

## A SERMON ON BRAVERY AND DUTY.

At the request of the widows and friends of several of the men who were killed or burned to death at the fire at the World's Fair on July 10, and also in honor of the brave men themselves, who so courageously gave up their lives in obedience to the call of duty, we publish the following sermon preached at the Church of All Saints, Chicago, by Rev. Alexander McClavick on the occasion of the funeral of Fireman Denning:

MY DEAR BRETHREN—The recent disaster, which brought death to so many homes, has moved the public feeling to its lowest depth. As the sad news flashed through the city and out over the country, there was a universal shudder. A cry of horror went up from the whole land. When the circumstances and details of the awful calamity were made known, strong men, who were far away from the sad scene and strangers to every fireman in our city, turned from each other and wept—wept for the brave men who went down to death in the discharge of their duty—wept for the widows and orphans who were searching in the ashes and coals or in the public morgue for the face they loved. The sympathy of the whole country goes to the bereaved. It is expressed in the public journals. You hear it on the streets, in the cars and hotels, everywhere where people congregate. There is but one sentiment in every heart for the sorrowing relatives of the dead, and that is a deep heartfelt sentiment of pity and commiseration. I know you are grateful for this widespread expression of sympathy, but I know too how futile it is to dispel the sorrow of this occasion or to compensate you for the loss you have sustained. It will not reanimate the heart that is still, or give back speech to these silent lips. Nevertheless it must be a comfort to you to feel that the public mourns with you in your distress, and that if it were possible to lift from you your burden of woe, a million hands would be outstretched to do you service.

We admire the soldier who fights and falls on the battlefield for his country, we admire the nurse who goes cheerfully to attend the sick and dying in times of pestilence, we admire the explorer or the discoverer who sails forth to lands and seas unknown, animated with a lofty motive, bent on serving not self but God and fellow man, we admire also and in quite the same degree the heroic firemen who on last Monday afternoon climbed the deadly tower at duty's call, and were obedient to duty even unto death. You can scarcely pay a man a higher compliment than to say that he died while faithfully and fearlessly doing his duty. God has appointed all our duties, and to fulfil them is to fulfil God's behests. To die in their discharge is to die in God's service.

The sense of duty is inborn in man. It comes to us from God and is unfolded with the unfolding of reason. It is one of God's greatest gifts to us. It brings us into the moral kingdom of God and makes us accountable beings. It opens up to our perception laws of right and wrong, laws which are unchangeable and which no power in the universe can abrogate. It sets before us a course of conduct, which, if we pursue, we shall be happy; if we neglect we shall bring upon ourselves inevitable misery. Now in some, this sense of duty is more fully developed than in others. Habit and association often so dull it that we become morally blind. The man who frequently shuns or neglects duty, soon loses a clear perception of the nature and import of its demands. It is no longer a sacred thing in his sight. He confounds it with personal comfort or gross material advantage. But even an unclouded apprehension of duty is not sufficient. Something more is necessary, and that is the courage to

fulfill it. There is so much weakness in human nature that it often shrinks from emotion and pain, no matter how noble the purpose which beckons it to undergo the sacrifice. Now, the greatest men, the greatest heroes, are those who know their duty and are brave enough to do it. This poor man whose remains lie before us was such a hero. He followed duty into the jaws of death. He sacrificed his life on duty's altar, a pleasing holocaust to the great God, a sublime example for the world to imitate, God's blessing on his noble soul. I bow to his immortal spirit. I reverence his sacred dust.

A sure indication of greatness is the giving up of one's self to others. That was, without a doubt, the most marked virtue in Christ. He came to save the world, and to give himself for its salvation. He pawned his life for our redemption. That has been the distinguishing virtue of all the great saints. Their own comforts and convenience were forgotten in their efforts to do good. In the presence of privation and danger the fire of their zeal burned brighter. The same virtue is characteristic of all good and worthy men. The selfish man is ever despised. The unselfish, the self-forgoing, the self-sacrificing, those who give not words or mere material helps, but who surrender what is dearest to them, their lives, in others' service, these are the men we love to honor, these are the men whose names shall be forever held in benediction. Such a man lies dead before us.

We sometimes estimate our wealth by what we have, by what we have hoarded up, but our true wealth lies rather in what we give to others. Our gifts to others are gifts to God, and are treasured up for us in heaven. "Whatsoever you give to the least of these little ones," said the Saviour, "you give unto Me." This poor man, like most of his companions, had little of earth's goods. If you took an inventory of his possessions you would find that he was poor. If his wife and children depended for their support upon what he had left them, they would scarcely have a roof to shelter them. His wealth was indeed little if you estimate it by what he had; but it was very great if you compute it by what he gave to others. In this sense he was richer than a Vanderbilt or Gould, for he gave the priceless treasure of his life. He gave his wife and children, not the legacy of a hero—the memory of a great name and the inheritance of a great example.

His death though sudden was in a measure foreseen. It is hard to be stricken down and hurried before one's Creator without thought or warning. From such a death, good God deliver us. His taking off was not that severe and awful kind. God mercifully saved him a little while to make his peace with Him, and we thank the Almighty to-day for that signal favor. He was received into the arms of one of God's ministers while yet life remained, and that brave priest, I am told, stood by him until he died.

Yet even had no priest been there to whisper God's name to him or breathe the words of absolution over him, I cannot believe that he would not find favor in Heaven. As he stood on the fatal tower and saw every avenue to life cut off, as he felt his footing tremble beneath him and looked down at the long, long leap, which meant a leap to death, no doubt, after bidding his companions farewell and bidding a blessing to his loved ones at home, no doubt, in that supreme moment, face to face with eternity, he lifted his heart to heaven and uttered a fervent prayer to the Most High. That prayer, the great God Who made all the bravery that is in human souls, Who made all the courage which urges the strong and good on to do and dare noble things, that prayer, breathed amid the crackling flames, a merciful

God would surely answer. The sacrifice which he made that day in the sight of Heaven and earth, would move to pity a being a thousand times less merciful than God. Oh, I think all the angels and saints in Heaven were at God's feet pleading for him, who he nerved himself for that awful struggle with death; and mingled with these angelic prayers were, I am sure, the prayers of fifty thousand men and women, who wept and groaned and grew faint and sick, as they stood watching the progress and close of as sad a tragedy as was ever enacted in our city. With all these prayers and his own deep devotion and loyalty at all times to his Creator, I feel gratified in holding out to you, as a comfort and a consolation to you in your bereavement, the cheering hope that his portion in eternity shall be a happy and blessed one.

And during these moments of awful anxiety, when he saw death reaching up for him in cruel flames, no doubt his religion stood him well. His faith and trust in God nerved his soul and made him braver and more heroic. He felt that though he was leaving all, he was not leaving God; he felt that though death would come to him, he would still live and his spirit would look down from Heaven on those he loved, and he would bless them yet from the unseen world, and meet them again in that calm bright land where tears and sorrows and partings are not known.

Before concluding let me say a word of praise for the brave firemen of our city. Their heroic conduct at all times, and under most trying circumstances, has merited for them the esteem and admiration of the whole community. There is no one who cannot recall instances of their courage and daring, and I have never yet heard of a case where they flinched from duty, or stood cowardly back while human beings perished in the flames.

"When all have fled, when all but him must fly,  
The fireman comes to rescue or to die."

One sentiment I have for the firemen living and the firemen dead—I have cheers for the living, I have prayers and love and tears for the dead.

A useful lesson we might all well learn on this sorrowful occasion—it is to love one another. There is an underlying principle of good, I think, in every one. It may not always be evident, but it is there and will leap forth when the time and place are ripe for it. Who could dream that there were such heroes, such great noble souls, beneath the mild calm faces and common ordinary exteriors of those who rode away carelessly on their engines to the fatal fire last Monday noon. No one would dream that they were as brave warriors as ever buckled a sword. No one would dream that they were "nature's noblemen." Yet such they were. Multitudes of others may be made of that same stern stuff; and we should never therefore despise or hate our fellow beings, but rather be filled ever with deep love and affection for them. Let us all to-day clasp hands together, and the hands of all men, in godly Christian charity, like the brave firemen who on the tottering tower reached out their hands, the one to the other, as a last proof of their mutual friendship and devotion.

Pray for the happy repose of all their souls, but especially of the soul of him whose remains are before you, for he was dear to you in life and you should not forget him in death.

## Advice to Invalids.

Almoxia Wine is the best wine for invalids ever before offered to the public, and is highly recommended by all the Medical profession all over the world, is the only wine known to contain natural Salts of Iron produced by nature. On account of the ferruginous soil in which the vines are cultivated. Gianelli & Co., 18 King street, Toronto, sole agents for Canada. Sold by all druggists.

## Wonderful Preservation.

The following is an extract from a letter of Rev. Bertrand Oathony, O. P., recently received by the *Library*:

"Amongst the many things I heard which could be of some interest for your readers, I will begin by relating an extraordinary proof of the goodness of the Blessed Virgin. A few days ago I went to see a family for whom I had a message from friends in Trinidad. What was my surprise and grief when they related to me that on the 8th of May their large house of business caught fire and was burned to the ground. Nothing of value escaped the devouring flames. The loss is estimated at about one million of dollars, partially covered by insurance. But what is a consolation in our trial, said to me the Christian lady, is the proof of affection and love which the blessed Mother of God has given to us. Everything in the house was burned and destroyed except her statue. What was the admiration of the people the day after the fire to see a piece of the small altar still hanging against the wall, and on it a large globe of glass unbroken, though quite black with the smoke, and under the globe the smiling statue of the Blessed Virgin as white as ever. How is it that the roof and several stories which fell did not shiver this glass to atoms? How is it that the roaring fire, which was ascending some hundred feet in this place, did not destroy the entire piece of wood supporting the globe? Is it not because the holy image of the Mother of God was there? Many pious persons believe it, and such is the belief of our friends, so terribly tried by the recent calamity which befell them.

"I may say this instance is not the first I have heard of in similar cases. In the year 1881, in a town called Romanus (the birthplace of Blessed Hubert, the fifth general of our Order,) during the month of May a large picture of the Blessed Virgin had been painted and erected high on a wooden altar in the Church of St. Bernard. One night during the devotions the altar caught fire, and everything was burned down except the frame. It was blackened but the picture remained untouched.

"Two years ago you heard probably of the disastrous cyclone which swept away all the dwellings on this land of Martinique in the Lesser Antilles, killing on the spot over 500 persons, and causing such devastation as it is difficult to imagine.

"On the hill called Morne Rouge there was a revered sanctuary, of Notre Dame de la Patience to which many pilgrims used to resort in order to implore the blessings of Mary. Not only the roof of this sanctuary was blown down on that fatal night of the 18th August, 1891, but the walls were levelled to the ground; altars and everything were crushed by the heavy materials, except the statue of Our Lady, which appeared the next morning, smiling above the ruins."

INFLAMMATORY RHEUMATISM.—Mr. S. Ackerman, commercial traveler, Belleville, writes, some years ago I used Dr. THOMAS' ELECTRIC OIL for inflammatory rheumatism, and three bottles effected a complete cure. I was the whole of one summer unable to move without crutches, and every movement caused excruciating pains. I am now out on the road and exposed to all kinds of weather, but have never been troubled with rheumatism since. I, however, keep a bottle of Dr. THOMAS' OIL on hand, and I always recommend it to others, as it did so much for me."

Rev. Father Dunne, C. C., Rathfriland, who had been seriously unwell for some time, has recovered so much that, under the advice of his medical attendant, Dr. Garret Joyce, he went to the country on July 29th, to further recruit his health.

The body of a woman named Johanna Morrison was recently found in the river, outside the quay, in Waterford. An inquest was held, at which the husband of the deceased was examined, and said he could not say whether any foul play was used or not, as she had left him alright. A verdict of "Found drowned" was returned.