

FIVE-MINUTE SERMON.

Fourth Sunday in Lent.

THE VANITY OF THE WORLD.

Jesus, therefore, when he knew that they would come to take him by force and make him king, he withdrew into the mountain himself alone. (St. John vi 15)

Why, my brethren, did Jesus depart from the people before whom he had worked a miracle? It was because they conceived the idea of making him king. He would have no imitator. Him by spurning the vain praises and glory of men. As an excessive attachment to these is the chief element of the corrupt world, our Lord brings down upon it the whole weight of His severest condemnation. He warns us not to do our good works before men to be seen and praised by them. If we do, He says that we shall have no reward from our Father in heaven.

Alas! does not our own experience teach us how fickle and deceitful the friendship of the world is! How vain are its promises! It amuses us with its flatteries, it deceives us even while it performs nothing. We have perhaps longed for some worldly distinction, and have had our desire satisfied, but have we found contentment? Even in its possession were we not troubled, in spite of ourselves, by the thought: How long will this glory last? If we reflect upon it, what can be more frivolous than reputation and the esteem of the world? If one person esteems me, another despises me; for who has ever had the approbation of the whole world? And if the multitude has a high opinion of me, what is the multitude after all but a crowd of blind people, who esteem me to-day but are just as likely to spurn me to-morrow? But even if their esteem were most sincere, would it make me really better or happier? If others applaud me when my own conscience condemns me, of what service is their praise to me.

So too, if I am satisfied with myself and think I deserve the good opinion of men, how does it all benefit me? If God condemns me? I am, in truth, only that which I am in the judgment of God; and to seek the applause of the world with too much eagerness is to incur the disapprobation of God.

Oh, that you would cast yourselves at the feet of the Crucified and there learn in what the glory of God—the only true greatness—consists! Happier were you to-day had your past life been lived for God! What of those jealousies which made you troubled at the success of others? Why that slander which spared no one when there was question of establishing your own reputation? How account for that unbridled love of notoriety which so often caused you to detest God and place Basil in His stead? Whence came they? From the desire of the world's esteem and from forgetfulness of God.

If you have been foolish in the past let not the future find you thus. What will it profit you, at the hour of death, to have been regarded as clever, if you must soon appear with empty hands before the awful tribunal of God? Will you forsake an eternity of happiness for the vain enjoyment of a momentary esteem? God forbid that you should sacrifice the salvation of your soul for emptiness!

Make good resolutions, then, while you have time. It is not necessary that you should quit your station in life, that you should leave the world—salvation can be gained in every station of life; but live with the world in constant fear of its treachery; keep yourself in peace but not in alliance with it; when its displeasure, but seek not its friendship; should its commands be in opposition to virtue, hesitate not a moment in spurning them; should its practice be at variance with the Gospel, try not to compromise.

Think not of serving two masters, but choose the one who can and will repay your attachment.

A FRUIT OF BAPTIST CHARITY.

To the Editor of THE CATHOLIC RECORD.

Dear Sir—In this season of pardon and Christian reconciliation permit me to re-echo to your readers with a revival of the little life story of Margaret Haughey, the Christian heroine of New Orleans, as it is admirably told by Grace King in her splendid work, "New Orleans, the Place and the People."

As a seasoning to this genuine mid-west treat, let us bear in mind as Catholics that but for the noble charity of a young Baptist couple, Margaret must needs have lost the "faith of her fathers."

Your obedient servant, F. B. HAYES.

"There is not much to tell. Margaret Haughey's story is simple enough to be called stupid, with impatience. A husband and wife, fresh Irish immigrants, died in Baltimore, of yellow fever, leaving their infant, named Margaret, upon the charity of the community. A sturdy young Welsh couple who had crossed the ocean with the Irish immigrants, took the little orphan and cared for her as if she were their own child. They were Baptists, but they reared her in the faith of her parents, and kept her with them until she married a young Irishman in her own rank in life.

Failing health forced the husband to remove to the warmer climate of New Orleans, and finally, for the sake of the sea voyage, to sail to Ireland, where he died. Shortly afterwards, Margaret, in New Orleans, lost her baby. To make a living, she engaged as landlady in the St. Charles Hotel. This was her equipment at twenty for her monument.

The sisters of a neighbouring asylum were at the time in great straits to provide for the orphans in their charge, and they were struggling desperately to build a larger house, which was becoming daily more necessary to them. The childless widow, Margaret, went to the superior and offered her humble services and a share of her earnings. They were most gratefully accepted. From her savings at the laundry,

Margaret bought two cows, and opened a dairy, delivering the milk herself. Every morning, year after year, in rain or shine, she drove her cart the rounds of her trade. Returning, she would gather up the odd victuals which she begged from the hotels, and these she would distribute among the asylums in need. And many a time it was only this food that kept hunger from the orphans. It was during those deadly periods of the great epidemics, when children were orphaned by the thousands. The new, larger asylum was commenced, and in ten years Margaret's dairy, pouring its profits steadily into the exchequer, was completed and paid for. The dairy was enlarged, and more money was made, out of which an infant asylum—her baby-house, as Margaret called it—was built, and then the St. Elizabeth training asylum for grown girls. With all this, Margaret still could save money to invest. One of her debtors, a baker failing, she was forced to accept his establishment for his debt. She therefore dropped her dairy and took to baking, substituting the bread for the milk cart. She drove one as well as the other, and made her deliveries with the regularity that had become a characteristic of her as her sunbonnet was. She furnished the orphan asylum at so low a price and gave away so much bread in charity that it is surprising that she made any money at all; but every year brought an increase of business, and an enlargement of her original establishment, which grew in time into a factory worked by steam. It was situated in the business centre of the city, and Margaret, always sitting in the open doorway of her office, and always good humoured and talkative, became an integral part of the business world about her. No one could pass without a word with her, and, as it was said no enterprise that she endorsed ever failed, she was consulted as an infallible oracle by all; ragamuffins, paper boys, porters, clerks, even by her neighbors, the great merchants and bankers, all calling her "Margaret" and nothing more. She never dressed otherwise than as her statue represents her, in calico dress, with small shawl, and never wore any other head covering than a sun-bonnet, and she was never known to sit any other way than as she sits in model. She never learned to read or write, and never could distinguish one figure from another. She signed with a mark the bill that distributed her thousands of dollars among the orphan asylums of the city. She did not forget one of them, white or colored; Protestants and Jews were remembered as well as Catholics, for she never forgot that it was a Protestant couple that had cared for her when she was an orphan. "They are all orphans alike," was her oft-repeated comment. The anecdotes about her would fill a volume. She never parted from anyone without leaving an anecdote behind her, so to speak.

During the four years of the war she had a hard task to maintain her business; but she never on that account diminished her contributions to the orphans, and to the needy, and to the families of Confederate soldiers.

When she died, it seemed as if people could not believe it. "Margaret is dead!" Why, each one had just seen her, talked to her, consulted her, asked her for something, received something from her. The news of the death of anyone else in the city would have been received with more credulity. But the journals all appeared in mourning, and the obituaries were there, and these obituaries, could she have read them, would have struck Margaret as the most incredible thing in the world to have happened to her. The statue was a spontaneous thought, and it found spontaneous action. While her people were still talking about her death, the fund for it was collected; it was ordered and executed; and all most before she was missed there, she was there again before her same old chair that every one knew so well, dressed in the familiar calico gown with her little shawl over her shoulders, not the old shawl she wore every day, but the pretty one she was so proud of, which the orphans crocheted for her.

All the dignitaries of the State and city were at the unveiling of the statue. A thousand orphans, representing every asylum in the city, occupied the seats of honour; a delega-

tion of them pulled the cords that held the canvas covering over the marble, and, as it fell, and "Margaret" appeared, their delight led the loud shout of joy, and the hand clapping. The streets were crowded as far as the eye could see, and it was said, with no doubt, exaggeration of sentiment, but a pardonable one—that not a man, woman, or child in the crowd but knew Margaret and loved her. And there is an explanation of this exaggeration that might be exuberantly mentioned, that as the unveiling of the monument took place in the summer, when the rich go away for change of air, the crowd was composed of the poorer classes, the working people, black as well as white. As the dedication speech expressed it, them for all time; "To those who look with concern upon the moral situation of the hour, and fear that human action finds its sole motive to-day in selfishness and greed, who imagine that the world no longer yields homage save to fortune and to power. . . the scene . . . affords comfort and cheer. When we see the people of this great city meet without distinction of age, rank or creed, with one heart, to pay their tribute of love and respect to the humble woman who passed her quiet life among us under the simple name of "Margaret," we come fully to know, to feel, and to appreciate, the motherless power of a well-spent life. The substance of her life was charity, the spirit of it, the strength of it, its religion, the end, peace—then fame and immortality."

DEPLORABLE STATE OF FRANCE. Antigonish Casket.

M. Jules Lemaitre is not a "clerical" writer by any means, but he is not a Freemason either, and those who will feel incredulous as to the part played by masonry in French affairs will do well to listen to his words. "Every law which has been promulgated of late years against the Catholic Church," he says, "has been planned in the Council Chamber of the Grand Orient of Paris, working under the direct influence of the Grand Orient of Rome, and although there are not more than 27,000 Freemasons all told in the whole of France, and only 25,000 in Italy, they rule both countries with a rod of iron." All but two of the present French Cabinet are Masons, as are likewise more than two-thirds of the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate. And Richard Day, in his writings in an English journal, sums up the work which the secret society has accomplished, as follows:

"Let us view the work of destruction which has taken place in France since 1902. The religious orders are dispersed; their convents, schools, and churches sold, in many cases for a trifle; all the Christian schools are closed; the chaplains have been recalled from the army and navy (even in the time of war), from the civil hospitals, the mad houses, the poor houses, the almshouses—in a word, from all charitable and educational institutions under State control; and, moreover, within the past month from all the lycées, in which it has now become punishable for a lad to be caught saying his prayers, or attempting to attend Divine service on Sunday. And here I may say, in parenthesis, that what applies to the boys' schools applies equally to the girls' schools, and that even in the famous house of St. Cyr, where the daughters of officers of the Legion of Honor receive their education from the State, the chapel has been closed, and night and morning prayers and attendance at Mass abolished. But there is more still: 2,833 churches and chapels belonging to ex-religious communities have been closed and sold, in most cases for a few pounds, on the express condition, however, that they may not be reopened as places of public worship; two of the most beautiful and largest in Paris have been recently purchased by the Jewish manager of the lowest form of café chantant, and their high altars have been turned into platforms from which dirty songs of a description which would not be tolerated by the London police, are sung by the most degraded of male and female singers. All the Archbishops' and Bishops' palaces have been seized, and have been converted either into museums, libraries, or municipal buildings. There is scarcely a priest from end to end of France who is at the pres-

ent moment in the enjoyment of his presbytery. The market crosses have been cast down, and even the humble crucifix over the papers' graves in the cemeteries have been torn up and thrown on the dung-hill. In the meantime France is deluged from end to end with the foulest literature that has ever been conceived by the foulest imagination. In the windows of the newspaper kiosks and shops of Paris, and indeed of every other city, horrible, obscene and blasphemous caricatures gaudily colored are exhibited for the benefit of little boys and girls on their way to and from school. In the cafés chantants, not only in Paris but in the provinces, songs are sung in which Christ and His Mother, even God the Almighty Himself, are turned into the coarsest ridicule. A well-known French writer lately described a scene which he beheld in a theatre at Bordeaux, as large as the London Alhambra. The house was crowded from ceiling to floor, some fifteen hundred young recruits having been granted a fortnight's imprisonment for spectacles, the revolting character of which baffles belief. I myself witnessed at Nancy a parody of the Resurrection in an enormous café chantant, which was so disgusting that—to their credit—half the audience rose and left the theatre.

Every day the papers teem with anecdotes of some outrage or other on religion. The Echo de Paris of December 7 contains a letter addressed by a young officer at E. anepes to his mother: "I sent you a fortnight ago a postcard with a view of the exterior of the cathedral of this town, but I dare not send you one of the interior, for five of our men have been punished by a fortnight's imprisonment for having entered the church."

"In the meantime the tide of crime is raising especially among the young. In 1902 there were 18,000 non-adult persons of both sexes taken up for various crimes in Paris; in 1906 there were 27,000, the eldest of whom was under twenty years of age; in 1902 there was 17 cases of suicide of boys and girls under twenty years of age, and in 1906 there were 87. Everyone who has lately visited France and studied the question for themselves, be they Protestants, Catholics or Agnostics, must bear witness to the extraordinary deterioration of the moral fibre of the people. Nous sommes rongés par l'alcoolisme et le sadisme—otherwise by drink and debauchery."

"WARFARE THE CONDITION OF VICTORY." Cardinal Newman.

"So down to this very time, when faith has withered, one and the other have been called to exhibit before the great King. It is as though all of us were allowed to stand before His Throne at once, and He called on each in turn, and then that, to take up the chant by himself, each in his turn having to repeat the melody which his brethren have before gone through. Or as if He held a solemn dance in His honor in the courts of heaven, and each had by himself to perform some one and the same solemn and graceful movement at a signal given; or, as if it were some trial of strength or agility, and while the ring of by standers upheld and applauded, we, in succession, one by one, were actors in the pageant. Such is our state. Angels are looking on, Christ has gone before. Christ has given us an example, that we may follow His steps. He went through far more, infinitely more, than we can be called to suffer. . . . Now is our time, and all ministering angels keep silence and look on. Oh! let not your feet slip, or your eye be false, or your ear dull, or your attention flagging! Be not dispirited; be not afraid; keep a good heart; be bold; draw not back; you will be carried through. Whatever troubles come on your mind, body or estate, from within or from without, from chance or from intent, from friends or from foes, whatever your troubles be, though you be lonely, O children of heavenly Mother, be not afraid! Call you like men in your day, and when it is over, Christ will receive you to Himself, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you."—Fr. Newman in Dublin Review in 1874.

Hurry, is the mark of a weak mind; dispatch, the vindication of a strong one.



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