

CHATS WITH YOUNG MEN

WHO'S WHO?

Who wears my neckties when I'm home? My brother, Whom have I nick-named "Ivory-dome?" My brother. Who is it mother thinks has wings, Who spoils my socks and shirts and things, And when I crab, who merely sings? My brother. Who is it sews my buttons tight? My sister, Who lets me in real late at night? My sister, Who lends me money when I'm broke, Who never snitches when I smoke And feeds me good things till I choke? My sister, Who pays the bills I can't make good? My father, And who has always understood? My father, Who is it never fumed or cursed When I've deserved the very worst, Although his heart could almost burst? My father, Who does the things no other can? My mother, Who made me, if I am, a man? My mother, Who knows if I am sick at night, Who tells me if I'm wrong or right, Who makes the whole world warm and bright? My mother.

— JOHN URBAN RILEY

LET US BE GENTLE AND KIND

Courtesy is to society what oil is to machinery — the lubricant that prevents friction. To be of the highest sort it must proceed from principle and be habitual. It should come from a kind heart full of good will. Then it is real, regular, reliable.

Some time ago New York newspapers gave an account of the death of a man who was asphyxiated while alone in his apartment in a large apartment house. At the inquest which followed, a lady who lived on the same floor with this man said she had heard him groaning, but that he had always been so very rude to women, she did not make any effort to see what the trouble was.

About the same time another news item appeared, stating that a wealthy woman left in her will to an employee of a big trust company of which she was a patron, a hundred thousand dollars, to mark her appreciation of his devotion to her interests and comforts, "as well as his unflinching courtesy, honor, and promptness."

Each item tells its own story. But for his habitual rudeness and lack of courtesy the life of the first man might have been saved. Because of his habitual courtesy and kindness, the second man won a large fortune.

We never know what will come of courteous conduct — our kindnesses, smiles, or little attentions to people whom we wait upon or come in contact with in any way; but we do know the immediate effect upon ourselves. We cannot hold a kindly attitude to others, we cannot be courteous and helpful without feeling better ourselves.

The gracious "Thank you," so often neglected, the pleasant smile, the suppression of rude, hasty words that are sure to give pain, the maintenance of self-control, and an agreeable expression even under the most trying conditions, the attention to others which we would wish accorded to ourselves — how easily we can be enriched and uplifted, made cheerful and happy, by the observance of these simple things! And how they help us to get on in life!

Unfortunately in large cities where there is perpetual crowding and hurrying, the example of seeing everybody pushing, crowding and trying to get the most comfortable seat or secure the place of advantage tends to encourage the development of the most selfish human instincts.

We are all familiar with public hogs, especially the "end seat hog," who gets on a car, takes his seat on the outside end, and compels everybody who boards the car after him to stumble over his feet to get past him. I have seen young men forcing their way through a crowd, nearly knocking people down, trying to get into a car first so they could monopolize the best seats.

"I recall an interesting anecdote of the value of politeness in history that should be of especial interest to Americans," said a noted Frenchman in a lecture on good manners, translated for a New York newspaper: "The Marshal de Rochambeau, who fought bravely for the Americans in the War of Independence, was one of the many good men condemned to the guillotine during the Reign of Terror. One morning he and a crowd of others were led out of prison to a cart which conveyed the victims to execution. Among them was a priest. The Marshal de Rochambeau and the priest were the last of the party. The old soldier, wishing to show respect to religion, begged the priest to enter first into the vehicle. Removing his hat and bowing with graceful politeness, as if he were totally unaware that they were in the presence of death, he said:

"After you, Monsieur l'Abbe!" "The priest, seeing that the Marshal, who was eighty years old, was much older than himself, did not wish to go first, but, bowing with equal politeness, said:

"After you, Monsieur le Maréchal!" "After they had exchanged courtesies for some minutes the jailer interfered, pushed the priest into the cart and said to the Marshal:

"Stand back, old Marshal; there is no room for you today."

"This very day saw the end of the Terror, the Marshal was released from prison and spent his last days in peace."

"After you" will unravel a crowd quicker than any vulgar, selfish pushing and crowding to be first. The world itself makes way for the kindly, pleasing, gracious personality. People will voluntarily stand aside and let a polite, well-bred person pass when the unattractive, rude, boorish hustler, however able he may be, must elbow his way and push through the crowd. His boorishness antagonizes all with whom he comes in contact.

The "After you" attitude is especially desirable in the hot season when tempers are more easily ruffled than in cooler weather. A little courtesy and consideration for others will go a long way to allay the discomfort of crowded cars and boats, and to make life generally more agreeable in the vacation months.

TRY TO BE AN INTERESTING TALKER

There are a great number of people who could talk interestingly if they could only get hold of themselves, and bring their resources into action. I have seen intellectual giants sit dumb in a drawing room while some pin-headed fellow was the center of attraction, because he knew how to wield to advantage his little ability.

How different it would be if as children we were all taught to express ourselves fearlessly, with facility and vigor in the presence of adults.

In every rank of society we see people placed at a disadvantage because of the lack of early training in self-expression. They are humiliated and embarrassed, unable to enjoy themselves, or contribute anything to the general enjoyment, because they never learned the art of putting their ideas into language. We see brainy men at public gatherings, when momentous questions are being discussed, sit silent, unable to tell what they know, when they are infinitely better informed than those who are making a display of smooth talk.

But it is never too late to correct a fault or to acquire a virtue. This is as true of the art of making conversation as of anything else.—Catholic Columbia.

OUR BOYS AND GIRLS

"TIS ONLY I"

I thought myself indeed secure So fast the door, so firm the lock; But lo! he toddling comes to lure My parent ear with timorous knock.

My heart were stone, could it withstand The sweetness of my baby's plea— That timorous, baby knocking and "Please let me in—it's only me."

I threw aside the unfinished book, Regardless of its tempting charms, And, opening wide the door, I took My laughing darling in my arms.

Who knows but in Eternity I like a truant child shall wait The glories of a life to be, Beyond the Heavenly Father's gate.

And will that Heavenly Father heed The truant's suppliant cry As at the outer door I plead "Tis I, O Father! only I!"

—ROSENE FIELD

A GIFT TO THE SACRED HEART

Nurse Mildreth smiled into her little charge's upturned face. "It is the Sacred Heart of Jesus who has made me so happy," she said in response to an eager question.

"He has granted me my wish after many, many weeks of prayer." "But where, where did you see the Sacred Heart of Jesus? And what is the Sacred Heart? Is it really a person?" questioned the little one eagerly.

Nurse Mildreth smoothed the sunny hair as she answered gently: "You could not quite understand, dear one. In our little church is the Sacred Heart. Yes, it is a Person—a wonderful, wonderful Person, and to this Person I prayed and prayed for something, oh, so special, and to-day it has been granted to me."

The child's wondering eyes never left the nurse's face, and when the nurse would change the subject the child returned to it.

"I think it was sweet of the Sacred Heart to grant you your wish. I am going to go into your little church some day, and do something nice for your wonderful Person. I'd like to know Him, too."

Nurse Mildreth sighed. She hoped this bright little girl might some day go into her church, that her loving nature might expand with the truth and the purity of the beautiful Faith. Then she went about her work and thought no more of the childish promise.

Daddy Jake knelt with his head resting upon the altar rail. Many a prayer had passed his lips, but none so piteously earnest as this. Tired, toil-worn and at the end of his courage and resources, he was crying for succor from the God who had never deserted him. "O God," he moaned, almost aloud, "must I beg? I have tried so hard."

Hot tears forced themselves from the wide eyes. Daddy Jake had fought a fine fight. Quarter by

quarter he had laid a bit away from his meagre earnings selling papers. Little he spent for food, less for his dingy lodgings, yet all his board had been swept away in one week's illness. The last ten cents had gone of necessity to the soup kitchen for the delicious hot soup and the bread. Not one cent was left for a night's lodging.

"O God," he whispered hoarsely, "send help to me that I may not beg."

And the brown hands were stretched appealingly toward the altar, before which burned the lamp that meant the Presence of One who is never deaf to the call of distress.

The door of the vestibule of the church was pushed softly open. A little girl with wonderful golden hair came forward, peering eagerly into the dim interior, for the setting sun was casting shadows all about. She looked around, anxiously walking slowly down the aisle.

"I cannot see any person," she murmured, and then "Dear Sacred Heart, dear Sacred Heart," she shrilled, in a childish whisper.

There was no answering sound and the child hesitated, disappointed, not knowing what to do. Suddenly her eye caught the kneeling figure before the altar, the old tired face, the hands held out, suppliantly.

"There is the person," she whispered to herself.

Up the aisle she tripped, her cheeks red with excitement and pleasure. Breathless, she reached Daddy Jake's side. Into his outstretched hand she pushed a bill that had been tightly clutched in her own small palm, and with her fresh young lips close to his ear she whispered:

"Dear Sacred Heart, I am giving you this money that father gave me to do anything I wanted with. You made Nurse Mildreth so happy by granting her request, I wanted to give you something. She said you were here in this little church; so I came right away when father gave me the money."

To the man's amazed eyes it seemed as though the wonderful child-form melted away into thin air. But it had not. The little girl had slipped noiselessly out of the church, and had hastened home to tell Nurse Mildreth a queer, disconnected story of a gift to the Sacred Heart. The nurse had smiled indulgently at the childish fancy, and straightway forgot all about it.

But if the child had melted away the two dollar bill in Daddy Jake's hands remained real and sound enough. More than half dazed by it all he had gone out, bought a supply of evening papers, sold everyone of them, and had then gone back to his old lodgings.

A week later, Father Rehan, the pastor of the little church, heard the queer tale from Daddy Jake's own lips. The old man had had a week of extraordinary good fortune in business, and he now proffered a two dollar bill to the Father.

"I do not understand it," Daddy Jake explained, "but I do know that God Himself sent the little girl to me. She wanted the money to go to the Sacred Heart, and you, Father, will see that it does."

Father Rehan took the offering, and then there sprung up a friendship that drove all the hardship from Daddy Jake's life. For Father Rehan found a place for him as a caretaker, where his home was pleasant and his duties light. Till the day he died Daddy Jake never forgot to thank God for the little girl's gift to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.—Catholic Opinion.

MEDIAVAL MONASTERIES AND THE Y. M. C. A.

"So many slurs and never a compliment!" exclaims a correspondent, sending a clipping from the Globe and Commercial Advertiser of New York. In the excerpt transmitted to us the writer speaks of the danger of immorality in the soldier's life and describes it as the worst thing about war.

"So, too, it is. But this was meant only as an introduction to a panegyric of the Y. M. C. A., which the writer "padded out" by a timely reference to the immorality of Catholic monasteries. "In the first place," he moralizes, "it is not good that the man should be alone, now, any more than it was before. Ever arrived in the Garden; and a womanless place of congregation is apt to slump. Even the history of the medieval monasteries is not pretty reading."

Why that unhistoric and unscientific innuendo about a subject of which the writer is evidently in complete ignorance, except for such unsavory information as has filtered down to him through poisonous layers of anti-Catholic prejudice? The comparatively few historic instances of laxity are the merest exceptions to the glorious record of those "medieval monasteries" which were the hallowed sanctuaries of purity and holiness as well as the homes of learning and the refuges of all its poverty, need and distress. The counsel of permanent virginity would never have been given by Our Lord had it been impossible, though it was meant for those only who could take it. He Himself gave us the example in His own life. As for the Catholic soldier in the trenches or the camp God's grace will not be wanting to enable him to preserve his purity inviolate. Sufficient for him are prayer, watchfulness and the Sacraments. There can be no objection against Protestants and praise of their own Y. M. C. A., but it should not be accompanied by slurs against the religion and institutions that Catholic soldiers hold dearer than life.—America.

THE FAITH OF SOLDIERS

M. BAZIN RELATES INTERESTING EXPERIENCES GATHERED IN TRENCHES OF FRANCE

Among the soldiers at the front, the religious reaction, so noticeable when the War broke out, has somewhat changed its character. It has lost its novelty, and, therefore, something of its attraction for shallow minds; but in souls more deep and thoughtful it has implanted habits that will survive the War, to which they owe their existence.

A symptom of the enlightenment that these religious habits have fostered is noticed by the well-known writer and academician, M. Rene Bazin: the convert and believing soldiers are no longer merely anxious to save their souls by making their peace with God; they are also eager to Christianize their country. M. Rene Bazin is in touch with many unknown soldiers; he willingly speaks of his experiences in this respect, and from one so highly conscientious they must be received as absolutely true.

His notices, among his unknown correspondents, who are mostly men of the people, a growing feeling that the official attitude of the French Government with regard to religion is unsatisfactory. To arrive at this conviction has been a work of time; it is the result of experience and of reflection, but it has more value than a spontaneous act of faith, prompted by fear of death, and it holds more promise for the future.

These soldiers clamor for prayers. "We are not doing enough for God," writes one, who is only 250 metres from the Germans. Another writes that victory will only be complete when public prayers are offered; a third that France must publicly return to Christ and then all will be well.

The writers, adds M. Bazin, are mere private soldiers. Many of them are peasants; they have no interest to profess feelings that are not theirs in reality. The Godless attitude of official France did not hurt them in 1914; in 1917 it alarms and pains them, a proof of the religious enlightenment that has widened and elevated their souls. Roughly speaking—in matters spiritual generalities are seldom accurate—we may say that, after nearly three years' war the soldiers, like the civilians, have become from a moral standpoint, either better or worse. Those of whom M. Rene Bazin speaks are in the first category. Their spiritual perceptions have been intensified and an apostolic spirit has been awakened that, after the War, may bring forth plentiful fruit.

A PRIEST'S RETURN TO HIS PARISH

A priest, who, before the War, was cure of Antreches, a village in the "department de l'Oise," was in November, 1914, removed as a prisoner to Germany, where he remained seventeen months. He had since been sent back to France with other French soldiers, who were left standing by the Germans, but his parish being still in the enemy's hands, it was not till the other day, after the French advance, that he had leave to visit his old home. It is no easy matter to obtain permission to return to these liberated villages, where the retreating enemy has scattered explosive bombs and where even the unbурied German corpses often conceal engines of death, that have, more than once, killed the unwary French soldiers, who were told off to bury the bodies. "They are now forbidden to touch them," said a general. "We must, above all, keep our men's lives safe, though those unbурied corpses are unpleasant to look at." Our cure's return to his once flourishing parish brought him face to face with scenes of destruction that surpassed all he had imagined. He first stopped at a hamlet called Hautebraye that the inhabitants had been removed by the Germans, but an old couple, named Menard, succeeded, by bidding in a cellar, in remaining among the ruins of their old home. There was no church at Hautebraye before the War. Since the advance of the French, two oratories have been arranged, where soldier-priests and military chaplains celebrate Mass. There are graves everywhere, in the gardens and in the fields, as Antreches, a Calvary has escaped destruction.

The big Christ with His outstretched arms, and a statue of Mary Magdalen, are left standing among desolate surroundings. The village of Antreches is filled with barbed wire railings. There are cables everywhere, with inscriptions in German such as "Lebensgefahr," "peril of death." Certain quarries, still unexplored, were called by the enemy "The Devil's Hole," hence the severity of the military authorities now in possession, with regard to visitors, who, unconsciously, may walk into a trap. With much difficulty, the cure made his way to the "place" where his church once stood; a magnificent church, he pathetically tells us, regarded as an historical monument of importance and value. He found himself in presence of a heap of stones; the stone spire and the columns lay on the ground in a shapeless mass. Nothing was left standing but a few bits of wall. The poor priest wept that he sat down in the garden of his shattered presbytery and wept. The sight of the birds flying in and out among the broken stones and preparing to build their nests among the ruins brought hopeful thoughts. "Some day," he writes, "life will return to Antreches;

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homes will be rebuilt and, may be, God will be served here more faithfully than before the upheaval. There is something very beautiful in this clinging to hope in face of ruin and desolation unspeakable.

At Rheims, some nuns are allowed to remain, those who by caring for the sick and wounded render valuable service to the inhabitants whose circumstances detain in the stricken city. Among these religious are some Sisters of the Assumption, the nursing Sisters of the Poor, who under the shells, go to and fro between the cellar of their shattered house and other cellars where their poor clients are suffering from sickness and from fear. They keep up a bright spirit, but neglect no reasonable precautions; thus they use masks against the shells which when they explode fill the atmosphere with poisonous vapors. The cheerful heroism of these little Sisters is wonderful. The other day, at the request of the Mayor, who feared that provisions might run short, the Cardinal Archbishop ordered the three Communities of women, who remain at Rheims, to send away half their members, as it was urgent to diminish the number of mouths to feed. They obeyed. In each religious house half the Community remained to carry on the work among the poor, the others were sent to Paris. These last were, according to their own report, infinitely the most to be pitied. The Sisters selected to remain at their post considered themselves privileged and rejoiced at their appointed lot.

A conversation with a lady who had lately returned from the province held by the enemy throws a curious light upon the mental attitude of the German priests who act as military chaplains to the armies. This lady has considerable property near Valenciennes. She has only just been sent back to France, and having lived for nearly three years among the Germans, is qualified to speak of them. Personally, she suffered no grievances beyond those common to all the inhabitants of these captive regions, but her conversations with well educated Germans gave her the impression of a people whose discipline has turned to fanaticism and whose conscience and judgment have been deformed by militarism. The German priests whom she knew were well conducted and discharged the duties of their office regularly, but their allegiance to the Kaiser stood first and foremost. She was amused at their frankly expressed surprise when the village churches were filled with weeping people. "We thought that the French people no longer practised their religion as the Government influence of an unbelieving and persecuting Government must, in the long run, have an evil influence over the masses, there still, thank God, existed steady and fervent Catholics, who, in the teeth of official opposition, faithfully practised their faith. These Catholics, charitable and zealous, patient under suffering and heroic in sacrifice, represent the real soul of France.—Providence Visitor.

A CHRISTIAN SOLDIER

Father Bernard Vaughan, S. J., recently traced the career of a soldier he had known as boy and man. Even before the youth left school he showed the inspiration of his life in his frequent use of the words: "Do your best for yourself, but put all your trust in God." As a young officer, he fell upon a companion in the messroom who tried to force him to listen to an indecent story. Not content with severely handling the story teller this modern Sir Galahad wrung from him a promise to never again serve up such garbage in their quarters.

"Twice a day he was on his knees in the trench for prayer, and during the day he kept up a fire of ejaculatory aspirations like a quick-firing gun," said Father Vaughan. "This fine Catholic soldier never allowed himself to fall short of the munition of prayer, and he kept his lines of communication with heaven, whence his spiritual rations were to come, always open. To his thinking, a Christian without prayer was in a worse plight than a soldier without arms, powerless to put up a fight. How he loved going to the nursery

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What an influence such an officer must have had on the young men in his command! Many of his type were raised up in our troops to safeguard the faith and morals of the American boys who are going out from their homes to what peril of soul and body God alone knows!—Sacred Heart Review.

BIGOTS HAVE NO REAL RELIGION

"That what we falsely call a religious cry," wrote Charles Dickens, "is easily raised by men who have no religion and who, in their daily practice, set at naught the commonest principles of right and wrong; that it is begotten of intolerance and persecution; that it is senseless, besotted, inveterate and unmerciful; all history teaches us." So wrote the great English novelist in his preface to Barnaby Rudge, a story based on the horrors of the "no Popery" riots, in England, of 1788.

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