

CHATS WITH YOUNG MEN

THE LOST CHORD

Seated one day at the organ,
I was weary and ill at ease,
And my fingers wandered idly
Over the noisy keys.

I know not what I was playing,
Or what I was dreaming then;
But I struck one chord of music
Like the sound of a great "Amen."

It flooded the crimson twilight
Like the close of an angel's psalm,
And it lay on my fevered spirit
With a touch of infinite calm.

It quieted pain and sorrow
Like love overcoming strife;
It seemed the harmonious echo
From our discordant life.

It linked all perplexed meanings
Into one perfect peace,
And trembled away into silence
As if it were loath to cease.

I have sought—but I seek it vainly—
That one lost chord divine
That came from the soul of the
organ

And entered into mine.
It may be that Death's dark angel
Will speak in that chord again;
It may be that only in heaven
I shall hear that grand "Amen."

—ADELAIDE ANNE PROCTOR

CLEVER ANT ENGINEERS

Dr. Ellendor, who has carefully studied the ants of Central America, says that these insects cut off the leaves of trees and carry them to their nests, where they serve various purposes. One of their columns was returning laden with spoils. I placed a dry branch, nearly a foot in diameter, obliquely across their path, which was lined on either side by an impassable barrier of high grass, and pressed it down so tightly on the ground that they could not creep underneath. The first comers crawled beneath the branch as far as they could, and then tried to climb over, but failed owing to the weight on their heads. They stood still as if awaiting a word of command, and I saw with astonishment that the loads had been laid aside by more than a foot's length of the column, one imitating the other. And now work began on both sides of the branch, and in about half an hour a tunnel was made beneath it. Each ant then took up its burden again, and the march was resumed in the most perfect order. They also show considerable inventiveness in the construction of bridges. It appears from numerous observations that they know how to place straws on the surface of water and cross on the straw bridges.

GOOD MANNERS AND SUCCESS

Good manners are more or less than a combination of unselfishness and grace. They are made up of small sacrifices in consideration of others. A well-mannered person always makes his own comfort secondary to that of others. In fact good manners are founded on consideration of others, dignity, self-restraint and common sense. Good manners, like good books, have an objective and may be known and appreciated by all. They not only teach consideration of others and protect society from rude, thoughtless people, but also give poise, grace and dignity to their possessor.

If a person lacks unselfishness he is conspicuous and awkward, two qualities which made him disagreeable to society in general. No one cares to be in the company of one who is continually talking about himself and looking after his own comfort. Furthermore, good manners promote success in the business world as well as in the social. Often a splendid position has been either lost or gained by a display of manners.

Like charity, good manners begin at home. Here everyone receives his early training in all lines, and it is this training that helps make either the well-mannered or the ill-mannered citizen. However, poor home training is no excuse for ill-breeding. Of what use are the power of observation and the books of etiquette? Surely, these are accessible to everyone, for if a person has not time to read—which case is very rare, he is able to observe what other people do, and can do likewise.—Catholic Citizen.

RELIGIOUS VOCATION

Dear young man or boy reading these lines, have you ever wondered whether you were destined by God to serve him as a Priest in a Religious Order? Have you frequently pondered over the matter, not knowing what to decide and embarrassed about speaking of it and your doubts even to your parents or your Confessor? If you have experienced all this, you are no different from thousands of other young souls who seem to hear the Divine Voice whisper, "Come and follow Me" when at prayer, at work, at play.

Perhaps one of the things that made you hesitate more than anything else was the uncertainty of the call. "Am I really called?" "Have I actually a Vocation to the Religious Life—to the Priesthood? If I were sure, I would obey gladly." Dear young soul, do not wait for an Angel to come down from Heaven to announce to you that Our Blessed Lord longs to have you offer Him your generous heart and to consecrate yourself to His holy service. The Master speaks to you in the quiet sanctuary

of your soul and there with loving patience repeats His Divine invitation. Sometimes it takes the form of a love for the service of the Altar, perhaps as an altar-boy; again it takes the form of a longing to get away from the fading things of life and of worldly ambition, to experience the real things of life in the blessed peace of the Cloister; or again, it is the desire to do penance for the past or to surely save one's soul.

Whatever be the form of the Call, young man, do not hesitate. Many a failure in life—many an unhappy soul—many a sinner—owes his unhappiness to his delay in obeying the Divine Voice calling him, and to his subsequent loss of Vocation and of God's grace. Do not delay—talk with some Priest or Religious about your sentiments and doubts.—"Conchessa" in Catholic Transcript.

OUR BOYS AND GIRLS

HEART OF A CHILD

A GREAT NOVELIST'S DYING TRIBUTE

When the lessons and tasks are all ended

And the school for the day is dismissed,

And the little ones gather around me

To bid me good-night and be kissed,

Oh, the little white arms that encircle

My neck in a tender embrace!

Oh, the smiles that are halos of heaven,

Shedding sunshine and love on my face.

And when they are gone I sit dreaming

Of my childhood, too lovely to last,

Of love that my heart will remember

When it wakes to the love of the past;

Ere the world and its wickedness made me

A partner of sorrow and sin,

When the glory of God was above me,

And the glory of gladness within.

Oh, my heart grows as weak as a woman's,

And fountains of sorrow will flow,

When I think of the paths steep and stony

Where the feet of the dear one's must go;

Of the mountains of sin hanging o'er them,

Of the tempests of fate growing wild;

Oh, there's nothing on earth half so holy

As the innocent heart of a child.

They are idols of hearts and of households,

They are angels of God in disguise,

His sunlight still sleeps on their tresses,

His glory still beams in their eyes;

Oh, those trunks from earth and from heaven,

They have made me more manly and mild,

And I know how Jesus could liken

The kingdom of God to a child.

Seek not a life for the dear ones

All radiant, as others have done;

But that life may have just enough shadow

To temper the glare of the sun;

I would pray God to guard them from evil,

But my prayer would bound back on myself;

Ah, a seraph may pray for a sinner,

But a sinner may pray for himself.

The twig is easily bended,

I have banished the rule and the rod;

I have taught them the goodness of knowledge,

They have taught me the goodness of God.

My heart is a dungeon of darkness,

Where I shut them from breaking a rule;

My frown is sufficient correction,

My love is the law of the school.

I shall leave the old home in the autumn,

To traverse its threshold no more;

Ah! how I shall sigh for the dear ones

That met me each morn at the door!

I shall miss the good-night and the kisses,

And the gush of their innocent glee;

The group on the green, and the flowers,

They are brought every morning to me.

I shall miss the low hum of their voices,

Their song in the school and the street;

I shall miss their delightful embraces,

And the tramp of their dear little feet.

When the lessons and tasks are all ended

And Death says school is dismissed,

May the little ones gather around me

To bid me good-night and be kissed.

—CHARLES DICKENS

A LOVABLE GIRL

The paper had given a detailed account of Edna's accident, how she had been run down by a taxicab on a rainy night when between her umbrella and the wind that kept tilting her hat over her eyes she had stepped almost in front of the machine, as it came around the corner. It was hard to explain why she was not killed. Except for the nervous shock and her broken arm she had no serious injuries. Unpleasant as the experiment was, it was not an unmixed evil.

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Edna discovered that she had more friends than she had realized, and some of the other members of the family reached the conclusion that Edna's tactics were worth following.

"If there's anything I could be doing," said the washerwoman when she brought home the clothes, "would be a pleasure, and I wouldn't want a penny. She's always that friendly and smiling and often on a rainy night she made me take an extra nickel so as to ride home. I'm glad she's no worse hurt."

The man who sold fruit and vegetables was a keen hand at a bargain. Ann, the cook thought. When he brought the potatoes and onions and celery she had ordered, there was a bunch of grapes in the basket. "I didn't order no grapes," said Ann eyeing the vegetable man suspiciously.

"I know you didn't," said the man. "They're for the little lady. Once when my horse tipped the wagon over and spilled all my stuff into the street, she came out and helped me pick it up. Some folks that saw it just laughed. Hope she'll be out again before long."

The postman asked about Edna every time Ann went to the door for the mail. "She's about as thoughtful as anybody I know," he said. "If I have a registered letter to be signed for, she doesn't leave me standing out in the cold. She asks me in. And once last winter, when I had a cough that I thought maybe would be the last of me, she brought me down some cough lozenges the doctor had given her. Said she hoped they'd help, and they did, too."

Every day it was like that. It was not to be expected that Edna's friends and classmates would be heard from, but it was a surprise when a lame girl who clerked in a little notion store, a few blocks away, called to express her sympathy.

"There aren't many like her," the lame girl said. "A month ago or so, I got caught in the rain going home, and she saw me and nothing would do but she must walk all the way home with me holding her umbrella over me. All I knew her was when she came into the store to buy things, but she didn't mind

walking half a mile to keep me from getting wet to the skin."

Edna's sister, Nellie, voiced the sentiments of the family at last!

"Of course, we've always known that Edna was a darling," she said, "but who'd have thought that she'd have meant so much to so many people? All she's done has been to do little kind things, and everybody loves her for it. I'm beginning to feel that it is quite a responsibility, living up to Edna."—Catholic Transcript.

Goodness and greatness come not by wishes, but by self-sacrifice and persistent effort.



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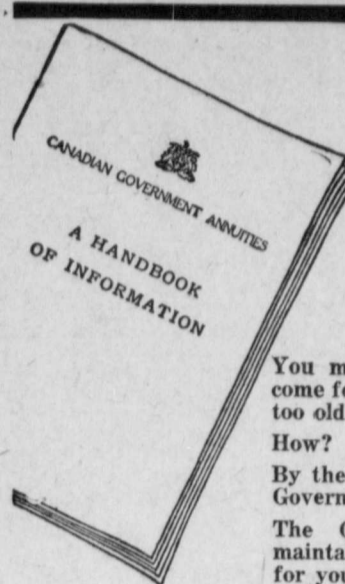
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