

FIVE-MINUTE SERMON.

Easter Sunday.

EASTER DUTY.

This is the day which the Lord hath made for us to be glad and rejoice therein. Why, I would ask you, my dear brethren, does the Church in the words of the Psalmist bid us rejoice and be glad on this day especially? Why should we experience any extraordinary spirit of joy and happiness on this day above all other days? The reason is plain, as you all know; it is the day of Resurrection, it is really and truly our Lord's Day, the Day that He has made for us to be glad in, which we are to place our hope for the future, since with the Resurrection of Christ have risen all our hopes. The thought of our own future resurrection ought to fill our minds with consolation, and with joy unlimited; with the hope that we too shall participate in the glory and delight expressed by the Church in her liturgy of the day. We look about us, and behold all nature risen, as it were, and beautiful in her new life; the trees budding, the flowers blossoming, and Mother Earth covered with her new verdure of green. Truly, then, has the Psalmist said: "Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; let the sea be moved and all things that are therein shall be joyful." (Ps. xv. 12.) If we, too, would share in this joy and gladness it is necessary that we should make our life comfortable, in so far as we can, to the spotless life of our risen Saviour. The Resurrection of our Saviour teaches us this great truth of priceless value, that if we would be truly happy we must rise from the death of sin to a new and holy life, to a life of Grace; we must "put off the old man, which is corrupted according to the desire of error, and put on the new man, who according to God is created in justice, and holiness of truth" (Eph. iv. 22.) That is why the Church teaches us that the best means of enjoying to the fullest extent the blessings of this day is by the reception of the Body of our risen Saviour, and so comes the question to each one of us: Have I risen from the death of sin? Have I made my Easter duty? If you have not done so, then the full joy of Easter cannot be yours. Hasten, before the Easter season be past, to enter into the spirit of it by a good confession and Communion. Thus only can you be truly united to your risen Lord. If you have celebrated Easter by the reception of Holy Communion, then your joy and gladness is without measure; it is true, it is pure, because fortified with the Sacrament of the day. This resurrection of ours must be true, it must be complete; for just as the risen Saviour dies no more, nor does He suffer anything further, so ought we, when returned to the life of grace, when risen from the death of sin to favor with God, remain faithful in that pure and holy condition and die no more to the graces vouchsafed us on this day. If we are dead to the world, to its vanities and deceitful pleasures, our Lord assures us that our resurrection will be the more certain and the more glorious. Therefore, my dear brethren, I would earnestly entreat you to continue in your purified condition, to persevere in your risen state, and so to enjoy not only to day, but at each and every one of your future Communions the fruits obtained for you by your Divine Lord and Saviour, as you must closely united to Him forever, so that having applied to yourself the words of to-day's epistle, that "Having feasted not with the old leaven nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth," you may in the end enter into the presence of Him whose resurrection has made this day one of joy and gladness for all His creatures.

OUR BOYS AND GIRLS.

THE HAMPSHIRE HILLS.

EUGENE FIELD.

One afternoon many years ago two little brothers named Seth and Abner were playing in the orchard. They were not troubled with the heat of the August day, for a soft, cool wind came up from the river in the valley over yonder and fanned their red cheeks and played all kinds of pranks with their tangled curls. All about them was the hum of bees, the song of birds, the smell of clover, and the merry music of the crickets. Their little dog Fido chased them through the high, waving grass, and rolled with them under the trees, and barked himself hoarse in his attempt to keep pace with their laughter. Worned at length, they lay beneath the bellflower trees and looked off at the Hampshire hills, and wondered if the time ever would come when they should go out into the world beyond those hills and be great, noisy men. Fido did not understand it at all. He lolled in the grass, cooling his tongue on the clover bloom, and puzzling his brain to know why his little masters were so quiet all at once. "I wish I were a man," said Abner, ruefully. "I want to be somebody and do something. It is very hard to be a little boy so long and to have no companions but little boys and girls, and this same high grass, and to hear nothing but the same bird songs from one day to another." "That is true," said Seth. "I, too, am very tired of being a little boy, and I long to go out into the world and be a man like my gran'pa or my father or my uncles. With nothing to look at but those distant hills and the river in the valley, my eyes are weary; and I shall be very happy when I am big enough to leave this stupid place." Had Fido understood their words he would have chided them, for the little dog loved his home and had no thought of any other pleasure than romping through the orchard and plying with his little masters all the day. But Fido did not understand them. The clover bloom heard them with sadness. Had they but listened to turn they would have heard the clover saying softly: "Stay with me while you may, little boys; trample me with your merry feet; let me feel the imprint of your curly heads and kiss the sunburn on your little cheeks. Love me while you may, for when you go away you never will come back." The bellflower trees heard them, too, and she waved her great, strong branches if she would caress the impatient little lads, and she whispered: "Do not think of leaving me; you are children, and you know nothing of the world beyond those distant hills. It is full of trouble and care and sorrow; abide here in this quiet spot till you are prepared to meet the vexations of that outer world. We are for you—me and flowers. Abide with us, and learn the wisdom we teach." The cricket in the raspberry-hedge heard them, and she chirped, oh! so sadly: "You will go out into the world and leave us and never think of us again till it is too late to return. Open your ears, little boys, and hear my song of contentment." So spoke the clover bloom and the bellflower trees and the cricket; and in like manner the robin that nested in the linden over yonder, and the big bumblebee that lived in the hole under the pasture gate, and the butterfly and the wild rose pleaded with them, each in his own way; but the little boys did not heed them, so eager were their desires to go into and mingle with the great world beyond those distant hills. Many years went by; and at last Seth and Abner grew to manhood, and the time was come when they were to go into the world and be brave, strong men. Fido had been dead a long time. They had made him a grave under the bellflower-tree, yes, just where he had romped with the two little boys that August afternoon Fido lay sleeping amid the humming of the bees and the perfume of the clover. But Seth and Abner did not think of Fido now, nor did they give even a passing thought to any of their old friends—the bellflower tree, the clover, the cricket, and the robin. Their hearts beat with exultation. They were men, and they were going beyond the hills to know and try the world. They were equipped for that struggle, not in a vain, frivolous way, but as good and brave young men should be. A gentle mother had counselled them, a prudent father had advised them, and they had gathered from the sweet things of Nature much of that wisdom before which all knowledge is as nothing. So they were fortified. They went beyond the hills and came into the West. How great and busy was the world—how great and busy it was here in the West! What a rush and noise and turmoil and seething and surging, and how keenly did the brothers have to watch and struggle for vantage ground. Withal, they prospered; the counsel of the mother, the advice of the father, the wisdom of the grass and flowers and trees, were much to them, and they prospered. Honor and riches came to them, and they were very happy. But amid it all, how seldom they thought of the little home among the circling hills where they had learned the first sweet lessons of life! And now they were old and gray. They lived in splendid mansions, and all people paid them honor. One August day a grim messenger stood in Seth's presence and beckoned to him. "Who are you?" cried Seth? "What strange power have you over me that the very sight of you chills my blood and stays the beating of my heart?" Then the messenger threw aside his mask, and Seth saw that he was Death. Seth made no outcry; he knew what the summons meant, and he was content. But he sent for Abner. And when Abner came, Seth was stretched upon his bed, and there was a strange look in his eyes and a flush upon his cheeks, as though a fatal fever had laid hold on him. "You shall not die!" cried Abner, and he threw himself about his brother's neck and wept. But Seth bade Abner cease his outcry. "Sit here by my bedside and talk with me," said he, "and let us speak of the Hampshire hills." A great wonder overcame Abner. With reverence he listened, and as he listened, a sweet peace seemed to steal into his soul. "I am prepared for Death," said Seth, "and I will go with Death this day. Let us talk of our childhood now, for, after all the battle with this great world, it is pleasant to think and speak of our boyhood among the Hampshire hills." "Say on, dear brother," said Abner. "I am thinking of an August day long ago," said Seth, solemnly and softly. "It was so very long ago, and yet it seems only yesterday. We were in the orchard together, under the bellflower-tree, and our little dog—" "Fido," said Abner, remembering it all, as the years came back. "Fido and you and I under the bellflower tree," said Seth. "How we had played, and how weary we were, and how cool the grass was, and how sweet was the fragrance of the flowers! Can you remember it, brother?" "Oh, yes," replied Abner, "and I remember how we lay among the clover and looked off at the distant hills and wondered of the world beyond." "And amid our wonderings and longings," said Seth, "how the old bellflower tree seemed to stretch her kind arms down to us as if she would hold us away from that world beyond the hills." "And now I can remember that the clover whispered to us, and the cricket in the raspberry-hedge sang to us of contentment," said Abner. "The robin, too, caroled in the linden." "It is very sweet to remember it now," said Seth. "How blue and hazy the hills looked; how cool the breeze blew up from the river; how like a silver lake the old pickered pond sweltered under the summer sun over beyond the pasture and broom-corn, and how merry was the music of the birds and bees!" So these old men, who had been little boys together, talked of the August afternoon when with Fido they had romped in the orchard and rested beneath the bellflower tree. And Seth's voice grew fainter, and his eyes were, oh! so dim; but to the very last he spoke of the dear old days and the orchard and the clover and the Hampshire hills. And when Seth fell asleep forever, Abner kissed his brother's lips and knelt at the bedside and said the prayer his mother had taught him. In the street without there was the noise of passing carts, the cries of trades-people, and all the bustle of a great and busy city; but, looking upon Seth's dear, dead face, Abner could hear only the music voices of birds and crickets and summer winds as he had heard them with Seth when they were little boys together, back among the Hampshire hills.

CHATTS WITH YOUNG MEN.

Exercise is Necessary.

Regular and vigorous exercise in the gymnasium or the open air is as necessary for a man's health as food. The Busy Man has Leisure. The saying, "He who works hardest finds most leisure," is a true one, and the oft-repeated statement, "If you want anything done ask the busy man to do it." The man who has nothing to do are usually the men who can do nothing; purposeless, untrained, flabby. College Graduates Begging for Food and Shelter. A college education will immensely increase a man's chances for success in life. But a college training will not keep that man from wreck and ruin who lacks principle, pluck and purpose. Ten per cent. of the four thousand destitute guests entertained at the Bowers Relief Department of the New York Y. M. C. A. are college graduates. Five Rules of Life. First. If possible, be well and have a good appetite. If these conditions are yours the battle of life is already half won. Many soul and heart troubles arise really in the stomach, though it may seem strange to you. Second. Be busy. Fill the hours so full of useful and interesting work that there shall be no time for dwelling on your troubles, that the day shall dawn full of expectation, the night fall full of repose. Third. Forget yourself. You never will be happy if your thoughts constantly dwell upon yourself, your own imperfections, your own shortcomings, what people think of you, and so on. Fourth. Expect little. Expect little of life, nor too much of your friends. Fifth. Trust in God. Believe that God is, that He really knows what is best for you; believe this truly and the

DUTY OF PERSONAL WORK FOR THE POOR.

The "Mission of the Child of Mary to the Poor" was the subject of the conference given by the spiritual director, the Rev. Thomas J. Gasson, S. J., at the regency meeting of the Sodality at the Convent of the Sacred Heart, Boston, on Friday, Feb. 4.

He insisted on the obligation of personal service to the poor, reminding his hearers of the words of Our Lord Himself in describing the Last Judgment, where the question of salvation or perdition turns on such direct duty as feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, sheltering the homeless. He accepts such service to our fellow creature as it is rendered to Himself, and resents the neglect of it as a personal neglect. It is not said of the rich man, Dives, in the Gospel, that he did anything very scandalous. He was merely absorbed in his own pleasures, and forgetful of Lazarus at his gate. But his apathy to the poor cost him Heaven. We do not discharge our duty to the poor by dropping a dime in the poor-box now and then. We must not assume that our responsibility can be shifted to the priests and the nuns. We must not shrink from personal communication with the poor and the afflicted. We must not think, however, that our duty is fulfilled by giving a little money to the poor with whom we may come in contact. Father Gasson distinctly deprecated this sort of charity. The greatest good you can do for the poor boy or girl is to put them in a position to earn money. You give a suit of clothes to a needy man. That is a temporary benefit. But you find him wretched, and so he may be comforted till the end of his days. To get poor need bodily relief, help to get work, etc., but they also need sympathy. The Child of Mary ought to be peculiarly able to give them this. She should go among them, as Christ went among the poor of His day, suffering with them, so to speak—never talking down to them, nor nagging them. The poor have their feelings as the rich have, and don't like to be outraged in their self respect by the alleged charity. The poor need instruction. Not so much can be done for the old people in this matter perhaps, but there is a miscellaneous field among the boys and girls in our city of Boston. Here Father Gasson, while complimenting the ladies of the sodality who are doing so well with their working girls' clubs, made a strong appeal for the boys who need charitable effort on a similar line. The need cannot be

SHAKESPEARE AN IRISHMAN.

Not many years ago a Protestant clergyman essayed the herculean task of proving that St. Patrick was a Baptist. The ordinary reader will perhaps think it a parallel absurdity to claim that Shakespeare was an Irishman. Yet a distinguished lecturer recently addressed the National Literary Society of Dublin on "The Celtic Genius of Shakespeare," and it must be said, made out a far stronger case for the contention that the greatest English poet was a Celt than Mr. Ignatius Donnelly has yet made for the Baconian authorship of Shakespeare's plays. The proverbially fine treatment of women that characterizes the plays was insisted on as being "most assuredly not Saxon, but indisputably Celtic," and the conclusion of the whole study was that Shakespeare was "by blood, nature, sentiment and sympathy a Celt"—Ave Maria.

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