

CHATS WITH YOUNG MEN

AFTER A RETREAT

What hast thou learnt today? Hast thou sounded a wail... Hast pierced the veiled skies...

Nay, This only have I learnt, that God is love.

What hast thou heard today? Hast heard the Angel trumpets cry... And rippling harp reply...

Nay, This have I heard, His voice within my soul.

What hast thou felt today? The pinnacles of the Angel guide... That stand at thy side...

THE GIFT OF HUMOR

I had rather be strong, affectionate, loyal, noble minded, than be the best humorist in the world...

HOLD ON

Hold on to your hand when you are about to do an unkind act.

Hold on to your tongue when you are just ready to speak harshly.

Hold on to your heart when evil persons invite you to join their ranks.

Hold on to your virtue—it is above all price to you in all times and places.

Hold on to your foot when you are on the point of forsaking the path of right.

Hold on to the truth, for it will serve you well, and do you good throughout eternity.

Hold on to your temper when you are excited, or angry, or others are angry with you.

Hold on to your good character, for it is and ever will be your best wealth.

And above all, hold on to your faith as the most precious gift of God.

THE EVIL OF IDLENESS

Commencement exercises always bring back a host of memories to the graduates of other years.

Too frequently a boy is left wholly to himself for the vacation period. And sometimes he proves to be a very bad companion for himself.

Thus we keep her memory precious. While we never cease to pray. That at last, when lengthening shadows

Mark the evening of our day. They may find us waiting calmly To go home our mother's way.

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"An athlete?" said the visitor. "But he's a cripple, isn't he?"

"Yes. But he used to play on a team in college. He was a fine runner, light and swift. He was hurt for life, several years ago, in pulling a child out from under a runaway horse's hoofs. But he says now he is having the athletic contest of his life, and he's putting the whole ward in training. He says everybody has some position on the world's team, and the invalids have the hardest line of all to hold. 'If we shrink,' he says, 'how can we expect the world to move ahead? Our place is the hardest, and the team needs us.' So he has all the invalids in the ward keen on the idea. They're in training. They aren't allowed complaining, or telling of symptoms, or wondering why they have to suffer so, or hopelessness, or irritable temper. All those are crossed off from their diet, so to speak. They're athletes—on the team, each with a place to fill that counts. I tell you, that man has put a new spirit into every other fellow in the ward, and he's done more for some of the cases than any doctor could do. We're not outsiders. We're not flung to one side, helpless, while the game goes on," he tells the others. "We belong! We're on the team, in the very hardest place! It's true, too. The strongest man on the football field today isn't so strong as that bedridden athlete."

Team play in a hospital! Yet it was perfectly possible. Not only in the beds of the ward, but in the nursing, too, for that matter, there was an opening for it. Any group of workers, any board of administration, any community, any home, is a place for team play—place where the opportunity waits day after day, for the wise athlete to come along and take it. Many young men never see it; but it is nevertheless there, to perform each task with joy, to reach power and value, to win out instead of fail.—Catholic Columbian.

OUR BOYS AND GIRLS

MOTHER'S WAY

Oh within our little cottage, As the shadows gently fall, While the sunlight tapers softly One sweet face upon the wall, Do we gather close together And in hushed and tender tone Ask each other's full forgiveness For the wrong that each hath done.

Should you wonder why this custom At the ending of the day, Eye and voice would answer: "It was once our mother's way." If our home be bright and cheery, If it holds a welcome true, Opening wide its door of greeting To the many—not the few; If we share our father's bounty With the needy day by day, 'Tis because our hearts remember This was ever mother's way.

Sometimes when our hands grow weary When our burdens look too heavy, And we deem the right all wrong; Then we gain a new fresh courage, And we rise to proudly say: "Let us do our duty bravely— This was our dear mother's way?"

Thus we keep her memory precious, While we never cease to pray, That at last, when lengthening shadows Mark the evening of our day, They may find us waiting calmly To go home our mother's way.

—REV. A. J. RYAN

JIMMIE'S PRAYER ANSWERED

"Have you any near relative?" "No."

"Any particular friend?" "Only in a business sense."

"Take a long breath—ah! Now another—there!"

Dr. Morsely took the stethoscope from Mr. Bentman's chest.

"You are about—forty-five years old?"

"I was forty-six my last birthday."

"You have no cause for worry—your business is in good shape?"

"My business, practically, takes care of itself."

"Uh huh!"

The last half of this expression was long drawn out. The doctor was thinking.

"Would you mind telling me how you felt when your mother died?"

"I don't remember. I was too young."

"Did you ever fall in love?"

"I formed several attachments when young, but they were not lasting."

"My one great desire has been to make money. Years ago, at college, I really cared for a fellow student, but after leaving school we drifted apart. He was religiously inclined—couldn't meet men at their own games—didn't believe in wasting life in money-making when happiness and love were to be had, he said. Of course these were not my views."

"I really don't find anything the matter with you—let us say physically; but I fear, Mr. Bentman, that your soul is starved. The normal life is filled with joy, sorrow, pain, pleasure—each in turn; also lesser, gains, sickness, health, friendship. To be perfect, there must be a desire for God, and a dependence upon Him. You tell me you have never felt the loss of a relative, nor joy in a friend's well-being. Your heart beats for nothing since you have satisfied its longing for money; whereas, it should be beating for loved ones—we'll say a wife and children. If you had some one dependent upon you, or if you needed the help of someone, I venture to say that you would be well. To cure

yourself you must take an interest in some one or something and this will stir your blood and cause a new kind of heartbeat."

"I'll think it over doctor. And what about my loss of appetite?"

"Take more exercise out of doors. Go where the fields are green, the sun shines and the wind blows. Now if I were you I would walk back home by easy stages. When you have done that your appetite will be all that you desire."

Mr. Bentman inquired the fee, paid it and left. On his way to the hotel he murmured several times: "And this is the great Dr. Morsely! And I came six hundred miles to consult him and he wants me to walk back!"

Mr. Bentman had been walking almost three days. It was near mid-afternoon of the third day and he had seated himself for a brief rest under a tree by the roadside.

"Well, I do believe I'm hungry again!"

He unsling a pack from his back, and took therefrom some meat, cheese and bread. Having satisfied his hunger he lit a cigar. "How much better a cigar tastes out here!" he exclaimed.

His eyes rested upon the lazily moving heat waves, the green fields, the trees which bordered the fields, where the grain was ripening, the brown, dusty road which led itself at the crest of a hill. Then he watched a woodpecker work on a hollow tree, and when his gaze returned to the road there was a figure at the crest of the hill. Twenty minutes later a bare-footed, curly-headed, sunburned boy, over whose little shoulder was slung a coat and a pair of shoes with the stocking protruding, approached. In his right hand was a man's walking stick.

The little fellow looked tired and dusty and one foot was bandaged with a blood-stained handkerchief. As he looked at Mr. Bentman his full blue eyes brightened.

"I'm glad to meet you. You are a pilgrim, ain't you?"

"Well, perhaps I might be called one."

As soon as I saw your pack and stick I knew you were. Mother says people always have a pack and a stick when they go on a pilgrimage. I'm going to Lourdes too."

"To Lourdes?"

"Yes, sir, Lourdes in France, where Our Blessed Lady cures sick people."

"Well—er—I hardly thought of going that far."

"I—am sorry. The look of hope faded from the round blue eyes, and they darkened as does the sky when rain threatens. "I—I'm sorry," the little voice went on brokenly.

"Father Daly said that thousands go on pilgrimages. I haven't met any one going yet. I was so glad when I saw you, because I thought you were going—and—and—I know I'll be afraid when it's dark."

"Do you know that France is a great way off, and that you must cross the ocean?"

"I know it's way, way off, and I must hurry." And the little chap swallowed hard. Then he started on.

Bentman looked after him, puffed his cigar, then felt uncomfortable inside.

"Oh, well, I can't be worrying about every stray boy I meet," he argued with himself. "Why—why, I might meet twenty before I reach home—why?" His eyes followed the retreating figure, and just then the boy struck his wounded foot against a stone. He held it with both hands for an instant to stop the pain, then sat down in the road. Bentman's heart gave one good, solid, human beat; he was on his feet and following the boy.

The boy looked up from his attempt to bandage the foot when Bentman reached him. "I'm so glad you are going with me!" he said.

There was much comfort in the tone that Bentman couldn't find the heart to contradict. He took the bandage and tied up the foot.

"I'm afraid you can't go on."

"Please, sir, please don't stop me. I thought you were going with me. I must go on—you don't know."

"Come and sit here a minute. You must tell me why you are going."

"I am going because father is sick; he can't go; and because Our Blessed Lady will cure him if I go and pray for him there."

"Did your mother send you?"

"Mother don't know—I stole off. You know—you know father's been sick such a long, long time, and he prayed, and mother prayed that he might get well; and one day I heard Father Daly say that God hears little children sooner than big people—do you think he does?"

"Yes, yes, I'm sure of it."

"I'm glad you think so. Well, then I began to pray, and pray, and pray; only I never told any one, and at last father got better. Then he went off to a city, and yesterday he came back, and was sicker than before, and mother—the cried, and cried, and cried 'til her heart would break when papa was not looking—only I saw her. And then I knew I had to go to Lourdes, because I heard Father Daly say how the Blessed Mother cured sick people there—so I packed my things, and took father's cane and stole away this morning."

"What is your name?"

"Jimmie."

"A brave name for a brave boy. Well, Jimmie, what if I told you I had decided to go with you to Lourdes?"

"I would thank you, sir, and pray for you if you ever get sick."

"I'm afraid, Jimmie, that I am sick now."

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"Then the Blessed Mother will cure you at Lourdes."

"Now if I promise to take you to Lourdes, first on a train, then on a big, big boat, will you show me where your mother lives so we can ask her permission?"

"Yes, sir."

"Jimmie," said the man after they had begun to retrace their steps, "Jimmie, are you hungry?"

"I brought two pieces of bread with me, but I ate them."

Mr. Bentman unsling his pack, and Jimmie fed heartily upon the cold meat, bread and cheese. They trudged on side by side for some time after that—the boy answering the man's questions—until Mr. Bentman saw that the boy was limping.

"Jimmie, your foot hurts."

"Not much, sir; and—and I think it's getting better."

"You can't walk any further. Did you ever play 'pig-a-back'?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, then climb on to my back—now—that's better, and I think we can get along faster."

By now Mr. Bentman's heart was beating right merrily to a good, wholesome, old-fashioned tune. The twilight was coming rapidly out of the east when Jimmie and Mr. Bentman, "pig-a-back" style, came into the neat cottage yard. Mr. Bentman caught a glimpse of mother-love when Jimmie was clasped to his mother's breast, and her tender words of endearment poured out over him; he caught a glimpse of a sick though hopeful face when the father learned what Jimmie had intended doing for him; he was the recipient of genuine heartfelt thanks for the first time in his life. All this made him feel sad and lonely, a person apart. He resolved to interest himself in his fellow in future.

"You are Father Daly?"

"Yes."

"My name is Bentman." Here followed a short account of himself and of Jimmie's adventure. "And now, Father, I want to know something about Jimmie and Jimmie's people."

"Well, Jimmie is the fine little chap he showed himself yesterday, the father though hopeful and brave is very sick, and the mother is praying and crying for him."

"Tell me, he isn't going to die?"

"I'm afraid he is."

"But what about the boy's prayers? I'm no Catholic, but surely his prayers are going to be heard?"

"There never was a cry sent to heaven that wasn't heard, but prayers are not always answered in our way."

"What of Lourdes? You surely haven't told the boy of these wonderful cures unless they are true?"

"The cures at Lourdes are true enough; thank God; but not every one is cured. Besides, Jimmie's father hasn't money enough to go to France; nor send Jimmie, if such a thing were dreamed of."

"But I have money—plenty of money—more money than I know what to do with. I want Jimmie and Jimmie's father and Jimmie's mother to go to France; I want to go with them. I want you to beg them to allow me to do this and to show them that Jimmie has really done more for me than I am doing for them. What do you say?"

"I say that Jimmie's prayers are answered."—Pius Le Staub, in Magazine.

A SOCIAL CANKER

Alarm is felt among all classes of society over the ever increasing divorce evil, especially in America, which leads the world in the vast number of legal separations allowed annually. This great and constantly growing cancer of divorce is a social disease which has developed out of the Protestant idea of Christianity. The origin of the evil has been powerfully portrayed in the moving picture "Deception," produced by German artists, and historically depicting the amours of the Blue-beard English King Henry VIII, and several of his numerous "wives," particularly Anne Boleyn. The lascivious monarch broke with Rome when the Head of the Church refused to sanction his divorce from his faithful wife of twenty years, Catherine of Aragon. The crafty, ambitious and double-faced Cromwell astly hinted that a way could be found by separating from the authority of the Church, so Henry VIII, announced himself to be the head of the English Church and gave free reign to his desires. The Christian code of marriage was founded on the divine law of Christ. "What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put a-under," but this meant nothing in Henry's young life.

The Head of the Anglican Church entered upon a career of successive polygamy and murder. Jane Seymour and many other unfortunate women following the fate of Anne Boleyn,

"all the lustful King had set a beautiful example for his illustrious descendants and fellow Protestants to follow. They have not been slow to act up to his teaching and precedent, and once the restraining dykes of Catholic doctrine were broken down, a Public flood of divorces had devastated the Christian fold.

Although one of the favorite stock-in-trade objections of Protestantism is that the Catholic Church interposes too many obstacles between man and his maker, the truth is that the Church sets too many barriers between the soul and material evil, such as divorce, and a religion based on private judgment, which means eventually that everybody may do what he pleases and believe what he wants to believe. Hence the development of modern license in moral and religious spheres that threatens social decadence and anarchy. As Peckseor von Ruville observes in his "Back to Holy Church," the Catholic faith as complete Christianity opens all possible avenues for the soul to approach God, and at the same time sets barriers against moral and material evils which war against the soul of man. The tendency of Protestant sects is to cater to human appetites and permit people who believe opposite things about the teaching of Christ to belong to their denomination. Hence divorce and other social evils are winked at in deference to potent influences in the pew. This is not Christianity or obeying the law of God, but rather harkening to the voice of corrupt men.—The Monitor.

DON'T WORRY BUT WORK

In his usual bright and cheery manner, Dean West, of Princeton, tells his students that devotion to study is rarely followed by a mental breakdown. The Dean relates that the records of the University, reaching back to the Colonial period, make no mention of so sorrowful a wreck, although one case, occurring nearly forty years ago, may be that of a collegian who studied not wisely nor too well, but indigestedly. So isolated an instance need not, however, fill the bosom of any student with alarm.

It is not the hardest work that kills, but the worry which some people insist on adding to their work. What experience has long evidenced, the psychologist of today can prove almost experimentally. It is true that many, if not most, of the relations between soul and body are still veiled in mystery; yet experimental psychology daily raises the veil, and some facts are clear. But long before the term was known, the ancients were well aware that mental work, quietly and calmly pursued was a tonic, not a depressant, and that the physical effects were benign only when the memory and understanding, struggling under the burden of fear and doubt, were lashed forward by the dictate of an imperious will. That is the work which kills. No sane man would attempt to run a machine into which a monkey wrench had been thrown. His first move would be to remove the foreign object, and then to repair the damage.

Unfortunately, this common sense is not always observed in dealing with our mental machinery. Physical ailments, a cold, a small fever, such as Dr. Holmes recommended the young physician to accept with gratitude, a temporarily deranged digestion, can sometimes make mental exertion impossible. Soulmatters, debts, fears, depression, anger, envy, hatred, or any unneeded passion, may, and very frequently, do exercise the same inhibitive influence. "Mens sana in corpore sano" is a true adage, but it is frequently misinterpreted to mean that a healthy body guarantees a sound mind. A healthy body does not quite do that, but only helps to that end. Ailments of the soul as well as physical disorders must be removed if the who's rational entity, man, is to function properly. We have been laying too much insistence upon physical, and too little upon mental, welfare.

Masters of the spiritual life, who as a rule, were skilled psychologists, have always kept to the middle path. The rules of all religious communities make proper provision for the physical health of their members, and while the practice of supernatural virtues is the prime end of these specialists in religion, they are by no means unmindful of the value to be found in a bright, happy, and even optimistic outlook upon life. St. Ignatius even went so far as to recommend his followers to cultivate a benign and cheerful countenance, and once expressed his philosophy on this point by saying

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that sadness was proper only in the servants of Satan. Life is indeed a vale of tears, but we shall not always walk in the shadow of this valley, for our life here is not a resting place, but only a sojourn. To the man who believes in God and His revelation, an optimism that is not a passing sentiment, but a grounded conviction, should not be difficult. For that revelation shows him the world beyond the grave, the world in which all wrongs shall be righted, in which those who mourn shall be comforted, and those who suffer persecution for justice' sake shall be crowned. Life is but a shadow that passes, and Heaven is the home that surely waits for all who during this little time bear with cheerfulness the badge of our salvation, the Cross of Christ.—America.

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