FIVE-MINUTE SERMONS.

Easter Sunday.

THE JOY OF PENANCE.

I wish all of you, my brethren, the joys of this day. It is the day of our Lord's victory over death and hell. Many of you have received Him in Holy Communion either this morning during the preceding week. To such He has found a way to communicate something of the vast ocean of love and joy which inundates His own soul. A good Communion, following a humble confession of sin, is indeed the nearest way to that tomb, riven and empty, and streaming with the light of heavenly joy, about which the Church gathers her children this morning. How well chosen is Easter-time for the annual Communion of all good Christians. "I have seen the tomb o Christ, who has risen from the dead,' may we well say with Mary Magdalen. God grant that not one of you all may pass beyond Trinity Sunday without attending to what is so appropriately

called the Easter duty. It seems to me that this feast is a great day for sinners — meaning, of course, repentant sinners. For look at the facts? Who is the saint of the Resurrection by excellence? Certainly dear Mary Magdalen, the type of all the penitent. She stood beneath the Cross when Jesus died, comforting Him and His Mother in that dreadful hour of His doom and of that Mother's woe And when the dead corpse was lowered down, Mary Magdalen pressed His limbs and feet and hands to her bosom while our sorrowful Mother clasped His theart to her own and kissed His pallid face a thousand times. Mary Mag-dalen helped to lay Him in His grave. She watched then; when driven away by the soldiers she bought spices and came again to embalm Him. And whose words are those repeated to day all round the world as the dawn greets the watching glances of the faithful. "They have taken away my Lord! I know not where they have laid Him;" and again the amazed and ecstatic exclamation when she saw Him in the garden: "Rabboni! Master." What a great store of love, says St. Gregory the Great, was in that woman's heart, who, when even His disciples were gone away, could not tear herself from the grave of the

See, then, my brethren, the reward of the love which is in true sorrow for sin ; it is given a singular kind of preeminence; it is selected above that of innocence and placed on guard at the post of honor to receive the first public greeting from the Immortal King of Glory, triumphant over sin for ever. I say public greeting, for doubtless Jesus visited and greeted His Mother in private first of ail; but this is not written down for our edification, and Mary Magdalen's privilege is. Sinners need encouragement, and certainly they get it to day in the honor paid to their glorious patron, to the who had many sins forgiven her be-

cause she loved much. I say again that sinners need en-In truth, there is no couragement. shame so deadly as that which conscious guilt brings to the human soul. There is no degradation like vice-in fact, there is none other but vice. Hence many sinners are met with who do not turn to God and who hold back from confession and Communion be-cause they are ashamed and afraid. It is not so much love of sin as want of confidence that now hinders them. They have felt the force of passion as the slave feels the whip of the slave-driver; or they have repented before and fallen again, and this fills them with distrust in themselves; or their surroundings are a constant source of temptation; or they have been so long away that the very process of reconciliation to God, the very practice of the simplest acts of religion, have grown strange to them. These, and other reasons, varying from mere timidity to utter despair, show the need of a strong word of encouragement to sinners. This is the day for giving sinners courage to repent. Oh! let every man and woman partake of All who are Christ's courage to-day. sinners, let them loath and detest their sins, and let them feel that if our Lord is with them they can conquer any passion, resist any temptation, and

persevere to the end. It is a singular thing that not only the first recorded words of our Lord after His Resurrection were addressed to His favorite child, the great peni-tent woman of the gospel, but that the first interview He had with His dis ciples was begun by the institution of the sacrament of penance, the open door of that city of refuge-our Lord's Sacred Heart. Now is the time, therefore, most appropriate for the return to God of all sinners among us. our risen Saviour give you that joy if you have it not, and if you have it, may He confirm it to you for ever!

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In the Spring

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OUR WESTERN WAITS.

BY FRANCIS J. FINN, S. J.

CONTINUED FROM LAST WEEK. All saw that Willie had something of importance to communicate; besides, the sleigh was his, so they listened.

Willie narrated briefly the story of Harry Conway ; he spoke in simple boy language, but the effect was better than that of many a glowing oration. "What'll we do for Harry?" queried

the silver-toned soprano.
"Do? Why, we'll become Christmas waits," answered Willie. "We'll go round, and give our friends all the music we know, and then we'll pass round the hat."
"Hurrah!" piped the trebles.

Now, boys, where'll we go first?' Mr. Gibson's! Mr. Gibson's! came the cry, pitched away up in the high leger-lines. Mr. Gibson was a great favorite with the little ones wherefore, it is unnecessary to spend words in praise of that kind, good

"All right. Get up !" and Willie cracked his whip. "Now, boys, let's

"How's our sleighing song to start on?" asked silver-voice.
"Just the thing."

Brightly their voices broke upon the air; and as they dashed on thus gayly, leaving in their wake a following of sweet sounds, men and women, smiling and waving their hands, came hurry ing out of doors, and in the pretty ways which fall upon people instinct-ively at Christmastide, sent the choristers off in an added exhilaration of

youthful spirits.

Scarcely was their song ended, when Willie brought the horses to a pause before the residence of Mr. Gib-

"Now, boys, gently," whispered lille. "We must take him by sur-Willie. "We must take him by surprise. We'll steal up the walk, and get under the window. Then we'll give him, 'God rest you, merry gentle-

Lightly these "mammas darlings tiptoed their way to the spot beneath the well-known window; and as Willie passed around their parts, they seemed to hold their very breaths, while their eyes blazed with excitement, and their features were screwed into that most comical expression yet discovered on

boy faces — mysterious solemnity.
Willie struck his tuning fork, put it to his ear, then, humming for a moment, gave each voice its proper note. Clear, and low, and sweet rose the first strains, clearer, louder, sweeter swelled the harmony, while each vocalist fixed his eyes upon the familiar window above, and carrolled away not unlike a little bird in full flown rapture of

song. "In Bethlehem in Jewry," tinued the warblers, as no smiling face at the window rewarded their first stanza:

"This Blessed Babe was born And laid within a manger Upon this blessed morn—"

At the word "morn" the window flew up, the loved face beamed down upon hem, and thus encouraged the waits burst into full voice with-

"The which His Mother Mary Did nothing take in scorn: O tidings of comfort and joy!"

"Hats off!" said Willie. Every hat was deffed. "Ready-charge!"
Without further ado the boys flew

up the steps, ascended the staircase, and crowded into Mr. Gibson's room.
"Present hats!" continued the

you put anything in, listen to our

And Willie repeated Harry Conway's

The old gentleman was touched, and acted as old gentlemen do when they are touched: he blew his nose, and made pretence of having something in

"I'm proud of every one of you," he said warmly; "and I'm glad you came to me first—flattered, too. Hold your hats higher."

Into each he threw a silver quarter till he came to Willie's, where he con-

tributed a dollar gold coin. "The quarters are for the singing," he said, "and the gold is for Harry Conway. Now, no thanks-sh-h-I've got something to say. Don't-now mind this-don't tell Harry's story to everybody. They are poor at his house and in want; but they are sensitive, There is such a thing as killing by kindness, when the kindness is indelicate. Now, I propose this to you. With the four or five dollars I've given you, suppose you buy a lot of nice things for Harry and his sisters, as a Christmas gift. As to what other money you may gather in, that you might offer to Harry as a loan, which he can pay off himself by doing some concert-singing for us now and then. There was a musical buzz of satisfac-

tion. "Thank you very much, Mr. Gib-'said Willie; "you're so thoughtson," said Willie; "you're so thoughtful! I'd have surely made a mess of it if it hadn't been for you."

Now, my little friends, I'll give you another hint. In twenty minutes the way-train will be in from Chicago, and all your people who do business in the city and a great many mammas who have gone shopping will return on it; they come home early, as it's Christmas eve. Suppose you get yourself in position just around the

son !"-these and other expressions of little friends are Catholics too.

thanks might have gone on indefinitely had not Willie ordered all out. Gibson was presently with them in coat and muffler, and in a trice the impossible was done—that is, all did squeeze into the sleigh, packed together like so many sardines, and jingled along merrily to the tune of their sleighing chorus.

As the depot was at a considerable distance from Mr. Gibson's house, the enthusiastic youngsters enlivened the ride with the songs they had intended for him from the start. From the mournful calm of the "Holly and the Ivy" they went on to,

"Listen, Lordings, unto me, a tale I will you tell."

Of this quaint carol they sang stanza after stanza till they ceased with the beautiful quatrain, the truth of which they so little understood :

Onward, then, the angels sped, the shepherd onward went; God was in His manger bed, in worship low they bent: In the morning see ye mind, my masters one and sil.

At the Attar Him to find, who lay within the stat.

" Now," said Mr. Gibson, as they came within sight of the depot, "you've but three minutes left. I'll go meet the train, and gather your

friends."
"Look, look!" cried Willie, as, music in hand, all stood watching the train streaming into the depot; "what

"Oh!" exclaimed several, dismayed at the wave of people rolling toward

"It's too late to back out," remarked silver-voice; "but let's take some-thing we know well."

Noel, then," punned Willie. Noel's the prettiest, too," added a

As the crowd drew nearer and resolved itself into smiling papas, mammas, uncles, sisters, and friends, with here and there a strange though not unkindly face, they plucked up heart of grace, and into the sweetness of the words throwing the sweetness of their voices, and that indescribable gift of the child-soul, that dear gift of God's, which the mother, gazing into the eyes of her little one, catches in its fulness, they poured forth the glad song of Noel.

Cheered on by kindly words and loving glances, the little fellows went from melody to melody till the place was filled with the spirit of olden time Christmas, till mothers wiped their eyes, till fathers opened big packages, and threw into Willie's sleigh all manner of pretty gifts.

When Willie and silver-voice, two hours later, drew up at Mrs. Conway's, they rivalled the postman himself in the matter of packages, as they toiled up the steps. The postman remarked this as he followed them to the door and handed Mrs. Conway a letter. The postman remarked

How Willie contrived to present his gifts in so delicate a manner as to bring tears of joy to Mrs. Conway's eyes is beyond my power of reproduction. But I suspect that he had been coached by kind Mr. Gibson.

Willie and silver-voice were soon seated beside Harry, and were prattling away in all the glow of warm feelings, when Mrs. Conway entered the room with the letter.

Harry, more good news! I have received an account of your papa's death. He died, happily, prepared and his last words were messages of

love to you and me. Thank God, he died prepared !

said Harry " He had appointed a lawyer to take leader.

At the word twenty smiling lads hemmed in the puzzled, delighted old gentleman, each trying to get his hat into the most prominent place.

"He had appointed a lawyer to take charge of his business just before he took sick; the lawyer didn't know your father had died till a week ago. He contrived to get all the details of his last moments, and now sends them "Now," continued Willie, "before his last moments, and now sends them to me. Besides, he sends me the money your father went out to collect. So now we are safe, my dear. We

have enough and to spare. Just think," exclaimed Willie " I've brought more than \$20 to lend Harry ; and now I might as well throw

If you don't know what to do with Willie," suggested Mrs. Conway you might help on some of the very

poor people in the village."
On Christmas, accordingly, the

young choristers made the rounds again; but this time they repaired to the houses of the lowly. Over and over they sang their carols, and left each humble home richer, happier for their singing and their gifts to the little ones. Indeed, it was a happy day. But to

Willie the Christmas that followed was far happier.

For during the 365 days that lay tween cordial relations sprang up between the Simms and Conway families and when it came out in a conversation one day that Mrs. Conway and Mrs Simms were New Englanders, and when both began raking up old records, you can guess how it all ended. They were fifth cousins or something. It's always that way out West. Let two New Englanders get to comparing notes, and in five minutes they'll estab lish an impediment to their intermar

riage which no casuistry may distinguish away. Christmas, when it came again, was as I said, particularly joyful to Willie not because they all made the musical rounds again, and brought down the earnest blessings of God's poor upon themselves. That was joyful indeed these little lads were still closely united, though Willie had become a

Their union lasts to fervent Catholic. Their union lasts to this day, and it is three years since Willie's conversion. Willie and yourself in position just around the corner on Adams street, near the station. I'll go with you myself. You do the singing; I'll act as manager."

"Thank you, sir!"—"Oh, Mr. Gib-Church, earnestly hold that all their in fact, for all conditions call-

But that first Christmas after his Then came the happiest conversion! moment of his life, when, standing beside Harry, his fellow-singer in the Catholic choir, in his golden voice, celestial for the fervor that informed it, he sang *Venite Adoremus*, while his loved father and mother advanced to the altar railing to receive for the first time Him, sweet Babe of Bethle-hem, who had descended from the skies and become our God Incarnate.

THE END.

THE LILIES' EASTER OFFERING.

Mary B. O'Sullivan in Donahoe's Magazine. The lilies slept in the warm brown arth, awaiting the Resurrection. The ar of Bethlehem had heralded the Christ-child's birth; the snow-drop, amblem of purity, bloomed in fragile beauty for the Presentation; and the rose of Jericho exhaled its fragrant homage under the Saviour's feet and drooped at the foot of the cross.

The angel of the flowers looked on them with love, as he flitted by, so softly that the lilies heard him not, till their hearts thrilled with the Easter tidings, "Awake! the Christ is

And the lilies awoke, resplendent in paschal beauty. "He is risen in-leed!" exulted the angel. "It is meet that the fairest flowers bloom for "Gather me first!" commanded a

regal blossom. "My place is next to the Presence, as befits the impartial

ily, the emblem of majesty."
"Not so," said the angel, in gentle reproof. "Pride of position would be an unseemly offering to One who was poor and lowly. What place seek you, little lilies of the valley?" Let us lie at His feet, dear angel,

pleaded the tiny flowers, lifting their fragrant chalices. "He placed us here the shade where we were sheltered and happy. Let us lie at His feet, an offering of love."
"It shall throb in His heart," mur-

mured the angel. "The sweetness of thy chalice shall overflow in the tabernacle.

A stately crimson lily drooped on her stem when the humble flowers were "Ah, my sorrow and my dis chosen. "Ah, my sorrow and my dis-grace! gather me not!" she cried as the angel drew near; "know you not that I am unworthy?"

"You are fair to see," he answered "your petals glow red as the gently: Precious Blood shed for man's redemp

tion"
"Once they were white," lamented
the lily. "When He walked in the
garden all flowers bowed low, I alone refusing Him reverence. His sorrow ful gaze sank into my heart, and the blush of shame forever crimsoned my lustrous blossoms. Pride rebuked has naught to offer."

"Offer Him repentance," whispered the angel. "A contrite heart makes joy in heaven."

And the lily grew glad at the angel's words, and offered her tribute on the altar, where it glowed like a beacon of

hope to troubled souls.
"My ways are lowly," said the orange lily. "I grow in humble garorange lily. "I grow in humble gardens and brighten dreary places; I bend my head to the storm and open my heart to the sunshine, and all the time I am happy. A contented spirit

is all I can offer."
"It will please Him much," said the angel, accepting the gift; "to che fully do His will is a noble mission.

"My one gift is beauty," said a strous calla. "I have treasured it lustrous calla. "I have treasured it up for Him. Take it, dear angel; let it shine on His altar, divinely transfigured."

"Consecrated beauty," murmured the angel, "lustrous purity, contentment, repentance, humility, love"—

"And prayer," breathed the annun-ation lilies. "When the angel of the ciation lilies. Lord declared unto Mary, the Angelus sung in our hearts foretold the joys of

"Your offering is worthy, O lilies!" exulted the angel. "Prayer brings peace to weary hearts and strengthens faltering souls; it shall rise on the fragrance of incense and flowers.

"Great is our joy," murmured the blossoms; "rising with Him for the paschal feast, exalted are we, the lowly

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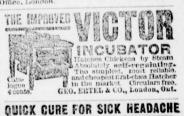
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