

OUR BOYS AND GIRLS.

SISTER COLLETTE'S CHRISTMAS SERMON.

By PETER CADWALADER.

"To-morrow is Christmas, the birthday of Our Lord and Saviour," said Sister Collette to her class at noon.

"So I will now dismiss you for the day. But before you go, I want to say that those of you who have pleasant homes with plenty of comfort, should not forget those less fortunate. To those who are unable to give up a little pleasure to help the Orphans' Collection, let me say that your prayers will be acceptable in the sight of God. It does not require money or fine clothes to have a merry Christmas. A pure mind and a clear conscience will only do that."

The girls did not wait the order for their going, but with a "Merry-Christmastime, Sister," they ran helter-skelter into the frosty air.

About the last to leave was Mary Green. She was about thirteen, and fair of face and slim of figure. "She was clad in a rusty yellow coat that was ill-fitting and her head was covered by a faded red hood. As she walked along she drew her hands up in the sleeves of her cloak. Her bright blue eyes, rosy cheeks and elastic steps betokened good health and spirits.

As she came to a big dry good store, which had been transformed into a toy bazaar for the holiday season, she hesitated an instant between pleasure and duty.

"It will be only for a minute," she said to herself. "I do so enjoy seeing the grand things. I'll get to confession early enough even if I spend a little while here."

So she entered. A cheerful-looking man with a long coat and a lady richly arrayed in furs, were gazing at the toys. Mary, who was just behind after drinking in all the splendor of her clothes and hearing, proceeded to follow them.

They were soon joined by a girl of about Mary's age, who had been wandering around the store.

The newcomer was dressed "splendidly," as Mary mentally thought.

"How happy she must be!" soliloquized Mary.

"Florence," Mary heard the lady say, "have you found anything you would like?"

"No," said Florence, in a surly tone. "I got almost everything they have here, and don't think I'd care to stay longer. Let's be going."

"Everything they have here!" commented Mary to herself. "Why, I'd give worlds and worlds for just that which I could take home to my sister Rose."

"Pie, Florence!" said the gentleman, "how would you like this watch? for they were now at the jewelry counter."

"Papa, I don't care for watches," said Florence. "They are such a bother, and the last one I had was a great deal prettier than that."

"Ho, ho! ha ha!" laughed her father, and Mary thought that if he had like Santa Claus with his red face. "No, you've got tired of watches also? Now, what do you really want?"

"Nothing," said Florence, stamping her foot impatiently. "Let us be going."

"Do be calm, Florence," remonstrated her mother. "Let us walk about a bit and see the things—perhaps you will see something to please you."

"No, I won't," said Florence. "I want to go home."

And they continued to walk through the store, Florence becoming angrier, till her frowns made her look positively ugly. Some sort of fascination kept her as she walked, and she wondered how such a girl could be anything but happy. Suddenly the words of Sister Collette came to her. "It does not require money or fine clothes to have a merry Christmas."

As they reached the great swinging doors Florence gave the door a hard push, and as it swung inward it struck her seakindle cloak and she wondered how she had given way to temptation, and Infant Jesus, who rejoices with us, has already rewarded you, for papa will go to work again soon; mamma has found a dear old friend, and you an affectionate companion—all because my little girl would not do wrong. You little girl would not do wrong. You put it aside. She held Florence's purse. She hesitated a minute as she held the little leather bag in her hand. She reasoned that if she would miss it, and while she hesitated, the opportunity to restore the purse was lost; the people got into their carriage and were driven rapidly away.

As the carriage disappeared around a corner Mary clasped her hands in despair.

"Oh what have I done?" she almost cried. "I wish I had given it right back. I don't feel happy one bit."

But there was no help for it. She had allowed the tempter to gain possession of her mind for a moment. She wondered what was in the purse. She was afraid to open it on the street, and as she hurried along she felt as if every one who looked at her knew she had it.

She reached the church, and seating herself in a quiet corner opened the book. She nearly dropped it in her terror and surprise. The purse contained several gold pieces, besides a bill with 100 on it. Mary had never seen so much money in all her life. There was also a stud in the purse which Mary judged to be a diamond because it glittered so.

She determined not to risk the danger of carrying it home, so she went to the vestry and waited for Father James to come over from the house to her confessions.

He came at last, and with a kindly word to Mary asked her business. She told him rapidly, yet fully, about the incident of the afternoon. As she concluded she handed him the purse.

"My child," he said, "I am overjoyed to see how you have resisted temptation. I know to whom the purse belongs. The young lady is Florence Morgan. She has just been in to see me. The \$100 bill is intended as the

joint contribution of her father and mother to the orphans, and she only missed her pocket-book as she was about to hand the money over to me. The loss of the money don't trouble her so much as that of the stud, which is a souvenir of her dead uncle. When she discovered her loss I actually thought her heart was breaking. I see," said Father James, pulling out his watch, "that I have still half an hour at my disposal, so we will go to Florence at once. She lives only a few doors off;" and as they entered the magnificent parlor of the Morgan mansion, Mary heard the sound of some one weeping bitterly.

Father James left her alone for a few minutes. Before she had finished her survey of the grand furnishings, she heard the patter of feet, and before she could turn, she felt herself clasped in two strong arms and a tearful pair of eyes were looking into hers.

"Oh, you dear!" sobbed Florence; "so it was you that found my purse and was so honest as to return it?"

"I—I—," stammered Mary, and she burst into tears.

Florence stared at her in amazement. "I am—not honest," wailed Mary, as she thought of the momentary temptation— "I was—going—to—keep—it—"

"Never mind, my child," said Father James, coming in at this juncture. "You resisted the temptation and put the tempter to flight. You have gained a great victory, which makes the Blessed Lord rejoice. You have a clear conscience, and will have a merry Christmas for your good act."

"Why—why—" began Mary. "What?" asked Florence, clasping Mary's hand in here.

"Why," faltered Mary, and gaining courage, "that's just what Sister Collette said, and by degrees she told of the little sermon of the school room. Father James listened quietly, and at his conclusion he turned significantly to Mrs. Morgan, who had followed him into the room."

Florence then became a very lively interrogator point, and got out of Mary all the particulars preceding the time she came into possession of the purse.

In an amazingly short time the two girls were chatting away like magpies, and they both went to confession together.

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to pay. It is interesting and instructive to note the difference in the ability of young men starting out on their careers to gain confidence.

Of two young men who have had equal advantages of opportunity and education; who, apparently, possess equal business ability; and who start out in the same city under practically like conditions, one will rapidly gain credit at banks and jobbing-houses, while the other cannot get any foothold whatever. People seem to be afraid to trust him—not because he is vicious or dishonest, but because they are not certain of his integrity. They do not feel that he can be depended upon under all circumstances. Unlike the other young man, he has not cultivated the one thing upon which all credit is based, a character above suspicion, a reputation without reproach.—Success.

**The Most Trying Period.**  
The transition or hobbledehoy period, between boyhood and young manhood, when youth is no longer a boy and not yet a man, is the most trying time of his life. This is the age when the interrogation point assumes colossal proportions, when every faculty of his nature is asking questions and wondering what the future has in store for him. This is the period which tries him. This is the time when great changes, the meaning of which he does not solve, begin in his life. He is growing so fast, and his tastes are changing so rapidly, that he does not yet know what he is going to do, what occupation or profession to choose.

While the youth is in this unsettled condition, teachers and parents should exercise great patience in dealing with him, as teachers are put into this part of his life is put into the whole of life. This is the impressionable stage, when, if he hears a lawyer expatiate upon the beauty of the law, he will think that he is out for the bar, and will change his mind next day in favor of medicine, if he hears a doctor enlarge upon the nobility of the medical profession. They do not take one thing, another with equal impartiality and lack of judgment. He has not had sufficient experience to see the thorns, the difficulties, the discouragements, incident to the different vocations, but he sees only the flowers and the pleasant side of them.

Then he had needs the counsel of those who, understanding his disposition, his talents and his tastes, can best direct him in the choice of a career.

**Inaccurate People Dishonest.**  
It is not safe to trust people who are habitually inaccurate in their work. Even with the best intentions in the world, they become dishonest. Before they are aware of it, the habit of inaccuracy extends to their statements. They do not take pains to be thorough in anything they undertake, even in clearly expressing the truth.

These people never carry much weight in a community, however honest in principle they may be, because no reliance can be placed on their words or work. You cannot depend upon what they tell you. If they are orators, they are discredited; if they are at the bar, the judges always take their statements with some margin; if they are in business, they soon get a bad name for inaccuracy. In fact, whatever those people do they are placed at a disadvantage because of their habit of inaccuracy.

There is a great difference between going straight right and a little wrong. The victims of inaccuracy did not start right. They failed to realize that what is put into the first life is put into the whole of life.

A pebble in a tiny stream will turn the course of a river, so the seemingly unimportant habit of inaccuracy kept many a man from success by changing the current of his life.

Accuracy, doing things to a finish, is one of the most important lessons that can be taught a boy, because there is a moral quality at stake. The whole character is often undermined by the unfortunate habit of inaccuracy. Men whose ability would have made them peers in their communities have become mediocre or total failures, simply because they were allowed in childhood to form the habit of half doing things, and of making half or exaggerated statements.

**Keep Your Ideal in Sight.**  
One reason for the failure of young men and women who start out in active life with warm sympathies and great expectations is because they generally lose the high standards they set for themselves, and lose sight of their ideals.

The models held up before them in their school-days, which made such deep impressions on their minds, and they were dreaming of their future and planning the nobility of their life, fade from vision and become dim in memory.

New ideals of a more commercial character take possession of the mind. Lofty sentiments give place to the pursuit of wealth or position, and the young aspirant for success finds himself gradually changing—or, rather, he does not know him notice the change, for it is so gradual, he does not appreciate the transformation himself—into a hard-headed and not overscrupulous man of

**ALCOHOLISM CAN BE CURED.**  
Rev. Father Quinlivan's Opinion.

To whom it may concern: The good points of Dr. Dix's new discovery, are the fact that the liquor is not habit forming. It is completely removed, and it cures the system in the shortest period only to build up a new system. Second, it leaves no bad after effects, but on the contrary aids every way the health of the patient, while the first, it takes the desire for drink.

Third, the patient may use it without injury to his business or leaving his job. All other liquor cures are slow and uncertain. This new cure is slow, and its effects are of such a nature that it can be used by the patient. It is not habit forming, and it is completely removed from the system. It is not habit forming, and it is completely removed from the system. It is not habit forming, and it is completely removed from the system.

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