CHATS WITH YOUNG MEN

UNKNOWN FRIENDS

He was walking down Boylston Street one wintry morning, a weary, care-worn man. His son had been causing him much uneasiness. His wife had been looking very frail of late. His salary was small and expenses were heavy. But the worst thing was his uselessness. "Dream and reality! What a contrast! Forty-five, friendless and a failure," he said bitterly. The gay shop windows held no appeal for him. The passing throng, chatting and animated, only intensified his loneliness. For one coward moment he longed to escape the dreary round of duties; to be transported to some kindly isle filled with flowers and sunshine, where he could rest.

As the tide of bitterness reached its height, he became aware of rapid steps behind him, of someone grasping his hand warmly, of a voice trembling with emotion.

"As long as I live I shall be thankful for your goodness to me. When your message came I was desperate. Everything had gone; business, health, courage. Your word brought them back. I can do nothing in return except say that to you I owe my honor and my life."

The speaker went down a side street apparently overcome by his feelings. The other thought: "Who on earth is that man and what in the world did I do for him? I don't even know his face or name."

He strode on, but presently felt someone plucking at his sleeve, and turned to see an old woman, pallid and lame, out of breath from hastening to catch up with him.

"O! sir, I must tell you how much you did for me when I was at death's door at the hospital. You were passing through the ward and saw how bad I was. You talked to me a while and told a story that made me laugh, and bade me cheer up. I don't know how it was, but right then I began to mend. Now, thank God, I am on the road to health. May the good Lord bless you all your days, for you're a kind man."

While the wayfarer was trying to gather his wits, the old woman hobbled away. He went on bewildered, but halted when he heard a soft voice calling his name. A limousine had stopped silently at the curb and a lady leaned out.

"Why do you never come out to our country house? My husband has spoken of you so many times. He says you were the life of the class at college and that he has never really enjoyed a dinner party when you were not present. He is so proud of all you have accomplished I have heard so much about you that I think of you always as an old friend. Do come soon."

And limousine and lady were whisked off like a moving picture. Country house! Life of the class! Old friend! What did this madness mean?" While he was attempting to read just his faculties, he noticed a distinguished looking old gentleman approaching, lost in thought. But as he neared the wayfarer his face lit up and he spoke.

"Ah! So glad to come upon you! Pardon me, but do you intend to draw on that thousand you have with us? In case the account is to remain inactive, we can use it to advantage and give you a higher rate of interest?

The wayfarer managed to mumble that the account would not be touched for several months. The old gentleman thanked him, bowed and was lost in the crowd. The wayfarer stood still and pondered. Was this Boston or Bagdad? In less than fifteen minutes he had been accosted by four total strangers who seemed to consider him as a personage of importance; a sort of fairy god-father, a comforter of sick old ladies, a social lion of exceptional gifts, a rich man. And it all took place on a prosaic Boylston Street that he had walked since boyhood.

Yet unaccountably he felt younger. His eyes brightened. His shoulders squared and his step quickened. As he entered the office the force seemed to regard him with new eyes. He plunged into work like a boy and it came ridiculously easy. He went home at evening, humming a tune. His wife greeted him with a smile he had missed for years. His son came in with a cheery: "You're looking fine, Dad," and all anxiety about the boy seemed to drop away. Supper was a function. From some mysterious well of laughter he drew draft after draft of gaiety. For years he had not felt so happy. Perhaps it was all a dream, but it was a very nice dream, and ever since, the wayfarer has been stronger, better, more lovable.

The solution? Unknown friends. People he had helped out of the goodness of his heart, expecting nothing. People he had cheered when his own heart was sad. People who had followed the trail of his kindness to thank him. He had rated himself as useless and suddenly woke up to find that he had been a benefactor beyond all his imaginings to his fellows, one whom all were proud to call friend.

This is no fairy story, it is a fact. Fit yourself in the frame. If you live cleanly, do a kindness when you can, comfort the sorrowing wherever you find them, bring forth the best that is in you to all mankind, you will have hundreds of friends you know not, you will be an honored guest in houses you never entered, you will deposit day by day unconsciously treasures compared with which money is dross. One moment: "And the king answering, shall say to them: Amen I say to you, as long as you did it to one of these My least brethren, you did it to Me."—Boston Pilot.

THE CHRISTIAN GENTLEMAN

Men may count as excellent Catholics on the ground that they keep the Commandments of God and the Precepts of the Church, frequent Mass and the sacraments, are perfectly orthodox in mind and submissive in will to all that the Church teaches. At the same time they may be greatly wanting in the interior spirit of Christianity—selfish, conceited, jealous, cantankerous, backbiting, and quarrelsome. In this case the Catholic qualities which they possess will not make them gentlemen so long as the inner spirit of Christianity is lacking. But I do not call these people *excellent* Catholics; I consider them extremely poor Catholics. They have caught up the outward and more obvious half of Catholicism—namely, corporate membership, devotional observances, and ecclesiastical conformity; but they have missed something much less obvious yet certainly no less important—namely, the fundamental spirit of Christ's moral teaching. "By this shall all men know that you are My disciples, if you have love one for another." Let such Catholics study and put into practice this law of charity as expounded by St. Paul in the twelfth chapter to the Corinthians. By adding this feature to their other and more easily practised Catholic qualities, they will begin to be really first-class Catholics; and for the same reason they will become gentlemen in the sense defined.—Bombay Examiner.

THE ELDEST SON.

Often it happens that the eldest son of a family "feels his oats" almost as soon as he begins to go to work. He becomes hard to manage. He gives impudence to his parents. He sets a bad example for the younger children. He wants to keep his wages to spend on himself. He stays out late at night. He goes with bad company. He chafes at correction.

He is laying up sorrow for himself. The young man who causes his parents to weep, is apt to have children who will bring his head down with grief to the grave. And the evil influences that he exerts on the conduct of his brothers and sisters will draw down punishment on him.

Sons who have grown up, need to be told this. As long as they are in the parental home, they are subject to its regulations. They still owe their father and mother respect and obedience. They are bound not to scandalize the younger children by any misconduct.

If they will not behave themselves at home, let them go away from it.—Pittsburg Observer.

HOW TO BE HAPPY

Happiness is seldom found among the overrich. It is found among the lowly, among the most humble and obscure. Wealth can buy pleasure which affords satisfaction for the moment, but cannot buy happiness which is the security of the morrow. The only possible happiness that wealth can procure is the good, it can do in helping others to be happy. There is no happiness in eating and drinking, only pleasure, and not even that always. There is no happiness in luxury, only comfort. There is happiness in love bestowed and love received, but wealth cannot buy it and has nothing to do with it. Happiness is not the result of events, but the outcome of character.

OUR BOYS AND GIRLS

WHEN JOHNNIE SAW THE PRESIDENT

It did not seem possible to Johnnie that what the teacher said could be true. To think that the President of the United States would pass by their schoolhouse door in the early morning was too wonderful a fact to grasp in a moment. To be sure, the great man would not see the schoolhouse, because the clearing in which it stood was separated from the railroad by a bit of the original forest and the special train would travel swiftly; but he might see the trees beneath which he and his comrades played, and that meant a great deal.

That night, on his way home, Johnnie kept his feet from wandering after squirrels or wookpeckers beside the trail. The boy could not waste time, with news of importance to be told. "Where's Pete?" he inquired, when he caught sight of his mother feeding the chickens their evening meal.

"Gone after the cow."

Straightway Johnnie explained the news—that the President of the United States was even at that moment on his way to the upper peninsula. "And his special train," the eager voice went on, "is going through here at 5 o'clock in the morning. Pete and I want to get up and see that train when it goes round the curve by the schoolhouse. That's only two miles away." When Peter reached home at twilight he was cross. The cow was lost.

"Don't talk to me about anything except finding old Brindle!" was his reply to the small boy's request for company.

"But Pete, if we find the cow after supper—and I'll go with you and carry the lantern—why, then, you'll get up with me in the morning, won't you? Only think of standing on a stump, Pete, and waving your hand to the President's train! Long's we live, maybe, we'll never meet such a chance again!"

"If we find old Brindle, I'll go with you," agreed Peter, "but not unless."

A weary, disappointed boy crept into bed beside his brother at 10 o'clock. That independent pioneer cow was still lost, and Peter was decidedly irritable.

"Don't say President to me again!" was his last remark to his small brother that night. "And I wouldn't go gallavantin' after the President's cinders when your own cow's lost and your baby sister won't have any milk to drink until she's found! Now mind what I tell you! Don't say President to me again!"

It happened that when Johnnie's father was a boy he narrowly missed seeing Abraham Lincoln. The man never forgot his disappointment, which accounts for the fact that he woke Johnnie at 3 o'clock the next morning, and whispered in his ear that it was time to dress.

Hoping not to waken baby sister, the boy dressed in the dark, his teeth chattering with the chill of early autumn in Michigan woods.

"I've lighted the lantern for you and set it just outside," his father whispered, "and mother says get a bite to eat before you start. And when the train goes by, you whoop all you want to, Johnnie, and then run home for breakfast."

Accustomed as he was to darkness in the clearing, it took courage to plunge into the solemn woods between 3 and 4 o'clock of a frosty morning, but he hurried on.

Dawn came at last, finding Johnnie dancing on a stump beside the railroad tracks. He had covered the distance between his home and the curve by the schoolhouse in less time than his father had supposed possible. So Johnnie danced to keep warm whistled to keep his courage up, until a locomotive sounded in the distance. As the rumble of the approaching train came near and nearer, the boy snatched his cap from his head and prepared to greet his nation's great chief.

At that moment another individual waited round the curve. When the last car of the train was opposite Johnnie, where he stood energetically waving his cap, there came a series of shrill whistles. Old Brindle, fascinated by the glory of the Presidential locomotive, had come to a full stop on the track; nor would she move until sixty-five seconds had passed, convincing the engineer, that he, too, must stop.

Black heads were thrust from windows; and when Johnnie heard colored porters and trainmen calling to one another, "No danger; nothing but a cow!" Johnnie disowned Brindle; that is, in the general excitement he did not realize that his cow had stopped the President's train.

"What are you doing here?" inquired one of the porters on beholding Johnnie. "Is that your cow?"

Johnnie rapidly explained that he had walked two miles in the dark" just to see the President's train. His face beemed with joy.

At that the President himself appeared at a window, and—wonder of wonders — he bowed to Johnnie, and said, "Good morning, my boy! I'm glad to see you are up so early."

It all happened in the briefest space of time. The train moved on, leaving Johnnie wondering whether he could believe his own eyes and ears. Suddenly one of the porters flung a sheaf of bright color from the rear platform of the train. "With the compliments of the President!" he shouted.

It was a huge bunch of American Beauty roses, tied with a sash of satin ribbon so like the roses that it seemed made of their petals.

Johnnie had never seen American Beauty roses before. Having often seen Brindle, however, he recovered from his dazed condition enough to recognize her when she came crashing through the underbrush, suggesting that they both go home to breakfast.

Wherever the President of the United States appeared that day he was warmly greeted by the people; but even he was hardly so great a hero for one twenty-four hours as was Johnnie in his own neighborhood when he told his story and divided the roses.

Baby sister shared in the joy, and wore the lovely red sash all day, and even teased to wear it to bed that night. —Frances M. Fox in Youth's Companion.

THE KIND BROTHER

A pretty story of the love of two little brothers for each other comes from New York City. Two small boys signaled a street car, and when it stopped it was noticed that one was lame. With much solicitude, the other boy helped the cripple aboard the car, and, after telling the conductor to go ahead, returned to the sidewalk.

The lame boy braced himself up in his seat, so that he could look out of the car window, and the other passengers observed that, at frequent intervals the little fellow would wave his hand and smile.

Following the direction of his glances, the passengers saw the other boy running along the sidewalk, straining every muscle to keep up with the car. The passengers watched this pantomine in silence for a few blocks, and then a gentlemen asked the lame boy who the other boy was.

"My brother," was the prompt reply.

Why does he not ride with you in the car?" was the next question.

"Cause he hasn't any money," answered the lame boy, sorrowfully.

The little runner was speedily invited into the car, and the sympathetic questioner not only paid his fare, but gave each a quarter besides.—Catholic Bulletin.

THE LESSON OF HOLY WEEK

The Church this Holy Week, extends to mankind an invitation whose words are wet with her tears. She has in the personality of St. Peter shone in all the glory of Thabor. In Mary she has heard the victory of wisdom in the Temple, when the hypocrite plucked his beard in silence, rolled his envious eye in wonderment and gazed in the anguish of wounded pride on the confusion which a youth of twelve had introduced into the council of the grey-haired fathers of Israel. She has entered and enjoyed the sublime quiet of Nazareth's humble roof, and has given to her painters ideas of its hallowed happiness, and has lovingly chatted to us her children of the virtue of Mary, the justness of Joseph and the obedience of the Holy One subject to them.

But all this past pleasure doubles by contrast the Church's present pain. No more do we hear the Gloria that gladdened the angelic messenger and awoke with its burst of heavenly harmony the sleeping night at Bethlehem, but in stead the doleful wail of the prophet and the pitiful Miserere of the sinner. The Church has heard the shout for the freedom of Barabbas and the kingship of Cæsar, and she weeps with the rejected Saviour. She has beheld earth's dearest and heaven's loved King clothed in naught save the purple of blood and bruise, and from her shuddering heart comes forth to us the wail, "Come and see!" She allows us human feeling, she supposes honesty and judgment. Come, then, to see the Church lead forth the "Man of Sorrows," not as did the irresolute Pilate to shirk a greater crime, but to mourn with us for that already unjustly done. By the hand she will lead us in spirit to Calvary, not that we may with wagging head and insulting tongue yell forth "vahs!" of mockery and contempt, but that we may leave the hill confessing in the repentance and faith of the Centurion. "Indeed this was the Son of God." She invites the carnal to see the contradiction of lust, the proud servant to behold the humble Master, the worldling to witness how his foolish friend, the world, dealt with its best benefactor and its God, and all to see if there be any sorrow comparable to our Saviour's sorrow. Here, indeed is a subject where words are well-nigh worthless, tears weak, and which naught can rightly express save the "dumb mouths" of Jesus' five wounds.

Who is this Man dying on the cross, every muscle twitching in anguish, every member raw and bleeding, every convulsion a new torture, and every torture excessive? Hear, Christian, in dread wonder; it is your God! Yes, God Who gave the gift of language, and the power of speech to those human hounds whose lolling tongues bayed up the mountainside. Yes, God whose creative hand laid the foundations of Calvary and Who could with His gigantic power hurl it at guilty Jerusalem. Yes, God Whose infinite mind molded in His palm this black ball of ingratitude called earth, and Who could now, by pressing His fingers crush it from out the skies. O wonderful contradiction that makes of human knowledge ignorance! O mystery sublime, that confuses and confounds all human views causing us to adore what our poor reason cannot compass, the ways of Him who gave us intellect and set its limit!

Why did the God of the world and of men come to earth, to become a jest for the ruffian, a slave to the degraded, and finally end the sport of a Jewish holiday the victim of savage malice? Why? The answer comes from the creed—"for us men, and for our salvation." Nothing could, after the Divine decree, so estimably wipe away the insult offered to God the Father but the blood of God the Son, and His blood could not be spilled in oblation by the offender's hand if He did not become man like unto the offender. Nothing could open the gates barred by original sin but the pierced hand of the Crucified Love, and Love leaves his Father's burning bosom to feel all the intense coldness of humanity's frozen heart. Truly here is the story of the Creator's clemency and the creature's crime.

In Gethsemane the seamless robe of the mother is changed for the black cloak of human guilt; the cup of bitter insult given the Father now is handed the Son, and the Son drinks dry the horrible potion. Yea, our dear Lord has taken the chalice of extreme bitterness, but in the drinking drops from His scored temples have fallen and sweetened the big cup of human suffering, making for us its taking easy. See Him, who never lived neath any roof save heaven's golden dome and Mary's country cottage, now in the guardroom of a pagan squad! Behold the strong steel-plated knuckles of a Roman ruffian striking the Pride of Angels in the very mouth! See Him, if your eyes can even in vision stand the prospect, rising from the pillar, one raw mass of jagged flesh, and in His struggle to dress watch Him flinch and shudder, as is heard the heavy rip of the hatchet making the gibbet He will hug with love for us, though for Him the instrument of hate! Regard the human streams which Jerusalem pours forth from her every gate to glut their blood-greed on the sorry tragedy!

Now, in imagination, our mind sees the turbaned band of Pharisees "feeding fat their ancient grudge" and chuckling in cowardly laughter at their power over the multitude which shouts forth their envious whisperings in mad demands. We see the Roman warrior, proud in the strength of the mail-coat of Cæsar, casting haughty glances of disdain on the weak and wounded Saviour, deemed the refuse of a nation then adjudged the "slime of earth." We hear the thrilling groans of anguish that torture starts from the lips of our Saviour, and the impious retorts of those who taunt Him in His misery with the power which in the past He said was His—words now regarded as braggart's boasting, and not those of a God with "none so poor to do Him reverence."

The long road of ignominy at length is trod; Calvary is reached; the hurrying crowd swarm around the Victim, and watch with curious, but alas! unpitying eyes the nailing of His body to the cross. A grim-faced executioner pulls to himself the hand that the gentle Mary kissed gets his rough nail and heavy hammer ready,—and now expectation for a moment stops the mouth of clamor, and all is silence—silence—deep and dreadful silence around the thronged mount. Soon a dull rent is heard; three times do heavy rappings strike the hearers' ears—rappings which go pleadingly to heaven's gate, echo through the universe and resound through hell. And then high on a cross, which in its timbers groans as if in pity with the dying placed thereon, is raised o'er the guilty earth He who fashioned it with a wish.

Oh! if in unchristian times it was said wrongly though poetically that the gods leaned from their stars to watch the fight of men, how heaven must have bent forth to note this battle—Divine Love on the one side and human hate on the other! Look you, too, gentle reader! See those hands shedding blessings in this hour of agony, more rich than ever fell from them in life, richer a gift than ever heaven gave earth—Christ's own life-blood, every drop of which angels adore and live glorious in the adoration. Ah! though the stars were beautiful in their fresh young light, as they went forth to glimmer their lives away in space, their beauty is but a blur compared to the star shaped drops of blood that now issue from Christ's pierced palm. Surely the world owes our Saviour much, and surely the naked man of sorrows owes the world little!

Let ours be the ineffable privilege, in repentance confessing that we did indeed crucify Him when the mob was shouting, or when passion ran riot in our souls, in spirit to take Him down from the cross, wipe Mary's tears away, and, with our own wash the blood from the dead body of the Crucified Christ, and thus bargain to see Him in His kingdom where His death wounds of love shine as very lamps of glory.—Catholic Union and Times.

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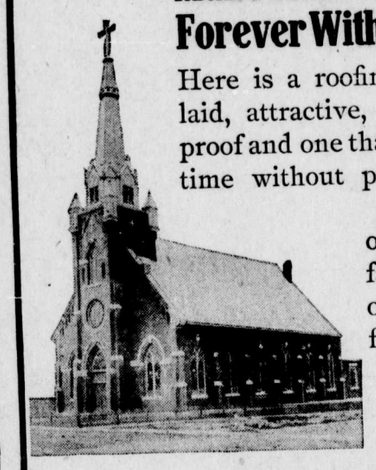

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