

HOW TO LEAD A CHEER.

IT was at the end of the holidays. All the rear of the car was filled with a rollicking set of college students, returning to their books. Suit cases were stacked up in the aisle, and canes, umbrellas, and golf clubs, bristled dangerously in all directions. As one and another dropped in, he was hailed obstreperously by the party already collected, shaken by the hand to within danger of dislocation, energetically thumped in the chest or between the shoulders, all of which attentions were received with astonishing and smiling composure. One of these late comers, in particular, a round-faced, brown-eyed lad was welcomed with an ovation, which plainly showed him to be a personage. I was glad when he flung himself into the seat behind me, and, as the train was put in motion, began a quiet chat with his companion. By piecing together what they said, it soon became apparent that the hero was the leader of his College Glee Club, and a freshly appointed leader, since he was just bringing back the men from his first trip, as to the success of which he was closely questioned by the other student. Having satisfied my curiosity so far, my mind drifted away a little, until caught again by something that the apple-cheeked musician was saying.

"Do you know," he asked, "what was about the hardest thing for me to learn?"

"What was that?"

"Why, to cheer. I thought I never should come to it. When I tried to lead the fellows, I got the words all twisted out of their senses. It was ridiculous."

"Yes; it is funny about that. You do have to have experience to lead a good cheer. I know how it is."

"I spoke to Morley about it." [The talk had already revealed that Morley was the last year's leader.] "And Morley said, 'You want to go off in a corner and practice on it. A Glee Club leader who can't lead a cheer is no good, you know.' And I did."

I smiled a little to myself out of the car window. It was amusing to think of this

youth of consequence off in a corner, practicing his painstaking and solitary Hurrah! A college cheer, as I had heard it roared out of hundreds of young throats, had always seemed the very essence of spontaneous overflowing animal spirits.

But, dear me, I soon stopped smiling. I grew sober under the magnitude of the wish that rose within me. Oh! if the army of long-visaged folk, that pester this poor earth with their sour countenances and whining voices might be sent off, each severally, to his own corner, "to learn how to cheer." How infinitely nearer, then, the law of Christ would be to its fulfilling! One of the world's greatest needs is encouragement. Often a child can give it; and often a child can take it away.

Learn how to cheer, girls. Learn how to cheer, boys. Learn how to lead a good, inspiring "God speed," that will nerve some stronger hand, perhaps, than yours, some wiser brain, to do its best.

As I thought the matter over, I remembered with what an air, some months before, a schoolboy friend of mine had waved towards himself, as he said, "I am the Official Cheerer of the school! I am a person of quality! At all the base-ball games and athletic events they pass me right in free. Three cheers, now, fellows, for the Official Cheerer!"

Let us join in with hearty good-will. We could well afford to pass a big corps of them over every railroad in the country, and pay all expenses, for their work's sake.

But, remember—the student was right—you "do have to have experience to lead a good cheer." People often say that "politeness does not cost anything," that "kind words are cheap," that "it is as easy to be encouraging as the other thing," and the like. But I, for one, am skeptical. Politeness is a beautiful accomplishment. Tact is a fine art. Sympathy is the very flower of training in the school of Christ. A feeling heart, a seeing eye, a ready hand—these come by grace, not nature. "We want to go off and practice"—you in your small corner, I in mine.—*Forward.*