

CHATS WITH YOUNG MEN.

Your Self Faith Measures Your Achievement

It was said that Napoleon's presence in a battle doubled the strength of his forces. Half the effectiveness of an army resides in the soldier's faith in his leader. When the leader doubts, hesitates, wavers, the whole army is thrown into confusion; but his confidence doubles the assurance of every man under him.

The mental faculties, like soldiers, must believe in their leader—the unconquerable will. The mind of the doubter, the hesitator, the waverer, the man who is not sure of himself, who thinks he is not equal to what he has undertaken, is set toward failure, and everything works against him. There is a weakening all along the line.

In an emergency, as in danger, a man can often perform feats of great strength which he could not even approximate in cold blood. Arousing a man multiplies his power tremendously. Think of what delicate men and women, even invalids, have accomplished when dominated by some supreme occasion or a mighty passion. The imperious "must" gives added strength and unusual power to all the faculties. So a great self-faith, an unwavering self-confidence, braces the entire man, physically, mentally, morally. It raises him to his highest power, and makes him do with ease what would be impossible without this wonderful stimulus.

An overmastering faith in oneself often enables comparatively ignorant men and women to do marvelous things—tasks which sensitive, timid, doubtful people, of far greater ability and much finer texture and nobler qualities shrink from attempting.

Your achievement will never rise higher than your self-faith. It would be as reasonable for Napoleon to have expected to get his army over the Alps by sitting down and declaring that the undertaking was too great for him, as for you to hope to achieve anything significant in life while harboring grave doubts and fears as to your ability.

The miracles of civilization have been performed by men and women of great self-confidence, who had unwavering faith in their power to accomplish the tasks they undertook. The race would have been centuries behind what it is to-day had it not been for their grit, their determination, their persistence in finding and making real the thing they believed in and which the world often denounced.

THE LAW OF SUCCESS.

There is no law by which you can get success without expecting it, vigorously demanding it, assuming it. There must be a strong, firm self-faith first, or the thing desired never comes. There are no accidents in this world. There is no room for chance in God's world of system and supreme order. Everything must have not only a cause, but also a sufficient cause—a cause as large as the result. A stream cannot rise higher than its source. A great success must have a great source in expectation, in self-confidence, and in persistent endeavor to attain it. No matter how great the ability, how large the genius, or how splendid the education, the achievement will never rise higher than the confidence. He can who thinks he can, and he can't who thinks he can't.

It does not matter what other people think of you, of your plans, or of your aims. No matter if they call you a visionary, a crank, or a dreamer, you must believe in yourself. If you forsake yourself by losing your confidence, you can accomplish nothing. Never allow anybody or any misfortune to shake your belief in yourself. You may lose your property, your health, your reputation, even, but there is always some hope for you so long as you keep a firm faith in your self. If you never lose that, but keep pushing on, the world will sooner or later make way for you, and you may regain the confidence of those who have denounced you.—O. S. M. in Success.

Religion Is Needed.

The men who do not go to Church need most the good things the Church would give them. They are living in their lower natures—lives, at best, of refined or aesthetic animalism, but more probably immoral, corrupt and sensual. Loss of religion, lukewarmness in it, results commonly from violations of the moral law—from the loss of honesty, chastity, or sobriety. Honest, not hypocritical, church-going, would bring men back to virtue and piety, through instruction, prayer and worship, through strengthening and purifying sacraments, and through sympathy, good example and mutual help. Right reason teaches the immortality of the soul, the existence of God, the filial relation of man to God, and the moral law graven on men's hearts by the obedience to the moral law is necessary for man's happiness here and hereafter, and for the best good of human society. Therefore, if there were no Christian revelation nor Christian church at all, wise and true men would form ethical and religious societies, to have the aid of association in the greatest of all concerns.

Signs of Deterioration of Character. When you are satisfied with mediocrity.

When commonness doesn't trouble you.

When you do not feel troubled by a poor day's work, or when a slighted job does not haunt you as it once did.

When you are satisfied to do anything "just for now," expecting to do it better later.

When you can work untroubled in the midst of confusion, systemless surroundings which you might remedy.

When you can listen without protest to indecent stories.

When your ambition begins to cool and you no longer demand the same standard of excellence that you once did.

When you do not make a confidant of your mother as you once did, or are ill at ease with her.

When you begin to think your father an old fogey.

When you begin to associate with people whom you would not think of taking to your home, and you would not want the members of your families to know that you know.

OUR BOYS AND GIRLS.

HOW THEY MADE A MAN OF JOHNNY.

By Rev. George Bamford.

CHAPTER VI.

FATHER McREADY'S STORY.

"Do you think he'll fog us?" said Johnny, with tears in his eyes. He had talked very bravely about it the night before, but for all that he had lain awake a little longer than usual, and visions of home—his father's caressing arms and his mother's kiss—had mixed with visions of himself writhing beneath the master's lash.

"He'll fog us right enough," said Corney, "you've had your warnings, haven't you, Pop?"

"What warnings?" said Johnny.

"Oh! he always gives two warnings; it's hop, skip, and a jump with Father McReady. The first time you disobey—anything bad, you know—he gives a little hop at you—talks to you—makes himself certain, he says, that 'you know the law, pop boy'; the second time it's a skip, a little further than the hop; he looks angry, and blows you up; and some of the fellows say his blowings up are worse than his floggings."

"Yes," put in Hardwin, "I do hate to be jawed at."

"You, you Rhinoceros," laughed Corney, "no wonder: your skin's so hard; a flogging's nothing to you. Why! it would take a cart whip worked by a sixty-horse-power steam engine to make you feel. Well, Johnny, the third time Father McReady jumps, and the further you are away from him when he jumps the better."

"Does he hit hard?"

"Don't he?" said Corney; "he don't do it often, but when he does it, he does it."

"But oh! I say! it does hurt much!"

The mischievous twinkle was in Corney's eyes, and a curl of merriment about the corners of his mouth, spite of his own expected flogging, as he made answer, "A well! it's the worst punishment out, you know. They have it now for fellows they can't cure with prison or anything else."

"How does it feel?"

"Oh! the first stroke is just like a thousand cats fastening their claws into you."

"And the second?" said Hardwin, laughing.

"And the second is like those same thousand cats drawing their claws out again with a bit of bleeding flesh. But," said Corney, half-frightened himself at Johnny's frightened face, "when you've had fifty or sixty cuts, you know, you don't feel it so much."

"Does he give fifty?" said Johnny, turning still whiter than before—"nonse."

"Fifty!" said Corney. "Ah! he's a one-er when he's at it. Fifty's not the number for what he gives."

The spirit of "stuffing up" was in Corney, and he did not leave his poor little victim till he had drawn a picture of horrors, some of which at least Johnny's fears drove him to believe true.

He told how when he was flogged himself he had five times fainted and been brought to by burnt feathers. Father McReady still standing over him to apply the birch the moment he revived; and how he had lain in bed for six weeks afterwards, and a London physician of great eminence had been called in to rescue him from the jaws of death.

"That's what makes me so long," said Corney; "I was quite a dump before that flogging; but people grow more in bed when they're ill, and I grew right out of mine; would you believe it Johnny, I hung two feet out of bed; twice during those six weeks they had to shift me on to a longer bedstead."

When Cornelius scampered away, chuckling at his own cleverness, he did not know what harm his words had done.

Our readers will agree with us that poor Corney was not a bad boy; he had a conscience, and certainly he had a kind affectionate nature, and was true to his friends; but he had a sense of humor which was a little wicked, and could not resist the delight of "stuffing up." Of course his nonsense about the horrors of flogging was not all believed, but it left an impression; and ten minutes had not passed before Hardwin and Johnny were well on their road to pay a visit to Mrs. Popwith at Bermondsey.

Wrangle was in great trouble; he would not have hurt Johnny or got him into mischief for the world, and he was mightily relieved when he was told an hour or so afterwards that the two had returned, looking very sheepish in the care of a policeman who had suspected and brought them back in triumph.

Johnny now felt the thousand cats tearing at him with more fury than ever; his flogging was certain; and he shed a deluge of tears as, in obedience to a summons from Brother Severus, he left Hardwin and entered Father McReady's room alone.

He could scarcely believe it true, when Father McReady, getting up from the table where he had been writing, took him by the hand and made him sit down on a little low chair beside him, patted him on the head and told him to leave off crying for he wanted to have a talk with him. He went on with his letters for some minutes, while Johnny's sobs and an ill-gone gradually died away.

"You poor, foolish, little fellow!" said Father McReady at last, stroking the child's hair; you foolish, little fellow! What did you want to run away from me for? I try to be kind to you—I'm sure I want to be kind to you."

By degrees, as Father McReady talked, Johnny lost his fear, and began to talk too.

"Please, Sir, I didn't know it was any harm. It isn't wrong to run away, is it?"

"Yes, Johnny, it is. Didn't I see you playing yesterday with my little dog, 'Brindle'?"

"Yes," answered Johnny, wondering what Brindle had to do with it.

"Well! you were calling him naughty and threatening to beat him."

"He wouldn't stop where I put him," said Johnny, getting interested; "I wanted him to stand up on his hind legs in a corner, and he wouldn't."

"Poor Brindle! I think you were a little hard on him. First of all, he isn't your dog, so he wasn't bound to obey you; and then he hasn't any reason, so he didn't know what you wanted. Little dogs can't be naughty, you see, Johnny; but little boys can—at least those of them who've got reason. Tell me, my son, who put you here?"

"Father," said Johnny, beginning to whimper.

"Did he wish you to stop?"

"Yes," said Johnny.

"And to obey your masters? Very well then, you see to run away is an act of disobedience to masters and also to parents; unless there's some very strong reason, it could never be right. Little dogs need not stop where they're put; little boys must. God puts them where they are, and puts their master to take care of them. Now, listen, Johnny, while I tell you a story."

And Johnny left off whimpering and settled himself to listen.

Some time ago, there were three boys about your age, who became great friends together. They were always up and down the playground together, with their arms around each other's necks, talking. I don't like too much of that sort of thing."

said Father McReady, by the way—I would rather see boys playing good games with their fellows. Poor little things! they had all been with me for a long time, and two of them at least had no friend but myself."

"No father and mother?" said Johnny, edging a little closer to Father McReady.

"No father and mother—or rather, what is worse—one of them had a father, but he had left his child. He brought me the boy when he was out a baby—a poor, diseased, miserable baby—and after a few months I heard no more of him. I took care of the poor orphan baby till he grew up into a strong, healthy boy."

"My father wouldn't leave me," said Johnny.

"No, my boy, he wouldn't; how can parents do it? But they do it in these bad days, and this one did it."

"Did you like the boys?" said Johnny, getting still a little nearer to Father McReady.

"Of course I did. I like all children. What should I have them about me for if I didn't? They are not like girls in a shop, Johnny, they don't pay. Well! the poor little fellows, after they had been with me a good many years, got reading tales about Robinson Crusoe and that sort of thing and took it into their heads to go away. Far away in the North—two hundred miles away—one of them had a cousin, he didn't know where they would go and find him, and then live happy together—the three by themselves—with no lessons, and no masters, and no one to interfere with their friendship."

"How would they get food?" asked Johnny.

"They didn't think of that. So one bright day in February, when all looked cheery and happy, they started off full of life and spirits and went on their road, as they thought, to London. Poor, little foolish things, they thought they could do without obeying, and without the masters whom God had given them to take care of them."

We went for them, Johnny, in every direction, especially on the road to London, for the friends of the only one who had friends lived in London. But they had mistaken the road and were going away from London instead of towards it."

"For a time they went on merrily. When they started the sky was bright and the air soft, but of a sudden the wind changed; it became bitterly cold; and the sky was overcast with clouds. They had gone away quickly when they got the chance; they had no food; and had not even taken their overcoats. They had travelled ten miles, and had got to a big town, but it was dark and cold, and snowing, and men and women hastened to their warm firesides but did not see or heed the children. Then tired, and cold and hungry, the children saw they could not do without the grown men whom God had put over them. 'Let us go back,' they said, and they turned and plodded wearily, wearily against the bitter storm."

"It was 8 o'clock now, and there was no light except from the snow, and the snow was driven into their eyes and out their faces with its sharpness, and was whisked all about them by sudden, fierce gusts, confusing them and making it darker rather than light. One of them—he was the weakest, and we had but lately been shielding him from the lightest breath of cold wind in the infancy—could not stand up against this wild wind. 'I cannot go on!' he said, 'let us sit down!'"

"Did they sit down all in the wet and snow?" said Johnny.

"Only for a time; they got up and struggled on again, and the two stronger ones took poor little Johnny, as they called him, by the hand, and tried to run with him, to keep him warm; they said, 'But they could not go far; the wind took their breath away; the snow got into their dresses and clogged them; their strength was failing, and at last they stumbled and fell as often as they rose.'"

"Did no one see them, Father?"

"No one saw them; they were shy by nature, and did not like to speak; they did not like, poor foolish kids, to tell the tale of their folly, and wretchedness and weakness made their shyness deeper; and though their lives began to be in danger, they shrink away from aid. The policeman went by upon his beat, but the driving snow blinded him, and the boys were afraid to cry out. Carts after carts came struggling on for the morning's market in London, but they lay hidden by a heap of drift on the roadside, and half-stopped by cold and misery they did not speak. They had reached—when they could go no farther—the top of a small rise in the road, and down in a hollow, in the midst of trees, was a cottage. The light from its windows shone cheerily out, and the poor boys looked at it and longed to be under the snug shelter and by the warm fireside, but that strange shyness held them back, and they dared not go down and knock. See, Johnny, how little it is children to be alone; how they need, as God wills them to need, the help of men."

"They were strangely brave, as well as strangely timid. They gave up the thought of struggling on, and two of them lay quietly down and tried to go to sleep; one even took off his jacket and wrapped it round his head, for the wind had blown his cap away, and his head," he said, "was cold."

But they could not sleep; the weaker boy kept running and crying. Oh! that he had never gone away! Oh! that he was back again! that he had not disobeyed! Liberty looked so pleasant to him, and he went away so joyously—but it was not pleasant now.

"Poor, poor boy! his sobs grew weaker and weaker, and he ran about less; and at last, as the dull morning began to break, he too was still."

"Was he dead?" said Johnny, with trembling lip.

"About 6 o'clock a workman came by and found them; and help was got from the cottage in the dip of the hill whose friendly light had shone upon them in vain. He was not dead; they bore them all into the warm shelter of a gentleman's farmhouse close at hand; into the shelter of warm hearths, and wise hearts; with love enough to tend them with no stint of pains; and wisdom to win back the obbling life by slow degrees. But for poor little James it was all in vain; he opened his eyes once on the shelter and the love he had cried for—and he died."

"And the other two?"

"The other two did not so much as take cold; and they are now your schoolfellows, and one of them is—will you guess, Johnny?"

"Thomas! Hardwin, who tempted you to run away this morning; so easily, murmured Father McReady, "do boys forget lessons, and forget kindness!"

"Please, Father," said Johnny, slipping his hand into Father McReady's, "I will not run away again."

"Do not, my child; the day that poor lad died was the saddest day of my life. But after all, Johnny, his death was not so very sad; he is warm and sheltered and happy in heaven, I doubt not. It would be sadder a great deal, my poor boy, if you were to fall into mischief, and boys do fall into mischief if they begin with running away. God bless you, Johnny, and keep you good."

There were tears in Johnny's eyes as he went out, and he did what only a Catholic boy would naturally do. The Oratory door was open, and he stole in and knelt before the Blessed Sacrament, and then before the image of our Lady; "oh! mother!" he said, "it is very hard to be good; please help me."

A few minutes afterwards Corney was standing in the passage, when Johnny rushed by him, hiding his face. "Hallo!" said Corney, "I wonder what's up now? I must look after that boy better," mused Corney in a fatherly kind of way, "or he'll go wrong."

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TO BE CONTINUED.

Study in the Heart of Jesus the ideas you should form of the greatness, beauty, and felicity of spiritual blessings. Oh, the rich treasure of Thy Heart, O Jesus! I will give all to buy it, casting into it all my anxiety.—St. Bernard.

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