

CHATS WITH YOUNG MEN. DON'T LET YOUR INSPIRATION GROW COOL.

Chemists tell us that when a compound is broken up and an atom is released from the attraction of other atoms, it has a new energy, and that it immediately seeks combination with another free atom; but the longer it remains alone, the weaker it becomes. It seems to lose much of its attractive power and vitality when idle.

When the atom is first freed from the grasp of its fellows, it is called nascent, "new born." And it is then that it has its maximum of gripping power; and if it finds a free atom immediately after it is released, it will unite with the greater vigor than ever again. The power seems to go out of it if it delays its union with another atom.

Mythology tells us that Minerva, the goddess of Wisdom, sprang complete, full-orbed, full-grown from Jupiter's brain. Man's highest conception, his most effective thought, most inventive and resourceful ideas, his grandest visions spring full-orbed, complete, with their maximum of power, spontaneously from the brain.

Men who postpone the execution of their ideas, who bottle up their thoughts, to be used at a more convenient time, are always weaklings. The forceful, vigorous, effective men are those who execute their ideas while they are full of the enthusiasm of inspiration.

Our ideas, our visions, our resolutions come to us fresh every day, because this is the divine programme for the day, not to be tomorrow. Another inspiration, new ideas will come tomorrow. To-day we should carry out the vision of the day.

A divine vision flashes across the artist's mind with lightning-like rapidity, but it is not convenient for him to seize his brush and sketch the immortal vision before it fades. He keeps turning it over and over in his mind. He takes possession of his very soul, but he is not in his studio or it is not convenient to put his divine vision upon canvas, and the picture gradually fades from his mind.

A writer has a strong, vigorous conception which flashes into his brain, and he has an almost irresistible impulse to seize his pen and transfer the beautiful images and the fascinating conception to paper at once, and while it seems almost impossible to wait, he postpones the writing. The images and the conception keep haunting him, but he postpones. Finally the images grow dimmer and dimmer and dimmer, and at last fade away and the vision is lost forever.

There is a reason for all this. Why do we have these strong, vigorous impulses, these divine visions of splendid possibilities? Why do they come to us with such rapidity and vigor, such vividness and suddenness? It is because it is intended that we should use them while fresh, execute them while the inclination is hot. Our ideas, our visions are like the beauties of the wilderness, which the hermits were obliged to gather up as they passed by. If they undergo the heat of the sun, the life went out of it. They could not use old manna.

There is something about allowing a strong resolution to evaporate without executing it that has a deteriorating influence upon the character. It is the execution of a plan that makes a man. Almost anybody can resolve to do a great thing.

If we could only make our highest moments permanent, what splendid things we would do in life, and what magnificent beings we should become; but we let our resolutions cool, our visions fade until it is more convenient to execute them, and they are gone.

There is no easier way than when one can hypnotize or deceive himself than by thinking that because he is always making great resolutions he is doing something worth while or carrying them out.

I know a man who would feel insulted if any one were to intimate that he had not been a hard worker, and had not accomplished a great deal in life, and as yet, although he is an able man, his whole life has been spent in jumping out of one's nest and into another so quickly that one could scarcely see the change. Yet every time you see him he carries his head high, he is as enthusiastic and optimistic as though his whole life had been one triumphant march. His enthusiasm is intense—but it fades away just as quickly as it came. The very fact that he always dreams of lives in the clouds, is always dreaming of the great things he is going to do, does not convince him that he actually does them. But he never stays at one thing long enough to reach effectiveness. His whole life has been spent in starting things brilliantly and enthusiastically; few men have ever begun so many things as he, or completed so few.

The putting-off habit will kill the strongest initiative. Too much caution and lack of confidence are fatal enemies of initiative. How much easier it is to do a thing when the purpose impels us, when enthusiasm carries us along, than when everything drags in the post ponement! One is drudgery, the other delight.

Hungering and striving after knowledge is what makes a scholar; hungering and striving after virtue is what makes a saint; hungering and striving after noble actions is what makes a hero and a man. The great successes we see everywhere are but the realization of an intense longing, a concentrated effort. Everybody is gravitating toward his aim just in proportion to the power and intensity of his desire, and his struggle to realize it.

prepares myself for a great life-work. "I have faith in my future, I have made a vow to myself to succeed, and I am going to do so on a broad gauge plan. I am not going to start out half equipped, half fitted."

When you find a boy who resolves within himself that, come what will, he is going to do the thing he sees before him, and that there are no "ifs" or "buts" or "ands" about it, you may be sure he is made of winning stuff.

How do you approach a difficulty? Do you hesitate before it, dread it, postpone it, dawdle over it? Are you after it? Do you go to it with an apologetic, doubtful, "Will it do if I can," or "Will try" attitude? Or do you approach it with an unflinching determination, and the consciousness of mastery?

A great aim is a powerful protection to a youth. It frees him from multitudes of temptations which otherwise would be likely to sweep him into the vice current.

A man with an overmastering purpose is a great elevating, energizing power in a community. People know better than to try to waste his time or trifles with him. His purposeful power shows them that he is dead in earnest, that he has an object in life, and that he proposes to gain it. His face is set like a flint toward his aim. Obstacles melt before such a purpose.

The power of a mighty purpose to clear up a cloudy, misty life, to scatter the fogs, and to open up a way when there seems to be none, is a daily miracle. We see it illustrated everywhere.

There is something about steadiness of purpose, about sticking to one's aim, and working by a fixed programme, that steadies all the forces of one's character and buttresses the power to achieve.—O. S. M., in Success.

OUR BOYS AND GIRLS.

The Touch of a Gentle Hand. "T. S. Arthur tells us somewhere of the power that rests in a gentle hand." Bisland in his travels has called at a farmhouse. He was greeted first at the door by a huge dog. As he was about to retire with fear, a slender girl appeared and with a gentle voice commanded the dog to go into the house. The voice at once controlled the animal.

"Who is there?" growled a voice from within, and Arthur was told that he could not remain over night at the girl's hand soon rested on her father's arm, and a gentle voice spoke a few tender words, when the rough voice modulated, and the stranger was made welcome. Several times in the course of the evening was the power which rested in that slender girl's hand and voice clearly manifested.

As morning dawned and Arthur was about to depart, the farmer informed him that he could ride to the town. The offer was gladly accepted. As they took their seats in the buggy, however, the horse, a rough-looking Canadian pony, stubbornly refused to go. The farmer jerked and whipped the horse, but all to no effect.

"A stout lad now came out into the road and, catching Dick by the bridle, jerked him forward, using at the same time the customary language on such occasions; but Dick met this new ally with increased stubbornness, planting his forefeet more firmly, and at a sharper angle with the ground. The impatient boy now struck the pony on the side of his head with his clinched hand, and jerked cruelly at his bridle. It availed nothing, however. Dick was not to be wrought upon by any such arguments.

"Do not do so, John," said a gentle voice. The boy obeyed the touch of her hand. "Poor Dick," said the maiden, as she stroked his neck lightly, or softly patted it with her childlike hand. Then speaking to the pony, the sturdy little creature, turning his head as if to see the hand whose magic power he could not resist, started upon his journey as freely as if no silly crotchets had ever entered his stubborn brain.

"What a wonderful power that hand possesses!" said Mr. Arthur, speaking in his companion, as they rode away. The farmer's countenance lighted up with surprise and pleasure as he replied, "She's good! Everybody and everything loves her."

"Indeed there was the secret of her power; the quality of her soul was powerful; the quality of her hand, however, evolved in the impression of her hand, even by dumb brutes. Even so can the magic touch and the gentle tones control the boy. In handling or correcting him, see that 'mercy seasons justice,' and that love be mingled with firmness."—Our Dumb Animals.

A Brave Drummer Boy. Almost every boy has dreamed of being a drummer and marching off to war to the sound of the drum and fife. Here is a true story of a little French boy who at the age of twelve enlisted a volunteer in the army of the great Napoleon. Joseph Bars, which was the boy's name, soon learned to play the drum and fife. Just before the battle of Waterloo a major, whose arms he used to furnish and whose horse he cleaned, sent him through the grove where the army was encamped to beat here and there the drum and sound the fife. Outside the lines he was surprised by a lot of royalist peasants, who told him if he cried "Vive le roi," which means "Long live the king," they would let him off. He answered My beating the drum and crying, "I am a republican." Twenty muskets were discharged at him, and he fell dead. The convention at Paris gave his pen-name, who was a poor widow, a pension and ordered that an engraving of the little drummer's execution be made and hung in every primary school, to show what a child can do when inspired by a noble sentiment. Recently a statue has been erected to the memory of this brave boy in the Church square at Palaiseau, his old home near Paris, France.—The Guidon.

He Courteous Boys. "I treat him as well as he treats me," said Hal. His mother had just reproached him because he did not attempt to amuse or entertain a boy friend who had just gone home. "I often go in there, and he doesn't

notice me," said Hal again. "Do you enjoy that?" "Oh, I don't mind! I don't stay long."

"I should call myself a very selfish person, if friends came to see me and I should pay no attention to them."

"Well, that's different; you've grown up." "Then you really think that politeness and courtesy are not needed among boys?"

Hal, thus pressed, said he didn't exactly mean that; but his father, who had listened, now spoke: "A boy or man who measures his treatment of others by their treatment of him has no character of his own. He will never be kind, or generous, or Christian. If he is ever to be a gentleman, he will be so in spite of the boorishness of others. If he is to be noble, no other boy's meanness will change his nature."

And very earnestly the father added: "Remember this, my boy—you lower your own self-esteem because some one else is. Be true to your best self, and no boy can drag you down."—True Voice.

Courtesy and Good Manners. Good manners are the key to advancement in life. The tactful person makes a study of the character of others and warms off unpleasant words, avoids argument which is sure to lead beyond the fields of pleasantness and is polite and considerately courteous. "Manners aim to facilitate life," writes Emerson. "They aid our dealing and our conversation. These forms very soon become fixed, and a fine sense of propriety is cultivated with the more heed that it becomes a badge of social and civil distinction."

He also writes that a beautiful behaviour is "the finest of fine arts." "Society demands an element 'which it significantly terms good nature, expressing all degrees of generosity, from the lowest willingness and faculty to oblige up to the heights of magnanimity and love.'—Our Young People.

SOULS IN MORTAL SIN.

During the current month the members of the Sacred Heart League are asked to pray for souls in mortal sin. All that is required to understand the necessity and the charity in this intention is to reflect on what mortal sin is, and the penalties which accompany it. The knowledge is in the possession of every Catholic. Unfortunately, however, it is not always a practical fact with all. For there are many who by committing such sins not only incur the penalties, but who continue to live in violent enmity with God for long periods. The folly of such a course is most distressing and the Apostleship is asked to pray for their return to God.

To pray for all souls is the pleasure of the members, but to pray for those in particular there is an urgent necessity. As the little Leaflet well says, it is precisely for these souls our Blessed Lord came. I have not come for the just in Israel, but for the sinner." I have not come for the unstained and untroubled, but for the soiled and the sinful. While, of course, he became Man for all, His heart yearned in an especial manner for those who had offended Him, rejected His graces and refused His love.

For these He thirsted, "as the heart panteth for the living water." "I thirst," is the dying cry which rang out on Mount Calvary—a thirst not for the cold water that ran in the Cedron to the East, or in the Pool of Bethesda, to cool His feverish mouth, but a thirst for the souls for which His life was oblation in human sacrifice.

An associate of the Apostleship will merit that honor who could stand on Mount Calvary on that dark Good Friday and bear unmoved that cry of pain and do nothing to cool those parched and cracked lips. How much more, then, must that cry find an echo in our hearts when it is not for the dead, but for the living, for the souls which have lost Him His blood and His life!—Church Progress.

WHY I BECAME A CATHOLIC.

Of course I became a Catholic through the grace of God and the faith which He gave me. As an Anglican I had been taught the unity of the Church as expressed in the creed, but I sought in vain for unity of faith in Anglicanism. Then I had presented to me the Branch Church theory—that Catholic Church consisted of three branches, the Roman, the Anglican and the Eastern. But there again I was confronted with the absolute hopelessness of any sign of real unity in the three. They essentially differed in one another, and therefore, while one of the three was instituted by Church all three could not form it.

Then I saw that if the faith were to be one given by the Divine Founder there must be visible unity in the Church, a visible authority and a living witness capable of interpreting revelation necessitating, at the presence of a visible head. At that critical moment there fell into my hands a pamphlet dealing with the supremacy of the Holy See. I began the study of Papal authority and the more I studied the more convinced I became that Scripture confirmed it, history confirmed it, and the Fathers and Councils were unanimous, upon it. "Ubi Petrus ibi Ecclesia," and it was led to make my submission, a step which, far from ever regretting, I daily thank God more and more for having taken.

More and more do I see in these dogmas of rationalism and new theories the bright light of the truth of Peter's supremacy, like a lighthouse light ever burning steadily and clearly to guide mankind to the haven of eternal salvation.—Dr. C. W. Marsh, in the London Monitor and New Era.

Peace shall come in one day, which is known to the Lord; and it shall not be a vicissitude of day and night, such as is at present; but everlasting light, infinite brightness, steadfast peace, and secure rest.

MRS. CRAIGIE'S PRESENTMENT OF DEATH.

Writes Dr. James J. Walsh, in the Current Comment which he conducts so admirably for the Helper, a Catholic educational magazine, published in New York:

I mentioned in this department some time ago the fact that Mrs. Craigie, who, as John Oliver Hobbes, was famous as a novelist on both sides of the Atlantic, and whose course of lectures in this country had attracted widespread attention, was not only a convert of the Catholic Church, but also, in spite of her social prestige and the notice she attracted in social circles, a rather pious and devoted adherent to the Church. She seems in her last book, the manuscript of which was just completed before her sudden death, to have had almost a premonition of her approaching end. There was no serious disease present, so far as was known, and it is therefore all the more surprising to note the expressions which she uses. She said:

"Women of my type," writes the dying woman in the epilogue of her book, "who are not strong enough physically to bear the strain of moral suffering, very soon and gladly flicker out." "I, although we may have the courage to face hard things and the faith that can accept hard sayings, God mercifully allows us to die early in the night. Do not you doubt that I have made a good little fight?"

The book concludes with words that seem to come straight from John Oliver Hobbes himself as a fighting farewell for the "good little fight" of a brave life had been concluded:

"For the rest, wrote Jim Firmalden to Lesnard, you know my creed: Poor vain life indeed! Worth man but turned to feed On joy, to solely seek and find at last; Such feasting ended, then As sure an end to me."

Suffering can never be suppressed, by statistics. It is a law of nature; but, as with other laws of nature, since it must be obeyed, let us submit as sons of God and co-heirs with Christ—not as boasts of burden and as those who believe that all labor is in vain.

There is the lesson of life in a nutshell, and so different from the materialistic attitude towards life as stated by George Eliot long ago, when she said, "God is unthinkable, immortality is indubitable, but duty inevitable." How cold and stern and lacking in every possible fountain of consolation is this.

What Converted Him.

A Catholic Irishman (formerly a Protestant), Sir Henry Bellingham of Castlebellingham, County Louth, who has received the good old Catholic custom of setting courses on the way-side, gives an interesting account of how he was converted to the ancient Church.

"The personal example and simple faith of the Irish poor," he says, "were the first things that impressed me. I compared it favorably with the class of Protestants in Ireland amongst whom I mixed, and whose doctrines consisted more in hatred of Rome than in any definite belief. The language they used first irritated and disgusted me, and predisposed me to make enquiries."

FATHER LACOMBE AND THE CANADIAN PACIFIC RAILWAY.

Father Lacombe, the famous Oblate missionary of the Canon the Vicar, was in Montreal recently, and in honor of his 80th birthday, the venerable priest, who bears valiantly his fifty-eight years of hard labors among the Indians, was invited to the table of Archbishop Bruchési. Bishop Racclet and the provincials of the Jesuit and Oblate orders were among the guests.

The president of the Canadian Pacific Railway Company, Sir Thomas Shaughnessy, occupied a place of honor next to Archbishop Bruchési. When Sir Thomas' turn came to speak, he said, among other eulogistic words about the hero of the feast, the following: "The other day I heard a missionary say jokingly: 'I pity the C. P. Railway Company if Father Lacombe lives for one hundred years.' My Lord and gentlemen, I am happy to affirm that, even if Father Lacombe were to live for two hundred years, the C. P. Railway would always be pleased to do him the same favors, for even then the company would not yet have paid its debt of gratitude towards him."

As a matter of fact, Father Lacombe has not only the privilege of traveling free with a secretary for all the lines of the Canadian Pacific Railway, but on the day following this family banquet he received from the president of the company also the privilege of using, free of charge, the telegraph lines of the company.

Hope is like the sun, which, as we journey towards it, casts the shadow of our burden behind us.

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MISSIONARIES AND WILD BEASTS.

It has long been a kind of tradition that our Catholic missionaries are never slain by snakes or wild beasts. Father Diekmann tells us that he has been frequently asked this question by his friends in Europe, and his answer is: "I have never heard of missionaries being killed directly by wild beasts, but certainly of their being so killed indirectly; i. e., they have fallen sick through terror inspired by meeting a wild beast or even have gone out of their minds and died in consequence."

Father Diekmann's evidence seems to bear out that of a veteran missionary of Malaya, Father Perie, whose thrilling story of Father Conell's terrible meeting with a Royal Bengal tiger and its tragic consequences is as follows:—

"So thickly was the Malay peninsula inhabited by these monsters that in the early days of colonization their victims in Singapore averaged 300 yearly. The natives were accustomed to destroy them by means of a pit dug on their paths, covered with branches on which they fell. This last accessory, however, the Government had to forbid as dangerous to human beings after the tragic death of a missionary, who was impaled by falling on one, and only survived long enough to receive the sacrament."

Father Conell went one Saturday to pass the night at an Englishman's house at a large plantation, who lived nearly a mile from Balay-Pulay. He left the house at six in the morning to say Mass at the station, and had to cross the plantation, traversed through its entire length by parallel alleys, at intervals of over twenty yards. He had been walking for some time in this labyrinth of alleys, when at twenty paces distance he saw an enormous tiger advancing toward him. Without losing his presence of mind he ran to meet the brute, opening and shut the tiger's umbrella. The brute, taken by surprise and intimidated, retreated and lay in wait for the Father at the next alley. He repeated the same manoeuvre, and the tiger fell back, but with a terrible glare of his eye, for he was hungry. Five times the missionary had to adopt the same tactics and five times the tiger fell back before the startling object but without desisting from his attack. The Father had reached a stream growing on the plantation, with a tree growing on its bank, driven to his last extremity, the work of an instant. The tiger followed and sat down at ten steps from the tree as though determined to await his prey. The Father hurled his breviary; the tiger did not stir. As a last resource the poor priest called for help but the tiger was in no way disconcerted. He redoubled his cries and was at last heard and answered from the plantation. At the sound of the voices the tiger withdrew with lingering steps, and the Father descended from his perch, but stricken to death. He was able, however, to control himself to say Mass, to relate his experience with the tiger and to return to Penang, where he died of tetanus in frightful convulsions."

God and Their Conscience. The Episcopal rector of Grace Church, Albany, has felt himself called on to announce and explain the conversion of his sister to the Catholic faith, and in doing so he assures that his friends and the public at large that his lady took that step without consulting him or her other brother, the rector of Christ Church, Cooperstown. We can assure the two disclaiming brothers that if they ever choose to follow her example they will be privileged to do it without consulting her. When people become Catholics they usually consult no one but God and their conscience.—Western Watchman.

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