

The Young Man and His Problem.

BY REV. JAMES L. GORDON.

Table Manners.

Certain men appear to splendid advantage everywhere except at the dinner table. They are easy on the street, neat in the office, dignified in the pulpit, graceful on the platform, at home in the parlor, and commanding in a crowd, but what a mess they do make of it when they sit down to dine. No man is a perfect gentleman who is not gentlemanly at the table. You may be a philosopher and a scholar and not be a gentleman—at the table. The following paragraph concerning Doctor Samuel Johnson is to the point:

"It is easy for us to see him, as he has been described to us, at table. He was totally absorbed in the business of the moment; his looks seemed riveted to his plate; nor would he, unless in very high company, say one word, or even pay the least attention to what was said by others, till he had satisfied his appetite, which was so fierce, and indulged with such intensity, that while in the act of eating the veins of his forehead swelled, and generally a strong perspiration was visible. In eating and drinking he could refrain, but he could not use moderation. Every thing about his character and manners, it is stated, was forcible and violent; there never was any moderation; many a day did he fast, many a year did he refrain from wine; but when he did eat, it was voraciously; when he did drink wine, it was copiously. He could practice abstinence, but not temperance. He told Boswell that he had fasted two days without inconvenience, and that he had never been hungry but once."

Haste VS. Hurry.

A man may make haste without being in a hurry. The hurried man rushes out of the house with the collar of his coat half way up, or his stocking down over his shoe, or his tie half way out of its knot, or his pocket handkerchief two thirds out of his pocket or some other odd disarrangement of his wearing apparel. But the man who moves in haste, when necessity demands it, is never in a hurry—like a strong engine on a clear, clean track, he simply puts on more pressure and dignifiedly moves at a more rapid pace. Mr. J. L. Williams in his little volume concerning Mr. Grover Cleveland, says:

"He never did anything hastily if he could help it, though he could perform huge tasks at a single sitting when under pressure. The celebrated Venezuelan message was a case in point. On the evening of his return from the fishing trip (for which he was so severely criticized) Secretary Olney dined with him and they talked the Venezuela matter over until half-past ten. Then he sat down and wrote until half-past four in the morning, sent his manuscript to the stenographer, revised it by breakfast time, and at ten o'clock despatched it to the Capitol. But he had been thinking about it all through his fishing trip. That was why he took the trip, to get away from the turmoil and see things clearly in perspective."

The Power To Execute.

Lend me your brains. Or, better still, keep our brains but use them in my behalf. I have told you my difficulty. I have informed you concerning my perplexity. As the boys say, you know what I am "up against." The proposition is in your hands. Now, then, look it over. Turn it over. Think it through. Dispatch the matter as if it were of vital importance to your self. "The man who has only an eye for difficulties will not succeed. When Howe was appointed commander-in-chief in the Mediterranean, a question concerning him was asked in Parliament to which Lord Hawke, who was then First Lord of the Admiralty, replied: 'I advised His Majesty to make the appointment. I have tried my Lord Howe on important occasions; he never asked me how he was to execute any service, but always went and performed it.'"

Honor Bright.

Tell the truth. Tell the truth to yourself when you are thinking. Tell it to your soul when you are dreaming. Tell it to your mind when you are cogitating. Tell it to your spirit when speculating. Breathe an atmosphere of truth. By and by the truth will flash in your eye, tremble in your voice, beam in your face and rest like a garland on your brow. The author of the "Sunny Days of Youth" remarks: "School-boys will understand to what Archdeacon Farrar alluded when preaching to Marlborough School, he said as follows: 'Although I know that there are scarcely any of you who would tell a deliberate lie, let me warn you, my young brethren, against acting one; against little concealments, against little dissimulations,

against little dishonesties, against little deceptions. Inform, for instance, the surreptitious 'eaf, the dishonest aid, the copied exercise, the note written in school; these are the fruitful sources of temptation; and therefore, if you would be perfectly honest, never pretend to be doing what you are not doing; never pretend to have done what you have not done; never be surprised into a concealment or startled into a falsehood; such 'man-slaughter on truth' always ends in murder.'"

Limitations.

The man with a weak body is apt to have a bright mind. The preacher with a thin voice is prone to put more matter into his sermon. The man with a short body is often blessed with a broad brain. Nature is forever seeking to balance herself, and in this attempt of nature to secure a perfect equipoise—every man has a chance.

"A man who had reached the heights of peace and power said: 'I was born in poverty, and I had a withered arm from birth, but it never dawned upon me until I was fourteen, that narrow circumstances and bodily disability were just what I needed to make the most of my powers. It was when I said to my father, 'I am poor and lame,' and he said, quoting Scripture, 'The lame shall take the prey.' Then I saw that what I had always thought of as weights might turn out to be wings.'"

Fame.

Would you like to be famous?—and are you willing to pay the price for it? "The price for it!" What's that? Envy, gossip, misrepresentation, the exaggeration of your insignificant acts, public inspection of your private affairs, the criticism of the minor faults of your children and the judgment passed by your less fortunate relatives upon certain luxuries, the right to which you have won by hard toil and midnight study. The author of "Characteristics" emphasizes this thought in the following paragraph:

"Burns, for his disposition to satire, was bitterly punished by his neighbors, in the only way they could punish one so superior to them. They exaggerated his follies, and scandalized his name. 'The disposition,' says Froude, speaking of a certain scandal relating to Caesar, 'to believe evil of men who have risen a few degrees above their contemporaries, is a feature of human nature as common as it is base; and when to envy there is added fear and hatred, malicious anecdotes spring like mushrooms in a forcing-pit.' Arthur Helps remarks, in reference to the accusation against Cortez of having poisoned Ponce de Leon, that 'any man who is much talked of will be much misrepresented. Indeed, malignant intention is unhappily the least part of calumny, which has its sources in idle talk, playful fancies, gross misrepresentations, utter exaggerations, and many other rivulets of error that sometimes flow together in one huge river of calumny, which pursues its muddy, mischievous course unchecked for ages.'"

Moderation.

Be moderate. Avoid extremes. If extremes cannot be avoided, then match one fad with another. If you are fond of history, give poetry a little more pressure. If the theatre has a strong pull upon you, try a solid lecture occasionally. Remember that there are two sides to your body and two lobes to your brain. Keep a good balance. When you feel like crying, laugh at yourself. Laugh at the universe. Laugh at a world where everything seems to conspire to produce a strange perplexity. Remember you are building a body for seven decades—a mind for a divine conflict—and a soul for eternity. One of our most popular writers remarks:

"Once when Socrates was asked what was the virtue of a young man, he said: 'To avoid excess in everything.' If this virtue were more common, how much happier the world would be! Before he died, Lord Northington, Chancellor in George the Third's reign, paid the penalty which port wine exacts from its fervent worshippers, and sundered the acutest pangs of gout. It is recorded that, as he limped from the woolstack to the bar of the House of Lords, he once muttered to a young peer who watched his distress with evident sympathy: 'Ah, my young friend, if I had known that these legs would one day carry a Chancellor, I would have taken better care of them when I was your age.'"

Personal Popularity.

Personal magnetism is a science. It may be reduced to a few workable laws and made a factor in the life of each one of us. You need not

"go out of your way" to be popular. The secret of popularity is to treat with sincere kindness and consideration those who cross your pathway. The author of "The Sunny Days of Youth" wisely remarks:

"The habit of being polite to every one, early acquired, made a certain famous man what he was. It was remarked of him that he always danced with the girls whom everybody else neglected—the ugly, awkward girls; the girls with red elbows and snub noses and sandy hair; the girls who could not dance well, and were too shy to talk. 'Ah my dear fellow!' wrote Thackeray, 'take this counsel: always dance with the old ladies, always dance with the governesses!' Be kind to the people who have not many friends, he meant; who are voted slow, and dull, and uninteresting, and very likely may be so, but who who are quite capable of responding gratefully to a little sympathy."

Try Your Hand.

The man who has too many irons in the fire usually allows the fire to go out. In trying to do everything some thing must be neglected and that some thing is usually the vital thing. And yet a man ought to have more than one iron in the fire. A man ought to be able to do at least two things well. Sherman could comprehend a mass of details, Sheridan could fight a hard battle, but Grant could do both, and in addition plan the campaign. He had the genius and strength of three men. Dr. Madison C. Peters, in "The Strenuous Life," says:

"Napoleon combined the qualities of McClellan and Grant—he had first-class organizing ability and the power to execute his plans. We find the hero of Austerlitz directing the purchase of horses, arranging for an advance supply of saddles and giving directions about shirts for the troops. His familiar knowledge of details, premeditated and carried out to the letter, resulted in his colossal triumph."

Your First Sacrifice.

Beecher affirmed that religion consisted in sacrificing man's lower nature for the sake of his higher aspirations, and I think we might safely assert that that man is a Christian who sacrifices the lower to the higher, the present to the future, the seen to the unseen and the temporal to the eternal. Certainly a young man's first sacrifice marks an important era in his development. Robert Collyer in his book entitled "Some Memories" remarks:

"Now I must return on my way to touch an incident which holds for me a pregnant meaning, as I glance backward to my childhood. The memory comes clear as if it was yesterday, of a happy day when some good soul had given me a George the Third penny, and I must needs go and spend it forthwith, or, as my mother used to say, it would burn a hole in my pocket. There was only one store in our hamlet, and there I must go. I had quite made up my mind what I would buy. I dearly loved what we call candy,—do still; and there it was, the sort I would buy, in the window. But close to the jar there was a tiny book, and I can still read the title 'The History of Whittington and his Cat. William Walker, Printer.' Price, one penny. I gave up the candy and bought the book. And now when I am in London and go up Highgate Hill to see a dear friend, I always halt to look at the stone on which the small boy sat when the bells rang him back again to become lord mayor of London."

Be A Specialist.

You ought to be able to do many things and yet be a specialist in some one particular line. The man of genius is not a man whose study and work is limited to one department of human achievement but the man who, touching many parts of life and entering many avenues of human activity is able to bring all to bear on his own chosen specialty.

"President Hayes said to Major William McKinley, on his entrance into Congress, 'To achieve success and fame you must pursue some special line. You must not make a speech on every motion offered or bill introduced. You must confine yourself to one particular thing; become a specialist. Take up some branch of legislation and make that your specialty. Why not take up the subject of the tariff? Being a subject that will not be settled for years to come, it offers a great field for study and a chance for ultimate fame.' McKinley began studying tariff, became the foremost authority on the subject and the McKinley Tariff Bill made William McKinley President of the United States."