

CHATS WITH YOUNG MEN

NEVER TOO LATE

Is it too late? Nay, nothing is too late. The heart shall cease to palpitate. Cato learned Greek at eighty; Sophocles wrote his grand Oedipus and Sinitides bore off the prize of verse from his compeers. When each had numbered more than four score years: And Theophrastus at four score and ten. Had begun his Characters of Men. Chaucer, at Woodstock, with the nightingales, At sixty wrote the Canterbury Tales. Goethe, at Weimar, toiling to the last. Completed Faust when eighty years were past. What, then! Shall we sit idly down and say The night hath come; it is no longer day? The night hath not yet come. We are not quite Out off from labor by the falling light; Something remains for us to do and dare. Even the oldest trees some fruit may bear. For age is opportunity no less Than youth itself, though in another dress; And as the evening twilight fades away The sky is filled with stars invisible by day.

—H. W. LONGFELLOW

DO IT TO A FINISH

When you finish a thing you ought to be able to say to yourself, "There, I am willing to stand for that piece of work. It is not pretty well done; it is done as well as I can do it; done to a complete finish. I will stand for that. I am willing to be judged by it."

Never be satisfied with "fairly good," "pretty good," "good enough." Accept nothing short of your best. Put such a quality into your work that any one who comes across anything you have ever done will see character in it, individuality in it, your trade mark of superiority upon it. Your reputation is at stake in everything you do and your reputation is your capital. You cannot afford to do a poor job, to let botched work or anything that is inferior go out of your hands. Every bit of your work, no matter how unimportant or trivial it may seem, should bear your trade mark of excellence; you should regard every task that goes through your hands, every piece of work you touch, as Sampson regarded every watch that went out of his shop. It must be the very best you can do, the best that human skill can produce.

It is just the little difference between the good and the superb that makes the difference between the artist and the artisan. It is just the little touches after the average man would quit that make the master's fame.

Regard your work as Stradivarius regarded his violins, which he "made for eternity," and not one of which was ever known to come to pieces or break. When a piece of work leaves your hand, it should bear your recommendation, the hall-mark of your character.

Stradivarius did not need any patent on his violins, for no other violin maker would pay such a price for excellence as he paid; would take such pains to put his stamp of superiority upon his instruments. He was determined to make his name on a violin worth something, to make it a trade-mark which would protect the instrument from the world over. This was his patent, he needed no other. Every Stradivarius now in existence is worth from three to ten thousand dollars, or several times its weight in gold.

I have known many instances where advancement hinged upon the little overplus of interest, of painstaking an employee put into his work, on his doing a little better than was expected of him. Employers are no fools. They do not say all they think, but they detect very quickly the earmarks of superiority. They keep their eyes on the employee who has the stamp of excellence upon him, who takes pains with his work, who does it to a finish. They know he has a future.

John D. Rockefeller, Jr., says that the "secret of success is to do the common duty uncommonly well."

It is doing things a little better than those about you do them; being a little neater, a little quicker, a little more accurate, a little more observant; it is ingenuity in finding new and more progressive ways of doing old things; it is being a little more polite, a little more obliging, a little more tactful, a little more cheerful, optimistic, a little more energetic, helpful, than those about you that attracts the attention of your employer and other employers also.

Many a boy is marked for a higher position by his employer long before he is aware of it himself because he appreciates the infinite difference between "good" and "better" between "fairly good" and "excellent" between what others call "good" and the best that can be done.

Everywhere we see perpetual clerks who will never get away from the yard-stick, mechanics who will never be anything but bunglers, all sorts of people who will never rise above mediocrity, who will always fill very ordinary positions because

they do not take pains, do not put conscience into their work.

A successful manufacturer says: "If you make a good pin, you will earn more money than if you make a bad steam engine." "If a man can write a better book, preach a better sermon, or make a better mouse-trap than his neighbor," says Emerson, "though he build his house in the woods, the world will make a path to his door."

When Daniel Webster, who had the best brain of his time, was asked to make a speech on some question at the close of a Congressional session, he replied, "I never allow myself to speak on any subject until I have made it my own. I haven't time to do that in this case, hence I must refuse to speak on the subject."

Thoroughness characterizes all successful men. Genius is the art of taking infinite pains. No youth can ever hope to accomplish much who does not have thoroughness and accuracy indelibly fixed in his life-habit. Slipshodness, inaccuracy, the habit of half doing things, would ruin the career of a youth with a Napoleon's mind.

You can't afford to give the dregs of yourself and your efforts to your employer. If you do so, it will bring only dregs back to you. Make it a life-rule to give your best to what ever passes through your hands. Stamp it with your manhood. Let superiority be your trade mark and characterize everything you touch. This is the quality that every employer is looking for. It indicates the best kind of brain, it is the best substitute for genius, it is better capital than cash. It is a better promoter than friends, or "pulls" with the influential.

Never allow yourself to dwell too much upon what you are getting for your work. You have something of infinitely greater importance, greater value, at stake. Your honor, your whole career, your future success, will be affected by the way you do your work, by the conscience or lack of it which you put into your job.

No matter how meager your salary you can not, on your account afford to let work go out of your hands without your unqualified endorsement. You can not afford to dilute your service, to cheapen it, just because your employer can make more money out of it.

Everything you do is a part of your career. If any work that goes out of your hands is skimpy, shabby, bungled or botched, your character will suffer also. If your work is badly done, if it goes to pieces, if there is shoddy or sham in it, if there is dishonesty in it, there is shoddy, sham, dishonesty in your character. We are all of a piece. We can not have an honest character, a complete, untarnished career, when we are constantly slipping rotten hours, defective material and slipshod service into our work.

To the man who has dealt in shams and inferiority, who has botched work all his life, must be conscious that he has not been a real man; he can not help feeling that his career has been a botched one.

To spend a life buying and selling lies, dealing in cheap, shoddy shams, or botching one's work, is demoralizing to every element of nobility.

No matter if you only get paid for doing a poor job, you can not afford to do a poor job, or you will cheapen yourself. You will tend toward the habit of inferiority, which is fatal.

Beecher said he was never quite the same man again after reading Ruskin. You are never quite the same man again after doing a poor job, after botching your work. You are not quite as efficient, nor quite as capable of doing an exquisite piece of work as before. You can not be just to yourself and unjust to the man you are working for in the quality of your work, for, if you slight your work, you not only strike a fatal blow at your efficiency, but you also smirch your character if you would be a full man, a complete man, a just man, you must be honest to the core in the quality of your work.

Then again, no one can be really happy who does not believe in his own honesty, does not believe he is trying hard to do right, to be just, clean, and honest.

We are so constituted that every departure from the right, from principle, makes us unhappy, causes loss of self respect.

Every time we obey the inward law of doing right, we hear an inward approval, the amen of the soul, and a protest of condemnation every time we disobey it.

Did you ever notice how much better you feel after having done a superb piece of work, how much more you think of yourself, how it tones up your whole character? What a thrill one feels when contemplating his masterpiece, the work into which he has put the very best that was in him, the very best of which he was capable! This all comes from obeying the natural law within us to do things right, as they should be done, just as we feel an increase of self respect when we obey the law of justice, of integrity within us.

There is everything in holding a high ideal of your work. For whatever model the mind holds, the life copies. What we think, that we become. Never allow yourself for an instant to harbor the thought of deficiency, inferiority.

Reach to the highest, cling to it. Take no chances with anything that is inferior. Whatever your vocation, let quality be your life-slogan.

Many excuse poor slipshod work on the plea of lack of time. But in

the ordinary situations of life, there is plenty of time to do everything as it ought to be done, and if we form the habit of excellence, of doing everything to a finish, our lives would be infinitely more satisfactory, more complete, there would be a wholeness instead of the incompleteness that characterizes most lives.

There is an indescribable superiority added to the very character and fiber of the man who always and everywhere puts quality into his work.

There is a sense of wholeness, of satisfaction, of happiness, in his life which is never felt by the man who does not do his level best every time. He is not haunted by the ghosts or tall ends of half finished tasks, of skipped problems; is not kept awake by a troubled conscience.

When we are striving for excellence in everything we do, the whole life grows, improves. Everything looks up when we struggle up; everything looks down when we are going down hill. Aspiration lifts the life; groveling lowers it.

It is never a merely optional question whether you do a thing right or not, whether you half do it or do it to a finish, there is an eternal principle involved, which, if you violate, you pay the penalty in deterioration, in the lowering of your standards, in the loss of self-respect, in diminished efficiency, a dwarfed nature, a stunted, unsuccessful life.

Don't think you will never hear from a half finished job, a neglected or botched piece of work. It will never die. It will bob up farther along in your career at the most unexpected moments, in the most embarrassing situations. It will be sure to mortify you when you least expect it. Like Banquo's ghost, it will arise at the most unexpected moments to mar your happiness.

Thousands of people are held back all their lives and obliged to accept inferior positions because they can not entirely overcome the handicap of slipshod habits formed early in life, habits of inaccuracy, of slovenliness, of skipping difficult problems in school, of slurring their work, shirking, or half doing it.

These skipped points in business or in life, the half finished jobs, the problems passed over in school, because they were too hard, are sure to return later in life and give endless trouble and mortification.

Half doing things, "just for now," expecting to finish them later, has ruined many a bright prospect, because it has led to the habit of slighting one's work. "Oh, that's good enough, what's the use of being so awfully particular?" has been the beginning of a lifelong handicap in many a career.

I was much impressed by this motto, which I saw recently in a great institution, "Where only the best is good enough." What a life motto this would be! How it would revolutionize civilization if every one were to adopt it and use it; to resolve that, whatever they did only the best they could do would be good enough, would satisfy them! Adopt it as yours. Hang it up in your bedroom, in your office, or place of business, put it into your pocket-book, weave it into the texture of everything you do, that your life-work may be what every one's should be—a masterpiece.—Success.

OUR BOYS AND GIRLS

TO THE SACRED HEART

Subject of Love! forever old and new,
Worthy of all, yet revered by few,
Accept the humble tribute of our lays,
Whilst we attempt to sound Thy wondrous praise.

To Thee, O Sacred Heart, we bend our mind,
In Thee our treasure and our all we find.

To Thee with hope we raise our joyful voice,
And bid the slaking, slumbering world rejoice:

For here is found a kind and safe retreat,
Where saint and sinner may in safety meet.

Here morn and eve Thy clients can repair,
And in Thy Sacred Heart cast all their care.

Here each can build her sacred little cell,
And with her Spouse in sweet contentment dwell:

Here to her Lord a little altar raise,
And, like a lamp, evaporate in His praise.

Oh, may my soul here find her sole delight,
And love for love return with all her might!

Bright furnace of pure love! my heart inflame,
And on Thy loving Heart inscribe my name.

With Thee I wish to live—with Thee to die;
Arm'd with Thy strength we can our foes defy.

Nor fear nor anguish can approach my mind,
For more than I can ask in Thee I find.

O Sacred Heart! could men Thy treasure know,
How would they slight all other goods below!

How would they wish to speak and live with Thee,
During all time and through eternity!

THE LOVE OF MOTHERS

Occasionally we see manifestations of disrespect to mothers, and we cannot help but regard the miscreant as an ingrate. The sacrifice of a

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mother deserves an esteem for her on the part of a child almost like the honor and homage due to God.

Who paints a prettier picture of mother than Washington Irving in the following: "The love of a mother is never exhausted; it never changes; it never tires. A father may turn his back on his child; brothers and sisters may become inveterate enemies; husbands may desert their wives, wives their husbands, but a mother's love endures through all; in good repute, in bad repute, in the face of the world's condemnation, a mother still loves on, and still hopes that her child may turn from his evil ways and repent; still she remembers the infant smiles that once filled her bosom with such rapture, the merry laugh, the joyful shout of his childhood, opening promise of his youth, and she can never be taught to think him unworthy."

THE MAN FROM KERRY

(By the Rev. R. W. Alexander)

A long time ago, a young Irishman of the County Kerry enlisted in the English army and was sent with his regiment to the Crimean war. He was a hot-headed fellow, warm-hearted, devoted to his country; in fact, wildly enthusiastic when Ireland was even mentioned—and brave to a fault.

On one occasion at a game of cards a party of privates of whom he was one, became noisy and got into trouble. They were put into irons for the night, and when morning came, Cormack and his comrades were brought before their colonel, fined, and dismissed with the stern reprimand military obedience demanded when army rules were broken.

After their punishment they were sent to their barracks, but first they were ordered to cheer for the Queen. Cormack foolishly refused, and for this second misdemeanor was flogged for contempt.

He did not utter a word, but took his medicine like a man! When he was released, he went back to his company burning with indignation and shame, and with a bitter heart determined to leave the army forever as soon as his time was up. This he did, returning to Ireland, and although he loved his native land, the memory of what he considered an outrage on his manhood rankled so deep, that he set out for America—the land of the free—as soon as he could get together the money for his passage.

His soldier life had loosened his hold on practical religion, but not on his faith, for he always said he was a Catholic. When he arrived in America he devoted his whole energy to accumulating a fortune and build up a home. Early and late he worked, having no time to God, or to the needs of his immortal soul; but he prospered, was successful as the world goes, and looked about for a wife. By God's mercy he married a good Catholic girl, and gathered a family about him, who were all baptized and reared Catholics, while their father never went to church. This was a source of great pain and sorrow to his devoted wife and daughters.

Once the pastor of his parish called to see him, and Mr. C., neatly concealing that he was not living according to his convictions, but in acknowledgment of the faith of his childhood, in a sort of nervous bravado, told the priest he did not mean to bother about religion, as long as he was honest and humane, a kind husband and parent. He intimated to the pastor that he would be thankful to be "let alone!"

His poor wife, mortified and ashamed, tried to excuse him to the pastor, but her excuses were cut short by Mr. C., who told her not to meddle, that he meant every word he said.

The pastor took his leave. "Nothing can be done, except by prayer," he said.

From thenceforth, mother and daughters besieged heaven with prayers for the father's conversion. Especially did they have recourse to the Sacred Heart. But as the months passed by, no effect was visible; the father was more obstinate than ever, and even found fault when the family went to church at any other time than to Mass on Sundays.

One autumn an unusual "cold snap" occurred. Many persons were unprepared for cold weather and were taken ill. Among them was Mr. C. Although he fought desperately against his illness he was obliged to go to bed, and pneumonia set in. When he was prostrate and the physician had announced the gravity of the case, his favorite little daughter with tears besought him to allow her teacher, who was a Sister in the parish school, to visit him and pray for his recovery.

To please the little girl the man consented, and when the two Sisters of Mercy entered the room Mr. C.

received them kindly, but commanded they should not talk with him about religion. He said he would die as he had lived; but they could pray all they liked —!

The Sisters saw he was not going to recover, and one of them begged him to allow her, as a favor, to pin a Sacred Heart Badge on his breast. He made no objection, and then the Sisters knelt down, and surrounded by the broken-hearted wife and family, said the Litany of the Blessed Virgin, for the recovery of his health. In their secret hearts they prayed more for the recovery of grace for his poor soul!

Mr. C. —, just quietly with his eyes closed, apparently unmoved. When the prayers were over, the Sister arose and going to the bed, took the sick man's hand.

"Good-bye, Mr. C. —. I am sorry to see one of my countrymen about to die without the sacraments!" The simple directness of the sentence, and the almost fearful earnestness of the speaker, struck home to the sick man's heart.

"One of your countrymen?" he echoed. "Why, are you an Irish woman, Sister?"

"I am from the County Kerry, not far from your mother's home, where you were born," said the nun.

A strange, moist light shone in the sick man's eyes. He grasped the nun's hand—and held it, while his face worked convulsively.

"God help me, Sister!" said Mr. C. —, as the love of country awakened the embers of faith under the crust of years. "No one will ever say I refused a Kerry woman anything she asked me!"

"Then," said the Sister, seizing the moment when nature helped grace, "in God's name, go to confession and make your peace with Him. The land of our birth must never have a record of one of its sons refusing to see a priest on his death-bed. Go to confession this night and we will storm heaven for your precious soul!"

"I will, Sister! I will!"—cried the man, "send me the priest!"

JOYS AND BLESSINGS OF TEAMWORK

The success of an undertaking depends upon the proper co-ordination of the activities of those who are engaged in it. Failure is due to lack of teamwork. Moreover, where there is no co-operation, the joy and pleasure go out of the work and it sinks to the level of mere drudgery. To confer one's attention to the trivial details of work that is before us takes the pride out of work; but to realize that one is co-operating with others towards the accomplishment of some larger end and purpose worth while is an inspiring consideration.

The misfortune of our days is that a wedge has been driven between the various factors that are bound together in common tasks. Instead of joyous co-operation and hearty teamwork, we have a spirit of antagonism and ugly, sullen opposition. The employee is not interested in the welfare of the concern for which he works; his vision is narrow; he sees nothing but the unappealing details of a routine with which he tries to get through as soon as possible and with as little expenditure of energy as he can help. The keen pleasure of a task well done is unknown to him. The pride of achievement, and the satisfaction that accompanies a duty conscientiously performed, he has never tasted. The man who works in that fashion and with such a spirit is to be pitied, because he gets nothing out of his work except his weekly pay. In that manner, the slave works; without enthusiasm, without inspiration, without joy. It is a sad lot, indeed. But it need not be thus.

If only the worker will place himself at a different angle of vision, the whole outlook of the situation will change and assume a brighter and more cheerful aspect. If he puts a little loyalty into his work, he will get so much more gratification out of it. We only get that out of our work which we put into it. Let him share with his employer, or the boss, the anxiety and the solicitude for the welfare of the shop or the office or the business, and he will soon find that he is amply repaid in spiritual values which are far superior to any material consideration.

But the material reward will not be slow in coming; for an employer realizes that a man of that type is a valuable asset to his firm and will be anxious to secure his services for the future. No one ever becomes efficient in anything unless he loves his work.

This spirit of co-operation and teamwork must be cultivated. It must be deliberately fostered. If it were cultivated to a larger extent,

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the relations between employer and employee would become more harmonious. Friction would be lessened. Friendship would take the place of that cold aloofness which at the present but too frequently prevails. The entire atmosphere of the shop or the office would change. The old, fine and noble loyalty, of which we read in historic novels would reappear and beautify our industrial relations. Where the spirit of teamwork holds sway, there work has zest and savor. Even the ordinary tasks take on a charm and beauty of their own, for they are merged in some larger and significant purpose.—Catholic Standard and Times.

THE HOPE OF THE FUTURE

If all the Catholic young men and young women who in a few weeks time will go forth from their Alma Mater bearing away her benedictions along with their diplomas and medals, should start out with a determination that they will live for the honor of their Faith, what a glorious band of soldiers of the Cross they would be, and how well would they fulfill the destiny religious education points out to them!

With their foundations of learning and well-disciplined minds they should enter upon the world's stage as graduates from a military academy enter a battlefield; prepared to put to practical use all the knowledge they have accumulated. But, alas, how few do! Many dazzled by the brilliancy of a college commercial, and impressed by the false idea respecting the character of a graduate, plunge headlong into the whirlpool of the world's pleasures, giving free reign to undisciplined inclinations that they were cautioned to subdue while following their curriculum. Their graduation day is their commencement of life; they then put to use what they have been

learning in order to make a good beginning. A bad and worthless after-life argues a bad beginning, and a bad beginning would show something defective in early training.

Each Catholic young man and young woman, on leaving college, should consider himself, or herself, a missionary, and as one to whom the world looks for an example. How noble, then, it is to see them bold, fearless, practical in their Faith, flinching at nothing to which duty calls them. A religious education is the hope of our country, so must our Catholic graduates be considered as those upon whom devolves the duty of sustaining this education, and of teaching and assisting those noble men and women engaged in it.—Michigan Catholic.

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