

## CHATS WITH YOUNG MEN.

### A Great Getting-On Asset.

President Eliot, of Harvard says, "I recognized but one mental acquisition as an essential part of the education of a lady or gentleman, namely, an accurate and refined use of the mother-tongue."

Sir Walter Scott defined "a good conversationalist" as "one who has ideas, who reads, thinks, listens, and who has therefore something to say."

To be a good conversationalist, able to interest people, to rivet their attention, to draw them to you naturally, by the very superiority of your conversational ability, is to be the possessor of a very great accomplishment, one which is superior to all others. It helps you to make a good impression upon strangers. It helps you to make and keep friends. It opens doors and softens hearts. It makes you interesting in all sorts of company. It helps you to get on in the world. It sends you clients, patients, customers. It helps you into the best society, even though you are poor.

No matter how expert you may be in any other art or accomplishment, you cannot use your expertise always and everywhere as you can the power to converse well. If you are a musician, no matter how talented you may be, or how many years you may have spent in perfecting yourself in your specialty, or how much it may have cost you, only comparatively few people can ever hear or appreciate your music.

You may be a fine singer, and yet travel around the world without having an opportunity of showing your accomplishment, or without anyone guessing your specialty. But wherever you go and in whatever society you are, no matter what your station in life may be, you talk.

You may be a painter; you may have spent years with great masters, and yet, unless you have very marked ability so that your pictures are hung in the salons or in the great art galleries, comparatively few people will ever see them. But if you are an artist in conversation, everyone who comes in contact with you will see your life-picture, which you have been painting ever since you began to talk. Everyone knows whether you are an artist or a bungler.

### An Indicator of Culture.

Every experience of your life, every book you have read, every person who has conversed with you has influenced the quality of your conversation. You do not need to tell me whether you are educated or ignorant, whether or not you have been to college, have educated yourself, or have practiced high thinking. I can tell that by the quality of your conversation. The richness or poverty of your language will betray what your associations have been. Your travels, the quality of your observation, the variety of your experience are all reflected in your speech, pictured in the words you use. Nothing else will indicate your fineness or coarseness of culture, your breeding or lack of it, so quickly as your conversation. It will tell your whole life's story. What you say, and how you say it, will betray all your secrets, will give the world your true measure.

Most of us are bunglers in our conversation, because we do not make an art of it; we do not take the trouble or pains to learn to talk well. We do not read enough or think enough. Most of us express ourselves in sloppy, slipshod English, because it is so much easier to do so than it is to think before we speak, to make an effort to express ourselves with elegance, ease and power.

Poor conversers excuse themselves for not trying to improve by saying that "good talkers are born, not made." We might as well say good lawyers, good physicians, or good merchants are born, not made. None of them would ever get very far without hard work. This is the price of all achievement that is of value.

You Can be a King in This Art of [ARTS].

I know a business man who has cultivated the art of conversation to such an extent that it is a great treat to listen to him. His language flows with such liquid, limpid beauty, his words are chosen with such exquisite delicacy, taste and accuracy, there is such a refinement in his diction that he charms everyone who hears him speak. All his life he has been a reader of the finest prose and poetry, and has cultivated conversation as a fine art.

You may think you are poor and have no chance in life. You may be situated so that others are dependent upon you, and you may not be able to go to school or college, or to study music or art, as you long to; you may be tied down to an iron environment; you may be tortured with an unsatisfied, disappointed ambition; and yet you can become an interesting talker, because in every sentence you utter you can practice the best form of expression. Every book you read, every person with whom you converse, who uses good English, can help you.

A noted society leader, who has been successful in the launching of debutantes in society, always gives this advice to her proteges, "Talk, talk. It does not matter much what you say; but chatter away lightly and gayly. Nothing embarrasses and bores the average man so much as a girl who has to be entertained."

There is a helpful suggestion in this advice. The way to learn to talk is to talk. The temptation for people who are unaccustomed to society, and who feel diffident, is to say nothing themselves and listen to what others say.

Good reading not only broadens the mind and gives new ideas, but it also increases one's vocabulary, and that is a great aid to conversation. Many people have good thoughts and ideas, but they cannot express them because of the poverty of their vocabulary. They have not words enough to clothe their ideas and make them attractive. They talk around in a circle, repeat and repeat, because, when they want a particular word to convey their exact meaning, they cannot find it.

If you are ambitious to talk well, you must be as much as possible in the society of well-bred, cultivated people. If you seclude yourself, though you are

a college graduate, you will be a poor converser.

### Brainy Men Dumb While Shallow Talkers Entertain.

We all sympathize with people especially the timid and shy, who have that awful feeling of repression and stifling of thought, when they make an effort to say something and cannot. Timid young people often suffer keenly in this way in attempting to declaim at school or college. But many a great orator went through the same sort of experience, when he first attempted to speak in public, and was often terribly humiliated by his blunders and failures. There is no other way, however, to become an orator or a conversationalist than by constantly trying to express oneself efficiently and elegantly.

If you find that your ideas fly from you when you attempt to express them, that you stammer and flounder about for words which you are unable to find, you may be sure that every honest effort you make, even if you fail in your attempt, will make it all the easier for you to speak well the next time. It is remarkable, if one keeps on trying, how quickly he will conquer his awkwardness and self-consciousness, and will gain ease of manner and facility of expression.

Everywhere we see people placed at a tremendous disadvantage because they have never learned the art of putting their ideas into interesting, telling language. We see brainy men at public gatherings, where, sitting silent, unable to tell what they know, when they are infinitely better informed than those who are making a great deal of display of oratory or smooth talk.

People with a lot of ability, who know a great deal, often appear like a set of dummies in company, while some superficial, shallow-brained person holds the attention of those present simply because he can tell what he knows in an interesting way. They are constantly humiliated and embarrassed when away from those who happen to know their real worth, because they cannot carry on an intelligent conversation upon any topic.—O. S. M. in Success.

## OUR BOYS AND GIRLS.

### A STORY OF SIX HOURS.

Shipwrecked, eh? Well, no, I've never been shipwrecked yet; but I was once a good deal nearer it than I ever want to be again; and if a man's hair can turn gray in a single night, as some folks say it can, that night's work ought to have turned mine as gray as a badger.

It was my fourth voyage, and we were homeward bound, from Bombay to Southampton, with a full number of passengers. I was only a youngster then, and, like all young hands, I'd a great longing for a taste of "the perils of the sea," and all that sort of thing. But when I did get a taste of them, as you'll see presently, I didn't like 'em quite as well as I expected.

We were several days out from Bombay, and it might be about two hundred and fifty miles from the island of Socotra, which lies in between Africa and Arabia as I dare say you recollect. I was fourth officer that voyage, by the way. The weather had been splendid from the very first, and looked like staying so right through. All the people who had been sick were getting quite brisk again, and everybody was as jolly as could be.

About seven o'clock one fine evening we were all on deck, watching the sunset, and calculating how soon we should be in the Red Sea, when my attention was attracted by our third officer, Harry Lee, who was a special chum of mine. He was a slim young fellow, not much older than myself, but cool as a cucumber and brave as a lion. I was just going to have a word with him, when I saw him lift his head and begin sniffing the air uneasily, like a startled deer. Then he slipped down the ladder leading from the hurricane deck into the waist, and went hither and thither for a moment or two in a hap-hazard kind of way, just as a dog does when he's looking out for a snug place to lie down.

I could see that his behavior puzzled the officers quite as much as it did me. Before any of us could say a word, back he came again, and, going up to the third officer, said something in such a low voice that I could only catch one word of it. But even that one was quite enough to double me up for the moment as if I'd been hit by a cannon ball. The word that I caught was "Fire."

To try a man's nerve in real earnest, I don't think there's anything in the world like a fire at sea. A fire on land is bad enough, where you have a chance of running away from it; but at sea, where you're hemmed in between fire on one side and water on the other, it's like nothing I can think of except the feeling you sometimes have in a bad dream, when you see something terrible coming rushing down upon you, and then suddenly find yourself rooted to the ground, and not able to stir a limb to escape. Show me the man who can face a sudden alarm of fire on board a ship without wincing, and I'll show you the bravest man on the face of the earth.

But it's one good of such a shock as that when the first stun is over it braces you up at once. We all felt that our only chance was to keep cool and to do our best, and we drew ourselves together to do it.

"Mr. Lee," said the captain quite coolly, though his hard old mouth was set like a trap as he said it, "the passengers must know nothing of this, whatever happens. Just go aft and get them down into the saloon for some music, and then, as soon as you can get away without being noticed, come here and lend us a hand."

Away went Harry accordingly, and presently we heard his voice down on the after deck as brisk and cheery as if there was nothing the matter. Down trooped the passengers in a body, for Lee was a great favorite with them, and was always getting up something for their amusement. In another minute or two we heard the piano going, and one of the young fellows singing a comic

song, with all the rest joining in the chorus:

"My uncle went out to fish one day,  
When twas just getting dark,  
And something pulled so hard at his line  
That he thought he'd hooked a shark.  
Instead of a shark twas the hull of a ship  
That had sunk there a year before,  
But just as he'd got it the line broke short,  
And down went the ship once more."

It did send a shudder through us all, I can tell you, to hear them so merry, and singing so carelessly about ships going down, and all that, with death gaping for them all the while. But there was no time to think of it just then.

Well, the captain called up our men, and told them there was a fire in the fore hold and that the sooner they put it out the better. He said it so lightly and cheerily that you might have thought the whole business was a mere trifle, and that they had nothing to do but to go and quench the fire at once. And as he finished speaking I saw that he had bitten his lower lip until it bled.

To work we went, then, one and all. We knew better than to take off the hatches and let in the air upon the flames, so we cut holes in the planking, and trained the nozzle of the hose-pipes through them. Then we began pumping away with all our might.

But just as the work was in full swing, two of the passengers—two young fellows just married, who were going home on leave—came on deck suddenly and saw at the first glance what was going on.

"Gentlemen," said the captain, going up to them, "we didn't expect you here just now; but since you are here, you must please stay and help us. We can't let you go back now."

One of them agreed at once; but the other begged hard to be allowed to go and see his wife before he began. However, the captain wouldn't hear of it, so at last he went and fell to work alongside of his comrade, and they both stuck to it like men right on to the end.

But, work as we might, the fire seemed to gain upon us, and between ten and eleven at night the hatches had to go. The moment they were off, up spouted a roaring jet of flame twelve feet and more above the deck, with such fury that I began to lose heart, for there seemed to be no chance of mastering that. But we weren't at the worst of it yet, for at once I saw our chief officer turn as pale as death, and he gurgled out, as if the words choked him, "the gun-powder."

When I heard him say that, it turned me quite sick and faint, for I knew well enough what he meant. In that very fore-hold, and close to the place where the fire was at its worst, there were eight ammunition cases, containing powder enough to blow the whole ship to bits.

For a moment we all stood like so many statues; but just then we heard old Captain Weatherly's voice, clear and cool as ever.

"I won't order any man on such a job as that; but we might get that powder up somehow. Who'll follow me?"

Down he went and he was hardly down before there were six of us beside him.

We flew at the powder chests and tugged them out of their places one by one, while the men on deck kept pouring down a perfect cataract of water, to fight off the flames from us. With the smoke and steam, the stifling heat, the shouting of the men and the roar of the fire, the dancing and flashing of

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faces and arms out of the darkness and into it again, and the feeling that at any moment we might all be blown into the air together, it was just like being in the thick of a battle.

One, two, three chests were handed up on deck. We had hard work with the fourth and fifth, but we managed them at last, and then the sixth and seventh. When it came to the last, I felt as if something must happen then; but up it went, and presently I found myself on deck again, hardly knowing how I got there, scorched and bruised and half choked, and black as a sweep from head to foot.

It was nine at night when we began to pump; it was three in the morning before the danger was fairly over. The passengers knew nothing of it until it was all done, and then we made as light of it as we could. But I can tell you that, although I am not more of a coward than other men, I don't think anything on earth could tempt me to go through those six hours again.—David Ker in Our Young People.

### HALF-HEARTED SERVICE.

One is often struck by the evidence of a desire on the part of many persons, Catholics included, to gain heaven at the least possible cost of personal effort. The Catholic of this type is anxious rather to know what things he is strictly obliged to perform or to avoid than to make any sacrifice whatever for God or his fellowman. He is selfish, loves his own ease and cares only to have a pleasant time without breaking the law of God too seriously.

He does not care to walk in the broad road of sin for he knows to what it leads. He really wishes to save his soul provided it can be done without too great an effort on his part.

The non-Catholic is more consistent. He believes that his obligations are very few and they do not trouble him much. He does not think seriously of his duty

to God, but aims rather at a certain degree of respectability which good form requires. His life is influenced by merely human and natural motives and he considers those sufficient for him.

The Catholic knows better than this. He is fully aware that there are obligations laid upon him by his religion which he must comply with. These are a burden and an annoyance to him and the performance of his religious duties brings him no pleasure. He would much rather that the duties were not to be performed. So he sets about getting rid of them as far as he can.

The obligation of fasting, and perhaps, sometimes, of abstinence he reasons does not bind one in his situation; so he gets rid of that. He finds it difficult to attend Mass on Sundays sometimes and he argues that the inconvenience is sufficient to excuse him altogether. Soon he neglects Mass without any scruple even when he could easily comply with his obligation. He has passed the line beyond which he had at first thought he could not go. The rest is easy. He becomes an indifferent Catholic, one who is such only in name.

It begins with little things. The wish to gain heaven as easily as possible—the grudging service rendered to God—the cutting off of all that was not absolutely required. This is the story of thousands. It is this foolish idea that we can somehow squeeze into heaven by a narrow margin that is beginning the ruin of many.—Pittsburg Observer.

### Cause For Indignation.

The excuse often made for crooked Catholic politicians, that "they are no worse than the other fellows," is the stupidest that could be offered. On the lips of the ignorant it does not seem so out of place; but when one hears it from men who ought to know better, it begets righteous indignation.—Sacred Heart Review.

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