

FIVE-MINUTE SERMONS.

DANGEROUS COMPANIONSHIP. Walk (transcendently; not as unwise but as wise. (Ephes., v. 15-16.)

To-day, my dear brethren, I propose to make a few remarks on the dangerous occasions of impurity, so common in these times.

The danger of which I wish specially to speak is that which comes from the familiar acquaintance which now exists to such a great extent, and is taken so much as a matter of course, between young persons of different sexes. This undue familiarity is too common everywhere in this country; and more than anywhere else in a city like that in which we live.

To take a flagrant instance. A priest being a man educated according to the rules of respectable society, is unexpectably surprised when he for the first time hears some young woman, apparently of a careful conscience, ask him if it is a sin to flirt.

Why, outwardly and at the first appearance, the act is not very different from that of an abandoned woman seeking to attract those whom she thinks will notice her. The intention, of course, in your minds is often comparatively harmless, it is true; but by outward standards, the act is simply despicable.

This seeking to form unknown acquaintances of the opposite sex or to attract special attention among them is, then, a thing which no Catholic girl should think of, if she has any sense of shame.

For the reasons, plain enough, on which these directions rest, promiscuous assemblies of both sexes, such as those to be found at certain gatherings, now unfortunately so popular, are full of danger, and had far better in all cases be avoided.

When Sister Agnes had gone the subject which the girls had been discussing presented a different aspect, and the keynote of her character which always impressed them—"Do noble deeds, not dream them all day long,"—caused them now to feel dissatisfied with themselves and to cast about for something to do.

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A LITTLE WHITE DRESS.

By MARY CATHERINE CROWLEY.

This information was received without comment, but it aroused in some foolish little hearts a feeling of envy, and in others a desire of emulation.

Eugenia Dillon was the richest girl in the school. Her father, a plain, sensible man, who had lacked early advantages, had within a few years amassed a considerable fortune, which he would gladly have enjoyed in a modest, unpretentious manner.

This, however, did not suit his wife at all. Mrs. Dillon, though a kind-hearted, charitable woman, was excessively fond of style, lavishly extravagant, and inclined to parade her wealth upon all occasions.

Thus the girl continued to speak to the band of little girls, who had eagerly gathered around her; thus she went to teach them lessons of wisdom in a sprightly, gay, happy-hearted way, as if generosity, unselfishness and self-denial were the most natural traits of her nature.

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with much animation, but the bell rang before any decision had been arrived at. Later, however, after a consultation with Sister Agnes, who promised her cordial co-operation, the children concluded to adopt Connie's suggestion, if their mothers would consent.

"I must acknowledge that I am disappointed," remarked Mrs. Davis to her husband that evening. "To-day I ordered the material for Lillie's First Communion dress—an exquisite tulle. But she came home from school with a story about furnishing an outfit for a poor child, and she assures me that her companions are to wear plain dresses for the occasion."

"A very creditable determination," said Lillie's papa, approvingly. "I endorse it heartily. If it is really the children will not be distracted by the thought of their gowns, while at the same time some deserving little girl will be provided with an appropriate costume. I advise you to send back the tulle by all means, my dear, and apply the difference in price between it and the fabric agreed upon to the fund the children are trying to make up."

"Well, I suppose it will be best to do so," decided his wife. "Anyhow, tulle is so delicate a tissue, and Lillie is such a headless little creature, that it would probably be badly torn before the end of the ceremonies."

"I am sorry," soliloquized Connie's mother when she heard of the project. "Connie's First Communion will be so important an event for her that I feel as if I could not do enough in preparation for it. I should like to dress her more beautifully than on any other in her life."

"The great day finally arrived. To picture it, or to describe the joy which filled the soul of each of our first communicants, is not the purpose of this story. But as the white-robed band entered the convent chapel, to the incense of the Mass, the girls who had assembled their appearance was the strongest possible sermon against vanity."

"Somehow, when Sister Agnes talks to me," even so flighty a little personage as Lillie Davis said one day, "I feel as if I could make any sacrifice quite as a matter of course, and without a speck of fuss about it."

"Yes," agreed Connie. "She seems to take your hand in her strong one and to lead you up a stony, hilly path; and then, when you come to the roughest, steepest places, she almost carries you onward, and you are ashamed to complain that you are tired, because, though she is so gentle with you, she does not mind such trifles at all herself."

"Girls," said she, "wouldn't it be nice if we could give a dress and veil, and whatever is necessary, to some poor child who is to make her First Communion on the same day as ourselves? Perhaps, too, we could arrange to have her make it with us. Don't you think this would make us happy, and do a good way to prepare?"

When you meet with one suspected, Condemned unheard for some sin, By fair weather friends rejected, The world's approval to win, Speak no word of heartless blame, For the slandering's vile detraction Yet may soil thy goodly name.

When you meet with one pursuing Ways the lost have entered in, Working out his own undoing, With his reckless and sin; Think, if placed in his condition Would a kind word be in vain? Or a look of cold suspicion, Win thee back to God again.

There are spots that bear no flowers, Not because the soil is bad, But the summer's genial showers Never make their bosoms glad. Better have an act that's kindly Treated sometimes with disdain Than, by judging others harshly, Doon the innocent to pain.

CONFESSING SINS TO A PRIEST. The Stock Protestant Argument Humorously Refuted. At acquaintance of ours, who frequently went to and from Philadelphia, was often teased by some of his associates about being a Catholic.

"Well, I'll soon do it," said Lewy. "You ride in this car, and so, too, sometimes, does Mr. —, the president of the railroad. Some day, when the president and you are in the car, the conductor asks you for your ticket."

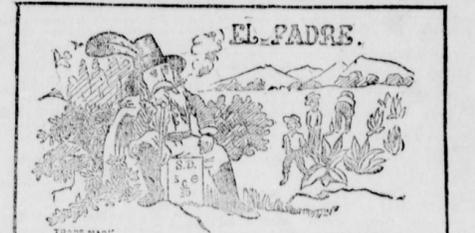
"The Catholic faith is the religion that is faithful to the Cross. It insists on self-denial. It teaches that nature must give way to grace. It idealizes suffering endured for love of God. It opposes the maxims of the world. It acts up to the warning of the Lord: 'Unless a man denies himself and takes up his cross daily and follows me, he cannot be my disciple.'"

"Edward's Catechism of Hygiene," for use in schools, has been issued by the Catholic School Book Co., New York; edited by Joseph F. Edwards, A. M., M. D., editor of "The Annals of Hygiene," etc.

Mr. Emile Zola has been defeated for the fourth time in his candidacy for membership for the French Academy. Mons. Severaino de Heredia who was Minister of Public Works in 1887 was elected to the vacancy by 19 votes, Mons. Zola receiving 7. It appears that even in France Mons. Zola's immoral novels have not made him a favorite.

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