffices to show how the polished surface, and with many a reading matter of our day reflects this light, caressing thrum he tuned and tendency to substitute inclination for ness to ignore or oppose the dictates of reason and conscience, when they conflict with the corrunt desires of the

or his readers.

We now come to a third danger, whose existence in connection with reading is all too imperfectly realized. As in relation to our bodies we must carefully avoid certain forms of exercise, either because they are dangerous in themselves, or unsuited to our particular constitution, so in the exercise of our reason and emotions we must be carefully on our guard against an improper application of the powers of our mind and the feelings of our overcome it. heart. Now, when we consider how easily passion, prejudice, and self-interest may mislead a writer, we are forced to admit the multitude of dangers that beset the reader. From an improper exercise of the reason and emotions, many acquire dangerous habits of loose reasoning and of false sentiment, and thus inflict permanent injury upon the powers of mind and

heart. It is now time to take up a close view of the various classes of Literature and to apply them to the observation and principles already set down. Let us first consider what may be called Serious Literature. In this category we naturally turn our attenjourney on foot. He had arrived tion to the Literature which professes within three miles of Vienna when his to be of a religious character, and here the Bible claims the position of honor. My reverence for Holy Writ being bestrength lailed him utterly, and he was forced one evening to ask hospitality at a humble cottage. The poor people received the travel-stained, gruff voiced, exhausted old man with cordiality, and asking no questions. The Bible is indeed God's word; but to diality, and asking no questions are generally merely human, and in the third the heroine met her death in special their meagers support with him. shared their meagre supper with him and out of this Divine Book human a new form of suicide. And, of course, shared their meagre supper with him and out of this Divine Book human a new form of suicide. And, of course, and offered him a snug seat by the life.

When the supper table was cleared the head of the family opened the supper table was cleared the pages of Christian history. If and think of the reckless waste of human a new form of suicide. And, of course, and out of this Divine Book human a new form of suicide. And, of course, and offered him a snug seat by the pages of the smanaged to violations of morality in the narrower of the word were not forgotten.

dangers of so grave a nature are found even in the Bible, what should we say of the vast body of so called "Religious Literature," especially in these countries? We must not forget that it is produced largely under the influence of a mass of misapprehensions and prejudices with regard to the Church of God-misapprehensions and prejudices which have been accumulat ing for over three hundred years, and which the best historians are able only very gradually to temper or remove.

With regard to the literature of Mental Philosophy, I must sum up the consideration of a very wide subject in a very few words. Modern thought is largely dominated by German Transcendentalism, which is especially dis tinguished by the two following characteristics-its independence of dogma and its superiority to common-sense ven. Come, let us finish the piece."
In a moment the strength of his youth Lest I should seem to exaggerate in this latter statement, allow me to ob-serve that the system of German philosophy most in vogue is that of Hegel, and some of Hegel's most ardent admirers frankly confess that even the fundamental position of his system cannot be formulated without appear ing as manifest absurdities. hardly necessary to point out that a "transcendentalism" which "transcends" both religion and commonsense must be the fruitful parent of many dangers, alike to faith, to moral ity, and to sound philosophy.

A Catholic, with his absolute reliand on the truthfulness of his creed, has, of all men, least reason to fear the truths of science. But he may often find himself in opposition to the unreasoning prejudices of certain scientists, or to the tone which they adopt when touching on matters quite beyond their province. They may indulge in the very unscientific prac-tice of "taking for granted."

In no department of Literature must the reader exercise greater caution than in the domain of history, whether profane or ecclesiastical. History, which ought to be the Oracle of Truth has been too often degraded to be a mere handmaid of controversy. Catholics have reason to rejoice that the tendency of history nowadays is to become ever more and more favorable to the Church, but the process of improvement is yet far from complete, nor is the evil work of nearly four centuries entirely undone.

To examine the various departments of poetry, fiction and the drama would require at least a volume. But after all, as far as our present purpose is concerned, whatever may be said of one of these applies to all. In the novel of to-day irreligion and immoral ity absolutely run riot. Religion is either ignored or only referred to in order to have its falsity calmly assumed. It is merely used as a foil to set off the agnostic's air of lofty superiority. That somewhat inconsistent individual delights to blaspheme what he professes not to know. As to morality, it is not, indeed, ignored by our novelists, but that is because it must be con-tinually outraged. What would the writer of fiction do without the three prohibitions: "Thou shalt not kill;" "Thou shalt not steal;" "Thou shalt not commit adultery"? Were these eternal laws repealed, the novelist would find his occupation gone.

But let us view our subject a little closer. The Modern Novel may per-Historical Novel and the Hysterical Novel. The historical novel is distinguished for its inaccurate presentment of historical facts. History is narrated must not take all things as they come, in a manner to suit the views of the but only such as are profitable. For it This is especially the case with novel published in these countries, when the authors touch on matters of Catholic doctrine and practice. And even Pro-testant writers confess their own subection to prejudice. Stevenson say "An Inland Voyage," p. 212): cannot help wondering whether a Pro-testant born and bred is in a fit state to

Euclid that my Protestant mind has missed the point, and that there goes with these deformities" (see how the evil crops out even in the very act of protest,) "some higher and more religious spirit than I dream." Yet the amiable Stevenson is a comparatively mild offender; would that some of his brother (and sister) novelists would take his remarks to heart! They might then, at least, restrain their pre-

As to the second type, the hysterical novel, its object seems to be to produce at any cost some strong, or even coarse, "sensation." This type of fiction would seem to be an importation from France, and to combine just those ele-ments which Dr. Ward described as the components of a truly French play, namely, the height of romance and self-devotion, as long as it can be combined with breaking a large proportion of the ten commandments. take an instance from our own Literature. There is a certain "high-class" magazine which is supposed to circulate freely among the "cultured" classes, and whose very editor is a lord. In a recent number there were, besides a portion of a serial and some miscellaneous articles, three short stories. The first ended with a duel,

man life affected by writers of the school of Mr. Haggard, do we not discover a new meaning in an old saying: "The pen is mightier than the sword?"—mightier, certainly, as a weapon of destruction. Such is that popular form of so-called realism which exaggerates the play of passion, and never hesitates to sacrifice decency and morality for the sake of what is called "effect." And who can tell the lasting evil that this literature must cause to the mind of the reader, by suggesting images and ideas which, once produced, may never be effaced?
To consider the different varieties of

reading matter that cannot well be classified either as "serious litera-ture" or as "light literature" would add too much to an essay that is already too long. There is, however, one class of literature which exercises such a widespread influence that it demands our special notice. I allude to Modern Journalism, and I need scarce ly add that I refer specially to infidel and Protestant journals. When we consider the ignorance, prejudice and hostility of the public mind in these countries with regard to Catholic Faith; when we reflect upon the strength of the temptation which editors must feel to pander to the passions of their readers; and when we realize how many motives tend to warp the jadgment and to lead one astray in argument, it must be evident that the public press is a formidable source of danger at once to the faith, to the morality, and to the mental health of the general reader.

What are the precautions and reme

dies which a reader must adopt?

In the first place, it is surely the duty of every loyal child of the Church to hearken to the voice of warning which our spiritual guides sometimes are constrained to utter. Whether it be by means of the much abused "Index ", or of the utterances of local authority, the true Catholic will always be ready to heed the warnings that are addressed to him, and to shun all Literature which his spiritual pastors declare to be evil or dangerous. He will not make the mistake of considering these warnings as violations of his liberty. He knows that the Church leaves him free in all that is for his good, and he does not yearn for the undesirable liberty of becoming either wicked or foolish.

In the second place, I would urge upon all to cultivate the habit of examining and even cross-examining, what they read, comparing it with the standard of sound sense and of true Faith. This habit will ensure their being always alive to the dangers that may lurk in the matter before them. As a man in anxious doubt about his bodily health consults his physician concern ing some particular form of food or exercise, so the Catholic who is in doubt about what he may safely read, can turn for counsel to one who has been made adequately acquainted with the spiritual and mental constitution of the inquirer. From such a counsellor a prudent decision may be expected; one free from the disturbing influence of perfrom the disturbing influence of per-sonal bias, and full of a kindly considertion. At a time when the range of available Literature is so vast, it cannot be pleaded that observance of the rules here laid down will ever be felt as a nardship. The quantity of reading matter is so immense that he who confines himself to the very best can never find his healthy appetite stinted. I may appropriately conclude with

the advice of the great St. Basil (De Legendis Libris Gentibus): "We would indeed be a shame that, while in matters of food we reject what is hurtful, we should exercise no discretion in those matters of instruction which are the nourishment of our mind.

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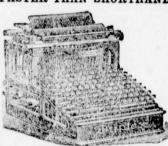
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