

## THE FRUITS OF SACRIFICE

MR. R. H. KENNEDY'S ADDRESS TO THE GRADUATING CLASS



**T**HERE is a beautiful story, full of loving devotion, in the life of David that reminds us that common-place things are made sacred by sacrifice. It is not a familiar story to most of us. Many who read their Bibles regularly come to this 23rd chapter of 2 Samuel, see that it is a list of David's mighty men, with names hard to pronounce, and turn to a more interesting chapter. But hidden away here in the list of hard names is the story:

"And three of the thirty chief men went down and came to David in the harvest time unto the cave of Adullam. And David was then in the stronghold; and the garrison of the Philistines was then in Bethlehem. And David longed and said, 'Oh, that one would give me water to drink of the well of Bethlehem, which is by the gate.' And the three mighty men brake through the host of the Philistines and drew water out of the well of Bethlehem, that was by the gate, and took it to David: but he would not drink thereof, but poured it out unto the Lord. And he said, 'Be it far from me, O Lord, that I should do this: Shall I drink the blood of the men that went in jeopardy of their lives?' Therefore he would not drink of it."

I do not know where you will find a more beautiful story of chivalry and devotion than that. A poet could take it and make an epic that would stir the hearts of the world. Let us look at it and think of it for a little while, that we may see its beauty and its significance.

David was at war with the Philistines, and was making his headquarters for the time in the cave of Adullam, near the home of his boyhood in Bethlehem. The Philistines had a garrison in the town, and were well fortified. As David looked toward the city he longed for a drink of cool water from the well that was by the gate. He remembered how cool and refreshing the water was when, a barefooted boy, he would come in from a day's play and pleasure on the surrounding hills. Then, as a shepherd lad; he remembered how he would stop and drink when he came home in the evening, tired from the day's work with the flock. And he said, "Oh, that I had a drink of water out of the well that is by the gate of Bethlehem." He was not in need of water; it is just a wish for a drink from that particular well, dear in the memory of his boyhood. Don't you long sometimes for a drink from that spring near your boyhood home? If I ever go to Virginia again, I shall want to drink from the old well under the cherry tree with the grape vines grow-