

CHATS WITH YOUNG MEN.

Laocordaire to a Young Friend.

My Dear Friend,—You have written me a good letter, for which thanks. You must not be surprised at your inability to fall off; we are all alike there. Absolute steadfastness here below is a fond dream. We first advance and then fall behind; we go with the stream; we row against it: such is our life. Besides, your health is a natural cause of weakness and remissness, which I quite understand. Take it for your chief penance, and often make an offering of it to God. The most painful mortifications are those which we do not ourselves will, which neither begin nor end where we want them. A man may have been making inward and outward acts of humility for weeks; and yet, when the time comes, a mere want of respect in some one else may upset him. As for work, I think there is one kind which is always easy and not fatiguing—reading; not random reading, but serious and consistent reading. We thus easily gain—especially at your age, when the memory is still young and fresh—a vast deal of knowledge with little else than pleasure. The "imitation" tells us that we ought always to be engaged in reading, writing, meditating or praying: aut legendo, scribendo, meditando, vel orando. It is the alternation of these kinds of occupation that fills up and at the same time gives charm to life. Reading serves to attract the mind, to feed, enoble and purify it; and I can never understand how wealthy men, with a library at hand, can find time hang heavy, and can even lapse into immoral habits. Idleness is the fruitful mother of bad morals, and reading, although not hard work, is enough to banish idleness. You must pay no attention to the trouble and darkness which comes over your mind at times. We must sometimes feel our own emptiness, and see how wonderfully weak our nature is, and also how frightfully corrupt. There is not one of us in whom there are not the makings of a saint as well as of a rogue. That is the explanation of those monsters of debauchery and cruelty of whom history tells us. At bottom, perhaps, they were not of a more wicked nature than others, but imagination and power took away from them every restraint. The devil is as bad as he is only because of the power he has without any moral curb. I advise you always to be regular in your confessions and communions, and generally in all the exercises which you have laid down for yourself. Such subjection to rule is very useful, although it often seems to us that it would be better to follow the irregular impulse of sentiment. Good-bye, my dear child; do not be down-hearted. Take each day as it comes, and serve God. Don't make plans. God will call you at His own and your own time. That is the simplest, the safest and the sweetest course to follow.

OUR BOYS AND GIRLS.

To Talk Well.

Don't speak in a low, monotonous voice. Conversation is like a song. It needs pronounced accent and a great variety of intonations to keep up a sustained interest. Don't tell long stories of personal experiences. One who has the habit of making personal recitals takes the lion's share of the conversation and doesn't give a listener a chance. Don't ask trifling questions. Don't air your prejudices. Neither contribute to the grace of conversational art, the essence of which should be sympathy. Don't talk of melancholy or gloomy matters. Give the talk a happy turn. Don't ride conversation too hard. Leave breathing spaces in the talk. It is not essential that every moment two people are together should be filled with a flow of words. Don't deaden and hinder the conversation by being too accurate over details. Don't go back and add appendices to a subject after you have once left it. If the subject was not closed to your satisfaction, no matter. Don't run one story into another. When you have told a good story stop short in order that its effect may tell. A good story should be set off by a blank or dull space in the talk. Don't make a point of agreeing with every speaker. The real zest of conversation lies in just enough difference of opinion to bring out the strong points of two people's character. There is nothing more genial than the warmth of friendly discussion which never rises to anger. Don't harp too long on one string. Change to another topic before the one in hand is quite thrashed out. To turn the conversation gracefully is like reversing in the waltz, a nice point of skill. Don't affect a stilted style of conversation. The longest words are by no means the best words. Every day idioms and colloquialisms have a directness and terseness that commend themselves to the really good talker.

Just a Little, Yellow Dog.

Ben was a worthless, yellow cur, but the baby loved him. They always played together. Their favorite spot was the meadow. There in the tall grass one could see the baby's bobbing pink sun-bonnet and close at hand the dog's waving tail. In July the grass was ripe, and the baby's father brought out the mower and set to work in the hay-field. The man had made the circuit of the field twice, when Ben sprang from the grass into the horses' faces. When the mower stopped, he stood before it, barking excitedly. The man tried to drive him away, but Ben, usually an ardent coward, stood his ground in spite of kicks and blows. The hired man returned to his seat and started on, determined to proceed, even if the machine killed the dog. But Ben, divining his intention, grabbed him by the leg and dragged him to the ground. The baby's father came hurrying up, Ben ran to meet him, and then bounded back into the uncut grass. The father followed. There, just a few rods ahead of the mower and directly in the path of the sickle, lay the baby, fast asleep.

Three Things.

- Three things to be—pure, just and wise.
Three things to live—courage, affection and gentleness.
Three things to govern—temper, tongue and conduct.
Three things for which to fight—honor, home and country.
Three things to cherish—the true, the beautiful and the good.
Three things about which to think—life, death and eternity.
Three things to commend—thrift, industry and promptness.
Three things to despise—cruelty, arrogance and ingratitude.
Three things to love—the wise, the virtuous and the innocent.
Three things for which to wish—health, friends and contentment.
Three things to admire—dignity, gracefulness and intellectual power.
Three things to attain—goodness of heart, integrity of purpose and cheerfulness of disposition.—The Parish Monthly.
The Fruit of the Rosary.
From the lips of Father Lawes we learned the following which happened to himself:
When a boy he was fishing on the bank of the Thames with his young brother,

To live according to your convictions. To be what you are and not pretend to be what you are not. To live honestly within your means, and not dishonestly upon the means of others.

When mortified and embarrassed by humiliating disaster, to seek in the wreck of ruin the elements of future conquest. To throw up a position with a good salary when it is the only business you know and you have a family depending upon you, because it does not have your unequalled approval.

To refuse to kneel and bend the knee to the wealthy, even though poor. To refuse to make a living in a questionable vocation. To refuse to do a thing which you think is wrong, because it is customary and done in trade.

To be talked about and yet remain silent when a word would justify you in the eyes of others, but which you cannot speak without injury to another.

To face slander and lies, and to carry yourself with cheerfulness, grace, and dignity for years, before the lie can be corrected.

To stand firmly erect while others are bowing and fawning for praise and power.

To remain in honest poverty while others grow rich by questionable methods.

To say "No" squarely when those around you say "Yes."

To do your duty in silence, obscurity, and poverty, while others about you prosper through neglecting or violating sacred obligations.

Not to bend the knee to popular prejudice.—Success.

The bank at that place was steep and the water deep. His brother's hook caught in something in the river's bed, and as he was making some effort to loosen it, he overbalanced himself and fell into the water. The current was fast carrying him away, and the now Father Lawes was much in trouble and looked round for help. He saw a woman sitting close by and she says: "throw in your line to catch your brother!" Immediately he did so, his brother caught the line and was slowly brought to shore. This was about seven miles from home. At the same time his mother says to his Aunt: "Quick! let us say the Rosary, for my boy is being drowned." After the Rosary she felt secure and shortly the boy arrived safe. Enquiries were made without delay concerning the woman seen on the bank, but the Ferryman plainly affirmed that no woman had been there. The gratitude of that Christian family can easily be imagined.

Shortly after Father Lawes was sent to College, hence ordination and a life of zeal and usefulness. Father Lawes is now at Southampton with impaired health.—Annals of St. Anne.

Her Sacrifice.

A teacher in a certain Sunday-school had been impressing on her girls the need of making some personal sacrifice during Lent. Accordingly, on the first Sunday of that penitential season, which happened to be a warm spring day, she took occasion to ask each of the class in turn what she had given up for the sake of her religion. Everything went well, and the answers were proving highly satisfactory until she came to the youngest member, "Well, Mary," inquired the teacher, "what have you left off for Lent?"

"Please, ma'am," stammered the child, somewhat confused, "I—I've left off my leggings."

THE NEWSPAPER OF TO-DAY.

READING OF ABNORMAL CRIMES DEPRIVES THE MIND.

One of the incidents of our modern life is the constant study of the abnormal. Our daily reading is the story of crime, degradation and horror. There is none of our journals that does not give each day columns of space to re-volting details of the vilest acts and some of them even boast of making a specialty of these awful happenings. Not content with what they can crowd into their columns, they print in lurid type on their margins sensational headlines, to lure readers to the disgusting feast.

According to our modern standards it is a dull day that does not furnish some gruesome tragedy to gloat over.

If it is not a farm hand murdering a whole family amidst the quiet of a sylvan landscape, it is a son crazy from drink and jealousy, shooting down his father engaged at his desk in a financial office. If it is not the body of a woman found floating on the reddened waters, it is a charnel house of murdered deal uncovered by a chance catastrophe.

One day it is the cashier lying dead with a smoking revolver in his lifeless hand; the next day it is the story of a looted bank and the despair of confiding patrons. We turn our eyes from a great railroad wreck with its saddening scenes only to let them fall in the next column on the recital of a mine explosion that brought death to hundreds. On one page it is a young murderer, a lunatic, struggling to cheat the asylum as he cheated the electric chair; on the next page, it is the struggle of a great corporation to evade taxes or fines. A woman staggers starving through the vilest and greatest city; whilst at banquet that Lucullus might envy is spread before appetites too sated to touch the tempting viands. An old man of seventy, tottering to the witness stand to save the remnant of a reputation already wrecked; a minister refused a bishopric because of a divorce; a foreign route with a gilded title changing a divorcee across the seas. And so it goes on. Murder and blood; catastrophe and horror; divorce rampant and families destroyed; crime in the mansion and crime in the hovel. All the human deencies outraged; all the laws of God and man broken; infamy applauded if successful; dishonesty unwhipped of justice, enthroned in luxury. Crime flowing in a mighty current through a thousand channels; death stalking in the midst of life.

These are the moving pictures constantly before our eyes in the daily press: this is the kaleidoscope of horror which is ever turning before our gaze. May we not ask ourselves what will be the consequence of this everlasting contact with the abnormal, the vile, the criminal? What will be its effect upon the children, upon the men and women who regale themselves day after day on these nauseous scenes and their revolting details? What will be its effect on the children, who, almost as infants in their mothers' arms, are fed on picture and print, overflowing with blood, crime and villainy?

The abnormal begets the abnormal. What is sweet and clean and pure and wholesome is losing its relish for many. They have fed their souls so long on the seasoned and tainted, that their vitiated tastes will no longer tolerate what is pure and ordinary. They what have

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murder and sensation. They demand murder and divorce and the whole disgusting menu.

There is a restlessness in their hearts that is driving them on like the knotted whips of some fury. There is a curiosity that grows as it feeds, it can never be satisfied. Calm and peace are fleeing their souls. They hunger after excitement. They are like men drunk from new wine and ever craving for another draught.

It is an unhealthy condition into which our society is drifting. We are burning with a fever which is ever passing into a fresher flame. It is the modern dancing sickness. We are all dancing whilst the devil is fiddling. The physical outcome is a national attack of nervousness. As a people our nervous system is becoming exhausted. The result touches every vital organ of the body. We are filling mad houses faster than we can build them.

We are plucking the horrors of the whole world into the limited space of our own tiny lives. We are clutching at spectres that never should have appeared on the horizon. Is it any wonder that the fagged brain is breaking under the load that it strains to acquire and strains still more to carry?

And does not this constant portrayal of crime and sin before our eyes tend to remove all horror for crime? Does it not make us familiar with its hideous face? What we first abhorred, now, perhaps, we pity; later on we will embrace it. Do not these detailed stories pave the way to crime? Do they not excite abnormal desires and passions? Do they not stir the soul with a strange feeling hitherto unknown? Do they not teach the ways and means of crime and the methods of escaping its penalty? Do they not inspire an almost unconscious propensity to like deeds? Is it not true that there is developing around us an atmosphere of indifference, an atmosphere that breeds ill for morality? Is not the day approaching when crime will lose all its moral repulsiveness, when penal statutes will be the only measure of responsibility? Can we not already feel the chill of a fatalism, that will blast all the noble and virtuous instincts of the human heart, till some cataclysm returns society to its normal status or the kind providence of God opens up extraordinary avenues into society or the operations of the Church.—The Monitor, Newark.

GREAT MIRACLE AT LOURDES.

The most recent cure recorded at Lourdes can, writes the Paris correspondent of the Irish Catholic, only be described as one of the most remarkable of which the famous shrine of the Immaculate has been the scene, and as signaling in a most marked way its golden jubilee. The subject of the cure was one Ernestine Guilloteau, of St. Denis in Brittany, Diocese of Poitiers. The poor sufferer was not unknown in Lourdes, having acted for five years as an infirmarian to the sick visitors to the shrine. The malady that reduced her almost to the condition of a corpse was tuberculous peritonitis, which finally infected her whole frame. Despite medical care, her condition became such that she lost almost two-thirds of her weight, and was reduced absolutely to skin and bone—a breathing skeleton. Still under twenty-four years of age, she found her case pronounced hopeless by seven doctors, and so she resigned herself to the generous sacrifice of her life. But a voice within called her to put her trust in Mary Immaculate, and to betake herself to her shrine. Her relatives and friends urged the absolute impossibility of one in her condition being transported thither. The more their objections grew, the stronger was heard by her the inward appeal. Her condition was so desperate that, to aid her to die without too much suffering, twelve centigrams of morphine were administered to her daily.

At last she carried her point, and, accompanied by her mother, arrived on August 24th at the grotto, and, according to an eye-witness, never did a more perfect spectre appear on the banks of the Gave. When the procession of the twenty-seventh arrived at the esplanade she could not hear what was going on about her. The night was passed at the hospital of the Seven Dolours, where a mirror was several times placed before her lips to see if she still breathed. On the 28th the medical authorities forbade her being brought to the grotto on account of her moribund state, but she refused to receive Holy Communion in the hospital, demanding that the administration of the Most Holy Sacrament to her should take place in the grotto. At 9 o'clock, when the ciborium for communions was being borne by the Bishop of Ravanuss from the grotto to the Basilica of the Rosary, she heard the well-known voice within her bidding her "Arise!" And suddenly the living skeleton came forth from her winding sheet. She sat up, and then followed after the God Who had thus called her back to life. The greatest miracle of the golden jubilee was accomplished.

The succeeding scene is indescribable. Returning, accompanied by a marvelous crowd, to the hospital, she felt hungry. She was given soup, which she partook of with appetite. Then she consumed three eggs; next a little champagne. The digestive organs had resumed their functional activities, and there was no abdominal pain whatever; but there still remained, as it were, the marks of Death's claws imprinted on her visage. After the procession of the Blessed Sacrament in the evening, when the skeleton of Ernestine appeared at the Bureau of Evidence, where the doc-

tors and five French, Belgian and Italian Bishops awaited her, Dr. Boissarie, usually so reserved, was not afraid to sum up in these words the situation: "My lords, it is not a cure I present to you—it is a resurrection."

OUR NEIGHBOR'S FAULTS.

Why is it that so many conversations turn upon the conduct and faults of our neighbor, and why is it that we seem always ready to depreciate his good deeds and to proclaim his failings? If we look carefully into the matter the reason is easily discovered. It is because we are wanting in that humility which directs us to esteem others better than ourselves—"In humility let each esteem others better than themselves" (Phil. ii. 3)—and in that charity which teaches us to love our neighbors as ourselves, and to do unto others as we would be done by. "All things therefore whatsoever you would have men should do to you do you also to them." (Matt. vii. 12).

If we would avoid speaking ill of our neighbor, if we would overcome the habit of publishing his faults, or of causing mischief by tale-bearing, we should do well to try and put in practise the three rules which are often given us by spiritual writers on this point. The first rule is: If you can not speak well of your neighbor do not speak of him at all. This is a most excellent maxim; for if you think ill of another, or if you are prejudiced against him, you may be sure that your conversation in that person's regard will be under the influence of this prejudice. The second rule is: Do not say in the absence of your neigh-

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bor what you would not say in his presence. For it is certainly unfair to say hard things or to aim a blow at the good name of one who by his absence is unable to defend himself. The third rule is: Say not of another what you would not have another say of you. Let us endeavor to act in conformity with these rules, and we shall find that they will often put a check on our speech and save us from many a sin against holy charity.—Sacred Heart Review.

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