

FIVE-MINUTE SERMONS.

Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost.

THE DIGNITY AND HAPPINESS OF OBEDIENCE.

Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is the Lord's commandment: (Colossians iii. 20.)

Brothers, there are many new things found out nowadays; but there are also some old ones and good ones being forgotten. Among other things we are apt to forget the happiness of obedience. Of course I do not mean obedience to the Church; perhaps there never was an age when Catholics rested so content in the gentle restraint of our holy mother the Church. But I refer to the practice of obedience one to another, done after the pattern of our Lord Jesus Christ. The loveliness of this virtue is best seen in the bosom of the Christian family. Affection, indeed, is the bond of the family, but the fruit of affection is obedience. There is nothing more pleasing to God than the son who is always at the service of his father and mother. Few families are without at least one such son. He is often the one of whom at first the least was expected; of poor natural talents, of delicate health, of irascible temper, or one whose earlier years were wayward. But all the time he was obedient, though no one, not even himself, gave him credit for it. Year by year the spectacle of father's and mother's affection and sacrifice penetrated him, till he became deeply attached to them. How much this reverence for his parents had to do with his religious state as a boy and a young man! It may be true that scarcely any boy ever grows up to be a man and is never a liar to his father and mother, or a pilferer of cake and fruit and pennies about the house. But the good boy drops all this at First Communion or when he goes to learn a trade, and he becomes honest and truthful in little things as well as great. One of the happiest days for him between the cradle and the grave is when he runs and puts the first dollar he has earned into his mother's hands. That good son lets all his brothers go away from home to seek their fortunes; he stays with the old folks, comforts their old age, closes their eyes in death, and with much love and many tears follows them with his prayers beyond the grave. The others were, perhaps, good children, but he is the hero of the family.

Then there is the good daughter, who in childhood is the sunshine of the family, and in a maturer years every body's other self. How many parents, too poor to hire a servant, have living riches in an industrious daughter! How often do parents find one at least of the girls who from very infancy is the joy of the whole family; who seems to have received in baptism such a fulness of the Holy Spirit that charity, joy, peace, patience, long suffering, kindness, and piety are the common qualities of her character! The faith also finds an apostle in such women. An intelligent woman, though perhaps unable to argue skillfully, can establish the truths of religion by methods, all her own. A friendly, just, good natured silence, a patient return of loving services for ill-treatment, the spectacle of her good life, not an hour of which lacks a virtue—all this in one instinct with religion is an unanswerable argument and often irresistible. How did it happen, people sometimes ask concerning this or that person, that she did not marry? She had good enough looks, excellent sense, a bright mind, affectionate disposition, and saw plenty of company. Why did she not marry? My brethren, the day of judgment will tell us that it was because God had set her apart that she might be for her widowed mother or her shiftless, unhappy brothers and sisters the pot of meal that should not waste and the cruse of oil that should not diminish. Brethren, I know of no order of nuns more pleasing in God's sight than the devout women who live a dependent, obscure, hard life in the world, and are old maids for the love of God.

Finally, you may say that such sons and daughters are hard to find. I answer that there are multitudes who approach the standard we have been considering, and more, perhaps, than you fancy who actually attain to it.

TALKS ON RELIGION.

CONTRITION.

A firm purpose of amendment is a "resolution to avoid not only sin, but also the dangerous occasions of sin." This is the true test of contrition. Some people may be easily moved to tears by a touching sermon, or by a special occasion, but they have forgotten all their tender feelings by the time their emotions have passed away. Others are not so easily touched. Their imagination and feelings are slow to move, and they easily imagine they have not a real sorrow for sin, because they have not the same sensation of grief as some other people, whereas in reality they may be much better disposed to have a heart easily touched by spiritual things—a heart which has not become hard or cold, and which does not confine its sensibilities to earthly affections. "He will give water to my head, and a fountain of tears to my eyes," says the prophet Jeremiah. In the same way it ought to be our desire to feel and to grieve as we should for our sins. We should not forget that the test of the value of an emotion is the act it leads to. Our Lord says, "By their fruits you shall know them." It is well to know that a purpose of amendment does not merely mean saying that we are going to do better. Many have said the solemn words: "I firmly promise with the assistance of Thy Grace never more to offend Thee and to carefully avoid the occasions of sin." As experience shows, they did not mean much, as judged by the fruits of the harvest.

The amendment of life does not mean "sometimes or another," but to begin at once. A firm purpose does not mean, "I will be good if I can do so without any trouble or self-sacrifice." It is quite clear that we can never be

good and do our duty without some sacrifice, and if we do not mean to make a sacrifice, we do not really mean amendment. The real purpose of amendment includes not only the end, but the means. If a man means to go to a place, he really means to take the road that leads there. He does not forget the distance, or the trouble or the expense to accomplish the journey. If you say: "I am grieved for this sin and I mean to avoid it," and in your heart you do not intend to give up certain company, or places, or habits which may lead you to a repetition of the sin, you certainly are not in earnest or sincere.

When persons know that amendment of life and keeping out of sin mean the frequent and regular reception of the sacraments and also reasonable diligence in prayer, prayer and the sacraments should be so used. In cases of venial sin, for instance, there is great danger of confessing them without any real purpose of amendment, hence a repetition of them week after week with very little improvement. This condition gives good reason for doubting the sincerity of the purpose of amendment the penitent has been making.

The mere fact, however, that we fall back into sin, does not prove that our promises were not sincere, because our nature is weak and changeable, and even our best resolutions may break down. Still we have reason for disquiet if we do not observe any sign of an effort to better our lives. In worldly affairs, people may not accomplish their purpose completely, but there is generally something to show if they have been in earnest, and certainly this should be the case in spiritual things, otherwise you might fulfil the declaration of the Psalmist: "They loved Him with their mouth and their tongue, and lied to Him." (Psalm lxxvii, 36.) "Cursed be he that doth the work of the Lord deceitfully." (Jer. xlviii, 10.) Those who are in earnest and make use of the necessary means will certainly be victors in the long run, and by God's grace their good intention will receive the crown in spite of human frailty. "A contrite and humble heart, O Lord, Thou wilt not despise. Create a clean heart in me, O God, and renew the right spirit." (Psalm i, 12.)—Catholic Universe.

A COLONY OF IRISH WRITERS.

DELIGHTFUL COTTAGE IN THE DUBLIN SUBURB OF RATHGAR.

Elizabeth Angela Henry, Dublin, Ireland.

The Irish muse was never more alive than today. But its theme is non-political, hence silence of press and public speaker as to the work of the men and women whose pens embellish present day literature. Because the bright galaxy of writers of today write as they chose, extremists will have nothing of them. The young Irish writers of to-day are not called upon to raise the spirits of a crushed nation, but time has changed the painful phase of the Irish question; Ireland is on the eve of coming into her own; her sons and daughters must learn of her beauty, her grace, if they would appreciate their birthright to the Isle of Scholars and Saints.

On any Sunday evening, not too early, you will meet many of Ireland's most brilliant writers and successful artists at the handsome home of George Russell—A. E. Russell as he is known in the book world. They are all interesting personalities. The host is tall, over six feet; loose jointed and spare of form and with eyes of singular sweetness. The eyes are about all you see of his face. A mass of soft chestnut brown falls down over the forehead and he wears a long curling, brown beard. When Mr. Russell reads a selection from his pet author and close friend, Standish O'Grady, you hear a voice whose mellow tones keep company with the kindly eyes gleaming through a pair of old-fashioned spectacles. Glancing about you see that the walls of the drawing room hang not only with the work of Mr. Russell's brush, but that of his brother artists in Dublin who, when they see fit, hang theirs also, for the house of the artist-poet is Liberty Hall.

There you, too, will meet the dramatist, Yeats, whose latest play "Kathleen ni Houlihan" made such a hit in New York. Mr. Yeats, pale, dark and with long, black hair falling over a collar tied with a flaring black ribbon bow, makes a picturesque figure in the Russell drawing room, a fact of which the gifted dramatist seems fully aware. Padraic Colum is also present a boy on the threshold of fame. You will see him any day in Sackville street carrying a stick stouter than himself and swinging along with the buoyant air of twentieth century Ireland. One of the young dramatists' plays was produced at the recent Gaelic Festival and received hearty applause from an audience which represented the best people of Ireland. Slight of figure, and with a shock of copper brown hair shading a pale face with large dreamy eyes, I would have been woefully disappointed if he, bearing the name of Patrick and Columbkille, did not have more of the rich Irish accent than the majority of those I met within the hospitable Russell residence. But I was not; his voice had the rich Gaelic cadence that makes music in the heart of the world.

"Come and I will show you Maude Gonne's Dublin house," said my host. The house was just round the corner, for most of Dublin's literary folk live in Rathgar, a charming suburb. The home of the Irish Joan of Arc is one of a row of red brick cottages whose windows and doors are openings in a screen of Irish ivy. It was dusk, and as we entered we stumbled over a baby carriage standing in the hall. To the right is the dining room furnished in bog oak. Its walls are covered with a dull, brown paper with unique mural decorations by Mr. Russell. Above doors and windows and perched on available corners are water-color drawings of lovely women who only live in song and story, or an artist's imagination: tall, golden rushes and graceful lilies spring from the wainscoting, where beautiful things of the sea stray here and there over the walls. Standing on the mantel shelf in the cosy sitting-

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room was a photograph of Mrs. Mac Bride and her baby boy; Seagoon, she calls her young Ireland. The beautiful advocate of "Ireland for the Irish" has not lost her hold upon the affections of those who followed her in the past; they deplore the unhappiness which has come into her life and chivalrously stand by Maude Gonne Mac Bride and her "dear" boy.

But the day is past when Ireland will bid Godspeed to the man or woman who elects to go abroad as a political lecturer. Gentle and simple, they declare they have been humiliated too long by the begging which has been practiced in the name of Ireland; that this is not a bankrupt country, millions lying fallow in the Irish banks. That it is not entirely due to the Imperial Government that Ireland is being depopulated in the agricultural districts; the drainage goes on equally in rural England where farmers are unable to compete with exports from Manitoba or Australia, but England has manufacturing towns where the impoverished agriculturalist may seek redress, while Ireland has no industries to fill the breach.

Again, many do not hesitate in saying that the Irish Nationalists as a body are a failure, that the country would long ago have been granted the new concessions it has obtained from the British Parliament without a special representation, and that the thousands of pounds contributed annually to keep a distinctly Nationalist party at London might be more profitably spent in Ireland and have these nationalists remain here and give their time and attention to the amelioration of deplorable conditions which do not require an act of Parliament to remedy. Also, that the National party as a whole are only feeble imitators of the policy of Parnell. Faces are turned towards the Gaelic League as the factor which will awake Ireland from the lethargy caused by emigration. "The brightest boy of the family is set apart for the Church," said a student of the Irish problem, "the next ablest are sent to America and the feeblest, owing to his very inability, mentally and physically, is given the farm and, as he may not marry until late in life, having to support his parents, still another impediment is added to Ireland's sad struggle."

Dublin's literary colony is celebrating the appearance of a charming book of verse by Ella Young. The girl-poet has a pleasant country home, Ballyroan Lodge, at Rathfarnham. I visited her yesterday afternoon in answer to an invitation which said "the gooseberries are at their best and the apples are ripe." After a mile or two by tramcar and the same distance on foot along a road bordered on either side with high stone walls covered with ivy, I arrived at Ballyroan Lodge, a white, low, rambling house on a hill, and with great wide windows and doors innumerable. Lawn opened into lawn; vines and flowers were everywhere and crowding against each other were tall pine trees, the highest clump forming a superb, dark green arch that led into an orchard where grew delicious gooseberries and luscious apples. To the right were the Dublin mountains, the foot hills of the Wicklows, and where the lawn sloped down ran a clear stream, gurgling happily as it dodged drooping branches and rocky corners. Later, as we sat drinking tea out of dainty Belleek, I learned that the poet's parents, a slender, willowy girl with charming face and still more charming manner, was a member of the Irish Dramatic Company which played at St. Louis during the World's Fair.

But patriotic as is the young actress her ambition is to play, some day, a leading part in a Shakespearean drama. Before leaving I was shown a costume in the style of those worn by the wives and mothers of the Irish chieftains. The main piece was a white woolen robe, cut square in the neck, and flowing angel sleeves. The hem of this tunic-like robe was embroidered in pale lavender, to correspond with a soft shawl drape which hung gracefully from the neck.

Two nieces of Gerald Griffin are also members of Ireland's literary circles. The older, Geraldine Griffin, a slender, well-kempt kinsman, speaks Gaelic fluently and is deeply and actively concerned in everything Irish-Catholic.—Catholic Universe.

Gentleness and meekness, says Surin, were the graces our Lord desired that we should copy in Himself; and certainly when we look at the edification of others, or the sanctification of ourselves, or at the glory our lives may give to God, we shall perceive that nothing can rank in importance before gentleness of manner and sweetness of demeanor when with others.

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SAD AND POWERFUL LESSON IN VERY PLAIN FIGURES

There is still force in the old saying that figures do not lie. Defunct bankers and embezzling employes give it a severe jolt occasionally, but its truth remains. By way of demonstrating a fact there is hardly anything of equal effect. They are the surest way to conviction.

We notice that the Young Men's Christian Association of the East has been occupying itself with them in a direction which may be of profit for serious Catholic consideration. This branch of the organization undertook recently to gather some statistics on the subject of mixed marriages. Just now, or why, it should have interested itself in such a subject does not appear. But its finding in the premises is a fruitful source of thought.

According to its figures, only fifty per cent. of the young, in families where both fathers and mothers attend different churches, are church members. Where the fathers and mothers were Protestants of some denomination, sixty-eight per cent. of the young men are church members, the remaining thirty-two per cent. not being members of any denomination. Where one of the parents was a Catholic, sixty-six per cent. belong to some church, while the remaining thirty-four per cent. are not members of any church.

Here we have a sad and powerful lesson in very plain figures. It is a conclusive proof in concrete form of what the Church teaches and the Catholic press constantly decries against, namely, the baneful influence of mixed marriage. Think of it, thirty-four per cent. of the young men, one of whose parents is a Catholic, are members of no church whatever. Sixty-six per cent. of them belong to some church according to these statistics. But what church? There is nothing to show that it is the church of the Catholic parent.

And yet there are many well-meaning Catholics who profess to see no danger to their faith in mixed marriages. They assure themselves of success where such a great percentage has failed. They are wise without thought on the question than those who have given it long and serious study. They are even wiser than the Church herself and refuse to heed her warning voice. In the face of the above figures, from an outside source, is there not ample reason for their rigid opposition to such marriages. And should the figures not set fear in the heart of our young Catholic people contemplating such unions?

But the figures furnish a lesson to all professing Christians as well. For if fifty per cent. of the young men only are church members in families where both fathers and mothers are members of different Protestant churches, it proves conclusively that marriage between persons of different sects is destroying Christian belief. Therefore it should be opposed even by all professing Christians.—Church Progress.

Answer peaceable things with mildness, says the Wise Man, and let there be no acid feeling in thy soul, and thou shalt be as the obedient son of the Most High, and He shall have mercy on thee more than a mother. Now it is quite notorious that joy is of all things the one which most helps us in sustaining this equable sweetness towards others.



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