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FIVE-MINUTE SERMONS.

Quinquagesima Sunday THE QUALITIES OF CHRISTIAN CHARITY.

What a beautiful description it is, my dear brethren, which St. Paul gives us of the virtue of charity in the Epistle of today!

Let us look just now at a part of it. "Charity," says the Apostle, "is patient, is kind; charity envieth not; dealth not perversely; is not puffed up; is not ambitious; seeketh not her own; is not provoked to anger; thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things."

Now, I say, this is very beautiful, is it not? And perhaps it seems all the more beautiful because the picture which it gives us is not a very familiar one. I know we are apt to think about as well of ourselves as of almost any one of our acquaintance; but can we say to ourselves, on reading or hearing this description of charity, "That's me; that's just my character to a hair?"

"Charity is patient, is kind." That is rather out of the way, to begin with, when we think how impatient and cross we are if anything goes wrong, if anybody stands in our way or interferes with us, or even ventures to differ from us in opinion.

"Charity envieth not." Worse yet. Why, some people cannot even see their neighbor have a new dress or hat without at once making up their minds to take the shine out of that conceited thing.

"Oh! I consider him to be a much over-rated man. I knew him when he was young, and he was nothing above the common. But some people certainly have luck." Or, if you do not hear it out loud, the grumbling is there all the same in the heart.

"Charity dealth not perversely." How is this? Why, you will find Christians who would, as the saying goes, "cut off their nose to spite their face." They will even suffer themselves, if some one else can only be made to suffer too.

But I shall not have time to make all the applications. As I said, you had better read the Epistle, then you can make them for yourselves.

I wish, however, to call your attention before closing to one unpleasant circumstance. Is this charity, which St. Paul so highly praises and so beautifully describes, a sort of fancy and ornamental virtue, which is certainly very commendable, but which we can get along well enough without?

Listen to a few other words which come a little before those I have read: "If I should have prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I should have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing."

"If I should distribute all my goods to feed the poor, and if I should deliver my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing." Notice, he does not say, "I am not much, or these things are not much good, with out charity;" no, without it, "I am nothing;" a cipher, and a sham. Take this home and meditate on it.

Why Hood's Wins. President Lincoln said, "You cannot fool the people a second time. They are too quick to recognize real merit or lack of it, and cling only to those things which they find to be what is claimed for them."

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A MAY-DAY GIFT.

By MARY CATHERINE CROWLEY. II.

"Oh mother!" cried Abby, the day after the arrival of the unique May-basket from Father Dominic, "now that we have such a lovely statue of the Blessed Virgin, don't you think we ought to make a regular altar?"

"A what!" exclaimed Mrs. Clayton, at a loss to understand what her little daughter could possibly mean. "I told you that you might have an altar, dear. And you may arrange it whenever you please."

"No, but an altar," persisted Abby. "The Tyrrells have an altar in their house, and I wish we could have one too. Why, you must know what it is, mother—just a little room fitted up like a chapel; and the family say their prayers there night and morning, and other times if they wish."

"Oh, an oratory!" observed Mrs. Clayton, trying to repress a smile. "Perhaps that is the name," admitted Abby, a trifle disconcerted. "Anyhow, can't we have one?"

"Well—yes," said her mother, after a few moments' reflection. "The small room next to the parlor might be arranged for that purpose."

"That would make a beautiful altar-chapel!" exclaimed Abby. She did not venture to attempt the long word again.

"I think I could get enough out of the carpet that was formerly on the parlor to cover the floor," mused Mrs. Clayton aloud. "The square table, draped with muslin and lace, would make a pretty altar. Then, with the pictures of the Sacred Heart and the Bogueureau Madonna to hang on the walls, and my *pridieu*—yes, Abby, I think we can manage it."

"Oh, how splendid!" cried the little girl. "When shall we begin to get it ready?"

"Perhaps to-morrow," answered her mother; "but I can not promise to have the preparations completed at once. It will take some time to plan the carpet and have it put down."

Abby was not only satisfied, but delighted. She told Larry the minute he came into the house. He had been over to the pond with his boat again. "That will be grand!" said he. "When you get everything fixed, I'll bring you the little vase I got for Christmas, and my prayer book, and—oh, yes, my rosary to put on the altar. And, then," he went on, quite seriously, "there's my catechism, and the little chalk angel, and—"

"The little chalk angel!" repeated Abby, scornfully. "Why, that has lost its head!"

"But it's a little chalk angel all the same," argued Larry. "And if I find the head, it can be glued on."

"Oh—well, we don't want any trash like that on our altar!" rejoined his sister. "And the books and rosary can be kept on the shelf in the corner. It would be nice to have the vase, though."

Larry, who at first had been rather offended that his offerings were not appreciated, brightened up when he found he could at least furnish something to adorn the shrine.

The following day was Saturday. There was, of course, no school, and Abby was free to help her mother to get the little room in order. She was impatient to begin. But alas for her plans! About 9 o'clock in the morning Mrs. Clayton suddenly received word that grandma was not feeling well, and she at once prepared to visit the dear old lady.

"I may be away the greater part of the day, Delia," she said, as she tied the strings of her bonnet; "but I have given you all necessary directions, I think.—Larry, do not go off with any of the boys, but you may play in the park as usual.—And, Abby, be sure you do not keep Miss Remick waiting when she comes to give you your music lesson."

there were yards and yards of it; for it had covered the parlor, which was a large room. Mrs. Clayton intended to have it made over for the dining-room, and estimated that there would be enough left for the oratory. She had not thought it necessary to explain these details to Abby, however.

"We'll do it," declared the latter. "Mother said to wait, but I don't believe she'll care."

"Course she won't," agreed Larry. Both the children felt that what they had decided upon was not exactly right—that it would be better to observe strictly their mother's instructions. But, like many people who argue themselves into the delusion that what they want to do is the best thing to be done, Abby tried to compromise with the "still small voice" which warned her not to meddle, by the retort: "Oh, it will spare mother the trouble! And she'll be glad to have it finished."

As for Larry, the opportunity to pound away with the hammer and make as much noise as he pleased, was a temptation hard to resist. Abby opened the roll.

"What did mother mean by saying she thought she could get enough out of this carpet to cover the floor!" said the little girl, with a laugh. She must have been very absent-minded; for there's lashin's of it here, as Delia would say.

"Oh, my, yes—lashin's!" echoed Larry. Abby was what is called "a go-ahead" young person. She was domestic in her tastes, and, for her years, could make herself very useful about the house when she chose. Now, therefore, she had no diffidence about her ability to carry out her undertaking. And Larry, although he frequently reminded her that she did not know carpentering, had a flattering confidence in her capacity.

"I'll have it done in less than no time," she said, running to get her mother's large scissors. Click, click went the shears as she slashed into the carpet, taking off breadth after breadth, without attempting to match the pattern, and with little regard for accuracy of measurement. Instead of laying it along the length of the room, she chose to put it crosswise, thus cutting it up into any number of short pieces.

"No matter about its not being sewed," she went on; "you can nail it together, can't you, Larry?"

"Oh, yes," said Larry. The more hammering the better for him. He hunted up the hammer and two papers of tacks, and as fast as Abby cut he nailed.

Delia was unusually busy; for she was housecleaning time, and so was getting the dining room ready for the new carpet. Therefore, although she heard the noise upstairs, she gave herself no concern about it; supposing that Larry was merely amusing himself, for he was continually tinkering at one thing or another.

By and by Larry remarked: "Say, Abby, you've got these two pieces too short."

Abby went over and looked at them. "Gracious so I have!" she said. "Well, put them aside, and I'll cut two more."

Click went the scissors again, and the carpet was still further mutilated. Then, as a narrow strip was required, a breadth was slit down the centre. Finally the boards were covered.

"There!" she cried triumphantly. "It is all planned. Now, I'll nail." Larry demurred at first, but Abby was imperious. Moreover, the constant friction of the handle of the hammer had raised a blister in the palm of his hand. Abby had an ugly red welt around her thumb, caused by the resistance of the scissors; for it had been very hard work to cut the heavy carpet. But she did not complain, for she felt that she was a martyr to industry.

At last the work was completed; and, flushed and tired, with her fingers bruised from frequent misadventured blows from the hammer, and her knuckles rubbed and tingling, she paused to admire the result of her toil. The carpeting was a curious piece of patchwork certainly, but the children were delighted with their achievement.

"Don't say anything about it to Delia," cautioned Abby. Larry agreed that it would be as well not to mention the subject. They did not delay long at the meal but hastened back to their self-imposed task.

"Now let's hurry up and finish the altar," said Abby. Having completed the adornment of the table, by throwing over the muslin a fine lace curtain, from the linen press also, and decking it with some artificial flowers found in her mother's wardrobe, Abby brought the statue from the parlor, and set it upon the shrine which she and Larry had taken so much trouble to prepare. Larry placed before the lovely image his little vase containing a small bunch of dandelions he had gathered in the yard. He was particularly fond of dandelions. Abby had nothing to offer but her May wreath, which she laid beside it. But the decoration appeared too scanty to satisfy her.

"I'll get the high pink vases from the parlor," said she. "Yes," added Larry. "And the candlesticks with the glass hanging all around them like a fringe, that jingles when you touch them." The little girl brought the vases. Then she carried in the candelabra, the crystal pendants ringing as she walked in a way that delighted Larry. She knew perfectly well that she was never allowed to tamper with the costly ornaments in the parlor; but she excused herself by the plea: "I'm doing it for

the Blessed Virgin." Larry also had a certain uneasiness about it, but he said to himself: "Oh, it must be all right if Abby thinks so! She is a great deal older than I am, and ought to know." The shrine was certainly elaborate now. The children were so engrossed with admiring it that they did not hear the house door open and close. A step in the hall, however, reminded the little girl of her music lesson.

"Gracious, that must be Miss Remick!" she said, in confusion. She quietly opened the door of the oratory, intending to peep into the parlor to see if the teacher was there. To her surprise she encountered her mother who had just come up the stairs. But Mrs. Clayton was much more astonished by the sight which greeted her eyes when she glanced into the oratory.

"O Abby," she exclaimed, in distress and annoyance, "how could you be so disobedient! Oh Larry, why did you help to do what you must have known I would not like?"

Larry grew very red in the face, looked down, and fumbled with one of the buttons of his jacket. "But, mother," began Abby, glibly. "It was for the Blessed Virgin, you know. I was sure I could put down the carpet all right, and I thought you would be glad to be saved the trouble."

"Put it down all right!" rejoined her mother. "Why, you have ruined the carpet, Abby!"

Both children looked incredulous and astonished. "Don't you see that you have cut it up so shockingly that it is entirely spoiled? What is left would have to be so pieced that I can not possibly use it for the dining room, as I intended."

Abby was mortified and abashed. Larry grew more and more uncomfortable. "And, then, the vases and the candelabra!" continued Mrs. Clayton. "Have you not been forbidden to lift or move them, daughter?"

"Yes, mother," acknowledged the little girl. "But I thought you would not mind when I wanted them for the altar. I didn't suppose you'd think anything you had was too good for the Blessed Virgin."

"Certainly not," was the reply. "I had decided to place the candelabra on your little shrine. The pink vases are not suitable. But these ornaments are too heavy for you to carry. It was only a happy chance that you did not drop and break them. And, then, most would not permit you to move it yesterday? How would you have felt if it had slipped from your clasp and been dashed to pieces?"

A few tears trickled down Abby's cheeks. Larry blinked hard and stared at the wall. "My dear children, that is not the way to honor our Blessed Mother," Mrs. Clayton went on to say. "Do you think that she looked down with favor upon your work to-day? No. But if you had waited as I told you—if each of you had made a little altar for her in your heart, and offered to her the beautiful flowers of patience, and the votive light of loving obedience—then indeed you would have won her blessing, and she would have most graciously accepted the homage of such a shrine. As it is, you see, you have very little, if anything, to offer her."

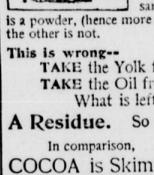
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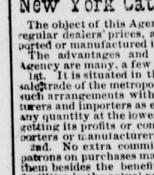
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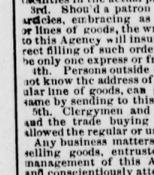
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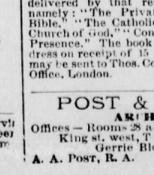
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