

“ and all that are desolate and oppressed.” Desolate and oppressed ! who may they be ? who can they be, if not the wives and children of our countrymen who have gone to the war ?

The prophet Isaiah in the verse preceding our text, states the negative of his proposition, the character of the fasting and humiliation which is not acceptable to Almighty God. In the words of the text, on the contrary, we are succinctly informed of the characteristics of that humiliation which is pleasing to him. “ This is the fast that I have chosen, to “ loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy “ burdens, to let the oppressed go free, and that ye “ break every yoke, to deal thy bread to the hungry, “ to bring the poor that are cast out to thy house “ when thou seest the naked that thou cover him, and “ that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh.” Alms giving as well as prayer should characterize our humiliation—we should deny ourselves that we may benefit others—we should impose restraint that we may practise charity. Good works should quicken our sympathy, and compassion find expression in benevolence, and when the objects which claim our help and pity are such as we are called upon this day to relieve, we think a fitting opportunity occurs for us to illustrate our sense of the fasting chosen by the Lord, and enjoined by his Prophet. Another end will also be gained, for our contributions however small in their amount will not only augment the fund which has been generously created by the bounty of our countrymen at home, but will, at the same time, evince the sympathy we