

CHATS WITH YOUNG MEN

LIFE'S HIGHWAY

Conscience stood on a great high way.
There was two roads branching there;
Along came Youth and asked the way
With a jaunty carefree air.
The road on the left—Conscience as his
Is shorter; there Life is gay,
'Tis full of mirth, and Time soon flies
Like the friends you meet that way.

The road on the right is longer,
With many a rut and hill;
But the climbing makes you stronger
For your work in Life's great mill.
Just keep to the right, Conscience cries,
You will have no wasted years;
When two roads on your highway lies,
Take the right and have no fears.

—M. E. DEATON

THE GOOD WORKMAN

On the topmost crest of a steep and verdant mountain there rises boldly to view the image of a human countenance deeply cut into the rocks. From its far attitude it is clearly seen to possess the characteristics of the features of an old man. The tourist, standing far below at the edge of a beautiful pool of water, looks upon this seeming apparition with awe. He wonders vaguely how many centuries have passed since first those massive features took on their present form. How many winds, how many storms, how many hoary frosts, have beat upon it since first the traveller glimpsed it from afar? No one can say. Those who dare the ascent to the summit and advance far out on the level ledge just above the gigantic forehead of the Great Stone Face stand silent in awed surprise at the magnitude of this creation of an Omnipotent Hand.

There are similar characteristics to be found all over our country. Certain physical features stand out clearly. Now we find a giant torrent of water loosed from some remote source, rushing over its mighty embankment like a veritable flood. Niagara in its dazzling beauty takes the pilgrim unawares, for until he has looked upon it, he can conceive no idea of its immensity or of the awful fascination which it can exercise over his soul. Men have looked upon the impassive countenance of the Sphinx or some equally impressive monument of antiquity, and have realized how small an atom is a human being and how tiny a part of the great universal plan.

So with characters of men. There are those who stand out bold, impressive figures in history, eclipsing in their vivid light the figures of lesser satellites. Through the years have come to us the tales of their prowess, not alone in feats of physical and intellectual superiority, but even more in their gifts of heart and soul.

The biographer of Abraham Lincoln stresses the fact that this man whose image is dearly enshrined in the hearts of all true Americans, whose statue adorns our colleges, libraries and public parks was a good workman. To those of us who like best to recall Lincoln as the ambitious youth, lying on the floor of a rude log cabin and scrawling his untrained letters in charcoal, this attribute offers food for thought.

We can easily divide the world into two distinct classes—the good workers and the indifferent workers. The poor worker is rare, for in these days of progress men can hardly hope to retain their positions without the exercise of a certain amount of energy.

Lincoln was distinguished for a prodigious faculty of performance, says his biographer. He worked easily, because his ambition was high and noble and his courage unsurpassed.

A good worker, Emerson tells us, is rare. "Everybody has some disabling quality. In a host of young men who start together and promise so many brilliant leaders for the next age each fails on trial. One by bad health, one by conceit or by love of pleasure or lethargy, or an ugly temper. Each has some disqualifying fault that throws him out of the race." But Abraham Lincoln was sound to the core, cheerful, persistent, a good workman, with a love of work.

Herein lies the secret of the good workman. He must be cheerful, persistent and like his work.

The sun does not light up all the world. Some spot must be in darkness or the insistent glare would cause everything to perish. The most beautiful ferns flourish in hidden, sequestered spots where the sun's rays scarcely penetrate. So the good workmen of the world, in hidden places, by their cheerful, persistent labor, cause the vast wheels of industry to revolve without ceasing and the world to go on with a minimum of friction.

Because of the cheerful, persistent labor of many who have passed by, our world is better and happier today. We are able to read books, travel on land and sea and enjoy many inventions dictated by man's ingenuity because there were those who, having put their hand to

the plough, never again looked back to the cooling shade until evening was come.

Great scholars worked by night as well as by day so that we might enjoy the fruits of their studies and meditations. Of that indefatigable scholar, St. Jerome, his biographer, Suljicious Severus, says that he was always in looks and in reading, that he rested neither night nor day but was always busy at his labors. He took immense pains to perfect himself in the knowledge of Hebrew and Chaldaic, and he himself confesses that it cost him great trouble to acquire real mastery over the languages. His work was interrupted from time to time, now by a long illness, now by an invasion of the Huns. But he always returned with cheerful persistence to his loved labors, and we of the twentieth century enjoy the ripe fruits of his toil. From this hidden persistent endeavor we have acquired the now famous maxim: "Not to have lived at Jerusalem merits praise, but to have lived well at Jerusalem." This age-old scholar has been beautifully described as the "veteran who was content to whisper to a poor auditor in a corner of his monastery at Bethlehem."

A middle-class country needs middle-class men. In the good workman we readily recognize the prototype of the race. The pulse of twenty millions is throbbing in his heart, and the thought of their minds articulated by his speech. By the labor of his tireless hands, he is his sphere ever so lowly, he assists immeasurably in the progress of the world. St. Paul summed up the philosophy of life, when he wrote to Timothy: "Carefully study to present thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed."—The Pilot.

OUR BOYS AND GIRLS

GUARDIAN ANGEL

My oldest friend, mine from the hour
When first I drew my breath;
My faithful friend, that shall be mine,
Unfailing, till my death.

Thou hast been ever at my side;
My Maker to thy trust
Consign'd my soul, what time He framed
The infant child of dust.

And thou wilt hang about my bed,
When life is ebbing low;
Of doubt, impatience, and of gloom,
The jealous, sleepless foe.

Mine, when I stand before the Judge;
And mine, if spared to stay
Within the golden furnace, till
My sin is burn'd away.

And mine O Brother of my soul,
When my release shall come;
Thy gentle arms shall lift me then,
Thy wings shall waft me home.

—CARDINAL NEWMAN

WHY DON'T YOU DO IT?

Why don't you answer your friend's letter at once? It will have double value if written promptly and will take no more time now than by and by.

Why don't you make the promised visit to that invalid? She is looking for you day after day, and "hope deferred maketh the heart sick."

Why don't you send away that little gift you've been planning to send? Mere kind intentions never accomplish any good.

Why don't you speak out the encouraging words that you have in your thoughts? Unless you express them they are of no use to others.

Why don't you take more pains to be self-sacrificing and loving in the everyday home life? Time is rapidly passing. Your dear ones will not be with you always.

Why don't you create around you an atmosphere of happiness and helpfulness, so that all who come in touch with you may be made better? Is not this possible?

Good qualities, like good steel knives, grow dull of edge unless they are used.—The Pilot.

THE PROTECTION OF THE GUARDIAN ANGEL

God extends His protection to us through many agents, among whom are the Guardian Angels, whose office is to assist and save all human wayfarers from the perils that in every turn in the road threaten the life of both body and soul.

This consoling truth is clearly taught in the Scriptures, which say: "For He hath given His Angels charge over thee to keep thee in all thy ways."

Not only the years of childhood, but youth in its prime, and manhood in its decay and old age come within the province of the ministering Angels. A simple faith in the power and protection of our celestial companion, who walks with us every step of our life, is one of the greatest needs of our materialistic and self-sufficient age.

Surrounded as we are by the vast throng of malign and unfriendly spirits that menace the soul and by physical dangers that jeopardize the very existence of the body let us turn constantly to our Guardian Angels for that defence and protection which they alone can give, and show those all-shielding spirits the honor and gratitude they deserve.

REMEMBERED DEBT

Whether you have been there or are planning to go, here's a story of Valley Forge you will want to remember. I give it as it was told by a writer in Our Dumb Animals:

The incident I am about to relate occurred in 1824, during Lafayette's last visit to this country. Forty years had passed since his promise to Washington to return as his guest. He was now nearly seventy years old, but his heart beat as warmly for his adopted country as in those earlier days when he had fought for its liberties.

A brilliant reception was under way. A slowly moving line of stately guests passed by Lafayette, who greeted each with courtesy and grace. Presently there approached an old soldier, clad in a worn Continental uniform. In his hand was an ancient musket, and across his shoulder was thrown a small blanket, or rather a piece of a blanket.

On reaching the marquis, the veteran drew himself up in the stiff fashion of the old-time drill and gave the military salute. As Lafayette made the return signal tears started to his eyes. The tattered uniform, the ancient flintlock, the silver-haired soldier, even older than himself recalled the dear past. "Do you know me?" asked the soldier.

"No, I cannot say that I do," was the frank reply.

"Do you remember the frosts and snows of Valley Forge?"

"I shall never forget them," answered Lafayette.

"One bitter night, general, you were going the rounds at Valley Forge. You came upon a sentry in thin clothing and without stockings. He was slowly freezing to death. You took his gun, saying: 'Go to my hut. There you will find stockings, a blanket and a fire. After warming yourself, bring the blanket to me. Meanwhile I will keep guard.'"

"The soldier obeyed. When he returned to his post, you, General Lafayette, cut the blanket in two. One half you kept; the other you presented to the sentry. Here, general, is one-half of that blanket, for I am the sentry whose life you saved."—Western World.

UNCLEAN LITERATURE

It is absolutely impossible to keep the atmosphere of the home clean, sweet and thoroughly wholesome unless every effort is made to bar and keep out the unclean and vile literature of the day.

Parents naturally are very solicitous to provide their children with pure and uncontaminated food; they know that tainted viands will produce disease and break down the physical health. They would not tolerate on the family table victuals that show evidence of corruption and that are likely to injure those who partake of them. Their solicitude in this matter is deserving of much praise. Health is a precious boon and ought to be properly and anxiously safeguarded. But spiritual and moral health are of even greater value, and similar vigilance should be exercised in order to protect them against destructive influences. Yet, in this respect there exists a deplorable remissness. The very same parents, who allow none but wholesome nourishment to be placed before their children, are astonishingly and shockingly indifferent to the reading matter which their offspring devour in their leisure moments. Over the reading of the child no supervision is exercised. In this serious matter it is left without counsel and guidance.

The harm that can be done by a salacious novel or a suggestive periodical is incalculable. Many can trace their undoing to the perusal of some foul book that instilled the principles of evil into their souls and made them acquainted with the ways of wickedness from which their parents had carefully sheltered and protected them. Under many disguises does the devil enter into the home; under none more frequently and more successfully than that of an outwardly attractive and inwardly rotten book. In this form he easily finds access to homes to which he is denied entrance in any other shape. In this garb he readily eludes the vigilance of parents otherwise so keen to sense his presence and to obstruct his stealthy approaches. Blocked in every other way, the evil one finally succeeds in crossing the threshold of an excellently guarded home under the gay colors of a magazine and begins his work of silent seduction. He has discovered a vulnerable point and is not slow in utilizing his opportunity.

It often happens that parents are unable to account for the change of manners that has come over a son or a daughter hitherto irreproachable in every respect. If they investigated the literature that has been permitted to enter the home, the mystery would be easily explained. Their eyes would be opened and they would understand why their children have become irreverent, disrespectful, selfish, worldly, pleasure-loving and frivolous. They have conned the lessons contained in the immoral books of the day. They are putting into practice what they have read. The subtle poison which they have imbibed, is beginning to do its deadly work.

Modern literature bears watching. Under the plea of realism, it purveys nastiness. Under the ridic-

ulous plea of candor and frankness, it delights in describing the seamy side of life and in revealing the most sordid phases of human existence. It possesses a morbid interest for depravity and perverseness. It gives a wrong impression of life and a distorted view of man. It revolts against decency and drips with obscenity. Such literature must, in the very nature of things, exercise a most pernicious influence and come like a fatal blight over the happy fruits of good home training. It sweeps over the garden of the home like a chilling blast, killing the tender blossoms of virtue and leaving sad destruction in its wake. It gnaws like an ugly cancerworm at the very heart of innocence and destroys its charming bloom. The tragedies that have arisen from indiscrete reading are many and infinitely pathetic. They might be written in bitter tears. Many books leave behind them a slimy trail of seduction. They defile whoever touches them. They leave indelible stains on the imagination and blotches of moral leprosy on the soul. The havoc wrought by them delights the demons and makes the angels weep. More souls are weaned from piety and alienated from God by bad books than by any other agency of the enemy of mankind, who has exploited to the full the potentialities for evil inherent in the printed word. Even the most robust in health succumb if they are continually exposed to infection; thus also the most virtuous finally yield to the insidious contagion of bad literature.

Unclean literature is the deadly foe of Christian modesty and purity. It is in league with the spirit of impurity and one of his most efficacious instruments of seduction. Wherever it succeeds in penetrating, it spreads corruption and creates an atmosphere of pollution in which the finer forms of virtue cannot thrive and in which delicacy of sentiment and chastity are bound to droop and wither away. The sentinels of the home must be on their guard against this treacherous enemy.—Catholic Standard and Times.

THE INTEGRITY OF THE HOME

Home has ever been the dearest memory to man, a memory which has potent power to soothe his cares, to arouse the better impulses of his nature and to bring a tear to his eye. Not infrequently do we find men who have strayed far over the earth and have amassed fortunes, men who have achieved distinction in the professions or in scientific pursuits, or even the poor weary prodigal, exhausted by his defeats and failures,—yearning for that spot of earliest dearest recollection, home. Whether it be some poor close dwelling in the crowded city or a lonely cabin in some remote mountainous district, there is no thought which has like power to influence man for good.

At the present day much of the sacredness of the old familiar association seems to have disappeared. Today men are busy about many things, although but one thing is necessary. Today it is no longer common for the members of the family to gather about the cheerful lamplight in the evening and discuss the simple happenings of the day. The many vocations open to both sexes, the disturbing element of hurry and bustle, the mad rush to obtain the necessities of life, these and many other elements tend to disrupt the stability and sanctity of the home and to make it commonplace and material. And, outside of the Church, the appalling lightness with which Christian marriage is thought of and entered into, is a force so powerful as to shake the very foundations not only of the home, but of the nation.

Undoubtedly, a Christian home has exercised a tremendous influence on the lives and achievements of all men. A great philosopher and preacher avers that it was the environment of a good home which eventually brought him back to faith and joy when he had strayed into errors of all kinds.

At the knee of a good Christian mother he prepared for his First Confession, a memory never quite eradicated in the midst of later years. When, under the custody of a master without religion, he later read the infamous works of Voltaire, the remembrance of the simple little green-covered catechism was present to his mind to confound these subtle philosophies. Weary of perplexities and dangers, his heart thrilled with joy and gratitude at the remembrance of his childhood's home. "One who has not known such a moment, has never lived," he says.

Insidious forces at work today tend to destroy this sweet and sacred recollection. Parents, teachers and writers can not be unmindful of this fact if their noble mission in life is to be faithfully carried on. Whatever tends to disturb the sanctity or security of the home, reflects on the peace and integrity of the nation and as such should be loudly decried.—The Pilot.

The man who not only does his work superbly well, but adds to it a touch of personality through great zeal, patience, and persistence, making it peculiar, unique, individual, distinct, and unforgettable, is an artist. And this applies to each and every field of human endeavor.—Elbert Hubbard.

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MEN AND HORSES

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