

FIVE-MINUTES' SERMON. Twenty-Third Sunday After Pentecost.

ON DEATH.—THE ART TO DIE, THE MOST NECESSARY ART.

"The girl is not dead, but sleepeth." (Matt. 27:52).

The girl is not dead, says our Lord in the gospel of today, "but sleepeth." Our Lord therefore calls death a sleep, a transition to an eternal, new awakening. But why do we tremble before this sleep? Why does the thought of this sleep fill us with fear and trembling? Why?—Ah, why do so many students fear the impending examinations? They have sufficient reason to dread them, for instead of studying diligently, instead of careful preparation for their state of life, they have squandered their precious time in laziness, carousing, and youthful nonsense, and yet upon the examination depends their career, their future happiness or unhappiness. Do you now understand why so many fear death? Is not the art of dying the greatest and most important of all arts? For the mistake made in death may, indeed, be eternally deplored, but never repaired. Alas! there are so many who have no wish to learn the art of dying well, who have no desire to prepare for it by frequent meditation, and yet on this art depends heaven or hell, eternal happiness, or eternal damnation.

Regarding temporal matters, every one can choose to learn what he wishes. He can say: I shall not devote myself to jurisprudence, for why should I become a lawyer or a judge? I do not intend to lead an army, why should I study military science? This I leave to the officers. Those who take pleasure in painting and poetry, may practice them. Why, then, should I trouble myself about them? But where is he who can say: "I shall never die, why therefore learn an art which does not concern me?" "Who is the man," says the royal prophet, "that shall live and not see death?" "That shall live and not see death?" (Ps. 88:49). "There is no man that liveth always" (Ech. 9:4) but "it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment." (Hebrew 9:27) And do you know when this fatal hour, which has been appointed for you from eternity, will strike? Ah, you know it not. You dream perhaps of many years that will be granted you; and you perceive not how soon, how suddenly, how unexpectedly and entirely unawares the end may come for you. Observe your surroundings. Day after day you see the angel of death lurking in all places, now here, now there, mowing down with his terrible scythe a dear brother, a loving sister, in the prime of life, in the vigor of youth, so suddenly, so unawares, without reception of the sacraments, without preparation for judgment. May not God have destined for you what daily happens to thousands of your fellow creatures, viz: a sudden and unexpected death? And should you not therefore always watch and pray, and be prepared? Should you not be concerned about that great art, on which everything depends, viz: the art to die a happy death? Would that not be acting more like a pagan than a Christian—more like a maniac than a sage?

But, perhaps, you reply: Who can be always thinking of death? Death will come by itself. Why therefore should it be learned? You are correct, my friend, death will come by itself, but so will damnation. Consider, when it will be said of you: He is no more! and it will be added: He was a rich and prominent man—but you from beyond the grave will have to answer: But he is now lost! If it be engraved on your tombstone: He was a linguist, master of so many arts—and you would have to answer: But he is now damned! If your children would relate: Our father was a light of science, the most prominent man in the State, owned a great many estates and you again reply: But your father is now in hell! Of what avail would it then be to you, to have gained all the treasures of the world, but lost the chief treasure, Heaven? What would it avail you to have been master of all arts, but had not known the most necessary art—the art of doing well? What would it profit you to have governed millions of subjects, you who must now be a slave of the devil for all eternity?

My dear Christians, I beseech you to consider this seriously in the presence of God, and you will certainly exclaim with the penitent St. Augustine: I will, I must learn the great art of dying a happy death. No further delay, no more hesitation. Every day I will think of the last things, and according to God's promise, I will never sin. Every day I will think of that terrible hour, when only a coffin and a shroud will remain of all glory and riches, and hence I will now detach my heart from the bonds of the illusory world and its miserable vanities. Every day I will remember the terrible judgment that will decide an eternity, and therefore, by true penance and worthy confession, atone for my sins, obliterate them, substitute for them great treasures of virtue, merits of good works. Thus my dear Christians, speak, act, live every day, and you will satisfactorily pass that examination on the art of dying well. Amen.

You Should Know.

What Hood's Sarsaparilla has power to do for those who have impure and impoverished blood. It makes the blood rich and pure, and cures scrofula, salt rheum, dyspepsia, catarrh, rheumatism, nervousness. If you are troubled with any ailment caused or promoted by impure blood, take Hood's Sarsaparilla at once.

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OUR BOYS AND GIRLS.

ALICE'S MISTAKE.

M. J. G. in Catholic Mirror.

It was a queer looking quartette that sat in the depot at H— one rainy night in November in 1891.

An emaciated man of fifty years, his wife young enough to be his daughter, and totally blind, their two children, both of them girls, one about fifteen a cripple, and very homely, except her eyes, which were of a clear blue and so full of courage and truth, that after looking into them one turned to look again, and forgot the girl was homely. The other one younger by five years and a perfect beauty.

They have sat for two hours in the waiting room. The last train had come in and the station master was ready to shut up for the night.

Closing the shutters with a bang, and his desk with a snap, he looked towards the forlorn crowd in the corner to see if they showed any signs of moving. They sat like statues. The younger girl had fallen asleep with her head resting against her father's arm.

Thinking of his bright little home at the other end of town the station master could wait no longer. Stepping over to them he asked the father if he expected any one to meet him. By the expression of the man's face he did not understand him. Raising his voice he repeated the question.

In a very low voice, peculiar to most deaf people, the man said: "My dear sir, I am as deaf as a post caused by a railroad accident years ago. We have travelled from Philadelphia. Two days ago I lost two hundred dollars, all I had; my pocket was picked, I think. We have no friends in the world. We can go outside if you want to shut up. We have no place to go to."

The station master was surely perplexed, he was blessed with a good heart, but he was poor, and had not an extra bed in his own little cottage. He tried to enter into a conversation with the blind mother, but she, poor soul, timid because of her infirmity, shrank from the sound of his voice. The little cripple, wide awake, looked at him with her mournful blue eyes so that his heart failed him when he thought of questioning her.

He walked towards the door in despair, and in the door at that very moment walked the man to bring relief. The instrument sent by Kind Providence—the Mayor of the little town of H—, a red faced, burly man, with a diamond stud in his shirt front, with a big seal ring on his finger, with a gold headed cane in his hand but, with a tender heart beat under his velvet waistcoat.

In a few words the station master stated the case. "Something must be done for them, of course," said the Mayor, "and I am the man to do it. It is too late for a permit to the Alms house," he added, lowering his voice slightly, but the quick glance the little cripple gave them showed she heard every word they said, and the poor blind mother bowed her head and her lips moved in prayer.

Seeing this the two men moved back a few steps farther away from the family under discussion, and in low tones continued their conversation. They soon agreed on a plan which the Mayor proceeded to explain to the blind woman, with many compliments to himself. So much easier it is for us "to let our light shine before men," than to hide from our right hand the doings of our left.

They could live, he told them, for the present, in a little tenement house, on his own grounds, that had become vacant that very day.

The poor woman, with tears streaming from her eyes, expressed her thanks, and the little cripple made her father understand that something had been arranged for their night's lodging. The station master called the porter, and dividing the luggage, they proceeded to learn the way to the house, which was only a short distance off. The mayor kindly took one hand of the little cripple who lead her mother.

And here they lived months after months. No collector ever called for the rent. The public looked upon them as wards of the town. They were abundantly supplied from the neighbor's gardens and cast off clothing, enough to dress a dozen girls, was sent as each season came around.

At first the children of the town were disposed to run from "Old Merton," as they called the deaf man, but his gentleness soon won them and they became great friends. The boys in particular flocked around him to hear his stories of bears and lions, elephants and tigers, of sailors and ship wrecks.

If a boy was missing from his home his mother sent to "Old Merton's" and the messenger rarely had to go farther to find the truant.

Violet, the younger daughter, was always by her father's side. They would take long walks in the country, gather ferns and wild flowers for Alice, the little cripple, who loved all things beautiful.

Neither of the girls could be persuaded to go to school. They shrank from mingling with children of their own age. Their father was their teacher. He would read to them for hours, and they would recite to each other, for he could not hear the sound of their voices.

work. Her mother once followed her, but Alice begged so hard to be left alone that the good, gentle soul never again disturbed her. Very few visitors came to the house, they were so timid and retiring that it seemed a kindness to let them alone.

Alice could count on the fingers on one hand the times she had gone out in the daytime. Sometimes at twilight with a crutch under one arm and the other linked in her mother's, she would slowly walk around the Mayor's spacious garden. At this time in the evening they rarely met any one.

So, one morning when Alice was seen making her way down the principal street of the village, she was greeted with a wondering stare by every one she met.

For once the shrinking girl did not seem to care, her face had a joyous look that had never been there before. On she went until she reached the Town Hall, where she left a large, thin package, and another, the same style at the depot. Great was the astonishment of the gentlemen in these offices on opening the packages—they found not what Alice intended—crayon portraits, they were to take the place of looking glasses for them. But on the station master beamed the countenance of the mayor, and his honor found himself inspecting an excellent likeness of the worthy station master.

Calling his clerk, the mayor bade him take to the depot the portrait he held.

"Who left it?" he asked. "Old Merton's lame daughter" was the answer.

The clerk returned very shortly bringing the mayor the portrait he had found the station master puzzling over.

"To see ourselves as others see us" must be a little startling, no doubt, but the clerk never could forgive the mayor for upsetting the inkstand over some very neatly written documents, and giving him extra work for two nights that week.

As for Alice, her fortune was made. From that day they were no longer beggars. Not one cent would she take from the mayor or the station master for their portraits. High in the Hall hung her excellent picture of "his honor," and at the station the other picture was placed in good light. These two pictures brought her more orders than she could fill.

"Old Merton," now well dressed, mingled with the men down town and surprised them by his intelligence. If he was not a good listener because of his deafness, he never trusted himself forward, but when he did talk all were repaid who listened to him.

About this time the worthy mayor was elected for a third term, an unprecedented event in the annals of that town. Most highly did he appreciate the honor, and his benevolent heart beat faster under the velvet waistcoat. The young man who had served as clerk for several years left for a position in a growing Western town, which brought more luck to our friends.

One morning, as the Mertons sat at breakfast, a very official looking envelope was handed in by the postman which proved to be an appointment of John Merton as clerk of the Town Hall.

There is an old Spanish proverb which runs, "God helps those who help themselves." God most certainly helped the Mertons and raised up friends for them in their hour of need to give them each day their daily bread. But why was it that not until poor Alice's pencil could bring them a modest living, was her father's intelligence and worth recognized, and the way made for him to support his family?

My little readers, this is not an isolated case. Watch close and you will find how true is the old Spanish proverb.

WHAT IT COSTS.

We can measure the value of our God given faith, even in this life, only by the effort it has cost others to attain it. To enjoy its Divine blessings the great English Cardinal Newman had to sacrifice positions of honor and trust, and cast aside friendships cherished for years. And this he considered his duty because of the Divine character of the Catholic Church. He had the courage of his convictions. Much like him in earnestness of purpose and magnanimous zeal, in deep intellectual attainments and power of mind, was our great American, Orestes A. Brownson. The study of his religious wanderings in his persevering search after truth, until he found rest in the bosom of Mother Church, will suffice to show how he generously obeyed faith, reason, and conscience regardless of personal sacrifice and inconvenience. Firm in his principle, like the great English Cardinal, once finding truth, he clung to it tenaciously and labored earnestly for it. But best of all he made it the standard of his every act. In this, his example appeals to every Christian heart and demands constant imitation.—Messenger of Spiritual Benevolent Fraternity.

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CHATS WITH YOUNG MEN.

The successful man is by no means helpful to himself alone; he helps a great many other people as well. There isn't a healthy, vigorous, energetic, self-reliant, successful man whose example does not breed the same qualities in others, and personal contact with such a man is an active stimulant and direct aid to success. He awakens in us new strength, and arouses ambition. He winds us up and sets us going. See to it, my friend, that you don't run down.

Look Alot.

Did your ever hear of a man who had striven all his life faithfully and singly towards an object and in no measure obtained it? If a man constantly aspires, is he not elevated? Did ever a man try heroism, magnanimity, truth, sincerity, and find that there was no advantage in them—that it was a vain endeavor?

Poor Tools to Design With.

Labor Agitator—"Every man is the architect of his own fortune."

Murphy (from the rear of the hall)—"Yis, that's so, but he stands a mighty poor chance when he has nothing but a shovel or hod to draw his plans wid."

Three Birds With One Stone.

To acquire the habit of saving is really educating yourself to become prudent and self-denying—two excellent virtues in a business man—besides storing up a sum of money for future use.

Our Faults and Virtues.

We are always doing each other in justice, and thinking better or worse of each other than we deserve, because we only hear and see separate words and actions. We do not see each other's whole nature.

Do You Sneak Too Much.

Does this shoe appear to you to be a trifle grayish? Or perhaps your friend's scarlet tie strikes you as being strangely dark? If so, you have been smoking too much, and had better discontinue the habit for a bit, or your sight may decrease to one-third of its usual strength.

Perhaps again, you are suffering from insomnia, accompanied by an irritating loss of memory, and severe chronic headache. The cause is an over consumption of the fragrant weed.

"There is no doubt," writes a medical authority, "that the abuse of tobacco may produce elementary complicated medical disorders, with aural illusions, and even hallucinations of vision."

In the first instance, the optic nerve has become over-excited. The others are due to the nicotine poison permeating the system generally.

Why Did He Fail.

"Why did our friend never succeed in business?" asked a man returning to New York after years of absence: "he had sufficient capital, a thorough knowledge of his business, and exceptional shrewdness and sagacity." "He was sour and morose," was the reply: "he always suspected his employees of cheating him, and was dis courteous to his customers. Hence, no man ever put good will or energy into work done for him, and his patrons went to shops where they were sure of civility."

Some men almost work their hands off, and deny themselves many of the common comforts of life in their earnest efforts to succeed, and yet render success impossible by their cross-grained ungentlemanliness. They repel patronage, and business goes to others who are really less deserving but more companionable.

Bad manners often neutralize even honesty, industry, and the greatest energy; while agreeable manners win in spite of other defects; but let one be gentlemanly, kind, obliging and conciliating, the other obdoling, rude, harsh and insolent, and the one will become rich while the other will starve.

A Mother's Problem.

"A Widowed Mother" writes to ask "what she can do with a son who is good hearted, very bright, obliging, popular, kind to his mother and sisters, but who has no education and cannot or will not study, although he regrets daily his lack of knowledge." There ought to be no trouble with a boy possessing the qualities described above. The fact that he does not like books does not prove that he is incapable of absorbing a practical education in

some other way. Regular schools, colleges and universities are not the only instrumentalities of instruction. In a sense, all the world's a school and all men and women, as well as children, only pupils in it. Some persons learn better and learn more by mixing with the world and by the experience gained in the struggles of life than from a systematic course of book study. This may be the case with the boy whom his mother describes so lovingly and admiringly. If he cannot study books, let her find out what his tastes and studies are in the line of practical pursuits and start him in that direction at once. Neither boys nor men should be idle. If he is unable to study and is physically strong, he should go to work at something, no matter what, if it is honest. Any honest labor is better than idleness. He may have a turn for some trade or mechanical pursuit, and, if so, he should devote himself to that, even if it pays him little or nothing at first. If he possesses the elements of true manliness, his mother will not appeal to him in vain, and he will not appeal gain a diploma from the school of work. Do not worry him with books if he has a distaste for them, but inspire him with the ambition to be a useful, helpful, working member of society. If he has the right stuff in him he will respond manfully to such a suggestion. There is always a way where there is a will.

Advice to Young Journalists. "Should a young man adopt journalism as a life work?" repeated Dr. Miller, a veteran editor of Nebraska, in answering a reporter of the Omaha (Neb.) World Herald.

"I do not feel that I am competent to give any advice on that question, for I was an editor by accident only, and never had any professional training. But from my experience I will say this, that I never would encourage a son of mine to enter it as a life-work."

"My reasons for discouraging a young man in this line are two in number. First, if he engages upon the country press, his salary will all ways be small, smaller than he would receive in any other business. And the world is so full of writers that the salary upon the country press will never be any larger. It is the most precarious position one can find, for upon the slightest pretext a man will be discharged, because the proprietor knows there are a dozen men equally good to take his place."

"But is there no prospect of graduating into something higher?" "Of course, that saying is true. There is always room at the top, but those places at the top are very few and hard to get. Just think of the small number of cities in this country that are really metropolitan, the number of great dailies in each, and then the limited number of high salaried positions they offer. No other profession has as few. Not only are the positions few, but the competition is greater than in any other business or profession."

"But as an educational agency, there is no better place for a young man than on a newspaper. It will broaden his views of the world, and give him a training he can secure no place else. I know of no other power so great as that possessed by the unknown local writer, in both city and country. The reporter is able to wield more influence than the editor, for he reaches the public more directly than the latter, and by the twist of a sentence, a sneer or a compliment, may present a man to the public in a manner which impresses itself upon the reader, and sticks."

"But there is something more than money in this world, I know, and many men remain in the newspaper business when they could make more at something else. There is a fascination about the work that relieves it of its labor. Although I was writing from two to four columns every day, I never thought I was working hard. Still, I would advise every young man, if he does become a newspaper man, to use it as a stepping stone to something else, to keep his eyes open, study the world, and when an opportunity presents itself, take it."

"Do you think that newspaper work is a good preparation for a higher class of writing?" The doctor hesitated for a moment and then replied. "I can answer that only by giving my own experience. In my case it ruined my imagination. It was excellent training for clearness and conciseness of style—one has to write thoughts, not words, for a newspaper; yet if a man wishes to become an author, a writer of fiction, I believe he would better take up fiction as a profession at once, and stick to it."

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