

FIVE-MINUTE'S SERMON.

First Sunday of Advent.

LOOKING TO THE END.

"And he spoke to them a similitude. See the fig tree and all the trees: when they now shoot forth their fruit, you know that summer is nigh." That seems a strange similitude for our Lord to make use of, does it not, my brethren? Yet what could more forcibly teach the lesson life would have us learn? Every one, even the simplest child, when he sees the trees beginning to put forth their leaves, knows that summer is nigh. So our Lord wished us to see that the signs preceding the end of the world are equally clear. And not only is this true of that great last day when all things shall be changed and the voice of the angel shall be heard calling all men to judgment; it is equally true of the day when the world shall end for us, when we shall be forced to leave the world. There are signs all around us telling that we are fast hurrying to the appointed lot of all men. Yet too often we live as if that day were still far off, as if we had yet many years to live; and when the day at last comes, how many does it not find unprepared?

What could be a clearer sign to us of the approach of death than this day, this first Sunday of Advent? For what is it? It is the beginning of a new year. It is the day on which the Church begins over again her round of penance and prayer and joy. A year of our lives has gone from us, and how have we spent it? What have we done? How do we stand now in God's sight? Are we better than we were a year ago? Has it not been to us a year of warning? Look back and see how many of your friends and neighbors have fallen in the battle of life during this past year; and how unexpected, perhaps, was it to many of them! How many afflictions have come to you! They were all signs, and the one lesson they should have taught you was that the time of life was short and was rapidly drawing to a close. Did you ever stop to think of that? Did you ever ask yourselves why it was your friend or neighbor was taken away and you were spared? Ah! it was that you might hear again the words of warning spoken to us by our Lord Himself. "Take heed to yourselves," he says, "lest perhaps your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, drunkenness and the cares of life, and that day come upon you suddenly. You have heard these words before, but what effect have they produced? Have you given up those sins of drunkenness and gluttony? Have you rid yourselves of those excessive and sinful cares of life? Or did you delude yourselves? Did you go forth from the church and say: 'Oh! I am young yet; I see no signs of death in me; there will be time enough to think of those things when I get older.' Thou fool! Have you not heard the words of the Gospel addressed to the man who thought he had a long time for enjoyment? And even while his heart was filled with such things the awful voice of God was heard saying: 'Thou fool, this night all these things shall be taken from thee, and thy soul cast into hell.' My brethren, ask yourselves now, what would be your fate if the voice were suddenly to call you. Do not some of you shudder when you think of it? And what is it then, as reasonable beings, that we ought to do? Is it to go on in that awful state? Ah! my brethren, God has permitted us to hear these words of warning perhaps for the last time, and said indeed will it be for us if we do not heed them. And now is the time to prepare; now, at the very beginning of this new year, is the time to cast off the works of darkness, to free ourselves from the sins by which we have been so long enslaved, for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.

A Mother's Influence.

I do not think that women exactly realize what the early teachings and influences of a mother mean to a man when he reaches years of maturity. The time which a boy spends at his mother's knee is never forgotten by the man. Our morality is learned there. We are most impressionable when we are in a stage of absolute dependence upon others. Many a man has stood at the forks of the road in his life, broken hearted and perplexed, only to have his mother's words, uttered to him when a child, come before him and point him the way. It is then that he realizes that the best thing in the world to a man is to have had a good mother, watchful, tender and anxious, as only a mother can be where her child is concerned. In those supreme moments the lesson taught—not by the nurse, not by a stranger, not by the kinder-garten, but at the mother's knee—becomes a precious recollection and a benediction. It means then a man's salvation. And in that quiet moment a man thinks of a good mother as he never thinks of any other woman. A look of tenderness comes into his eyes, a feeling of softness creeps into his heart, and the attitude of his early infancy comes to him as unconsciously, he looks upward and breathes to himself the words of all mothers: "Mother, I remain for the mothers." To-day to determine how much that word will mean to the men of to-morrow.—Edward W. Bok, in Ladies Home Journal.

Many a Young Man.

When from over-work, possibly assisted by an inherited weakness, a health fails and rest or medical treatment must be resorted to, then no medicine can be employed with the same beneficial results as Scott's Emulsion.

OUR BOYS AND GIRLS.

At The Door.

I thought myself indeed secure. So fast the door, so firm the lock; But lo! he tapping comes to knock. My patient ear with timorous knock.

My heart was stone could it withstand The sweetness of my baby's plea. That timorous baby knocking and "Please let me in—it's only me."

I threw aside the unfinished book, Regardless of its tempting charms, And, greeting wide the door, I took My laughing darling in my arms.

Who knows but in a twinkling I, like a trusty child, shall wait The glories of a life to be Beyond the Heavenly Father's gate?

And will that Heavenly Father heed The truant's supplicating cry, As at the door I stand, I plead, "This I, O Father! only I?"

—Eugene Field.

Strictness and Accuracy.

Habits of exactness in every phase of life are a safeguard to character. In a considerable degree the whole boy is exhibited in any of his spheres of thought or action. He cannot, therefore, indulge in laxity in any one of his activities of head or of hand, without incurring the risk of growing lax unconsciously in other things. Carelessness or slouchiness in mere surface routine may result in a loss of the sense of care and exactness in matters involving the deeper principles of rectitude and honor. The line between right and wrong, between honesty and dishonesty, has been lost sight of by many a trusted employee, simply because hard and fast lines have fallen out of his general habits of thinking, speaking and doing. Strictness and accuracy have a value beyond any immediately utilitarian purpose their value is to character.

A Great Artist's Advice.

Asked on one occasion to say a few words of advice to boys, Sir John Millais said: "My advice to boys is 'Work!' They can't be all geniuses, but they can all work, and without work even the most brilliant genius will be of very little good. I never recommend any one to be an artist: it is a wretchedly disappointing profession for most, and is terribly over-crowded. If a boy has got a real calling to be an artist, he will be one without being recommended. Scores and scores of people bring their children to me and ask me if I should advise them to bring them up as painters, and I always say, 'Certainly not.' But, whatever a boy intends to be, he must grind at it; study all the minutest details, not scamp any of the uninteresting elementary parts, but work away so as to be thoroughly well up in all ground-work of the subject. It is interesting to remember in this connection that Sir John as a boy never ceased using his pencil. He was sketching every minute of the day.

St. Louis and the Miraculous Host.

It is related in the life of St. Louis, king of France, that upon one occasion while the priest was celebrating Mass in the royal chapel, our Blessed Lord manifested Himself to the assistants during the time of the elevation, under the form of a little infant of our passing beauty. As the king was not present, a messenger was immediately despatched to inform him of the miraculous event. In the meantime the priest was earnestly requested not to lower his hands until St. Louis had arrived, in order that the king might witness with his own eyes so extraordinary a prodigy. The messenger having reached the royal apartment, informed the king of the event, and urged him to lose no time in replying to the spot. Whereupon St. Louis, without manifesting any surprise, quietly replied: "Let those go who profess the prodigy who have no true faith in the Blessed Eucharist. For my part, I am more satisfied about the real presence of Jesus in the consecrated Host than if I were to behold Him with my own eyes." So well did he know that true faith has a firmer foundation in the Word of God and the teaching of the Church, than any that can be obtained by the testimony of the senses.—Anne Divota.

The Sunshine of Past Ages.

The teacher bade me write an essay upon "Coal." I studied the encyclopedia until my head was in a whirl with big words like "amorphous substance," "bituminous coal," "lig-nite and cannel coal," and they all contained "carbon, hydrogen, oxygen and nitrogen," and then I did not know one single thing about coal, and so I asked mamma:

"What is coal, any way?"

"It is the sunshine of past ages," said she, and then she told me so pretty a story that I thought I would write it for "Our Boys and Girls" to read.

Ages and ages ago, when the earth was young, and man had not yet begun to live on it, because as yet the conditions were not favorable to the life that mankind needs, monster fishes swam in the slimy seas and giant animals stalked over and through the marshy lands. Monster trees grew from the sloppy, moist ground, while grasses with huge stems and gigantic leaves, grew beneath their branches.

Then, as now, rain fell, clouds floated by and the bright sunshine was over all. The brighter the sunshine, the ranker and taller grew the trees, the grasses, the ferns and the weeds. Year after year they grew and blossomed and died, over and over again, just as plants and trees do now. Again and again, in those ages,

great earthquakes occurred, and the waters would roll in places where they were not before, and where they were once would be bare ground. The giant trees and the plants beneath them would be packed and buried in the mud and would see the sunshine no more.

Over and over again, trees and grasses, plants and ferns, grew in the sunshine: over and over again they were buried and packed down in the darkness, ever undergoing chemical changes.

Ages came and went, and finally man, the crowning work of the Creator, appeared upon the scene. Centuries came and went before he discovered the buried sunshine. Many are the legends as to how and when he first learned of the warmth imprisoned in the black mineral that, now and then, was found above the ground.

As every good deed sooner or later leaves its good record on the annals of time, so the short lives of the tiniest ferns of ages ago are now making light and happiness in many a home that would be dark, cold and gloomy had not the Creator, in His wisdom, ages and ages ago, buried the sunshine in earth's dark bosom, to be until such time as He was ready to bring it again to the light of day.

It's Worth All It Costs.

"Cultivate the habit of being gracious and entertaining at home." There was never better advice than that. "Company manners" are the most detestable things in the world, not alone because of their pretension—and all pretense is vulgar and wrong—but because of the evil they work upon those who practice them. The girl who does not cultivate the habit of being gracious and entertaining at home is never easy and sure of herself away from home. Her voice is affected, her words are illy chosen, her attitudes are too stiff or too careless and she lacks refinement in a dozen small, fine, dainty yet most pleasing ways. The unrestrained yet always carefully guarded intercourse with "home people" is an education in itself. They know each other's hindrances, drawbacks and weak places, therefore they readily perceive the strength and courage which overcomes difficulties, and it awakens both pride and hearty sympathy when one of the circle brightens and widens in wit and learning. A family party meeting three times each day around a plain and frugal board with the determination to make it pleasant for each other, passes through years of trial and care, through sickness and disappointment, from youth to middle-life and even into age, with cheerful spirits, with courage and hope, with growing intelligence, deepening refinement, an unshaded and vigorous youthfulness of heart and mind that wards off the real evils of age. Keep the merry thoughts and amusing incidents of each separate life story to tell graphically at home; read and talk to each other of what you read; gather beautiful things to share under the roof tree; mark the birthdays and the feast days with the spoken word of congratulation if no more, and with some slight and simple honor if the costly gift is beyond your means. In fact, for this work money is not needed—not one cent.

But no one can tell until they have tried it how delightfully entertaining the home circle may be and how pleasant and attractive are at times the plainest and roughest, the shyest and dullest belonging to it. Never to be unkind or rude, never to refer to unpleasant matters, never to talk over sorrows, misfortunes or mistakes, unless they can be remedied; add these precautionary measures to active efforts to entertain the family, and the habit will become in time with all of you so delightful, so comforting, so cheering, that you will like home better than any place else and turn to it with warm and happy hearts from every dark, cold hour. Take it up in earnest, every girl among you, and be just as pleasantly entertaining as thoroughly gracious, polite, kind, and brilliant at home as you can possibly make yourself anywhere. Let nothing daunt you. You will find it worth all it costs in the end.—Catholic Standard and Times.

He always wins who sides with God.

To him no chance is lost: God will be sweetest to him when It triumphs at his cost.

All that God blesses is our good. And unblessed good is ill: All is ill that is against His most word. If it be His sweet will!

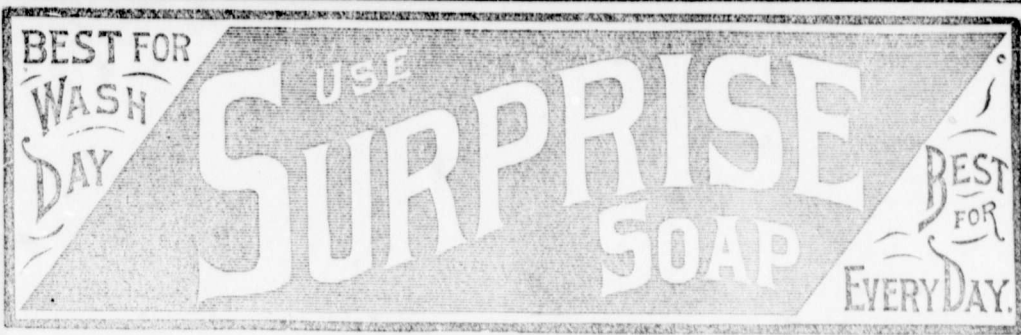
When obstacles and trials seem Like prison walls to be, I do the little I can do, And leave the rest to Thee.

I have no cares, O blessed will! For all my cares are Thine: I live in triumph, Lord, for Thou Hast made Thy triumph mine.

—Faber.

A Word in Time.

The too careful avoidance of religious discussion which some Catholics feel as incumbent upon good breeding, may be the means of deterring some one of wavering faith from pursuing an investigation that might lead to the light. The of canon society say that religion is a subject which is to be tabooed, and generally speaking the rule is a very good one to hold by. It is the exceptional case that calls for the transgressing of this law, and the private judgment of every individual must decide whether queries are put in good faith, or merely for the sake of provoking an argument that will lead to naught. If the repulsion of a single honest enquirer and his subsequent indifference result from the too strict adherence to this unwritten code of manners, it were better that it be broken daily than that a seeker after truth should be turned aside.



CHATS WITH YOUNG MEN.

He who does the best he can is always improving. His best of yesterday is outdone to-day, and his best of to-day will be outdone to-morrow. It is this steady progress, no matter from what point it starts, that forms the chief element of all greatness and goodness.

Use Every Opportunity.

It is the sum of little things that stands for the great accomplishments of human energy and ingenuity. If we analyze a career crowned with fame or one that breathes the perfume of good deeds, we shall find an aggregate of trifles, so to speak, imposing and monumental. No great act, singly, ever brought renown. Though to the popular mind it seemed the foundation and the capstone of reputation, invariably a philosophical study of antecedent circumstances discloses a line of conduct logically culminating in the event upon which public interest centres. This is so of spiritual and intellectual heroism no less than of minor achievements in the lower order of merely social and material successes.

ATTENTION TO LITTLE THINGS.

Is the key that unlocks the door of prosperity in every line of human effort. Not alone does it brighten the prospect of future progress, but it affords in a very direct and substantial way our immediate happiness. Take for example, the careful observance of all these little conventionalities that comprise "good breeding," as it is called, mark the result which it produces on the minds and dispositions that come within the radius of its influence. It means uniform courtesy and consideration that almost always awake a responsive chord. It means modesty and frankness of manner that are not unwelcome even on the most boisterous of mankind. It means the establishment of pleasant relationships which facilitate the utilization of opportunities and the means of getting on comfortably. No nature is proof against the insidious potency of politeness. The most obdurate will ultimately capitulate to its silent but resistless persuasion. Amiability and sincerity achieve more conquests than the harsh spirit of dictation that commands where persuasion would better serve the purpose. To wield this mighty instrument of dominion, we have only to exercise that

JUDICIOUS SELF-RESTRAINT.

which civilization denominates courtesy.

The habit of observing the requirements and amenities of social intercourse arises from the cultivation of respect for the little things that bear upon our relation to others. Too much attention therefore cannot be bestowed on the cultivation of this side of the character.

The same influence that wins the good will of those with whom we come in contact in a social way operates much in like manner for the benefit of our material or business interests. One of the best investments that can be made by any man who aspires to enlarge his field of commercial or professional activity, is the assiduous cultivation of this trait. That is one of the little things that count immensely in the equipment of success.

It is the application of the same principle in a material sense that has wrought the most wonderful results in scientific progress and material advancement. To fully understand the importance and value of close observation of the trifles that comprise the details of the life around us, it is only necessary to study the marvellous consequences evolved from the discovery of the relation of these to the great forces that underlie the magnificent and harmonious whole. In astronomical science, the movements of the heavenly bodies, which the ordinary mind would consider a waste of time to follow with that minute particularity which characterizes learned research in this direction, are known to exert a most momentous influence on the great fact of physical existence and the conditions and relations that govern the universe. In physics and mechanics, it is the discovery of immutable principles and the appreciation of natural laws and forces that lead to the most remarkable adaptation of those simple agencies which contribute so much to man's comfort and happiness. An excellent illustration of the fruitfulness of

THIS HABIT OF OBSERVATION, applied to what apparently are the least important phenomena of nature, is the accidental character of the great discoveries that produce the most marvellous results of civilization, on its practical side. The present status of steam and electricity and the revolution which they have wrought in the methods and results of productive industry, are striking consequences of the habit. We are all familiar with the genesis of steam-power in harness, as it were. The usefulness was developed from the simplest experiments by Watts, whose observation of the principles involved was the result of habit. In the era of invention which followed the

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popular use of steam as a motive force

thousands of ingenious devices were introduced with the purpose of improving upon hand labor, and the primitive means of production and transportation, so long employed by mankind. It is not necessary to allude to the wonderful advancement that has been constantly made under the impetus of steam and electricity, and the subsidiary factors that have transformed the face and character of external civilization. Our object is to point out the fact that in this new field of discovery and invention, the quality of close observation of little things has been productive of enormous material benefit to its individual possessor as well of

INCALCULABLE GOOD TO HUMANITY.

at large. Coming down to the personal application of the matter and the practical fruits that have rewarded the efforts of inventive, because observant geniuses, we find in a current publication some interesting facts that have an important bearing upon the human interest which the subject inspires. As showing the humble beginnings of some of the great fortunes coupled with great fame, won by the pursuit of this policy of turning little things to account, the substance of the article in question may prove profitable as well as entertaining to the young men who read it.

According to the writer, it is estimated that five out of every seven of the millionaire manufacturers began by making

WITH THEIR OWN HANDS the articles which made their fortunes. One of the greatest hindrance to advancement and promotion in life is the lack of observation and the inclination to take pains. A keen, cultivated observation will see a fortune where others see only poverty. An observing man, the eyelets of whose shoes pulled out, but who could not afford to get another pair, said to himself: "I will get up a metallic lacing book, which can be riveted into the leather;" he was so poor that he had to borrow a sickle to cut the grass in front of his little tenement. Now he is a very rich man.

An observing barber in Newark, N. J., thought he could make an improvement on shears for cutting hair and invented the clipper, and became very rich.

A Maine man was called in from the hayfield to wash out the clothes for his invalid wife. He had never realized what it was to wash before. He invented the washing machine and made a fortune.

A man who was suffering terribly with a toothache said to himself there must be some way of filling the teeth to prevent them aching; he invented gold filling for the teeth.

THE GREAT THINGS OF THE WORLD have not been done by men of large means. Want has been the great school-master of the race. Ericson began the construction of the screw propellers in a bath room; the cotton gin was first manufactured in a log cabin. John Harrison, the great inventor of the marine chronometer, began his career in the loft of an old barn. Parts of the first steamboat ever run in America were put up in the vestry of an old church in Philadelphia by Fitch. McCormack began his famous reaper in an old grist mill. The first model dry dock was made in an attic. Clark, the founder of Clark University, of Worcester, Mass., began his great fortune by making toy wagons in a horse shed. Farquhar made umbrellas in his sitting room, with his daughter's help, until he sold enough to hire a loft. The boy Edison began his experiments in a baggage car on the Grand Trunk railroad when a news-

boy. Every one cannot be a great inventor or acquire vast opulence, but

NO ONE CAN SAY POSITIVELY, that he does not possess the necessary qualifications for success in one or the other direction. Nor is it desirable that the sordid love of material reward should replace ideals more in keeping with the spirit and teaching of Christian faith, which is founded on something infinitely higher and more enduring than worldly greatness and glory. But there is no reason why the

most exalted ideals of Christian civilization should not in a measure be linked with the purpose and energy requisite to the attainment of a moderate degree of material prosperity, which brings with it vast possibilities for good and for the realization of the noblest ends of Christian faith and endeavor.

We would impress on the thousands of young Catholic men who have left school and college to fight life's battles, that there is nothing which adds so much to the beauty and power of man as a good moral character. It is his wealth, his influence, his life. It dignifies him in every station, exalts him in every condition and glorifies his individual possessor as well of

STAY CHIPS OF THOUGHT.

Every man is a failure at something.

It is easy to compile a list of "don'ts."

Not a few men are like the amoeba—they live on what sticks to them.

A jingo and a patriot are separated by the distance between brag and do.

A young lawyer has a hard time. Necessity makes him know the new laws, and when he has mastered them some old fellow tells him they are unconstitutional.

It's all very old, but a man knows less as he grows old, until at sixty he doesn't know anything at all. At twenty he knows everything and more, too; at forty he has doubts, and at fifty he becomes very modest. What a pity that at seventy we can't really know as much as we thought we knew when we were twenty-five.

The home is the sunniest side of every great people. Without devotion to home there can be no devotion to country. The home is the cradle of good citizenship and patriotism; it is the fountain of happiness, not only to individuals but to nations as well; and it is the one spot on earth that should be guarded from needless shadows.

My Duty.

True repentance has a double aspect: it looks upon things past with a weeping eye, and upon the future with a watching eye.

"Then what is my next duty? What is the thing that lies nearest to me?"

"That, I repeat, belongs to your everyday history. No one can answer that question but himself. Your next duty is just to determine what your next duty is. Is there nothing you neglect? Is there nothing you know you ought not to do? You would know your duty if you thought in earnest about it, and were not ambitious of great things."

"Ah, then," responded Lady Georgiana, with an abandoning sigh, "I suppose it is something very commonplace, which will make life more dreary than ever. That cannot help me."

"It will, if it be as dreary as reading the newspapers to an old deaf aunt. It will soon lead you to something more. Your duty will not begin to comfort you at once, but will at length open the unknown fountain in your heart."

—George MacDonald.

POOR DIRECTION leads to nervousness, chronic dyspepsia and great misery. The best remedy is Hood's Sarsaparilla.

Thousands Like It.—Tena McLeod, Severn Bridge, writes: "I owe a debt of gratitude to DR. THOMAS' ELECTRIC OIL for curing me of a severe cold that troubled me nearly all last winter. In taking a few drops of the oil, I gave quietness to a hacking cough, took a dose of DR. THOMAS' ELECTRIC OIL, three or four times a day, and the cough spells render it necessary."