

GREATER LOVE THAN THIS

NO MAN HATH

**FIVE SISTERS OF CHARITY OF THE
INCARNATE WORD**

**OFFER THEIR LIVES TO SAVE THE
ORPHANS**

1912

HEROINES OF THE CROSS

(San Angelo Standard)

San Antonio is known as the Cradle of Texas Liberty; it has been called the city baptized in the blood of heroes, Henceforth let it be known as the city of heroes and heroines. Possibly, with the exception of the Hindu Taj Mahal the finest monument in the world is erected on Alamo Plaza to the memory of American heroes immolated on liberty's altar--the Alamo. No less glorious was the sacrifice last Wednesday morning of the six daughters of the Church, and along side the names of Travis, Bowie, Bonham and Crockett should be written the names of these heroines of the cross, and their statues should stand in the Alamo Hall of Fame alongside of those who laid down their lives in defense of Texas. The love of country and liberty inspired the one; the love for the helpless and a sublime devotion to duty led the other in the noble self-sacrifice that their helpless charges might live. A holy sacrifice indeed, which will forever stand as a monument to the Sisterhood who devote their days to good deeds and who dare to face the supreme test of love and duty. For no greater love hath man than this.

(From the Fort Worth Star-Telegram)

Presenting a thrilling spectacle in magnificent courage and devotion to duty that almost takes from conception the horror of this morning's disastrous fire at St. John's Orphanage in San Antonio, the story flashed over the wires of the noble self-sacrifice of those consecrated women, the Sisters of Charity, is one to teach again the lesson of heroism.

The death list in its few words tells the story.. Six of the dead were Sisters of the orphanage. But two were children, and one of these a child clasped in the arms of the Mother Superior, who all but reached a place of safety with it after returning to face certain death in the dormitory upon hearing its feeble cry.

The Titanic had its heroes, whose noble deeds comforted hearts tried by the world-wide horror. No less to be honored is the sacrifice at San Antonio. The heroes of the Alamo have beside them in the pages of history the heroines of St. John's Orphanage.

Build high the monument to Captain Smith and the brave men of the Titanic, but high as it may be builded, must rise above it the fearless death of these women of faith and duty.

No mother could have done more for children of her flesh and blood than these mothers of the Church for the little orphans placed in their care. None flinched, but supported by that faith that guides their acts they fulfilled the Master's ultimate expression of love.

"For no greater love hath man than this, that he lay down his life for another."

A BIT OF VERSE

Requiem

Sweet Mother, Mary of the Cross,
Sleep now, and take thy rest;
Thy perfect love enfolding still
The child upon thy breast,
For whom thy feet walked through the flame
In holy sacrifice,
And led thee, worthy of thy name
Straight through to Paradise.

The tender Christ looked down on thee
And on thy faithful band,
And strengthened all to bear the test,
For He could understand;
And as He thought of Calvary
With all its grief and shame,
Remembering its agony,
He bore with thee thy pain.

And when within His arms were laid
The treasures thou hadst won,
Perfected by the Crucible,
The cry rang out: "Well done!"
Then with his tears He cooled thy burns:
While Heaven's mighty throng
Proclaimed thy noble victory
In one triumphant song.

Dear Mother, in thy sacred loss
We see through scalding tears
A brighter light upon His cross
To shine through endless years.

LAURA HUBBARD JACCARD

(From the Galveston Tribune)

If there can be found a circumstance that would lessen the awfulness of the appalling story of the orphanage fire at San Antonio, it will be found in the heroic conduct of the women who had charge over the eighty-odd little children who were inmates of the institution when the alarm of fire aroused them from their sleep. The world has often been told of how these white-faced, black-clad religieuses had nursed the sick in time of epidemic, of how they had bound up the wounds of those whom battle had mangled and torn, but it has been left for San Antonio to give to humanity a new chapter in self-sacrifice in the six nuns who, when the moment of testing came, proved true to the teaching of the Master they served, and laid down their lives for the safety of those over whom they had been given charge.

(From the Dallas Times-Herald)

The terrible fire in San Antonio this morning resulting in the deaths of a number of Sisters of Charity and children when a large orphanage was destroyed, illustrates the every day bravery of these Sisters. They gladly gave up their lives in the effort to save little children and they faced the flames with smiles on their faces and prayers on their lips. Death has no sting, it causes no fear, to those who are truly religious.

Those Sisters of Charity who unselfishly devote their lives to the alleviation of suffering humanity are heroins in every-day life, therefore we are not surprised when in times of stress they surrender their lives that others may live. The world takes this heroism as a matter of course and the Sisters, we find, look upon it in the same way. The Catholic Sisters represent one of the strongest and most useful arms of the Church. Men of all creeds should awaken to a greater appreciation of the services these Sisters are daily rendering humanity and their willingness to give up their lives in the performance of duties in His name.

SIX IMMORTAL WOMEN

The heartbreaking story of the San Antonio holocaust is one of courageous and unselfish sacrifice. There is nothing in the deeds of our race that surpasses the heroism of the Catholic nuns who sacrificed themselves without a murmur to save the little children committed to their care. There was nothing amazing about it, however. The centuries are brilliant with the devotion of these women who have renounced the world to battle with distress, misfortune and sorrow. They have died in such emergencies and exemplified the supreme sacrifice of Calvary, and they will always do so when duty calls them.

Not one of these nuns was a native of the United States. Four were from Ireland, one from France and one from Mexico, but all in the moment of fate attained unto that sublimity of womanly faith and devotion which attests humanity's kinship with God. The tragedy enables us to see, however, that the distinctions of nationality or society which men and women set up, amount to very little in the presence of such deeds as the dispatches from San Antonio record..

The Mother of Christ must have felt exalted in the example of the Irish daughter who 1900 years after Calvary bore her name through the flames and brought it resplendent and glorified to the throne of God.

It is futile to attempt to exalt these martyrs to faith and duty. Only God Almighty Himself can adequately honor and reward them, and that task can be safely left to His Divine omnipotence and love. The rest of us, however, are permitted the privilege of aiding as we can in providing for the nearly 100 children whose little lives are animated monuments to the memory of the six immortal women who gave up all to save them.

No sectarian distinctions can avail in the presence of this disaster and the duty it points. The Christianity that can not respond to the call is not the kind that will answer in the day of judgment, and is not the kind that the nuns who perished lived and died for.

The poorest service the rest of us can render is to aid the Sisters of Charity in housing the orphans in a fireproof building, and in that way we can pay a tribute to them for what they did and thus share the supreme honor and glory they have conferred upon the Christian religion and the human race.--

GEORGE M. BAILEY in Houston Post

HEROIC DEATH OF THE MOTHER SUPERIOR

(The Southern Messenger)

The Mother Superior of the orphanage, Mother Mary of the Cross, had left the building in safety, believing that all the inmates were saved. She discovered, however, that a little child had been forgotten in the hurry and excitement and immediately rushed in to the rescue. A few moments later she appeared amid the glare of flames, with the child in her arms at a third story window. All hope of escape by the stairway was vain. Fire Chief Phil. Wright made a daring attempt to rescue her but failed and narrowly escaped death himself. A ladder was placed against the wall and the fire chief scaled it. As he reached the top of the ladder, great sheets of flame enveloped him, and the Mother Superior and the orphan child suddenly disappeared. The flooring had been burned away and they had fallen through to the second floor. Their bodies were rescued later, the child still in the arms of the nun.

(The Viatorian)

Courage has always been admired by mankind. Sublime heroism defies admiration, for admiration feels its own insufficiency in the presence of that which raises man to heavenly heights. Reverential awe is all that we can feel in the presence of the sublime heroism of the six nuns who sacrificed their lives for their charges in the fire that destroyed the San Antonio orphanage recently. Such courage in men would be admirable; in mothers trying to save their own children magnificent; in these it is sublime. The children for whom they met an awful death were not their own flesh and blood, but were waifs and strangers committed to their charge, yet these gentle Sisters laid down their lives that they might live. Stand back, you great conquerors and give first place to these Spouses of Christ. You did deeds of gallantry to win the victor's crown. Put these angels of peace at the head of your glorious column, you noble heroes of Balaklava. You died because you were commanded. Receive them as your queens, you chivalric gentlemen of the Titanic. You met death as men when it was inevitable. These noble Sisters returned to the seething flames and laid themselves upon their own funeral pyres, not encouraged by the glint of arms or the ardor of charge, nor urged on to win duty's iron crown by the stern word of command, nor did they face death bravely because it was unavoidable, but of their own free will because the children whom Christ had loved were in danger. In years gone by they had surrendered all to the service of these children, and when the consummation of the sacrifice was required they did not take back what they had given. Gather up their ashes with reverence and preserve them in golden urns, for history holds no more glorious, no nobler, no sweeter story than theirs. Receive their snowy souls, Angelic Hosts, and with triumphant chant present them as other Christs to Him who died that men might live.

(The San Antonio Light)

A DREADFUL DISASTER

Five Sisters of Charity and Three Orphan Children Lose Their Lives

In a Fire Which Destroyed St. John's Orphan Asylum,

San Antonio. Heroic Conduct of the Nuns.

An Awful disaster occurred in San Antonio at an early hour on the morning of Wednesday, October 30, when five Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word and three little orphan children lost their lives in a fire which totally destroyed St. John's Orphan Asylum for Boys. That the Sisters perished in a heroic effort to save the little ones committed to their care when they might easily have saved themselves is evident from all the facts that have come to light. Of the ninety-two children in the asylum, eighty-nine were brought out safely; of the nine nuns only three were saved. These three had helped in taking the little ones from the blazing structure, and were marching them across the yard to a place of safety when the walls began falling. The other six were searching for any that might have been left behind, when their escape was cut off. One of them was killed in jumping, another was fatally injured, and four perished in the building. The following is a

LIST OF THE DEAD.

MOTHER MARY OF THE CROSS, 47 years old, Mother Superioress of St. John's Orphanage, a native of Wexford, Ireland.

MOTHER FRANCIS, 60 years old, one of the first Mothers of the Congregation; a native of France.

SISTER PETER CLAVER, 29 years old, teacher in San Fernando School; a native of Dublin, Ireland.

SISTER LEOCADIA, 28 years old, teacher in San Fernando School; a native of Dublin, Ireland.

SISTER MONICA, 50 years old, in charge of the orphans; a native of Mexico.

FRANCIS O'BRIEN, 2½ years old. Met death clasped in the arms of the Mother Superior in her vain efforts to rescue him. Portion of charred body recovered.

THE NUNS OF SAN ANTONIO

It was night in San Antonio,
The Texas city was calm and still,
Her people slept and, sleeping, dreamed
No dream of evil, no thought of ill.

Suddenly out on the silence rang
A sharp, shrill cry as of fear and pain,
Startled sleepers awoke, arose,
The cry comes louder, again, again!

Look where the sky is all alight,
See, 'tis the glare of smoke and fire!
As it eats its way in the silent night
From the orphanage base to its topmost spire.

Arouse! O people of San Antone,
Hasten, for children are gathered there
In that furnace women and babes alone,
Their cries are filling the palpitant air.

Four-score children helpless and dazed,
Wakened from slumber sweet and sound,
Are hastened and harried and kept in line
And hurried safe o'er the orphanage ground.

Nine great souls are those calm, pale nuns;
Sisters of Charity, do you say?
Mothers of children call them tonight,
Fighting the battle with death are they.

Coming and going again and again,
Back and forth in the heated air,
Battling thro' smoke and flame a path,
Carrying succor everywhere.

Sisters of Charity! Mothers of Love,
Saviors of helplessness, weakness and woe,
Fighting the fire in old Santone,
Bright are the crowns that ye wear, I know.

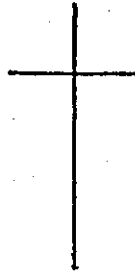
And she who stood for a moment so
At that window, a babe in her clasping arms,
Lo, soul so brave, what is pain or death,
The grave's dim terrors, or life's alarms!

Women and mothers and saints in one
Thy portion not pain and death alone,
For a wondering world its homage brings
To the glorious nuns of old Santone.

LEILA BOSWORTH WILSON

New Orleans, La.

IN MEMORIAM



"Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends."- John XV.-13.

Mother Mary of the Cross--(Rossiter).....Wexford, Ireland
Mother Mary Francis--(Pasteur)..... France
Sister Peter Claver--(Slevin)..... Ireland
Sister Mary Leocadia--(Nolan)..... Ireland
Sister Mary Monica--(Montez)..... Mexico

"Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them."

R. I. P.

A TRIBUTE

To the tenderness, the sweetness, the self-sacrificing heroism of
the Sisters of St. John's Catholic Orphanage, destroyed by
fire in San Antonio early in the morning of October 30
1912. Mother Mary of the Cross lost her life by
re-entering the blazing structure to res-
cue a missing child.

"GREATER LOVE THAN THIS NO MAN HATH"

(Houston Post)

HEROIC SACRIFICE

COMMENTS OF THE PRESS

1912

(New Orleans Times)

FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH

Reviewing the past week's events, the discriminating historian will find, we think, no episode worthier of commemoration than the heroic sacrifice of the Catholic Sisters in the burning orphanage at San Antonio, Texas, who gave their lives to save the lives of their helpless little charges. We need not overlook in this appraisal the martial achievements in the Balkans, where men have been fighting and dying for love of country or of liberty. None of the Balkan warriors has faced death in a holier cause, or more fearlessly, than did the six women whom San Antonio mourns. No soldier steeled against death disciplined against panic, schooled to prompt and efficient service in emergencies, could have acquitted himself more valiantly than did the last of these Sisters, who battled magnificently for the lives of others and counted the cost of their own a little thing.

Recitals like that flashed over the wire from San Antonio last Thursday morning bring tears to the eyes and constrict the heart, but among the emotions they invoke in the average human breast there is, we think, a trace of solemn joy in the knowledge that the race now as ever, breeds its heroes and its heroines. Brave gentlemen by hundreds went down in the Titanic through somebody's blunder, but many thousands caught inspiration from their unnecessary sacrifice. The Sisters at San Antonio merely sustained the noble traditions of their Order. More remarkable than their quiet devotion to duty and their self-sacrifice would have been their failure to meet the supreme test. They did upon high occasion, what they have done day after day in the quiet of the orphanage--what thousands of others are doing inconspicuously day by day. Devotion to duty, unselfish service to others, had been the rule of their lives. In the terrible emergency of the fire they did no more.

But their example shone out conspicuously, to enrich and inspire humanity. San Antonio and Texas have preserved the Alamo, to celebrate the desperate valor of their ancient fighting men. It might well raise a monument to the gentle Sisters who died as noble, in a cause as sacred. And were those heroic women permitted to choose their own memorial it would very likely take the shape of a fireproof orphanage, to save their tender charges from further peril.
