

CHATS WITH YOUNG MEN.

Catholic Columbian. The chief topic for to-day's talk is supplied by one of the leading physicians of London, Dr. Norman Kerr, who answers the question—

Should We Drink in Moderation?

At the present time there are few more important questions for a young man to answer aright, on entering on active life, than the question—Ought we to drink in moderation? On his answer may largely depend his future happiness and usefulness. I have no hesitation in replying—No.

1. We ought not to drink in moderation, because no human being can be absolutely certain that he will be able to long remain a "moderate" drinker. Of the many young men whom I have known, those who have "done well" as well as those who have "done badly" as the world goes, I have never yet known one who set out as a "moderate" drinker with any intention to become, or fear of becoming, a drunkard. Every man of them began to drink with a strong determination to continue a "moderate" drinker as long as he lived. Many of "the world's grey fathers," like Noah and Lot, did their best to be "moderate," but sadly failed in their endeavor. Yet in our day it is immeasurably more difficult to preserve strict moderation than it was in our race's early history. There were no brilliant saloons, no gilded restaurants, no gorgeous hotels and music halls, to tempt our remote ancestors to empty cup after cup, nor indeed the "strong waters" of the distillation of later ages, to infuse into their veins, immediately on drinking, liquid fire producing speedy and deep intoxication, and so penetrate the whole being of parents as to bring forth children practically drunk before they were born. In our day and generation, products as we are of the accumulated alcoholic heredity of centuries, and living in an age of nervous overstrain, how tremendously more arduous the fight to remain "moderate" in our drinking!

2. We ought not to drink in moderation because, even if we were absolutely certain that we would never overstep the bounds of moderation ourselves, there are all around us in life young men and maidens, joyously or timidly engaging in the struggle for existence, who, whether from inebriate inheritance or from some other nervous defect of constitution, are totally unable (from no misdoing of theirs) to drink in moderation. They can abstain and they can drink to excess, but to drink "moderately" is beyond their power. Such handicapped ones are just the very persons generally whose mental balance is so delicate and whose resisting power is so defective that they are often the least able to abstain altogether. If they try to follow your apparently safe practice of "moderation," they cannot continue "moderate to the end."

3. We ought not to drink in moderation because intoxicating drinks are unnecessary and useless in health. We need, to live at all, well or ill, fresh supplies of certain things to repair the waste of substance, heat, fluid, and energy, which is constantly going on in body and brain. Does alcohol meet any or all of these wants? It does not, neither does it give healthy tissue, nor internal vital heat (though it makes our skin hot), nor an innocent liquid, nor even force. Alcohol cannot build up a sound frame. Though it makes us feel warm it robs us of our very life's heat, and if to much is withdrawn from us, it leaves us too cold to live. We are all practically two-thirds water, which conveys the nourishing matter over the system, cleanses our bodies, and preserves our personal identity, like a liquid paste or glue. Every addition of alcohol impairs this three-fold beneficent capacity of nature's beverage, "honest water that never left sinner's mire." Therefore "moderate" drinking is extravagance alike for body and purse. What we pay for our liquor, if that is intoxicating, is simply wasted, wasted as if we threw the money into the sea.

4. We ought not, therefore, to drink in moderation because moderation is wasteful, extravagant and uneconomical, physically and financially.

5. We ought not to drink in moderation because this is a practice injurious to health. Alcohol is an irritant narcotic poison. It irritates and inflames the stomach, liver, and kidneys and other vital organs, overworks the heart and disturbs the brain; not much perhaps, at first, but certainly in the long run. Of drunkenness I do not speak. No one defends that nowadays. I limit what I have to say to so-called "moderate," steady drinking. Medically and pathologically, the man who gets abominably drunk once a month for a couple of days and is a strict teetotaler in the intervals, humanly speaking and leaving aside the ethics of the question, will, other things being equal, undermine his health less than the man who practices day by day such "moderation" as a drink of whiskey, three glasses of wine, or four "schooners" of beer. It is your regular drinking, whether limited or unlimited, that induces disease. The proportion of disease among abstainers has been shown, in large groups of soldiers and others under similar conditions, to be about one to two.

We should not drink in moderation,

therefore, because moderate drinking is injurious to health.

6. We should not drink in moderation because thereby we diminish our chances of long life. Superficial or unskilled observers do not see beneath the surface. The "moderate" drinker often looks ruddy and robust, the teetotaler pale and shrinking. But the battle is not always to the flushed in the face. I have known "moderate" people die unexpectedly and quickly fifteen and twenty years before their average term of life. The seeming mystery was revealed when their bodies were opened after death. As one, so many. He died in twenty minutes after a little extra exertion. Though there never had been a suspicion of his temperance, his liver and heart were found pierced with fatty degeneration. The irrefragable proof of the longevity of abstainers lies in the records of various insurance societies. The abstainers have a higher bonus, because they live from some fifteen to twenty, or more, per cent. longer than non-abstainers, drunken lives being, of course, excluded.

7. There are many other good reasons why we should avoid drinking entirely. I will add only one more. Alcohol, in any appreciable quantity, reduces muscular force and lessens mental sharpness. Carefully conducted experiments have shown this. Other conditions being equal, alcohol takes the keen edge off our perceptive faculties, so that we take some seconds longer to see an object, while it mocks us by causing us to think that we have seen it sooner. So with thought. Thus it is that an abstainer can often do business more to his own advantage when the person with whom he deals has imbibed in intoxicants. Alcohol is a reducer, a blinder, and a paralyser.

8. We should not drink in moderation, finally, because by so doing we are hindering ourselves from enjoying and exerting to the full the various capacities with which Heaven has endowed us.

No One Dies from Overwork.

A number of successful business men were engaged in animated conversation on the announcement made by a newspaper of the approaching death, from overwork, of a well-known writer and humorist. A man of sixty-five, who had been silently listening to the talk, suddenly declared:

"I do not believe any man died from legitimate hard work, and I am willing to back my statement against any reasonable proof furnished."

"Men do not die from legitimate work nor from what they do during business hours," he continued, when the agitation his first words had caused had subsided. "If a man would leave his office and go home to rest or indulge in reasonable recreation, he would not suffer in health. But he does not do this. Instead, he goes to the club, the billiard room, saloon, gaming-house, or to other amusements, even less reputable. Indeed, many a man rushes away from business that he may plunge into dissipation of some sort."

"It is true there may be instances in which a complicated business, handicapped by lack of means to carry it on in a comfortably smooth fashion, may wear on a man's mind during sleeping and waking hours. But this is not legitimate business. No man should work against such desperate odds. It is much better to begin on a smaller scale, to adapt one's hopes to the means at hand, and to remember that vital force is too valuable to be squandered in striving for the almost impossible. Straightforward commercial transactions, unattended with the enormous risks that many men take, are healthful and rarely bring bad results. Indeed, all things being equal, it is not business worry that kills except as a man lifts the burden of business worry on shoulders weakened by excesses and dissipation."

Act:

A member of the United States Senate has expressed this opinion: "We have all heard the axiom that 'Knowledge is power.' But mere knowledge is not power, it is simply possibility. Action is power, and its highest manifestation is action with knowledge."

A desire for power is said to be the secret of the hoarding done by rich men, but while they have made their "pile" they have merely accumulated "possibility," and not power. They are too old or too unskilled to exert power.

There must be action as we go along the pathway of life, if there is to be any power, or force or mark in the career we are having. If one has convictions, let there be no time-serving; now is the appointed time for their expression. If there are good deeds to be done let there be no procrastination. With some men life is wasted in a vain forecast of "To-morrow and to-morrow."

They put off achievements by which posterity might know them; they dream that some day they will act; but life passes, and the end of it finds the action still undone.

Be Agreeable.

One very important branch of worldly wisdom must not be neglected in the young man's education, and that is the art of being agreeable. It is hard to find the dividing line between affability and hypocrisy, because one must often be amiable to persons whom he may thoroughly dislike. But no one has a right to take his ill-feelings into the homes of others. Guests under the same roof must be

polite to one another, no matter how much bitterness is in the heart. Cicero said of Catiline, "He lived with the sad severely, with the cheerful agreeably, with the old gravely, with the young pleasantly, with the wicked boldly." Whether he had these feelings himself, or simply assumed them, we are not told, but it is not probable that he really felt them; he simply was making a high art of being agreeable.

Addison says in the Spectator: "The true art of being agreeable in company (but there can be no such thing as art in it) is to appear well pleased with those you are engaged with, and rather to seem well entertained than to bring entertainment to others." Of course, one must have an unusually happy temperament to associate intimately with a variety of dispositions; and that he can do so agreeably, shows that he is content to do what is most pleasing to others, instead of asserting his own preferences.

A man who imagines himself a wit can render a whole company miserable without seeing his mistake; for he is usually a person of less delicate sensibilities than one of a more reserved nature. Real wit is spontaneous and is always pleasing, but the man who assumes it is certain to be a bore. On this topic, also, Addison advises most sensibly. "Witty men," he says, "are apt to imagine they are agreeable as such, and by that means grow the worst companions imaginable; they deride the absent, or rally the present, in a wrong manner, not knowing that if you pinch or tickle a man until he is uneasy, or ungraciously distinguished from the rest of the company, you equally hurt him."

CONCLUSION.

AN HOUR WITH A SINCERE PROTESTANT.

By Rev. J. P. M. S. STUDY OF HISTORY. LXI.

There have always been and will always continue to be miracles in the Roman Catholic Church, miracles so well proved that only want of good will can refuse to admit them. But outside the Roman Catholic Church not one miracle has ever been proved.

LXII.

Nor will you find one single non-Catholic who has given his life in defence of the doctrines of Protestantism. Those who are called Protestant martyrs are proved to have suffered death for their own (private) individual religious opinions, to uphold proudly ideas and convictions purely human, or in punishment for crimes committed against the laws of the State. Catholic martyrs, on the contrary, do not die in order to proudly uphold private opinions, but for truths taught by the true Church; and thus they perform an act of most humble submission to authority and of total self-abnegation.

LXIII.

It is admitted by non Catholics that the Roman Catholic Church was for some centuries the faithful guardian of revealed truth. Now, you will find that just during these centuries those very doctrines have been separately condemned which Protestantism teaches. Consequently, Protestantism concedes that its own doctrines were condemned at a time when the Roman Catholic Church was undoubtedly the faithful guardian of revealed truth.

LXIV.

Experience proves that the more Protestants study the doctrines of Protestantism the more they become immersed in doubts and perplexities. On the contrary, the more Catholics study the doctrines of the Catholic religion the more confirmed they become in their religion and the more attached to their Church.

LXV.

If the Roman Catholic Church were a human institution she would doubtless have disappeared long ago from the face of the earth; for there can scarcely be imagined any force that has not been employed against her; but instead of bringing on her ruin, every trial and persecution has proved to be a sure forerunner of one more glorious triumph over her enemies.

LXVI.

PIETY OF CATHOLICS. Whilst Protestants always tend to extremes Catholics are led by their holy religion in the sure middle way. Hence the piety of Catholics is sweet, quiet, attractive, whilst Protestants of good faith, in their endeavor to practice piety, are often sad, or extravagant in sentimental demonstrations.

LXVII.

You will never hear of a Catholic who at the approach of death, in order to secure his eternal salvation, has become a Protestant. Innumerable, on the contrary, are the instances of Protestants who, when about to leave this world, have asked to be received into the Roman Catholic Church.

LXVIII.

Neither will you ever hear that converts to the Catholic Church, who have faithfully lived up to her teaching, have ever regretted their submission to her authority; but, on the contrary, they for the most part abound in feelings and expressions of gratitude for what they are convinced was the greatest favor bestowed upon them by the goodness of God.

LXIX.

Whilst the Roman Catholic Church

swells her ranks with the very cream of what can be found among the most learned, most honest, best instructed, most intelligent, and, for their morals, highly estimable persons, Protestantism can gather recruits only among individuals who are either ignorant or, at least, justly suspected regarding their morals.

LXX.

Oliver Wendell Holmes was once asked by a clergyman, what effect religious beliefs had on the minds of the dying. His reply was: "So far as I have observed persons nearing the end of life, the Roman Catholics understand the business of dying better than Protestants. I have seen a good many Roman Catholics on their death-bed; and it always appeared to me that they accepted the inevitable with a composure which showed that their belief, whether or not the best to live by, was a better one to die by." Innumerable non-Catholics have had the same experience, and many of them have expressed it in words similar to those of Dr. Wendell Holmes. The logical conclusion to be drawn from it must necessarily be this: "If the Roman Catholic Church is the best one to die in, it must be also the best one to live in."

LXXI.

CHANGING ONE'S RELIGION. Do not listen to those foolish persons who proclaim that it is beneath a wise and honest man to change his religion. First of all, becoming a Catholic, strictly speaking, is not "changing one's religion," since the Catholic religion is the only one which merits the name "religion," as it alone is capable of doing what is expressed by the word "religion," which means "reunite," viz., to "unite man again with God"; secondly, if to become a Catholic were after all a "change of religion," this change would be a most rational and prudent act, worthy of a man, since it would be abandoning error in order to embrace truth.

LXXII.

Reflect on what St. Augustine told the Donatist schismatics: "Whosoever is separated from the Catholic Church, however innocently he may think he lives, for this crime alone, that he is separated from the unity of Christ, will he not have life, but the anger of God remains upon him." (Council, Labbe, tom. ii. p. 1520).

LXXIII.

UNWORTHY OF A MAN. There can be no action more unworthy of a man than to live as a Protestant, troubled in mind with serious doubts, without taking pains to have them cleared up; and still more to continue to be a Protestant after having arrived at the knowledge that the Catholic Church is the Church founded by Christ. This is like the conduct of a man who, wishing to arrive in a certain city, enters a railroad car. Soon doubts arise in his mind whether the car is the right one or not. He then is told that the car does not go to the city he wishes to reach; yet, instead of leaving it at once to go to the right one, he begins to consider how comfortably he is seated, and how inviting everything is that meets his eye. Admonished to leave, he answers, without bestirring himself: "All right; I don't care whether the car goes to the city or not. I wish to remain in it; I find it too comfortable and too pleasant to leave it."

LXXIV.

GOD NOT INDIFFERENT. Do not repeat after others that foolish saying: "God will not ask of men to what Church they have belonged, but whether they have led a good, honest, and moral life"; for God would cease to be God if, after having made known a religion, and after having founded a Church, He should be indifferent as to whether men should profess His religion and belong to His Church or not. In the second place, a good, honest life includes the perfect fulfilment of God's holy will; it includes, consequently, the observance of all the commandments of God and the firm belief in whatever Jesus Christ has sent the Apostles to teach; it includes submission to the prelates of the true Church as successors of the Apostles, to whom Jesus has said: "He that heareth you, heareth Me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth Me" (St. Luke x. 16). If a man fulfills all the other commandments of God, but fails in this, he toils and lives in vain. There are many who have, like you, led good and edifying lives; but having come to the knowledge of truth they were fully convinced that all would avail them nothing unless they submitted to the authority of the Roman Catholic Church and lived according to her doctrine and precepts. This was the reason why they gave up, and continue daily to give up, all that this world can offer, in order to cling to the mother of all the saints, the holy Roman Catholic Church. The approval of their conscience and the consolation of the Holy Ghost make their sacrifices light and even delightful.

LXXV.

A PROMISE NO LONGER BINDING. Be not troubled on account of the promise which you have made to live and die as a Protestant. When you made this promise you thought that Protestantism was the true religion; but having become convinced of its falsity, your promise is no longer binding. It would even be sinful to think one's self obliged to keep a promise to do what is displeasing to God.

LXXVI.

Now, my dear friend, let me take leave of you by recalling to your mind

the words of our Lord: "What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul" (St. Matt. xvi. 26). What will it profit you to have treasured up all the goods of this world; to have won by your honesty, by your kindness, by your condescension and generosity, the affection and esteem of all who ever approached you, if you have not at the same time fulfilled the great commandment of Jesus Christ, to "hear His Church" and to submit to her authority and direction? Be not like those foolish persons who, in exchange for some little passing earthly honor and comfort are willing to renounce the hope of an eternity of bliss and happiness. Be not like those weak-minded and ungrateful people who prefer to ignore God, their greatest Benefactor, rather than suffer the sneer of a friend or to grieve a family blinded by ignorance and prejudice! Imitate St. Paul, and say with him: "Lord, what dost Thou wish me to do?" despoiling all earthly and vain things to secure those which will last forever. But, rely not on yourself alone. The knowledge of the true religion and the embracing it must both be the work of God. Ask of Him without ceasing, especially through the intercession of His Virgin Mother, to enlighten your mind and to strengthen your will, and you will one day increase the happy number of those who will praise God for the unspeakable grace of having brought them out of darkness into the splendor of

"HIS ADMIRABLE LIGHT!"

Archbishop Ryan's Wit.

The stories that are told of Archbishop Ryan's wit are public property, and would fill a small volume. Like all other wits he has suffered from the habit of crediting some people with witticisms which other people invented. He did refer to Archbishop Ireland as the consecrated blizzard, but he did not call the suffragan Bishops of St. Paul the Young Irelanders. The apocryphal stories are numerous. A well-known and esteemed priest called upon him one day to ask for a vacation, on the ground that his health required it. As he was noted for his frequent absences from his parish, the prelate could not let slip the opportunity. He granted the leave of absence promptly, with a recommendation. "The physicians say that you need a change of air, Father?" "They do, your Grace." "How would it do, then, to try the air of your parish for a month or two, as a change?" He remonstrated once with a priest whose silk hat had seen its best days before the war. I would not give up that hat for twenty new ones," said the priest. "It belonged to my father, who fell in the rising of '18." "And evidently fell on the hat," said the Archbishop. His wit had no sting in it, for it sprang from a genial and kindly nature.

The newspapers told at one time his reply to the reporter who wished to know where he stood in a supposed difference between Cardinal Gibbons and Archbishop Corrigan. "As Archbishop of Philadelphia, naturally I stand midway between New York and Baltimore," was his reply.

Lord Russell Coming.

The lord chief justice of England has accepted an invitation from the American Bar Association to attend its annual meeting, to be held at Saratoga Springs, New York, on Aug. 19, 20 and 21 of the present year. The association, which has been in existence for eighteen years, is composed of members of the bar associations of nearly all the states and territories of North America, its objects being "to advance the science of jurisprudence, promote the administration of justice and uniformity of legislation, uphold the honor of the profession of the law, and encourage cordial intercourse among the members of the American bar." Lord Russell of Killowen will be accompanied by Sir Frank Lockwood, Q. C., M. P., Mr. Montague Cranthorpe and Mr. James Fox of the south-eastern circuit.

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