

FIVE-MINUTES' SERMON.

Palm Sunday.
PERSEVERANCE.

"Hosanna to the Son of David." (Matt. 21, 9.) St. Matthew informs us in the gospel of today that when Jesus made His entrance into the royal city, the enthusiastic multitude of the Jewish people raised the glorious triumphal hymn of "Hosanna to the Son of David." This joyful acclamation ought to fill us with sadness when we reflect that our divine Saviour will hear from the same people on the Friday following the terrible cry of "Crucify Him." "Hosanna," and "Crucify Him." What contradictory sentiments! Who would imagine such inconstancy possible! But, alas! this occurred not only then, it takes place every day, and perhaps there are many of my hearers who have frequently been guilty of malice so great against our dear Lord that it cried to Heaven for vengeance. For, my dear Christians, what have you done, as often as, by the commission of a mortal sin, you rejected Jesus, and crucified Him anew? Have you not also faithlessly revoked the glorious Hosanna which arose in your heart at the reception of Holy Communion, and by your sinful deeds exchanged it for the fearful "Away with Him, crucify Him?"

And you have indeed done this, and not like the Jews, through blindness, but with the full knowledge that Jesus is the Son of God, your Saviour, your future Judge. You have been shamefully inconstant to Him, who has never injured you, who loved you, shed His Blood for you, who has promised you a Heaven of infinite happiness, as a reward for your fidelity. O! should not the greatest sorrow penetrate your hearts? Should you not, with your whole hearts, renew your resolution to remain loyal to your Saviour, and never more to prove unfaithful in His service?

What will it avail us to begin in the grace of God, if we do not persevere in it? Not the beginning but the end of life decides our fate. Judas began well—as a highly favored apostle of the Lord—but how did he end? As thief, liar, sacrilegious, traitor, suicide and perpetrator of hell. On the other hand, St. Mary Magdalen, the good handmaid on the cross, millions of holy penitents, all these began as reprobate sinners, but they ended well, as elect children of God, and as glorious heirs of Heaven. And thus, my dear Christians, your former virtuous life, with all its eminent good works, will be as naught if you do not persevere and die in the grace and love of God. Though you lived four score years in sanctity and innocence as great as that of St. Aloysius, or even of Mary, the Queen of all saints, yet, if one moment before your death you would lose sanctifying grace by committing a grievous sin, were it only in thought, then were you; all your virtues, all your good works, would be useless, the crown of Heaven would be lost—irretrievably lost—and the fiery chains of hell would be your eternal portion. Of this our Saviour assures us in the gospel: "No man putting his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God" (Luke 9, 62), and St. John admonishes us in the Apocalypse: "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life." (Apoc. 2, 10.)

Take away, therefore, perseverance, and what remains? All else is vain and useless: to no purpose were your struggles for virtue: to no purpose all your good works of piety, mortification and mercy: to no purpose so many sufferings endured. The heavenly inheritance is lost, eternal perdition alone remains.

O perseverance! I may justly exclaim, you are the crown of all good; for without you, nothing can lead me to that which alone is good and desirable. O perseverance! you are the narrow portal of life, which cannot be evaded, through which I must pass myself, at whatever cost. O perseverance! you are the pearl of all graces, since those who obtained you now dwell in the land of peace and happiness; they have crossed the threshold to our eternal home, in happy security; they now rest from all struggles and sufferings; they have nothing more to fear from human frailty and weakness.

But, courage, my dearly beloved Christians! Let us not be disheartened. What our glorified brethren and sisters have done, we also, with good will, can accomplish. Let us co-operate faithfully with the grace which our Lord will abundantly grant us for our salvation. Let us fight the good fight, scrupulously avoid the dangers and occasions of sin, be diligent in prayer, in the reception of the sacraments, and mindful of our last end. Then, certainly, our merciful Lord, who has begun the good work in us, will also perfect it by means of all-availing grace. Then the God who in life was our helper in the struggles for virtue, will also in death, be our Saviour and Preserver. Then the just Rewarder, for whom, during life, we suffered and fought, will also in death give us the glorious, unfading crown of victory, which He has promised to those who love Him. Amen.

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OUR BOYS AND GIRLS.

LISZT.

The Abbe Liszt was a lovely eccentric. Those who were passionately fond of his heavenly music often had great difficulty to persuade the master to exhibit his skill, for, like all truly great men, he abhorred "showing off." Trollope, in his reminiscences, tells an amusing story of the old maestro. I was one of a very gay and pleasant dinner party given by an American lady, says the chatty writer. Liszt and Senator Manicani, then octogenarian and a good bit more, were among the guests. After dinner, which had been a somewhat long and very merry one, an attempt was made to induce Liszt to go to the piano, which had been carefully introduced into the room and disguised by cloths into the innocent semblance of a sideboard. We all knew that the enterprise in hand was likely to be a difficult one, for the great musician was apt to be somewhat chary in responding to such impromptu calls upon him, and in fact he showed manifest signs of not being minded to comply with the entreaties of those around him, till Manicani said: "Maestro, will you go to the instrument if I beg you on my knees to do so?"

"I cannot answer for what might happen under such circumstances," said the old musician, shaking his flowing white locks, "for I never had a Senator on his knees before me."

No sooner were the words out of his lips than Manicani, not only a Senator, but one of the most illustrious of the Senate and with his eighty-five years still as playful as a boy, jumped up, ran around the table and with napkin in hand—I can see the venerable white, old heads now laughing into each other's eyes—pumped down on both knees before him. Liszt, placing his hand on the kneeling Senator's shoulder to help him in rising from his chair, went to the instrument without another word, and once there was not niggardly in the treat he gave us.

An American girl who studied in Germany years ago had the great privilege of becoming a pupil of Liszt. She said of him that he was then the most striking-looking man imaginable—tall and slight, with deep set eyes, shaggy eyebrows and long, iron-gray hair. He gave no paid lessons; he was much too grand for that! But if one had talent enough or pleased him, he let one come to him and play to him.

Never was there such a delightful teacher! and he is the first sympathetic one I've had. You feel so free with him, and he develops the very spirit of music in you. He doesn't keep nagging at you all the time, but he leaves you your own conception. Now and then he will make a criticism or play a passage, and with a few words give you enough to think of all the rest of your life. There is a delicate point to everything he says, as subtle as he is himself. He doesn't tell you anything about the technique. That you must work out for yourself. When I had finished the first movement of the sonata, Liszt, as he always does, said "Bravo!" Taking my seat, he made some little criticisms, and then told me to go on and play the rest of it. Now I only half knew the other movements, for the first one was so extremely difficult that it cost me all the labor I could give to prepare that. But playing to Liszt reminds me of trying to feed the elephant in the Zoological Garden with lumps of sugar. He disposes of whole movements as if they were nothing, and stretches out gravely for more! One of my fingers fortunately began to bleed, for I had practiced the skin off, and that gave me a good excuse for stopping. Whether he was pleased at this proof of industry I know not; but after looking at my finger and saying, "O!" very compassionately, he sat down and played the whole three last movements himself. That was a great deal, and showed off all his powers. It was the first time I had heard him, and I don't know which was the most extraordinary—the Scherzo, with its wonderful lightness and swiftness, the Adagio, with its depth and pathos, or the last movement, where the whole keyboard seemed to *domern und blitzen* (thunder and lightning)! There is such a vividness about everything he plays that it does not seem as if it were mere music you were listening to, but it is as if he had called up a real, living form, and you saw it breathing before your face and eyes. It gives me almost a ghostly feeling to hear him, and it seems as if the air were peopled with spirits. Oh, he is a perfect wizard! It is as interesting to see him as it is to hear him, for his face changes with every modulation of the piece, and he looks exactly as he is playing. He has one element that is most captivating, and that is a sort of delicate and fitful mirth that keeps peering out at you here and there: It is most peculiar, and when he plays that way the most bewitching little expression comes over his face. It seems as if a little spirit of joy were playing hide-and-go-seek with you.

He is so overrun with people that I think it is a wonder he is civil to anybody, but he is the most amiable man I ever knew, though he can be dreadful, too, when he chooses, and he understands how to put people outside his door in as short a space of time as it can be done. I go to him three times a week. At home Liszt doesn't wear his long abbe's coat, but a short one, in which he looks much more artistic. His figure is remarkably slight, but his head is most imposing. He generally walks about and smokes and mutters (he can never be said to talk) and calls upon one or other of us to play.

From time to time he will sit down and play himself where a passage does not suit him, and when he is in good spirits he makes little jests all the time. His playing was a complete revelation to me and has given me an entirely new insight into music. You cannot conceive, without hearing him, how poetic he is or the thousand nuances that he can throw into the simplest thing, and he is equally great on all sides. From the zephyr to the tempest the whole scale is equally at his command.

But Liszt is not at all like a master, and cannot be treated like one. He is a monarch, and when he extends his loyal sceptre you can sit down and play to him. You never can ask him to play anything for you, no matter how much you're dying to hear it. If he is in the mood, he will play; if not, you must content yourself with a few remarks. You cannot even offer to play yourself. You lay your notes on the table, so he can see that you want to play, and sit down. He takes a turn up and down the room, looks at the music and if the piece interests him, he will call upon you. We bring the same piece to him but once, and but once play it through.

Liszt does such bewitching little things! The other day, for instance, Franklin Gaul was playing something to him, and in it were two runs, and after each run two staccato chords. She did them most beautifully and struck the chords immediately after. "No, no," said Liszt; "after you make a run you must wait a minute before you strike the chords, as if in admiration of your own performance. You must pause, as if to say, 'How nicely I did that!' Then he sat down and made a run himself, waited a second and then struck the two chords in the treble, saying as he did so, "Bravo," and then he played again, "Bravo," and positively it was as if the piano had softly applauded! That is the way he plays everything. It seems as if the piano were speaking with a human tongue—Philadelphia Standard and Times.

CHATS WITH YOUNG MEN.

The following account of how a poor Irish boy gained success with honor by his own efforts and ability will, we think, be of interest to readers of this department:

Not very many years ago Bourke Cockran, the famous speaker, and one of the most popular orators of the country, landed in New York a stranger, with only \$100 to start him in his career. He was a strong, healthy young Irishman, ambitious to be somebody and do something, and willing to work at any honorable business until able to gratify his higher aims. He was well educated, and of marked ability, and it was not his habit to be idle, then, when unknown, as it is now, when he is a man of national prominence; so he secured a place as a clerk in A. T. Stewart's store. A month later he became a teacher in a public school on Rutgers street, where he instructed in French, Latin, and history. Then he accepted an appointment as principal of a public school. But Bourke Cockran had selected his walk in life, and had commenced the study of law. All his evenings and spare moments were devoted to that which at once absorbed his attention. He bent his whole energy in this direction, with the concentration that has always marked him, and without which few succeed. On Saturdays, when his time was his own, he studied law in the office of the late Chauncey Schaffer. At length he gave up his place as principal, and for nearly a year lived on his savings, and studied. In 1876 he was admitted to the bar of New York. He was always possessed of a genial nature and a ready wit, and made friends quickly wherever he went, and it was not long before the young man found a chance to start on his public career.

The beginner's first case was in connection with the trial of five men, at White Plains, who were arraigned for selling liquor on Sunday. He defended four of them. Three of the four were acquitted, while the jurors disagreed in the case of the fourth. Frank Larkin of Sing Sing, who was then the leading criminal lawyer of Westchester county, defended the fifth, and lost the case.

In speaking of this his first success, Mr. Cockran described it as a combination of "work and fortuity, though a favorable circumstance. Looking back on it now," he continued, "it seems to me that the jurors were more or less affected by a desire to encourage a young man who was beginning. If that was their feeling, it certainly produced the desired result. Of course that trial gave me a confidence in myself that was of incalculable benefit."

His rise thenceforth was rapid. Establishing himself as a lawyer in New York city, where he has thousands of competitors, he was soon known as a man of great ability as an advocate, and of supreme eloquence as a speaker. It was only a short time until his practice was large and profitable, for he seldom if ever lost a case, and his faculty of speech, combined with his thorough study and knowledge of law, enabled him to make irresistible arguments in court. He gradually took a foremost place among the great lawyers of the metropolis, and his fame as an orator spread throughout the nation.

I asked Mr. Cockran to tell me something about his work, and the way in which he managed to achieve such immediate success, says William Dickinson in Success. He talked pleasantly. He is the same handsome man, with the same splendid physique and massive head as on the platform. The

voice alone was different. It was no longer the great melodious thunder-peal one hears when Cockran is delivering some great oration. Indeed, he spoke in such a low, quiet tone that I could hardly believe the voice could be the same.

"You are asking me a question," he continued, "that has been presented to me time and again, and one which I have never yet been able to answer satisfactorily. I think most men are more successful than they deserve to be. So far as I am concerned, that is certainly true. Generally speaking, however, success is the result, and the laudable result, of absorption in your work."

"No one truly ambitious will mind working to achieve his ambition. If I see a boy dissatisfied at having to wait and study before beginning active work, I make up my mind at once that that boy will not succeed when at length he does get started. Patience and arduous preparation are necessary to success."

"Mr. Cockran, do you think the average young man is persistent?" I asked.

"No; but if he is, he will succeed. I believe a man can qualify himself for any calling, and will be recognized. There are too many eyes on the look-out for him to remain undiscovered. There are thousands this moment seeking qualified lawyers, doctors, bricklayers, pavers, drivers, and day laborers. Employers are as anxious to get good service, as workers to obtain good employment."

"The passport to success is merit; and in my judgment there is no other. You can give a young man but very little assistance toward the goal of his ambition. If he is in earnest, is persistent, self-reliant, he will succeed by his own merit, whether you assist him or not."

"I suppose you had no training in oratory, Mr. Cockran."

"Well, I can hardly say that I had. I think that is one gift that comes more naturally to a man than any other. I seldom write an address before delivering it; though when I have time, I prepare my speeches very carefully. I think them out very thoroughly beforehand, and then depend largely upon the inspiration of the moment for expression. That is the only way to produce an effect upon an audience. Let a man know what he wants to say, let him plan it out carefully beforehand, and go before the audiences with plenty of words at his command, and the inspiration of the moment will tell what is the proper and telling form of expression. I am always unconscious of everything but my subject whenever I produce any good effect. Everything else sinks out of sight, and I think only of my topic and what I want to say."

"An audience must become one great mass to me before I feel that I am expressing myself forcibly. If I can distinguish any one face, I always fail to do anything worth mentioning. Unless I lose all consciousness of individuals, unless my audience becomes one being, as it were, which I see in a hazy way, and with which I talk as I would face to face with a friend, I can do nothing. Everything depends upon the circumstances of the moment in making a speech, and how I feel, and how the audience feels; and when a speaker is unable to read his auditors, he isn't likely to be successful. A speaker must know his audience; he must play upon it as one plays upon an instrument. He must know just how his hearers feel at each moment. How a speaker knows this I cannot tell. It is simply a feeling that comes—somehow. In this way he can tell when his audience is no longer interested, long before there are any signs of it apparent to others; long before the moving and noise begin. There is some sign, some indescribable feeling, that warns him. It is a part of a speaker's art, given to him by nature."

"Mr. Cockran," I asked, "in preparing a speech, do you make notes?"

"Yes, occasionally; it is important to get an outline—the principal points impressed indelibly upon your mind, so that they are on the tip of your tongue. That is particularly necessary, when you have the platform to yourself, have no interruptions, and have no opportunity for a cue. But in debate it is a bad plan to have a speech prepared, though you should be conversant with the subject. You must speak on whatever point the debate turns upon. If you do not, you are hopelessly lost. People do not want irrelevant remarks, entirely foreign to the topic under discussion."

"I will not say," added Mr. Cockran in reply to a question as to his success, "that I have succeeded; but that I have been successful more than I deserved to be."

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BYRON'S PICTURE OF A CATHOLIC WOMAN.

St. Peter exhorted Christian women, converts to the faith, so to live "that if the husbands of any believe not the word they may be won without the word, by the conversation (that is, the conduct and manner of life) of the wives, considering your chaste conversation with fear." This holy awe was inspired by St. Cecilia to her heathen husband and his brother, who could not but exclaim: "Christ must be, indeed, the true God since His chosen saint for Himself such a handmaid." St. Monica inspired her husband, St. Patricius, with a similar fear, which brought him at last to the faith. There are many such examples recorded in the lives of the saints, and renewed in the experience of our day.

But the most beautiful commentary we know of upon St. Peter's words has been written by Lord Byron, and that, too, quite unconsciously. The lines occur in a book so generally shunned by Catholics that they will be new to most. Moore has described the poem in question as "the most powerful, and in many respects, painful display of the versatility of genius that has ever been left for succeeding ages to wonder at and deplore." The strangest, though by no means the most deplorable, instance of Byron's versatility occurs near the end of the poem in the fifteenth canto. The noble poet has been describing at great length, and with more sarcasm than wit, the company gathered at an English nobleman's mansion, when all at once his tone changes, and he speaks of a young Catholic orphan, whom he calls Aurora Raby. The lines are as follows:

"Early in years, and yet more infantine in figure, she had something of sublime in eyes which sadly shone, as seraphs shine. All youth—but with an aspect beyond time; radiant and grave, as pitying man's decline; mournful—but mournful of another's crime. She looked as if she sat by Eden's door. And grieved for those who could return no more."

"She was a Catholic, too, sincere, austere, As far as her own gentle heart allowed; And deem'd that fallen worship far more dear. Perhaps because 'twas fallen; her sires were proud Of deeds and days when they had fill'd the Orations, and had never bent or bow'd To mortal power; and as she was the last, She held their old faith and old feelings fast."

"She gazed upon a world she scarcely knew As seeking not to know it; silent, lone, As grows a flower, thus quietly she grew And kept her heart serene within its zone. There was awe in the homage which she drew. Her spirit seemed as seated on a throne Apart from the surrounding world, and strong In its own strength—most strange in one so young."

Can anyone doubt that this beautiful picture was drawn from life? Byron must have met a young Catholic lady who neither thought it necessary to conceal her religion nor to apologize for it by fast talk and worldly manners. She was a contrast to all around her, and the result was, not sneers of contempt, but respectful admiration. "Considering your chaste conversation with fear," said St. Peter. "There was awe in the homage which she drew," says Lord Byron.—N. Y. Herald.

FORTITUDE.

"I will glory in nothing but in my infirmities." (II. Cor. xii, 5.)

When the hand of God is laid upon us the first thing we are likely to do is to complain and to wonder why we are so much afflicted. We are in poverty, and we look with jealous eye on the rich and forget the saying of Our Lord, "How hardly shall the rich man enter the kingdom of heaven." God smites us with disease, and instead of bearing it with patience we murmur, and are very impatient of the restraint which it brings upon us, when, in deed, this very sickness may be God's own chosen means of helping us save our souls. That "the Lord doth not willingly afflict or grieve the children of men" we know full well. That He brings sorrow upon us and suffering we know, and that it is for our good we know also. He is no angry God sitting in judgment to punish us all the time. Sickness, loss of money, friends, and of all that is dear and dear to us, is no sign at all that God dislikes us or is in any way angry with us. "For whom the Lord loveth He chastiseth, and He scourgeth every son whom He receiveth."

St. Paul appreciated this so much that he could say "I glory in my infirmities"; and then he went on to describe his chastisements from the day he had been a Christian up to the time of his writing. And in spite of all his hardships, of all the base ingratitude with which he had been treated; in spite of perpetual bodily pain; in spite of temptations of Satan; he would glory in his infirmity. He knew that out of the proper submission of spirit to all this a man's soul is elevated to God, merit is gained and greater glory be given to God.

And we, alas! how do we act to-day in similar circumstances? Which one of us has the strong, burning faith to rejoice when God tries him? The saints have praised God for all the afflictions He has put on them. We are called to be saints, and what have we done? We have complained. We have become angry. We have doubted the goodness of God. We have not said with Job the Patriarch, "Shall I receive good at the hands of

the Lord, and not receive evil also?" Our duty in this regard is plain, and so plain that St. Paul says, "If you do well and suffer for it, this is acceptable with God." For this renders us like to Him Who suffered for us, the just for the unjust. St. Francis of Assisi says that perfect joy consisted in being despised and ill-treated by men of the world.

Now, this treatment of the world which we receive, how do we bear it as a rule? Most men resent it. Most men will stand no ill treatment from their fellow-men. They talk big about their dignity. Yet the Psalmist says, "What is man that Thou art mindful of him? and the son of man that Thou so regardest him?" Men speak of their being insulted and talk of apologies, and they insult God, and have not made the apology of a good confession. Men abuse us and slander us, and we seek revenge. Are we right? No; we are wrong. "Those who take the sword shall perish by the sword," saith our Lord to St. Peter. Let us say this: If men afflict me, or insult me, I will, after the example of my Divine Master, be silent. I will count it all joy to suffer for Him and for His name. But as for myself, I am a worm and no man, and if I must glory, let it be in my infirmities.—Sacred Heart Review.

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