

CHATS WITH YOUNG MEN

COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS

Have you sorrows? You must bear them; Without murmur, without moan; Think not you may shrink or share them; Keep them for yourself alone. But if you have joys—oh, show them, Broadcast to the winds go throw them, Seed like through the world go sow them, And be glad when they are sown!

SQUARE PEGS IN ROUND HOLES

(Continued)

The greatest reward that this world has for the man who does his very best is the joy that comes to him in doing it. To the faculty that is born in the individual with the desire to do and increases with the progress of the task, civilization is indebted for its great endeavors and achievements. However, to perform a definite service for humanity and merit the reward, the young man must resist the temptation to drift and fight his way to a place where his talents will find a proper outlet. Though some progressive corporations seem to realize the utility of placing the man where he rightly belongs, the common belief that the occupation is a factor in the success or failure of the individual is one which the world in general is slow to profit from. A father solicitous for his son's welfare, unwisely, without consulting the latter's abilities or preferences, selects for his vocation some lucrative profession which he himself admires. He is surprised when the son, in obedience to his natural inclinations, takes up his life work in another calling. And if the young man's choice is not in a line which offers a great opportunity for him to make a name for himself, he is regarded as a disappointment and a failure. Now the fact that the individual traits which suggest our course in life begin to reveal themselves in childhood, is proof that they are not of our making; and if the great majority of men incline to a place in the rank and file of life's army of toilers, how essential is it to the world's progress and harmony that they should do so. Have not those who are happy in filling well a place in the ranks every right to be classed as the world's successes?

The lower walks of life, however, offer a ready retreat for many suited to higher places, the burden of preparing for which they will not or think they cannot well endure. The call to the very highest positions is usually to young men whose circumstances make a ready response truly difficult. One will heed the call and courageously surmounting the obstacles march straight to his goal. Another foolishly allows himself to become disheartened at the prospect and decides to be contented with an occupation easier of attainment. To decree that he will not be contented seems to be the world's way of getting back at the man who thus attempts to side-step his responsibility. For history is replete with examples to show that the man who is meant to be a master of finance or a great diplomat has about the same chance of becoming a successful mechanic as the ordinary mechanic might have at success in either of those higher professions. Try as the former may to give himself unreservedly to the work in hand, the world's big problems in finance and diplomacy keep forcing themselves upon him for solution. The lash of livelihood's necessity drives him to his adopted calling from which the lash of his natural inclinations is ever driving him away. So he is compelled to walk a dividing line between two occupations bearing the burdens of both and reaping only in small part the benefits of either. At the age of twenty he thinks the price of admission to his real life work too high but ere he reaches forty he pays it more than once in playing the part of the misfit. The success of other men, who began life in circumstances very like his own, he attributes to their having been especially favored by fortune. And perhaps they were, as it only seems reasonable that the Great Being who is responsible for the talents and ambitions in man, would render, if necessary, special assistance that their purpose might be attained. In his proper place the man of ability is an object of envy, but out of it he is an object of pity. The thought that lends pathos to what is often called the world's greatest fiction tragedy, "The Tale of Two Cities," is—A Genius lost to Himself and to the World. An individual may honorably engage in the humblest of callings if he can truly say that he loves his work. But the bounden duty of the

young man, who is continually hunted by the call to an eminent or difficult occupation, is to bravely set himself to the accomplishment of his task; to strive, economize, persevere and sometimes—to wait; but always with the goal in view. Hard? Perhaps. But what of the alternative?

OUR BOYS AND GIRLS

SHORT SKETCH OF LIVES OF SAINTS OF THE WEEK

FEBRUARY 11.—ST. SEVERINUS, ABBOT OF AGAUNUM

St. Severinus, of a noble family in Burgundy, was educated in the Catholic faith, at a time when the Arian heresy reigned in that country. He forsook the world in his youth, and dedicated himself to God in the monastery of Agaunum, which then only consisted of scattered cells, till the Catholic King Sigismund built there the great abbey of St. Maurice. St. Severinus was the holy abbot of that place, and he governed his community many years in the exercise of penance and charity, when, in 504, Clovis, the first Christian king of France, lying ill of a fever, which his physicians had for two years ineffectually endeavored to remove, sent his chamberlain to conduct the Saint to Rome; for it was said that the sick from all parts recovered their health by his prayers. St. Severinus took leave of his monks, telling them he should never see them more in this world. On his journey he healed Eulalinus, Bishop of Novara, who had been for some time deaf and dumb; also a leper, at the gates of Paris; and coming to the palace he immediately restored the king to perfect health, by putting on him his own cloak. The king, in gratitude, distributed large alms to the poor and released all his prisoners. St. Severinus, returning toward Agaunum, stopped at Chateau-Landon in Gatinois, where two priests served God in a solitary chapel, among whom he was admitted, at his request, as a stranger, and was soon greatly admired by them for his sanctity. He foresaw his death, which happened shortly after, in 507. The place is now an abbey of reformed canons regular of St. Austin. The Huguenots scattered the greater part of his relics when they plundered this church.

FEBRUARY 12.—ST. BENEDICT OF ANIAN

Benedict was the son of Agulf, Governor of Langueoc, and was born about 750. In his early youth he served as cup bearer to King Pepin and his son Charlemagne, enjoying under them great honors and possessions. Grace entered his soul at the age of twenty, and he resolved to seek the kingdom of God with his whole heart. Without relinquishing his place at court, he lived there a most mortified life for three years; then a narrow escape from drowning made him vow to quit the world, and he entered the cloister of St. Seine. In reward for his heroic austerities in the monastic state, God bestowed upon him the gift of tears, and inspired him with a knowledge of spiritual things. As procurator he was most careful of the wants of the brethren, and most hospitable to the poor and to guests. Declining to accept the abbacy, he built himself a little hermitage on the brook Anian, and lived some years in great solitude and poverty; but the fame of his sanctity drawing many souls to him, he was obliged to build a large abbey, and within a short time governed three hundred monks. He became the great restorer of monastic discipline throughout France and Germany. First, he drew up with immense labor a code of the rules of St. Benedict, his great namesake, which he codified with those of other monastic founders, showing the uniformity of the exercises in each, and enforced by his "Penitential" their exact observance; secondly, he minutely regulated all matters regarding food, clothing, and every detail of life; and thirdly, by prescribing the same for all, he excluded jealousies and insured perfect charity. In a Provincial Council held in 818, under Charlemagne, at which he was present, it was declared that all monks of the West should adopt the rule of St. Benedict. He died February 11, 821.

FEBRUARY 14.—ST. VALENTINE, PRIEST AND MARTYR

Valentine was a holy priest in Rome, who, with St. Marinus and his family, assisted the martyrs in the persecution under Claudius II. He was apprehended and sent by the emperor to the prefect of Rome, who, on finding all his promises to make him renounce his faith ineffectual, commanded him to be beaten with clubs, and afterward to be beheaded, which was executed on the 14th of February, about the year 270. Pope Julius I. is said to have built a church near Ponte Mole to his memory which for a long time gave name to the gate now called Porta del Popolo, formerly Porta Valentini. The greater part of his relics are now in the Church of St. Praxedus. To abolish the heathen's lewd superstitious custom of boys drawing the names of girls, in honor of their goddess Februata Juno, on the 15th of this month, several zealous pastors substituted the names of Saints in billets given on this day.

FEBRUARY 15.—STS. FAUSTINUS AND JOVITA, MARTYRS

Faustinus and Jovita were brothers nobly born, and zealous professors of

the Christian religion, which they preached without fear in their city of Brescia, while the Bishop of that place lay concealed during the persecution. Their remarkable zeal excited the fury of the heathens against them, and procured them a glorious death for their faith in Lombardy, under the Emperor Adrian. Julian, a heathen lord, apprehended them; and the emperor himself, passing through Brescia, when neither threats nor torments could shake their constancy, commanded them to be beheaded. They seem to have suffered about the year 305. The city of Brescia honors them as its chief patrons, possesses their relics, and a very ancient church in that city bears their names.

FEBRUARY 16.—ST. ONESIMUS, DISCIPLE OF ST. PAUL

He was a Phrygian by birth, slave to Philemon, a person of note of the city of Colosse, converted to the faith by St. Paul. Having robbed his master and being obliged to fly, he providentially met with St. Paul then a prisoner for the faith at Rome, who there converted and baptized him, and sent him with his canonical letter of recommendation to Philemon, by whom he was pardoned, set at liberty, and sent back to his spiritual father, whom he afterwards faithfully served. That apostle made him, with Tychicus, the bearer of his Epistle to the Colossians, and afterwards, as St. Jerome and other Fathers witness, a preacher of the Gospel and a bishop. He was crowned with martyrdom under Domitian in the year 95.

FEBRUARY 17.—ST. FLAVIAN, BISHOP, MARTYR

Flavian was elected Patriarch of Constantinople in 447. His short episcopate of two years was a time of conflict and persecution from the first. Chrysaphius, the emperor's favorite tried to extort a large sum of money from him on the occasion of his consecration. His fidelity in refusing this simoniacal betrayal of his trust brought on him the enmity of the most powerful man in the empire.

A graver trouble soon arose. In 448 Flavian had to condemn the rising heresy of the monk Eutyches, who obstinately denied that Our Lord was in two perfect natures after His Incarnation. Eutyches drew to his cause all the bad elements which so early gathered about the Byzantine court. His intrigues were long baffled by the vigilance of Flavian; but at last he obtained from the emperor the assembly of a council at Ephesus, in August 449, presided over by his friend Dioscorus, Patriarch of Alexandria. In this "robber council," as it is called, Eutyches entered, surrounded by soldiers. The Roman legates could not even read the Pope's letters; and at the first sign of resistance to the condemnation of Flavian, fresh troops entered with drawn swords, and in spite of the protests of the legates, terrified most of the bishops into acquiescence. The fury of Dioscorus reached its height when Flavian appealed to the Holy See. Then it was that he so forgot his apostolic office as to lay violent hands on his adversary. St. Flavian was set upon by Dioscorus and others, thrown down, beaten, kicked, and finally carried into banishment. Let us contrast their ends. Flavian, true to the teaching of the Roman Pontiff, and sealed his faith with his blood. Dioscorus excommunicated the Vicar of Christ, and died obstinate and impenitent in the heresy of Eutyches.

KEEP IT UNSULLIED

It has been a cherished custom of American Catholics to take a pardonable pride in the admirable part which their fellow-believers of the past have played in the history of this country, from its discovery by that illustrious son of the Church, Christopher Columbus, all the way down through the years, even to the present day, when the flower of our youth is arrayed in such creditable numbers under the glorious banner of the Stars and Stripes in the world struggle for liberty and humanity. At patriotic celebrations we have been wont to dwell with pleasure upon the achievements of Catholic discoverers and explorers, who gave to islands, cities, rivers and mountains names that are perpetual memorials of our holy religion. We have rejoiced in recounting the inestimable services to God and Country by those pioneer missionaries—the Franciscan padres and the black-robed Jesuits—who contributed so much to the combined cause of civilization, education, and religion in those early times, tried men's souls to the utmost. We have contended—and rightly—that our system of education, maintained for conscience sake at great financial sacrifice, is splendidly adapted for rearing loyal citizens, for the very simple reason that it is designed for rearing good, practical Catholics; and a man cannot be a good, practical Catholic unless he is a loyal citizen.

That is the record of our past. It is a record that has been gradually but surely dissipating the inherited prejudice of non-Catholics against the Church and her children in the United States. It is a record that has been opening to our people positions of public honor and public trust, for which their integrity, their ability, and their patriotism have qualified them. The record is now in keeping of the Catholics of the present day. It

is a sacred trust; and we have not the slightest doubt but that they will measure up to all the requirements of their great responsibility. In no land on earth is Catholicism making such rapid and substantial progress as it is in the United States; and this is due in very great measure to the free and beneficent institutions of the country. These institutions are now menaced by an unscrupulous foreign foe; and the Government of the United States may justly say in this crisis: "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth." (Matt. xii, 30)

It is our proud privilege not only to maintain intact the glorious record of the past, but also to enhance its splendor, and to hand it down for the admiration and emulation of American Catholic generations for ages to come.—Catholic Telegraph.

SOME REFLECTIONS

BY NOTED CONVERTS OF LAST DECADE

The late Rev. F. F. DeCosta, immediately after his conversion to the Catholic Church, wrote:

"With profound gratitude I acknowledge the great goodness of God, who mercifully lightened my path, giving grace to overcome the deep prejudice against the Catholic faith, and has now led me, not without trial, yet with a shepherd's gentle hand, to the fold of the Catholic Church."

In the same connection he had the following to say on the subject of Papal Infallibility:

"It is time for candid non-Catholics to address themselves to the subject of Infallibility, and learn that the notion that it interferes with individual liberty is as true as that the mariner's compass renders the sailor an abject slave. Without instruments and guidance the sailor would be as free as the ancient Sidonian in his ivory galley with purple sails, without even an astrolabe to take the height of the polar star; dead-reckoning and guessing his way, gazing with strained, uncertain eye over pathless sea and perilous shore. The freedom that the devout Catholic loses in the freedom to lose his way in storm and night and fog."

To quote from the same article:

"For the last forty or fifty years an impressive procession, composed of clergy and laity, has been moving on from Canterbury to Rome. The significance of this spectacle is too evident. It can not fail of application in connection with new individuals. It would be idle at this late day to credit recent examples to impulse, and the devout Catholic loses in the freedom to lose his way in storm and night and fog."

DR. CHARLESON (SCOTCH)

The Catholic Times (1901) of Liverpool, Eng., says:

"Mr. Charleson had been struggling toward the 'light of Catholic truth. He had studied the Fathers and been convinced that in a unanimous voice they directed his steps toward the Catholic Church. With not less earnestness he questioned history, and its teaching when furnished by men of large learning and incorruptible character. Persons of this stamp carry with them a weight of authority, and their case serves to indicate the strength of the reaction in favor of the Catholic Church. These unusual testimonies possess evidential value. Newman's 'Apologia' and Ives' 'Trials of a Missionary' are only examples of the path through the dim, tangled Anglican wilderness, but they powerfully convince many of the legitimate nature of the call to accept the Roman position."

ADAPTED TO ALL

In that charming book of essays entitled "Agnuchesk," by Charles B. Fairbanks, one of the old-time Boston converts to the Church, published in the early part of the last century, occurs the following beautiful passage:

I have often been struck with the facility with which the Catholic religion adapts itself to the character of every nation. I have had some opportunity of observation; I have seen the Catholic Church on three out of four continents, and have everywhere noticed the same phenom-

enon. Mahometanism could never be transplanted to the snowy regions of Russia or Norway; it needs the soft enervating atmosphere of Asia to keep it alive; the veranda, the bubbling fountain, the noontide repose, are all parts of it.

Puritanism is the natural growth of a country where the sun seldom shines, and which is shut out by a barrier of water and fog from kindly intercourse with its neighbors. It could never thrive in the bright South.

The merry vine-dressers of Italy could never draw down their faces to the proper length and would be very unwilling to exchange their blithe-sonnetto for Sternhold and Hopkins version. But the Catholic Church, while it unites its professors in the belief of the same inflexible creed, leaves them entirely free in all mere externals and national peculiarities.

When I see the light-hearted Frenchman, the fiery Italian, the serious Spaniard, the cunning Greek, the dignified Armenian, the energetic Russian, the hard-headed Dutchman, the philosophical German, the formal and respectable Englishman, the thrifty Scotchman, the careless and warm-hearted Irishman and the calculating, go-ahead American, all bound together by the profession of the same Faith and yet retaining their national characteristics, I can compare it to nothing but to a similar phenomenon that we may notice in the prism, which, while it is a pure and perfect crystal, is found on examination to contain, in its perfection, all the various colors of the rainbow.—Sacred Heart Review.

THE BETHLEHEMITES

During this sacred season Bethlehem has not been the least among the cities of Juda. The little town and its little King have been the center of the world's thoughts. Even those who do not worship as God the Child who was born in the City of David, 2,000 years ago, have reverently turned their eyes to the Crib where the Child was placed by His Virgin Mother and where the Wise Men of the East came to adore Him.

There is a Divine and irresistible attraction in the memories of the birth-place of the Man-God. There, in visible form, He began to show His love for fallen man. There appeared the benignity, the grace, the loving kindness, the humanity of the Saviour. The Crib is but His first step to the Cross. And no one can leave the stern lessons of Calvary and His Victim without passing through the lowly portals of the cave which sheltered the Child. It may interest American Catholics to learn that here in the New World a religious body of men, affiliated to the great order of St. Francis of Assisi, once bore the name of "Bethlehemites" in honor of the heavenly Babe, whom its members promised to serve in helping the sick and the outcast. The records of the congregation prove the undying charity of the Church for suffering humanity. They furnish also an eloquent refutation of the charge that the Catholic Church took but little interest in the welfare of the Indian tribes conquered by the Spaniards four centuries ago.

The founder of the Bethlehemites was Pedro de Betancourt, a Spanish nobleman, a descendant of that Juan de Betancourt who conquered the Canary Islands for the Kings of Spain. Saddened, while working in the city of Guatemala, by the wretched condition of its sick poor, he built a rude hut as a hospital, and on his own shoulders frequently carried to this improvised shelter the victims of the plague and the wreckage of humanity which chance threw in his way or which his own tender charity made him salvage in the byways of the town. The work grew. Popes and kings approved and helped it and viceroys and prelates gave it their alms. Exhausted by his labors, Pedro de Betancourt, still in the vigor of manhood, died in 1667.

The name of the "Bethlehemite Brethren" was a familiar and a loved one in Latin America. To the vows of poverty, chastity and hospitality, they added another vow, that of caring for the sick, even those infected with contagious diseases. To every hospital, a school for poor children was added, a refutation of the oft-repeated accusation that Catholic Spain neglected the education of the natives of her colonies. The "Bethlehemite" hospitals were built on a splendid scale, in the solid and spacious architecture of the Spanish colonies, with airy halls and wide patios made bright with fountains and waving palms. Visitors to Havana may have seen one of the specimens of these splendid mansions for the poor and the sick in the Colegio de Belén, or Bethlehem, which passed from the hands of the Bethlehemites on their being expelled into the hands of the Spanish Government, and was later transferred by Queen Isabella in the middle of the last century to the Society of Jesus. A chain of Bethlehemite hospitals linked Havana and Guatemala through the City of Mexico, Lima, Arequipa, Santiago de Chile and Buenos Ayres with the southernmost limits of the New World. Over thirty of their hospitals offered shelter to the sick and the homeless. When they were swept away by the revolution of 1820 Spanish America was the poorer for their loss. The history of the Beth-

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lemonites is but one of the instances of that heroic charity of the Catholic Church which she learned at the Crib and which in varying forms she has constantly practised for the welfare of humanity. The name of Pedro de Betancourt should not be forgotten. It is one of the noblest in the history of South America. The Holy Christmas time gives a fitting opportunity to recall with gratitude his own virtues and the devotion and charity of his spiritual sons, the brethren of Bethlehem.—America.

THE PRIEST

If the priest is the physician, the spiritual father, the guide and the consoler of his parishioners he is also their friend, says the Catholic Bulletin. The true Catholic will always cherish the memory and the name of his priest as things included in his idea of what is sacred. On no account whatsoever will he allow that name to be humiliated by the thoughtless or the profane. Anything that savors of disrespect or even thoughtless want of respect will be at once met by him with just indignation.

Frequently, however, there are those who consider themselves privileged beyond others to the extent of treating the priest with familiarity that borders on the disrespectful. Some persons coming into closer contact with the priest will enjoy greater friendship and confidence with him; but this is always of a personal nature, and in no way exempts them from showing him that consideration and honor which as a minister of God is his due. On the contrary, the more closely a person is bound either by friendship or other ties to a priest the greater should be the veneration that person shows towards him whom God has placed as a spiritual father in the midst of His faithful.

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