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FIVE-MINUTE SERMONS. Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost.

GRATITUDE. My brethren, we have had a word to say before this about the vice of ingratitude, and of how mean a vice it is, especially in a Christian. Now let us consider the opposite virtue—gratitude. It is, to be sure, one of the little virtues. Yet how can we call any class of virtues little? No doubt there are, strictly speaking, grades of merit very much higher than above the other. But that is not so much from the action done in each case as from the motive that inspires the action. One saves a man's life for the love of money; another gives a glass of cold water for the love of God. The glass of water is nothing compared to a human life; yet the glass of water will be rewarded for all eternity, and the saving of the human life is paid for as we pay for a load of coal. Brethren, beware of thinking there is anything to be called little that has to do with God and eternal life; and always bear in mind that, by practising little virtues with an earnest purpose to please God, your merit is according to your heart, and not to your hand. I do not intend to speak specially, just now, of gratitude to God; but between man and man gratitude is one of those gentle virtues that increase our fondness for each other. Gratitude is a short cut to sincere and lasting friendship. And if a supernatural motive inspires one's gratitude to his friends, then a holy friendship is the result. Some people complain that they have no friends. I think they are most to blame themselves. Have they never had a favor done them? Why, every one of us has had a score of favors done him every day of his life. Those who bear it in mind, who say a word of hearty thanks, who watch a chance to do a favor in return, never lack friends. Brethren, never forget a favor. Return it if you can, at least in part; but at any rate never forget it. Feel grateful at least; say a thankful word; offer up a prayer for your benefactors now and then. The best use we can make of our memories is to remember our benefactors. Favors done and favors gratefully remembered are the two halves of a happy life. It would be only simple justice if we looked on gratitude as we do on a just debt; for gratitude pays debts, first in goodwill, and before long in a more substantial manner. You know that an honest debtor will always try to save a little from day to day to pay his debts. So we can do a little from time to time by way of instalments, so to speak; we can say a daily prayer for our benefactors, write an occasional letter, pay a visit now and then, often praise them to our friends.

Of course, those who have done us the greatest favors are entitled to the deepest gratitude. Now, who has done so much for us as our parents? Certainly, next to God, our parents stand first in the list of our benefactors. Yet many, especially after they have married and settled down in their own families, are wanting in gratitude to their parents. Married persons who are badly treated by their own children should sometimes ask themselves if it be not in punishment for their forgetfulness of their own parents. Of course, when we are in middle life, what was done for us in childhood seems very far away; it was diffused over many years; it was a regular habit and course of life; it was bound up in our parents' own happiness. But let us bear in mind, all the same, how true and deep the love that inspired it; how unwearied the patience; how self-forgetful the devotion of our parents, and let us seek every chance to make their last years happy.

Brethren, shall I say a word about gratitude due to us of the sanctuary? Has not some priest done you a favor; converted you by a sermon, inspired you to perseverance by his advice in the confessional, soothed your sick and weary heart, or reconciled you to a dreary burden? If so, you ought to pray for him, and especially for your pastors.

But gratitude to God is, of course, the first and best of all. From Him we have received all, and having forfeited every favor, again and again received them back from the Divine bounty.

To make your business pay, good health is a prime factor. To secure good health, the blood should be kept pure and vigorous by the use of Ayer's Sarsaparilla. When the vital fluid is impure and sluggish, there can be neither health, strength, nor ambition. Have You Tried Derby Plug Smoking Tobacco, 5, 10 And 20 cent Plugs. Mr. Thomas Ballard Syracuse, N. Y., writes: "I have been afflicted for nearly a year with that most-to-be-dreaded disease, Dyspepsia, and at times worn out with pain and want of sleep and after trying almost everything recommended, I tried one box of Ayer's Sarsaparilla, and am now nearly well, and believe they will cure me. I would not be without them for any money."

OUR BOYS AND GIRLS. AN ARTIST'S STORY.

In the Strada Reale in the city of Valette, Malta, stood one of those quaint old houses, half castle, half church, built at the time the brave knight and Grand Master John de Valette, lived quietly in his stronghold, after the many stout blows his battle-axe had showered on the heads of the infidel Turks. In a room facing the North, Daniel Rota, Neapolitan painter, had his studio. He was a genial old man, well verging on to seventy years; but his hand was yet steady and his vision so little impaired that with the aid of his spectacles, he still painted those remarkable pictures which made his rooms the resort of the connoisseurs of the period.

He had a picture hanging on his wall that was a gem in its way. It represented an Italian boy, barefooted, and in the garb of a beggar, eating a crust of bread. It was one of Rota's early productions, and was considered by him as one of his best. There was something most angelic in the gentle expression of the child's sweet face, that made one loath to turn his eyes from the canvas. One day questioned the old artist in regard to the picture. "Ah!" he replied, "it has a history that is at once so replete with consolation and sadness that it brings tears to my eyes when I look upon it and think of the past as I frequently do."

I was a young fellow, scarcely twenty years old, and all the instruction I received was acquired in the town of Rocigliano. It was a pretty place, and much frequented by tourists. I was poor, and had no patrons, so to speak, until the Marquis Bernardo Grantini came to my studio, and, praising one of my pictures, bought it. Ah! then, what a joy filled my bosom! I had never felt so happy before, for the Marquis belonged to a powerful family, and had great influence in the country. Everyone I met congratulated me when they heard that the Marquis had deigned to honor me with his patronage. But when he came and brought the Marchioness to sit and have her portrait painted, the people said, "Now Rota is on his way to fortune." You may believe me when I tell you that I shared all the kind predictions of my friends. I had great ambition, and a fire in my temperament that would not be easily quenched. I never labored at a picture with more real pleasure and zeal than I did the sweet face of the Marchioness Grantini. When it was completed I was satisfied with it in every particular.

The Marquis paid me more than I asked, and brought his friends who like-wise gave me orders. I removed to better rooms, and worked with greater assiduity than ever. That was not all. The Marquis invited me to his house, where I was introduced to a great many distinguished people. It was a great honor, though you can't understand it as I did then. The Marquis had a son—an infant—quite tender in years. When he became older, I was to paint his picture. But alas! very shortly after the promise, as his wife's health required a change, he lost a good friend when he departed. It was then that I determined to travel and improve myself in my profession, for, you see, I had never been out of my native town. I went to Rome, where I stayed several years, and then located in Milan. How inscrutable are the ways of Providence!

My success in Milan was good. I had saved quite a sum of money, and my pictures sold rapidly, and were much sought after. It didn't spoil me though. Thank heaven! I endeavored to cultivate a meek spirit, and I don't remember of wishing any one ill in all my days. I must have been thirty when I went to Florence. I had wholly lost all intelligence of my kind friend, the Marquis; but I often thought of him, nevertheless.

I made Florence my home, and it was there I gained all the distinction I may possess as a painter. I bought a pretty villa, and used to entertain my friends in my bachelor style, for I was never married. The maestro Rubini was my most frequent visitor, and Cardinal Imperiali, a noted ecclesiastic, came often to my house. I had a great many worthy friends, and was quite happy. One day, I was taking a stroll through the streets, when a small boy, meekly attired, approached me, and asked charity for his grandfather, who was sick and incapable of supporting himself. The child was gnawing a piece of bread with an avidity that bespoke hunger. There was a peculiar beauty in his countenance that made me pause. His face seemed to bring me some vision of the past that I in vain tried to recollect. It appeared as if the eyes of one I had known in far-off years was looking in to my soul, and appealing to my pity for the unfortunate. "What is your name, my child?" I inquired, laying my hand tenderly upon his head. "Camillo," he replied. "Camillo what?" "That is all, signor," he replied; "they never call me anything else."

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"What a splendid subject that boy would make for my canvas," I thought. "I should like to see your grandfather, my little man," said I. "Suppose you show me the way?" The boy hesitated and gazed at me in a very perplexed manner. "What are you thinking about?" I asked. "My grandfather is not pleased when I return home soon; he bids me beg until I hear the Angelus," he replied. "He is afraid you'll not gather the coppers fast enough, hey?" The little fellow hung down his head, but made no answer. "Well, come along, I'll see that he does not scold you for once at least." The child, without further delay, started off toward that portion of the city, inhabited by the medics and public thoroughfares. It was a good half hour's walk ere we halted at a low, mean dwelling, with ragged children playing at the door. "This way, signor," said the child, as he stepped into the entry, and began to ascend the rickety stairs that creaked with our weight, as if they were going to tumble down. At last, by groping along the passage, we came to a door which he opened, and a man engaged in making a toy looked up and demanded, "Who are you?" His voice was rough and disagreeable, and he bore upon his face the stamp of a villain.

I at once explained the object of my visit, and offered to pay him if he would permit the child to attend my studio. It required but little observation to satisfy myself that the fellow was one of those miserable impostors who live upon the money collected by the children they send out to beg upon the streets. He was fat, and withal, to a certain degree, insolent. "I scarcely know what to say, signor," he replied, "Camillo is of great service to me. Yet if you are willing enough to pay me for the time you occupy him, I suppose I might allow him to go. You will not require him all day, I imagine?" "I don't know," I answered, disgusted at the penurious wretch, whose question indicated a purpose to place the child upon the street the moment I dismissed him.

"Well, he can go. I will accept your terms," he replied. "What is your name?" I asked, handing him ten florins. "Hugo, signor, that's all I ever use. I am too poor to have occasion for a surname." "You say this is your grandchild?" "I did not say so, signor, but he is nevertheless. He is the son of my daughter who died in Garda. His father ran away, so he fell to my care." "Care?" I voluntarily ejaculated. "Certainly, signor, don't I give him food and shelter?" "I thought he provided you with both," I responded, becoming a little nettled at the fellow's impudence. "Then you were mistaken," he answered coolly. "I'll take the boy, now," I replied, desiring to get out of the den, that did not smell any too fresh. "Come directly to me, Camillo," he said, "as soon as the signor is done with you, and mind, don't linger upon the way."

During my walk homeward, I questioned the child about his history, but he was so young he could give me but little information. He acknowledged that his grandfather sometimes whipped him when he returned with no money, and more than once had threatened to turn him out into the streets. I began my picture—painting him as I first found him, eating a crust of bread. As I worked upon his face, the old feeling that first came over me when I met him, grew strong within my heart. Certainly there was something in that child's features that connected me with the past. Surely I had gazed upon these looks before, but where and when?

The Cardinal Imperiali came to visit me one day while I was engaged on my picture. "That is a very beautiful child," he remarked. I repeated what had taken place with the boy's grandfather. "Tis a lamentable fact that these things are on the increase in Europe generally. As far as I can discover, nothing has ever been proposed to effectually correct the evil. There have not been wanting those who lay odium at the door of the Church. But that is unjust as well as untrue. I despair of witnessing the amelioration of this class."

Day by day my heart warmed towards this friendless child. At length the feeling became so overpowering that I determined to obtain possession of him if it were possible and bring him up as my own son. With this view, the Cardinal kindly consented to visit Hugo and arrange terms. He was not able to do so without great difficulty, for the fellow was exorbitant in his demands, and not easily persuaded to part with the child. However, I got the boy, and Hugo received a liberal annuity. "I cannot believe that Camillo is in any way related to this scamp who styles himself the grandfather," remarked the Cardinal as we were sitting together. "He gives a very unsatisfactory and disconnected account of himself, and I do not credit his assertions." Camillo, once in my house, clad as becoming my son, was different in

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many respects from Camillo, the beggar boy. His gentleness was soon apparent, and the natural affection which slumbered in his heart went on to all who were kind to him. I think he learned to love me quickly. I am sure I lavished my affection on him. I was very proud of him—proud to hear him answer, when asked his name, "Camillo Rota." A year passed away, and he was my delight. To have separated us would have rendered me miserable. If any one would have told me that by my own act I would send him from my side, I do believe the knowledge would have driven me to madness. And yet it was to be.

Well the Marquis and Marchioness Grantini came to Florence. I did not know it, but the Marquis heard of me first and came to visit me. He was overjoyed to see me. A decided change had come over him; he looked older and careworn, and his hair was getting white. But his spirits seemed good; only at times he appeared oppressed. He said the Marchioness was well; "but," he added, you will find her greatly altered. We have had trouble, good Rota, but another time we will talk of that." It was true; I found the Marchioness so changed that I could scarcely believe that I looked upon the beautiful woman whose portrait I had painted scarce five years before. When I advanced to meet her, tears filled her eyes. "Oh! my good friend," she exclaimed, "I am glad to welcome you, and yet when I last saw you, I was a happy mother!" and she wept. Then I remembered the infant, and felt mortified that I had not thought of it at first. "You lost your child?" I said. "Yes, yes," she sobbed, "poor little Camillo! If death had taken him I could have been reconciled, but to have him snatched from me in such a way. Oh! my good friend, it was too cruel." "Pardon me," I replied, "I never, till this moment heard aught of your misfortune."

The Marquis then spoke. He related the fact that they were visiting Lake Garda, when, one evening, the child was stolen from the house, and no trace of him had ever been discovered. He had no difficulty with any person, and knew no reason why the animosity of any one whatever should have been visited upon him. A hot pain shot through my veins when he mentioned the name of Garda. I could not tell why, but I shuddered as if a great evil was overshadowing me. The next twenty-four hours was to make a change in my home, so great that my head would bow with sorrow and joy at the same moment. The following day, the Marquis came to dine with me, bringing his wife. I had already informed them that I had adopted a boy to bring up as my son, but as his name was the same as that of the lost child, I refrained from mentioning the fact. Camillo was sent for after the Marquis and Marchioness had laid aside hat and shawl. When the boy entered the room, he came bounding towards me with childish glee, throwing his arms about my neck. Suddenly a shriek came from the lips of the Marchioness as she darted forward and catching Camillo drew him towards the window. The Marquis became very pale.

"For the love of heaven, Signor Rota, speak; whose did you possess yourself of this child? Look! behold, Bernardo," she cried, addressing her husband; "do you observe that scar? What is your name, my child?" she continued, gazing into his face, with her eyes dilated to their fullest extent. "Camillo Rota, signora," he replied. With a wild cry, the unfortunate woman fell backward in a swoon. The Marquis, accustomed to these occurrences, declined my offer to send for medical aid, and lifting her to a couch proceeded to administer restoratives himself. Ere the Marchioness recovered, there came a knock at the door, and Cardinal Imperiali entered in great haste. "Seigneur Rota," he said, "I am the bearer of the news to you that ought to bring you great joy, notwithstanding it will spoil some of those splendid anticipations you cherish for your son." He then proceeded to relate that Hugo Restaggio had been stabbed in a quarrel with some of the occupants of the house where he resided, and the Fra Stephano, being near at hand, confessed him. "At his request the Fra was to inform you that the child you have adopted was stolen from the Marquis Grantini at Lake Garda. No motive was assigned for the act save the design to have a beautiful child to



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