

FIVE-MINUTE SERMONS.

Second Sunday After Epiphany.

CURSING.

"His name was called Jesus."—Gospel of the day. The feast of the Holy Name of Jesus, dear brethren, is one which suggests to us many thoughts. It recalls to our mind the sweetness of our Saviour. It speaks of His tenderness for sinners and of His mercy to the penitent. It tells us, too, of His power—the infinite power of God, and of His awful majesty.

It is a day that fills us with joy and with sadness. It brings us joy because the Holy Name is a precious treasure, and it brings us sadness because of the attacks of our spiritual enemies.

And we are sad, too, to-day, because we are reminded how much the Blessed Name of God our Saviour is reviled and used irreverently. And to-day the Church protests with all her power against blasphemy and cursing.

To-day she calls upon her children to turn with loving hearts to God and to praise and bless in an especial manner the Holy Name of Jesus. Not that she would have Christians confine their praises to-day alone, but she would impress upon us by this day's feast the constant duty of giving reverence to the Holy Names of God and of Jesus.

The wicked habit of cursing, which the Church lifts her voice to cry out against, is an evil of a very serious kind. And it is something that unfortunately is too common among Christians of every age and walk in life.

Young children and gray-haired men and women are guilty of this irreverence towards sacred names. Rich men and poor men, men who say they have faith and men who have no faith, all are addicted to the impious vice of cursing.

Think how shocking it is to hear the name of Him who so loved us that He gave the last drop of His blood for us; who literally poured out His life for us; think of His name brought into the gutter! Think of that Name, which was called by the angel "with awe, introduced into the lead speech of the bar-room, or called upon in witness of the ribald jest! Think of gossiping women varying the monotony of their unsavory discourse with ejaculations filled with irreverence towards God and our Saviour!

Go to the shops, to the mills, to the business houses, and have your ears offended and your soul grieved by the injury done to the Holy Name. And go to the homes of Catholic men and women—to the homes of some of you and listen! Hear the father and the mother cursing each other and their children! Hear them call upon God to damn them, to strike them dead, to hurl them to hell!

You unnatural parents, you teachers of wickedness to your own children, how shall you escape the wrath of God? You who should bring up your children in the love and fear of God have become the agent of God's enemy, and are instructing your offspring in the way of eternal perdition. And how many more of you, instead of calling your little boys and girls about you when bedtime comes, teaching them to lift their hearts and voices in prayer to God; how many of you are altogether negligent about this most important duty of taking care that your children pray! When the veils are drawn aside, and you stand before the judgment-seat of Christ, you will learn how many sins you have been the occasion of by your neglect of duty and your bad example.

The home, the street, the work-place, are each and all the scenes, and often the stronghold, of this rampant vice of bad language. And the men and women and children who debase themselves and scandalize others, and sin against God by this evil habit, are more numerous than we like to acknowledge.

Our duty is plain enough. If we have the misfortune to be of those who have contracted this vice of foul speaking, let us resolve now upon amendment, and impose upon ourselves some suitable penance for our crime, and study to discover and apply the proper remedies.

If we are not ourselves the victims of the habit, let us help others by our example. Let us show our displeasure on every occasion when bad language is used. Let parents bring up their children strictly, teaching them the respect for sacred names and the duty of reverent prayer. And let us always, by internal acts of praise, give honor to God whenever we hear His name dishonored among men, and thus do something to abate the evil of this horrible vice.

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OUR BOYS AND GIRLS.

The Sisters of Woodside Farm.

BY EDWIN ANGELOE.

"Leave go that dog!" "No, I won't." "Then I'll make you." As Will Tucker uttered the threat, he darted forward to rescue a whining, cowering cur from the cruel lashes that were being laid heavily and mercilessly upon the unfortunate animal's body with a stout leather whip.

The owner of the whip affected a defiant attitude as Will approached him. The dog's defender made an effort to grasp the weapon, but the other quickly drew his arm back, uttering a low chuckle of delight.

"You must be in want of something to do, abusing a poor dumb beast in that manner," said Will, glancing compassionately at the shrieking animal whose eyes shone forth their gratitude for the boy's interference.

"I ain't none o' your business, no-how," growled the fellow. "I hits him cause I likes to hear him whine—see?" The boys and the dog were in the yard fronting the house of the Widow Page, who, on hearing the disturbance, made her appearance on the scene, just as Will was about to make another attack upon the fellow to obtain the whip.

"Be that you, Will Tucker?" asked the widow, in a shrill, squeaky voice. "Yes, Mrs. Page, I was just interfering on behalf of your dog. This fellow was beating him unmercifully."

Widow Page turned toward the overgrown fellow, and, in a harsh voice, bade him enter the house, which command he obeyed without a remonstrance, much to Will's amazement.

"You see," explained the widow, "he ain't countable fur what he does. Praps you didn't notice that he is simple. He's my nephew from Fleece-town. He's very fond of birds, and he's got it into head, somehow, that all the dogs wants to kill them. That's why he beat my dog—Go to your kennel, Bouncer."

Saying this the widow re-entered the house, while Will proceeded on his way to Woodside Farm, where he was to deliver a message to the pretty sixteen year old Alene, the younger daughter of Farmer Markland.

"A note for me?" exclaimed Alene, when Will came upon her at work in the strawberry patch.

"Yes, Alene, it is from my sister, Kate. If you don't mind I'll buy myself eating berries out of that pan till you finish reading. I suppose Kate wants you over to help her curl her front hair, or something like that; girls' notions never amount to much more."

"How smart you are! please don't put your hand into that pan so often—'Dearest Alene' and the merry girl, hastily perused the contents of her note, after which she looked up, a smile as bright as the sun lighting up her rosy face.

"Perfectly delicious!" exclaimed she. "The berries, I know it," said Will. "How stupid!—no, the note. Kate wants me to go with her to the wealthy Mrs. Clavering's, who is going to give a 'Wednesday' this week," cried Alene, in ecstasy.

"A what?" "A 'Wednesday'—it's an afternoon party to be held at the stone house near the village. Your sister writes that Miss Clavering said she would be pleased to meet your friend with the wavy chestnut hair—that means me. Isn't it lovely?"

"Your hair? but its not chestnut, it's red—oh, you mean the invitation! of course it is. What shall I tell Kate? you needn't look mad; it was a slip of the tongue."

"Never speak to me again. Tell Kate I'll go by all means. You have eaten half a panful!" and Alene did her best to make the boy think she was vexed at his jest.

With a rollicking laugh Will tossed a luscious berry at her head and then left her.

A little later Alene set the heaping pan of fruit under her arm and walked toward the farm house, swinging her dainty sun-bonnet in her crimson-stained hand, while an unhappy expression stole over her countenance, giving evidence that something was troubling her, something that most always rises before a girl's mind when- ever a picnic or a house party is on the programme.

"I had nothing to wear." Up stairs in her wardrobe were stacked numberless garments, but none of these suited her. They were either out of fashion, or lacking in fit. She must have something new.

"There is nothing I could alter except my white French lawn of last summer. I ought to have allowed for letting it down but I was careless. If I rip the tucks and gathers, the thread marks will surely show, and that would be awful."

A year before, Farmer Markland had been well off, but owing to an unfortunate business transaction in which he risked his whole bank account on a newly invented plow, which turned out a dire failure, he was now poor, and his daughters could look to the winds for any expensive garments they might expect.

"I dare not ask papa for money to buy anything," mused Alene, a sad, most pitiable expression of despair beaming from her lustrous eyes. "Only yesterday, when I begged the price of a new parasol he glanced at me frightfully and asked if I wanted to drive him to the poor house. What shall I do, anyway?" Alene asked herself, in a tone of utter hopelessness.

"I know. I will see Genevieve about it. She always can tell best."

In a few minutes she was entering, the room that was shared by herself and sister, who was an invalid.

THE CATHOLIC RECORD

and laid her rosy cheek against the delicate skin.

"I will, Genevieve," she said in a voice of charming sweetness, "because I know it will please God and the angels in Heaven, and because it will please you, the very best sister in all the world."

The Old Year. BY NELLIE MARIE O'DONNELL. While we're standing on the threshold of the New Year fair and bright, We sigh for the year that's dying— Fast fading from our sight.

"What a difference there was between these two sisters! Alene, a bright rollicking bit of femininity with a voice full of life and merriment, and an exuberant fondness for dress and all things worldly; Genevieve, gentle and serene, with saintly beautiful gray eyes, and a voice as soft as the August breeze. She was the elder sister by two years, and looked upon Alene as a lively, thoughtless child who hardly knew the difference between right and wrong."

"Don't fret, Alene! I see a way out of the difficulty."

"You may have that pink lawn I won at the fair last winter. I will make it up for you."

"And have it ready for Wednesday?" "Yes."

"You dear, darling creature," cried Alene, in true girlish fashion, flinging her arms about her sister's neck and imprinting a fond kiss on the pale lips. "Genevieve, you are just too lovely for anything!"

Wednesday forenoon found Genevieve working hard and earnestly on the dress, her pale face and dim eyes telling what she was enduring to make her young sister happy.

Little did Alene dream what a battle Genevieve was fighting with her feelings! Could the girl have foreseen what was coming, she would have torn the goods from the invalid's lap rather than suffer the painful sight that met her vision before that day had ended.

One o'clock Alene ascended the narrow stairs to see if her dress was done. When she entered the room all was still as the grave.

"Genevieve has fallen asleep in her chair. I see the dress is ready. Her hands are closed on it yet. I'll try to open them as gently as possible, so as not to disturb her. How good of Genevieve to do this for me—Oh, heavens, how cold her hands are! Genevieve!"

No response from the ashen lips; no lifting of the tired lids. A hoarse scream broke from Alene. Just then the door opened and Kate Tucker entered. She had come over to pass her opinion on the fit of the new-made garment.

"Oh, Kate! Kate!" cried Alene in a hollow voice of anguish. "Look at my sister, she is red and still, she will not awake! Help me, Kate, or she will die!"

"Not so loud, Al. Be calm and we shall soon revive her. Don't you see she has only fainted?" assured her friend.

It was an hour later. Kate Tucker had gone, and Alene was sobbing as though her heart would break, as she sat at Genevieve's side.

"It was all my fault, so it was. Genevieve, never speak to me again, for I don't deserve it. And I don't intend to go a single step to the party—not if Mrs. Clavering's were to beg me on her bedded knees!"

"But you shall go," the other mildly insisted. "No, not one step," persisted Alene. "Not even to please me?"

"Would it really please you? Then I will go."

My dear reader, it would be inconceivable to me to take you to the wealthy Mrs. Clavering's. I will merely state that the merry, bright-faced Alene went there, enjoyed herself to her heart's content, and then returned home anxious to run to her patient sister to learn something Genevieve had promised to tell her on her arrival home from the stone house.

Alene sat at Genevieve's feet. "You promised to tell me how I can repay you for what you have done for me, and how I can atone for being so thoughtless. Let me try to guess what you want me to do. Is it to never again make fun of Sam Blunkett's patched trousers?"

"Hardly," smiled Genevieve. "Last birthday I gave you a little prayer book. I have never seen you use it but once. Where is it?"

"It fell behind the bureau one day, and I didn't feel like recovering it. It was so hard to move that big piece of furniture."

"But you managed to tear a board from the summer house floor in order to rescue your turquoise ring, didn't you? That was worse. Now what I want you to do is to read your book every day with me in this room. You are too fond of gayety. Don't let yourself grow too fond of anything worldly. White French lawns and Wednesdays will not lead you to heaven, but that little book will. Be satisfied with this humble home, and the plain garments you will have to wear, for father can do no better for us. If you do this, you and I will be two exceedingly happy girls. Will you, Alene?"

For answer Alene rose, wound her plump arms about the invalid's neck

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The South of Ireland. The following is from one of Ireland's daily newspapers: "It has often been pointed out that while Protestants and Roman Catholics southerly in the northeast of Ireland, where the Catholics are in a minority, they are generally on the best of terms in the south, where they are in a majority. A pleasant example of this is a letter which has just been written by the Protestant rector of Cahirciveen, County Kerry, sending a subscription to the Roman Catholic church which Canon Brosnan is building in memory of O'Connell."

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