

CHATS WITH YOUNG MEN

THE PARABLE OF THE PRODIGAL SON

Love is a wonderful thing as has been often said. We can hardly see, often, how it is that a person can love some people. It cannot be explained how a friend's love will endure for one who has "gone to the bad," or for one who is mean or cruel. It is surely a God-given and God-strengthened thing in a mother's life, when that mother can still love a child who has ruined his own life and who has broken the mother's heart.

One of the hardest things to hear, then, anyone say, is ingratitude. How we despise that, when we see it in another; and yet how often we exhibit ingratitude ourselves! The son who was a prodigal, in the lesson of the Bible, had rare advantages—a home of great plenty was his, with many luxuries perhaps, and with much love. Maybe he never had much to do but enjoy himself, and receive training for his future life. Maybe he was a dashing, brilliant young fellow, who was popular in society life; and perhaps it was just because he got into the places where he was honored and admired, and for excessive pleasures—such as finally wasted his life—that he forgot the good things of his father's home, and went ungratefully out from it to break his father's heart and life.

But the prodigal son is less important, in this story, than the father of the boy. The great teachings of this parable of Jesus is that the Father—who represents our Father in Heaven—never forgot the boy, and yearned after him, ever hoping for the boy's return.

It was several years ago that an illustration in modern life, of this parable occurred in a Pittsburgh man's life. At the time that the fleet of the United States navy sailed around the world, a Pittsburgh boy left his home to run away and join the navy, for that great voyage. He left without asking permission from his parents; and he went away without telling anyone of where he was going. The parents were almost distracted, were broken in their lives; they did not hear from the boy for months, and in all that time did not know whether he was in sickness or poverty or in good condition—they did not know whether he was alive or dead!

After the fleet had reached the coast of California, the parents in Pittsburgh had their first communication from their son. He sent them a post card from San Francisco. And then the orders were given to the fleet to sail across the Pacific, and months passed before the vessels returned to our Atlantic coast. Through all of that time these Pennsylvania parents carried the heavy burden of sorrow and care in their souls. The father was a blacksmith; and blacksmiths are often thought to be so strong that nothing can hurt them; but the soul of any man can suffer anguish. One day the pastor of the church which the blacksmith was a member of met the man and was talking with him. The father told the story of the boy—his prodigal son—who had gone to far countries; and he ended the account with the statement, "I never before understood the father's part in the parable. I know now what he suffered and what he desired. Every night since my boy went away I have left our outer door unfastened; so that, whenever and as soon as he comes home—whether at day or at night—he will find his home open and a welcome for him, and he will know that his father wants him back."

God yearns for the return of His children who have gone astray from Him—rebellious, ungrateful, willful, foolish, selfish, unkind, thoughtless, unloving though they may be.—Catholic Sun.

THOUGHTS HERE AT HOME

Laugh whenever you can; but let the heart warm up the laugh. It is cold humor that is all noise.

A quick temper is a destroying angel; it gives crabbed lines to the face and bitterness to the soul.

Be more interested in humans than in things, and let them know it.

Think more of giving than of getting, and give.

Assume there is a pathway of God to every heart and seek to find it.

Sympathize with suffering, and seek to relieve it.

Seek to give joy and notice how swiftly dull eyes will brighten.

Recall the hasty word before it passes the lips, and keep it.

Do not notice all you see, nor heed all you hear.

Let the roots of your life be deep in God, and the flowers will be pleasing to men.

Have in you richly the spirit of Jesus, and wherever you go take Him with you.

The noblest mind the best contentment has.

He sins against this life who slights the next.

He sees enough who doth his darkness see.

Watch thy tongue; out of it are the issues of life.

Everything that lives lives not alone nor for itself.

Take what is, trust what may be, that's life's true lesson.

He who cannot hold his tongue cannot keep his friends.

Things gained are gone, but great things do endure.

Man without religion is the creature of circumstances.—True Voice.

LITTLE VIRTUES

On a very pertinent subject the greatness of little virtues I wish to speak writes the Rev. F. Marchant, S. J. By little virtues I mean acts of virtue in little matters, in the little occasions of every-day life. It is by the constant practice of little acts the greatness of virtue is acquired.

The little virtues are in reality great, even in the order of nature, but they are far greater in the supernatural order, the order of grace. They are virtues that are only thought little because they are so little thought of, and hence so little value, and so little positively prayed for and cultivated.

Lastly, there is, perhaps, the greatest of little virtues, namely, charity, love, and kindness, shown by sincere heartfelt sympathy for others in their trials and troubles and by real encouragement of others in the work they do; an encouragement shown by being anxious and glad for their success as for your own. He who encourages the good works of others, shares in them.

The practice of these little virtues can only be cultivated through earnest thought, and by not letting oneself be discouraged when one sometimes fails. Whosoever does practice constantly, readily, and cheerfully, the little virtues, or rather the little acts of great virtues, in little things, for God's sake and his brethren's sake, as to his brethren in the sight of God, is near to being a saint, and he who is truly trying to practice the little virtues is on the road to holiness; on the way to becoming meek and humble of heart, and of going about doing good to all, after the example of our Divine Saviour.

Just as the mean and petty faults of those whose aims and standards are mean and petty, so the little virtues are the virtues of the truly great.

OUR BOYS AND GIRLS

DO NOT JEER AT AN AWKWARD BOY

Speaking of the troubles of an awkward boy, Dr. Edwin H. Hughes of De Pauw University, says in "Mother's World":

"The boy is in a constant state of flitting moods. In the morning he believes, and believes tremendously, that his father is the finest man to be found anywhere, and in the evening he knows without a doubt that there never was a meaner man on the face of the earth than that same father.

"In the morning he adores his mother with all the ardor of a boy's heart, and believes that there is no throne so lofty as to be beyond her wrath, and in the evening, when he has been refused, maybe, a second of pie at the dinner table, he knows that there never was a more tyrannical being.

"And if he is a normal boy, he is not fond of books, and he goes to school largely because his father pushes him from home and the school-master pulls him into school.

"Now, what the boy needs at this time is adroit sympathy. If you are at some social gathering and you see some boy standing off by the door suffering like a modern martyr, go to him and make him forget that he has hands, feet, a collar that chokes him, clothes that are too big for him, and for just a minute let him be a human being.

THE SECRET OF CHARM

Perhaps you know a girl whose attractions are great and you sigh and whisper to yourself:

"I wish I had her charm."

Now pick to pieces the character of the charming one and see if by so doing you cannot find out her secret. What is natural to one may be copied by another and studied quietly until it becomes a second nature.

What is charm? Certainly it is never hidden under a cloak of reserve. We are so fond of wrapping ourselves up in this winter garment that our sun charms are often concealed from those round about us. We are so cautious of others penetrating our real hearts and feelings that we appear to outsiders formal and chilly.

Just resolve when you meet a stranger to take off that cloak. Let the human note be struck and banish formality.

Teach yourself to seek for interest in other people's affairs, not as a busybody but as a real sympathizer. Friend making is an occupation that breeds charm. You can make friends by overlooking their shortcomings and magnifying their pleasant traits.

In this way charm is born in your own soul and shines out through your eyes.

HE WAS SORRY

"I wish I hadn't done that," said the boy frankly. He held in his hand the little feathered victim of a carelessly flung stone. His aim had been only too true, and the songster lay still and lifeless. The boy was not cruelly inclined, just thoughtless; but the small tragedy made him stop and think now, with a little aching pain of regret in his heart at sight of the harm he had done.

Boys are more apt to do wrong thoughtlessly than deliberately. Yet such thoughtlessness is wrong in itself. The secret of the remedy is in the words of a certain writer who has said, "The only way to prevent what's past is to put a stop to it before it happens." Forethought is always better and usually happier than afterthought. Cultivate it.

GENTLENESS

In this day much emphasis is put on the strong, masculine traits of character. Teachers of youth are speaking of what they call robustness of character, by which they mean the embodiment of those recognized manly or masculine elements which are regarded as essential to success. No one questions the value of such traits, but the fact that gentleness is necessary to a well-rounded character should not be overlooked. By gentleness is not meant effeminacy, or softness of any kind, but that real, genuine, sterling quality in one which has ever marked the truly great men of the world. Someone says, "The truly great are the most gentle."

THE INDULGENCE OF THE PORTIUNCULA

The 2nd of August annually reminds the faithful and zealous soul of the great St. Francis, who was not only similar to Our Lord and Redeemer for being born in a stable, practicing extreme poverty, and being favored with the sacred five wounds, but also by feeling deep compassion for the poor sinners. Our Saviour was accused of conversing and eating with the sinners, and He wept over the impenitent sinners of Jerusalem. St. Francis endeavored to bring his fellow-men to repentance by speaking to their hearts, and he prayed to God for their conversion—yes, even wept often and protractedly when he considered how so many were heedlessly continuing in sin and thus hastening to their temporal and eternal destruction. He wept so much over the sufferings of Our Lord and the indifference and carelessness of the world, that he nearly lost his sight. Our Lord, seeing the glowing heart of His servant, lamenting the offenses offered to His God and his all, was much pleased, hearing the suppliant prayers of his ardent intercession. At one time, when St. Francis was again fervently praying for the conversion of sinners, an angel urged him to go quickly into his beloved chapel, called Portiuncula. He hastened there and saw the most wonderful spectacle. Our dear Lord appeared over the tabernacle, His face beaming with infinite kindness and His most glorious Mother Mary at His side, and both surrounded by a host of bright angels. St. Francis prostrated himself in deep adoration and sweet ecstasy. But Jesus bade him rise and ask a favor for his poor sinners. And St. Francis said: "Merciful Lord, grant to all the sinners coming into this chapel and praying with a contrite heart a full forgiveness of all their sins and the punishment thereof." When Jesus seemed to hesitate, saying: "This is something very great, what thou askest," St. Francis turned with touching simplicity to Mary, the refuge of sinners, to plead with Him for the poor sinners. Thereupon Jesus granted one extraordinary indulgence of Portiuncula.

For two hundred years this indulgence was confined to that little chapel of the Portiuncula, which was each 2nd of August the scene of a wondrous gathering of penitents. After this the Pope was moved to extend it to all the Franciscan churches of the world.

Succeeding Popes have still further extended it to churches where members of the Third Order meet, and even to other churches where no Franciscan church is available. The obligation of receiving Holy Communion, either on that day, Aug. 2nd, or on the day before, is required for all the churches outside of Assisi, however.

Confession and Communion and a visit to the church so privileged are all that is necessary to the gaining of the Indulgence of the Portiuncula.

One may not gain it oftener than once for himself, but he can gain it as many as a hundred times for the souls in Purgatory if he can go in and pray and come out so often. There is no set form or duration of prayer. Five Our Fathers, and Hail Marys, and Gloria in union with the Sovereign Pontiff's prayers are recommended, but any form of prayer may be followed.

FATHER HECKER AND CARDINAL NEWMAN

Cardinal Newman's own words have been instrumental in suggesting the subject for this article. In his letter to Father Hewitt upon the death of Father Hecker, the Cardinal wrote as follows: "I have ever felt that there was this sort of unity in our lives—that we had both begun a work of the same kind, he in America and I in England." And in concluding he says: "Now I am left with one friend less."

In studying and analyzing the lives of these two great geniuses, one finds a large field of resemblance between them. There was truly a touch "of unity" as the Cardinal expresses it, which grows more striking and refined the closer one examines into it. In the present article we shall touch upon only a few points of the likeness and the unity in their lives.

As we examine their early days, even there we find them very much resembling each other. It can be said of Father Hecker, as it has been said of Cardinal Newman, that "he was utterly in earnest, masterful by temperament, severe on self, oftentimes disinclined to hope, and sometimes even melancholy as youth will be until it finds a definite vocation." Neither struck the note of joy in their early days. Each "shuddered at the sight of his own failings; and the world seemed so completely out of joint that, were it not for conscience speaking within, either might have been perhaps an Atheist or Pantheist."

Thus then, both had their days of dread darkness and dreary doubt, and as one passes in thought over these torturing hours in life of Father Hecker, one is made to feel that he, too, like the great Newman, experienced a distress like unto that which is set forth in the Cardinal's tender prayer of a wandering soul: "Lead, kindly Light." For Father Hecker too "the night was dark and he was far from home"—and he, too, pleaded with the Holy Spirit of Light to "lead him on, o'er moor and len, o'er crag and torrent, till the night was gone."

Later on, as we know, the night disappeared for both of them, and a new dawn broke—the dawn of Catholicity broke upon their lives with an enchanting brightness and splendor that was henceforth to remain for an everlasting glow.

As philosophers, both displayed keen minds, and they resembled each other in their uniqueness and individual thought. What has been said of Cardinal Newman might very truly be said of Father Hecker; that "he had a philosophy of his own, vast and overshadowed with eternal mysteries, akin rather to the poet's deep and creative reason." This we can well attribute to the fact that they both possessed "strong imaginations" which indeed "tended to the rhythmic form" of the poet. However, although poetic in temperament, their minds were so constituted that each "must have the main reason of things, whether religious or not, firmly settled before he could enjoy their use."

As students of religion they were essentially one; their ways and methods were searching, and they penetrated deeply yet broadly into the truths and mysteries—penetrated in a keen clear-sighted and decisive manner. They differed only in their external trappings. Newman was a trained schoolman, a scholar of university polish and culture. Hecker was a self-trained schoolman,

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a scholar of "the University of the World" and of thought—a student self-taught, yet none the less refined.

Newman was a mystic; Hecker was a mystic. And as we peruse their writings now penned by their Catholic hands we find hardly a page that is not tinged with the mystic purple. It was in their writings, it was in their lives.

So purified and refined were their spiritual faculties and senses as to enable them to "hear the most delicate, the sweetest, the stillest sounds and murmurings of the angels" who were about them—even as now they are about us. How full and rich were their lives, "acutely sensitive and finely textured." What a pure world surrounded them—a world of which "none but holy prophets and poets have had a glimpse." To Cardinal Newman there were but two beings in the whole world: himself and God. So, too, with Father Hecker: it was himself, and God dwelling within him, in the person of the Holy Spirit. This was Hecker, this was Newman. Both great, both simple; both courageous, both unselfish.

They resembled each other very much, too, in the founding of communities. In 1848 Newman instituted in England the Community of Oratorians, "a body of priests laboring in the conversion of great towns," a community peculiarly fitted for the needs of the time. Ten years later Hecker instituted in America the Community of Paulists, a body of priests whose purpose was that of laboring in the conversion of their own native land, a community equally fitted for the needs of the time. It might be interesting to note here in parenthesis, that the first recruit to join Father Hecker's little band of Paulist Missionaries, was Father Robert Beverly Tillotson, a convert, who, though an American, had been for some time a member of Newman's Oratory. It is said of Father Tillotson that "he was a charming preacher and a noble character, much beloved by all the Fathers, and especially by Father Hecker. He died in the summer of 1868, having given the Community nine years of most valuable service."

Herein then, we see a striking similarity in these two newly founded Communities: the Oratorians in England, the Paulists in America. Like the Apostle Paul of old, preacher and teacher of the Gentiles, so Newman and Hecker, each in his own country was above all things a preacher and teacher.

Thus both of them, afar adrift in early years, became united in faith to the Church of God—for which both their hearts had thirsted, and of which their spirit was in great need. Both became heads of Communities. But now, we see them separate—Newman advances and becomes a Cardinal while Hecker remains the simple priest. Yet it is said of Newman that as Cardinal he was the same humble priest of the Oratory, even taking his regular turn at waiting on table and at reading in the refectory. Twenty-four years ago Father Hecker passed from this earth to the Kingdom beyond, at the age of sixty-nine. A year and a half later the great Cardinal followed him into eternity, at the age of eighty-nine. United in many kindred things in this life, Cardinal Newman and Father Hecker were, we trust, in the end made one in their final all perfect and eternal union with Christ in Paradise.—The Missionary.

WOMAN SUFFRAGE

Woman suffrage is a question of the day. The agitation for it is as universal now as it was sudden in its development from a mere academic opinion of a few enthusiasts. One has to consider, therefore, what view he ought to take of it. Much that is said about it is beside the question, which must be separated from all irrelevances. Thus, that there have been queens, as well as kings, and very good queens, too, is no more an argument in favor of woman suffrage than that there have been prophets, as well as prophets, demonstrates the propriety of female preachers. In the first place, queens became such usually by hereditary right, by accident, through default of male heirs of equal proximity to the defunct ruler. Secondly, though the sovereign may be the supreme possessor of the three powers, the executive, the legislative and the judicial, though the acts of these stand in her name, yet their preparation, administration and execution are in the hands of others, advisers, ministers, judges, agents of various kinds who are always men. If an example could be brought of a king governing successfully by means of women, it would give an argument of some value; but even then it would prove no more than capacity to govern, and mere capacity does not establish an antecedent right. Secondly, the argument from queens is only a *pari*. Such an argument is valid only under the conditions are the same in both cases; otherwise it is a fallacy. For example, compressed paper wheels are said to work well in railway carriages, therefore they will work well as driving wheels of locomotives. It does not follow, and we think experiment would prove the contrary, "Where woman suffrage exists it works well." This is a pragmatic argument, but it does not prove a right. Moreover "works well" is a rather vague, and needs clearer definition. Does it mean only that certain particular advantages are gained, or does it mean that the whole social organization is perfected? Besides

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it is a universal assertion. Does it rest, with those who make it, on a complete knowledge of all those places where it is found, or on a knowledge, often incomplete, of certain places only? However these things may be, the argument can only prove that the question of woman suffrage is worth considering. We may add that our experience even in all such places is very limited. If women vote they will, as a logical consequence, be voted for eventually, and will hold office executive, legislative and judicial. We have no satisfactory example of a body politic so organized. Resuming our example, let us suppose it proved by experience that locomotive driving wheels of compressed paper work well, it does not follow that the whole machine, boiler and fire box included, can be made of that material. In connection with this argument authority is quoted. "Bishops A, B and C have declared in favor of woman suffrage." But they express only their individual views. Against them can be quoted Bishops D, E and F. Sometimes, too, they have given no opinion on the question in itself. Finding woman suffrage an accomplished fact, they have declared that all women should exercise the suffrage, lest the community find itself at the mercy of doctrinaires in education, matrimonial matters, and such like.

There are many women with property interests, wage earners, or in trade. They are independent, unmarried. They have a right to be represented; but unless they vote their interests are unrepresented." The last assertion is not quite true. Their interests are represented in the general representation of similar interests. The interests of real estate, of stocks and bonds, of labor and of trade, do not change because the owner, or worker, or trader happens to be a woman, not a man. The argument assumes that every individual interest must be represented in the government formally and directly. This is nowhere the case. But suppose it is true, it would not prove that a woman, as a woman, has a right to vote, but that certain women should do so on account of accidental circumstances that have nothing to do with their womanhood.

"The laws are made and administered by an authority elected by men alone. We have an equal right to a voice in the matter, and we will never obey mere man-made laws." Here we pass into a new field. The obligation to obey the law comes from the fact that it is imposed by lawful authority, not from the share that one has in the making of it. The argument, if argument it can be called, implies the false supposition of an opposition, even an hostility between men and women that cannot be admitted for a moment. Still worse, it assumes the perfect equality of the sexes in defiance of the dictates of nature and the teaching of revelation. We need not dwell upon this point. As to natural law, the modern theory of women's rights assumes that all mankind have been wrong for thousands of years and under every form and degree of civilization, on a matter not merely speculative, but so intensely practical, that it touches every society, every family, every individual that the world has ever seen, an error simply inconceivable. With regard to revelation we might appeal to the creation of our first parents, to the history of the Fall, to the constitution of the Holy Family, under the headship of St. Joseph, as explained by the holy Fathers, to the doctrine of St. Paul. But this is unnecessary. The Suffragists themselves recognize that revelation is against them; for only the other day a committee of women prepared a petition, demanding the removal from the English marriage service of every allusion to the teaching of the great Apostle of the Gentiles. So long as women rest their claim to the suffrage on so false a plea it cannot be considered. The best thing in the world could not be hanged were it claimed under a false title.

Another point that must be considered is the female character. It is emotional. We do not say this in any spirit of disparagement. On the contrary, God in His wisdom, created them so; and, were they otherwise the world would be sadder than it is. Nevertheless, one must ask whether emotionalism is a quality conducive to stable government. Restrained within the sphere of the family it has a noble function. When it passes beyond and assumes control of public affairs, it runs too often into excess. According to the old Greek legends it was by women's hands that Pentheus and Orpheus were torn in pieces. In Roman history it was a woman that trampled her father to death under the hoofs of

her chariot horses; and one does not care to dwell upon the more authentic records of the conduct of women in imperial times. All must know the long bloody history of the mutual hatred of the Merovingian Brunhild and Fredegond, and the infamy of Theodora and Merozia in the dark times of the Papacy. Coming to later times the most persistent critics for blood from the galleries of the French Revolutionary Convention were those of women's voices; it was women who sat around the guillotine knitting and counting the heads that fell; it was women chiefly that were active agents of the burning of Paris in 1871, and the acts of the militant suffragists show that woman's nature is unchanged. In a moment she can be transformed from a quiet, gentle lady, into a maenad.

On the other hand, the status of women has changed greatly during the last fifty years. Through this change, for which they are not responsible, they enter into public life in a way they never did before. They take part in municipal matters in many places where, as yet, they have not the general suffrage, and one must admit that on the whole they bear their functions well. Where they have the general suffrage, though at times they show impatience in urging reforms, and perhaps would have these too drastic, we have testimony that, on the whole, their influence has been good. The question, then, of Woman Suffrage is, as we said, a question of the day, and it has to be solved everywhere. To put it, therefore, in its proper form is the duty of everyone who seeks the public welfare. In comes, in our opinion, to this: first, is the indirect influence which women exercise in public affairs sufficient, or would it be useful to the public welfare to give them the vote? Second, if so, is the opening to them of some or all public offices a necessary consequence, and would this be to the public welfare? Third, if one or both be desirable, what means must be taken to safeguard the natural relations of woman to man confirmed by supernatural revelation, especially in the family, and to prevent the new order of things from being a hindrance to the entering by women into their normal state as mothers and mistresses in the family and household? Lastly, would it be necessary by some constitutional arrangement to provide a check for the natural emotionalism of women; and, if so, what should be the nature of such an arrangement? If the question be discussed in this manner, we are quite ready to accept the decision arrived at reasonably. At present, however, we fear that it is very far from being on a proper basis.—Henry Woods, S. J., in America.

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