

CHATS WITH YOUNG MEN

KEEP OUT OF RUTS

We hear a great deal about the disadvantage of falling into a rut. We are told that in order to keep up our interest in a study or to carry forward an enterprise vigorously we must constantly make an endeavor to vary our variety. To fall into a rut is to do the same thing in the same way, day in and day out, is supposed to be most unfortunate, and we are warned against it as if routine in itself were fatal to advancement.

Yet there is something to be said in favor of a rut. Not long ago a thoughtful teacher was discussing the talents and attainments of several lads in her class. "Blohard," she said, "has remarkable facility. He learns with the rapidity of a bird on the wing, but the trouble is that he does not stay in one place long enough to retain much of what he acquires. He has no concentration. He is continually in search of a new impression. Harold, who is his opposite in temperament, marches steadily along and loses nothing that he has once gained. With him habits of accuracy and attention have become established. By and by Harold will surpass Richard. It will be as if a freight train were attached to the express when Harold is ready for action, but he will go forward by straight lines and according to a right way."

Habits either good or bad are said to become ruts in the brain by imperceptible degrees. The formation of a bad habit is therefore to be dreaded, because there is something deeply and permanently about a bad habit. We may as well be warned on this score, if we letting ourselves drop into a habit, of foolish self-indulgence, of using language of which we are ashamed, or of neglecting plain duties. Ruts of this kind are clearly out of the question if we would lead honorable lives.

The advantage of the rut is perhaps best shown by illustration. Observe the plowman who crosses the field with a deep, straight furrow. Watch the engineer who never takes a needless risk on the road, but with eye and hand directing and controlling his marvelous machine carries passengers safely in the same way over the same course year after year. There may be monotony in a rut, but there is sometimes safety.

POWDER-MILL PIETY

There is an old adage to the effect that "he who works in a powder-mill should be pious." The thought behind this semi-facetious counsel is that one who is in hourly danger of being translated to the other world should be on good terms with his Maker.

Many a man displays a faith of this powder-mill variety. In positions of extreme difficulty or danger he becomes conscious, apparently for the first time, that there is a God. When he is desperately sick, or his ship is sinking, he calls on the Almighty for help. When the steamship "Spree" broke her shaft in mid-ocean, practically the whole ship's company, including the most frivolous, fell to praying. Before some of the battles of the Civil War, whole regiments were as monster prayer meetings. We feel, and rightly, that God is our help in our direct extremities. He is a "very present help in trouble." He loves to save us out of our distresses.

But it is the part of cowardice to acknowledge Him only in the hours of darkness and terror. The Almighty is not to be regarded merely as a court of last appeal. Religion is not a sort of safety appliance to be used only in case of danger. Rather, he who knows not what the most sheltered hour may bring forth, are called into hourly companionship with the great Friend whose power and whose love are alike perfect.

A YOUTH'S GOOD MORNING

I started out the other morning to walk about a mile to the street car by which I come to my duties. It was a

beautiful morning. It seemed glorious to live. I made up my mind to leave a cheerful greeting with each man I met. The following was my experience:

A man of wealth was coming out of his fine residence. I called out to him: "What a magnificent morning it is, is it not?" He replied: "Yes, pretty fair, but yesterday was a horrible day."

The next greeting was to a man sitting on his veranda taking his morning smoke. He was a man of assured income, fine home, and every advantage of life. I greeted him with much the same words, calling attention to the splendid morning. "Yes, pretty good, but it is a weather breeder; we will not have good weather very long."

The next one I saluted was a gentleman walking along the street taking a leisurely smoke. "What a splendid morning," I said as we passed. He removed his pipe from his mouth, and stared me out of countenance without a word of response. We had not met in our "swallowtails" at some social function, and I therefore had no right to remark upon the beauty of the weather to him.

Soon there came into my view a working man. He was perhaps fifty-five years old, bent wrinkled, worn with the hard toll of a lifetime. He looked just a little hungry as he approached me. I risked the morning greeting, however saying to him: "What a beautiful morning we have."

"Sure, sir," he said, "it is a beautiful morning. I have been thanking God ever since I left home at the beautiful day He is givin' us." Which life was valuable? Which life was honest? Which life was Christian? And so I say, the subjective and not objective, largely determines the value of life. If hardships and privations and numerous trials come to one, there are also the sunshine and the bright sky and the hills and towering waters which may bring cheer and satisfaction.—Catholic Sun.

A BLIND SENATOR

When a young man has won for himself high political honor we applaud him, but when he has done the same thing in spite of serious physical handicaps we more than admire, we are inspired by him. For this reason it is a remarkable thing that the youngest man in the United States Senate, Senator Gore of Oklahoma, has been blind from boyhood.

The misfortune which condemned him to walk forever in darkness did not break his courage. He went right on with his school work, getting friends to read his lessons to him, and grasping them with his alert mind in a single reading. The manly spirit that neither refused to take the aid it requires nor yet makes weak demands for a sentimental pity cannot be too greatly admired. For every step of his advance he has had to depend on his friends, latterly on his wife, for the loss of his eyes. Yet he never obtrudes his misfortune. "Glad to see you," is his invariable greeting to friends and strangers, as if the sight of them were his. "Glad to see you!" How often we use the expression carelessly when we have felt nothing but the most languid interest in meeting a casual acquaintance. Suppose the next time we say it we think of the darkness in which the blind man lives. Perhaps then we may feel keen enjoyment out of the ability to see even the most common-place and uninteresting face.

HOW TO BE POPULAR

Every one would like to have a gracious manner, to be popular, to be loved by everybody. It is a legitimate ambition to be well thought of and admired by our fellow-men. Yet the majority of us are willing to make any great sacrifice to acquire this art of arts—in fact we are all the time doing

things which repel others and which inevitably tend to make us unpopular.

We have to take infinite pains to succeed in our vocations or any accomplishment worth while, and should we expect to gain the air of arts, the charm of personality, the power to please, to attract, to interest, without making great efforts?

Selfishness in all its forms is always and everywhere despised. No one likes a person who is bound up in himself, who is constantly thinking how he can advance his own interests and promote his own comfort. The secret of popularity is to make everybody you meet feel that you are especially interested in him. If you really feel kindly towards others, if you sincerely wish to please, you will have no difficulty in doing so. But if you are cold, indifferent, retiring, selfish; if you are all wrapped up in yourself and think only of what may advance your own interests or increase your own comfort, you never can become popular.—Catholic Columbian.

OUR BOYS AND GIRLS

TO YOUR GUARDIAN ANGEL

Boys and girls who may fancy themselves too grown-up to repeat the "Dear Angel" prayer of their early childhood should know that the greatest men of our faith are as little children in their devotion to the invisible Guardian Angel. Father Russell, now past seventy-five years of age, thus addresses his lifelong comrade:

Still with me, still with me, my Guardian more dear! But oh I have wearied your patience, I fear.

You have watched over me since my first feeble breath, You will watch till mine eyes close forever in death. But your care and your peril must now soon be past; How near is the day God has fixed as my last? Be with me, be with me, dear Angel, till then. And oh I how I'll thank you in heaven. Amen.

THE POTENCY OF KINDNESS OR THE BOY APOSTLE

There was intense excitement in the sleepy Southern town. The whole population was filled with ill-suppressed anger. Crowds of men, and boys through the streets, particularly around the court house and jail. Women gathered in groups on their verandas and in the shops to discuss the fearful crime that had been committed in their midst. It was a brutal murder, and the murderer was a negro. Only strict surveillance kept the poor wretch from being dragged from custody and hanged to the nearest tree.

The murdered man was his master. What matter if the slayer was goaded to madness by cruel treatment and insulting words? Was he not a despised negro? The murder was committed in a moment of frenzy and there was no defense. The wretched man of the poor wretch was a foregone conclusion.

The learned court made haste to have the trial, and the jury to a man pronounced the fatal word, "Guilty." Public opinion was satisfied, and the excitement cooled down.

In his death cell the slayer sat alone with a terrible fear of death and the world beyond the death chair. They asked him did he want religious aid. No! He never knew religion in his life; it was an unknown factor in his thoughts, and as he sat and brooded with sullen brow and muttered oath, in the dark and in the light of the few days that were between him and eternity, people came and looked curiously into the barred window of his little cell. But no one pitied him.

Among the throng that passed through the jail were two lads, who, like small boys, were curious to see a condemned man before execution. One of them heartlessly called him to the window, and the poor wretch unkindly turned the lad to call at him: "You sounder! You murderer! The country does well to turn you over to the gallows!" The negro, who expected a kind word, turned away with a bitter oath on his lips.

"Shame on you, Tom!" said the other lad. "The law you talk that way to a poor condemned fellow! Watch out that the Lord doesn't take his part, since nobody else does." "Pshaw!" said the first boy; "he deserves his fate. I have no pity for him, the black devil!"

"Stop!" said his companion. "We didn't come here to act the judge. He has my deepest pity." And calling to the poor black wretch, he said some kindly words. The darkey's eyes filled with tears. "Young massa," he whispered, "if you done cum heah by yourself, I'se got sumpin' to ast you. Kin you cum tomorrer—all alone?"

"Sure!" whispered the boy, somewhat startled, as he made off down the corridor after his companion, who had turned disgustfully away.

The guard who was standing by, and who had heard the whole conversation, nodded approvingly, and the boy disappeared.

This was a Catholic lad of fourteen, whose faith commanded him to be charitable to the unfortunate and treat his neighbor with consideration. His Catholic faith taught him also that this black man had an immortal soul that could be made as white as snow if he repented of his sins and became reconverted to God. The kind words he uttered brought God's grace, and the boy determined he would go on the morrow and see if he could do something towards saving that soul.

He said nothing at home, but his promise never left his mind. At the hour appointed he went alone to the jail to see his wretch. As he passed the guard, the man said to him: "I'm glad you came; that nigger has been raving about you ever since yesterday. Took a wonderful fancy to you. You are the first one he's ever talked about!"

They opened the cell door, and the boy, with certain tremors easily accounted for, found himself alone with

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the condemned man. The negro fell on his knees before him.

"Young massa," he sobbed. "I'se goin' for to die, and I'se a poor nigger wid murder on my soul. Dey want me to git religion, but I don't see dat any 'ligion counts dat ain't got no kindness in it. You took up foah me 'gainst dat gemplin dat cum 'long wid you, an' you said dat Loard would take my part, an' all night I bin thinkin' dat your 'ligion must be de kurrent one, for you git me comfort. If I die in any 'ligion, it's yours, young massa; so gib me you'n way ob thinkin', an' maybe I'll see de Loard!"

The boy felt his heart swell with pity. He determined to save the poor fellow. He made him sit down on his poor bed and gave him the fundamentals of faith, in the words of the catechism. He taught him one or two little aspirations, and finally told him he would bring him his pastor if he desired it. The negro was all anxiety to follow the boy's instructions, and sent for the warden, who promised the priest should come. The lad departed and went immediately to his pastor, who listened in astonishment. A formal request soon came for his presence in the jail. He went accompanied by the lad, who became the idol of the negro's heart, who looked upon him with the blind adoration of his race. The priest found his sincerity was not to be doubted. He instructed him for baptism and taught him the faith. The fellow had been sulky, untractable, dangerous; now he became gentle, resigned and penitent. The lad was his sponsor, in baptism, and before his execution had the satisfaction of seeing him make his First Communion. Every day he spent an hour with him, and on the eve of the fatal day stayed as long as was permitted.

At the last moment the negro held the boy's hands close in his, and in a choking voice said: "Goodby, young massa; you have opened de doob ob hebben to dia poor nigger. When he is a white angel befoah de Loard, he will watch ober you'n footsteps and you will hab luck and de Loard's blessing whereever you go. Let me hold dese hands tight in mine foah just a minute, an' den nobody else shall touch dem. Goodby!"

The black, blood-stained hands held the boy's tightly. The lad could not speak, but his face told all the poor fellow wanted of sympathy and kindness and pity. The boy left hurriedly. When all was over they told him that the Negro went to his doom with clasped hands and praying audibly. He refused, gently, to shake hands with any one, saying, "My young massa must be de last! His white hands kept me from destruction, an' I'se goin' to take his shake-hands to the Loard!"

And so he died, paying the awful penalty for his crime, but he hold dese hands tight in mine foah, and he humbly reconciled to God, deeply penitent.

The lad still lives, a man deeply imbued with the spirit of faith, and he tells his own boys now what a privilege it was to help one immortal soul.

How many souls might be won if the thoughtless cruelty of unkindness were eliminated from our lives! — Rev. Richard W. Alexander in Catholic Standard and Times.

"GOOD-NIGHT"

There is a tender sweetness about some of our common phrases of affectionate greeting, simple and unobtrusive as they are, which falls like dew upon the heart. Good night! The little one licks it as, gowned in white, with shining face and hands, and prayers said, she toddles off to bed. Sisters and brothers exchange the wish; parents and children, friends and friends. Familiarity has robbed it of its significance to some of us; we repeat it automatically without much thought. But consider. We are, as voyagers, putting off from time to time, upon an unexplored sea. Our barques of life set sail and go onward into the darkness, and we, as we sleep on our pillows, take no care as we do when awake and journeying by day-light.

Of the perils of the night, whatever they may be, we take no heed. As un-sleeping vigilance watches over us; it is the vigilance of one stronger and wiser than we, who is the Eternal God. Good and God spring from the same root, are the same meaning. "Good-night" is only "God be with you." "Good-night" is really "God-night," or "God-guard the night." It would be a church household in which these gentle forms of speech were ignored or did not exist. Alike, the happy and the sorrowful, day by day, may say, "Good-night,"—Catholic Sun.

To Make America Catholic

The Guardians of Bigotry are raising a great clamor over the enthusiastic words of Archbishop Ireland that we must make America Catholic. They represent us as plotting to destroy the republic, as forming military organizations, as drilling by night, as intending to slay our Protestant neighbors, etc., etc.

Idiotic as these charges are, they are believed by a multitude of Protestants. Our efforts to make America Catholic are confined to prayer, to giving a good example by leading pious Christian lives, to spreading good books and papers, and to endeavoring to convince our neigh-

bors that ours is the true Church established by Christ.

The Pope would not come here to live if he were given the whole of the American continent. We have no stomach for murder. And we are quite content with this government and its star-spangled banner.—Catholic Columbian.

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SEEN IN THE HILL COUNTRY

By Rev. Vincent M. Nabb, O. P.

On a Monday gone, at seven and a half of the clock, I beheld the Maiden Mother of God in a vision of delight. I was not expectant; but, as it fell out, I was not unprepared for the vision when it came. This is an important point about visions. To see them the soul must always be prepared. But rarely is the soul prepared if it is expectant.

Believe me, gentle reader, when these visions befall a soul their joy is not unshared with pain. For they are of such sort that a man must carry the tidings of them amongst his kindred. Yet it is easier to take them with joy within one's bosom than to give them back again in the clipped coinage of human words. Therefore you will know that I who saw the vision have no less sorrow in dishonouring it by my description than I had joy in welcoming it within my eyes and soul.

It was Whit Monday. I had been borne by a slow train upwards into the gently swelling hill-country of Leicestershire. The land was overflowing with spring green. Chestnuts in full bloom stood up in kingly majesty against the uplands. Spendthrift laborers were scattering handfuls of gold over every copse. Each hedgerow was a snow-drift of white Hawthorn. The land—my land!—was Alma Mater, dear Mother Earth. And I, friar and town dweller, had the rare delight of being welcomed once more to home by the fair and beloved Mother of men.

I knelt down for Compline in the stern grey church of the Trappist monks. Everything I could see within its walls was a violent anathema to all that Nature was weaving, and singing as she weaved, outside the walls.

The monks began their office deliberately in deep, long-drawn notes like measured scouring or crucifixion of song. The brown habits of the lay-brothers and even the white woollen cowls of the choir-monks were more like shrouds of the dead than garments of the living. Through the narrow lancet windows light filtered through apologetically, as Saul came amongst the prophets.

Over the high altar of painful sombreness hung a white ivory figure of the Crucified outstretched, bowed, and, to use the word of Juliana of Norwich, "sagged" in the travail-heats of dying. A few deep red peonies were the only flowers on the altar. On second looks alone could their dark green leaves and darker red be seen against the almost ebony panelling of the reredos.

The white figure of the Dying One was no relief to my eye or heart. It was but a burden added to the death-like sombreness of stone and wood and flower.

Suddenly, with no inward eye but with this dear eye of flesh, I caught sight of a little shrine which the stern monks had fashioned as a May offering to the Maiden Mother of God. They had reared it against one of the heavy, uncarved stone pillars of the nave. To hide the bareness and sternness of the axe-hewn stone they had fastened of the gentle Maiden seemed to scar heavenwards as a white bird, engirdled gaily with a wind-garment of blue.

The solemn plain-song had come to rest in deep-tones that echoed like

voices from a tomb. There was a swift, tense moment of silence. Tapers white and slender were lighted amidst the sea of leaf and flower at the Lady's feet. Two monks moved from their stalls with deep courtesy to the Maid, and began that masterpiece of joy, the "Litany of Loretto," in a swift, mirthful chaunt. The bearded monks in their stalls knelt upright as a regiment reviewed by their Queen, and gave back verse for verse.

Suddenly my eyes and heart were opened. It was not a choir of the Church's sternest monks I saw. It was a troop of children welcoming a beloved mother home again, crowding round her, clinging to her garments, and saying again and again those childlike nothings that are everything to those that love and are beloved.

The white figure of the young Maiden Mother with upcast eyes seemed to be conscious that some new lightness had been sent of God into the chambered and rugged hearts of those veterans in the choir-stalls. Upon the altar still shone the agonising white of the Crucified with head bowed and body sagging, colourless, livid, and alone.—London Tablet.

The heart of the people at large is still old-fashioned in its adherence to the idea that every man is responsible to a higher moral and spiritual power—that duty is more than pleasure—that life cannot be translated in terms of the five senses, and that the attempt to do so lowers and degrades the man who makes it—that religion alone can give an adequate interpretation of life and that morality alone can make it worthy of respect and admiration. This is the characteristic American way of looking at the complicated and interested business of living which we men and women have upon our hands.—Henry Van Dyke.

Among the poor most of what is called class hatred arises from ignorance on both sides, from loosely-held tradition, or from a more or less well founded sense of personal injury. Some degree of acquaintance must precede liking, but mere ignorance gives a tolerably firm foundation for dislike.—M. Loane.

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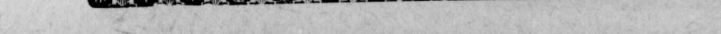
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