

CHATS WITH YOUNG MEN

"THE MAN BEHIND THE PLOW" They sing about the glories of the man behind the gun. And the books are full of stories of the wonders he has done; There's something sort o' thrillin' in the flag that's wavin' high, And it makes you want to holler when the boys go marchin' by; But when the shovin' over, and the fightin' done, somehow, We find we're still dependin' on the man behind the plow. In all the pomp and splendor of an army on parade, And thru the awful darkness that the smoke of battle's made; In the halls where jewels glitter and where shouting men debate; In the palaces where rulers deal out honors great, There is not a single person who'd be doin' bizness now Or have medals if it wasn't for the man behind the plow. We're buildin' mighty cities, and we're gainin' lofty heights, We're winnin' lots of glory, and we're settin' things to rights; We're a showin' all creation how the world's affairs should run. Future men'll wonder at the things we have done, And they'll overlook the feller, just the same as they do now Who's the whole concern's foundation—that's the man behind the plow.

—S. E. KISER

THE LAUGH CURE

Laughter induces a mental exhilaration. The habit of frequent and hearty laughter will not only save you many a doctor's bill, but will also save you years of your life. There is good philosophy as well as good health in the maxim, "Laugh and grow fat."

Laughter is a cure to pain and disease, and a sure cure for the "blues," melancholy and worry. Laughter is contagious. Be cheerful, and you make everybody around you happy, harmonious and healthful. Laughter and good cheer make love of life, and love of life is half of health.

Use laughter as a table sauce; it sets the organs to dancing, and thus stimulates the digestive processes. Laughter keeps the heart and face young and enhances physical beauty. Laughter is nature's device for exercising the internal organs and giving us pleasure at the same time. It sends the blood bounding through the body, increases the respiration, and gives warmth and glow to the whole system.

It expands the chest and forces the poisonous air from the least used lung cell. Perfect health, which may be destroyed by a pile of bad news, by grief or anxiety, is often restored by a good, hearty laugh.

A jolly physician is often better than all his pills.—Intermountain Catholic.

OPPORTUNITY

Everyone, it is said, has naturally the power of excelling in some one direction, and each one will assuredly attain to excellence in that department for which she is best fitted if she be but faithful in scrupulously taking advantage of those manifold opportunities that occur in every life. Opportunities for great things may be rare; not so these trifling and ever-recurring occasions for improving character and developing abilities, thus paving the way for that fitness which is essential to the seizing and profiting of those large, perhaps immense, opportunities which may at any moment present themselves to the most humbly placed amongst us.

There are few who are not "good for something" if they could but realize what that something is, and resolve to bend every effort to its successful accomplishment. A person whose life-work lies in congenial sphere, even in the midst of absorbing occupation, is ever on the alert, in a sub-conscious fashion as it were, to discover opportunities of improving and advancing her work, and of rendering it more valuable and perfect, for perfection is ever the goal which her ambition strives to attain. She will note and grasp every advantage, and with trained foresight recognize possibilities which are rejected as trivial and insignificant by those who may consider themselves her superior. But she will be ready for the great opportunity of her life, whilst they, the disdainers of trifles, will let the tide flow aimlessly by without realizing that dead opportunity has no resurrection.

But no matter what the condition or aim of life may be, even those who are unconsciously placed more profitably take advantage of the innumerable opportunities which offer themselves daily. Opportunities of improving character, of cultivating talents, of increasing knowledge or acquiring accomplishments; opportunities of doing good and performing unselfish actions which will materially aid and increase the happiness of others; and in the case of a girl who hopes one day to possess a home of her own, invaluable opportunities which should not be neglected or passing herself in all haste, witly skill and knowledge, in order to be able to avoid the shocks and jars, the waste and worry consequent on ignorance of the useful and necessary art of home making. These and a thousand similar opportunities are within the reach of us all. We

can, too, exercise ourselves in self-control, in patience and forbearance with the shortcomings and failings of those by whom we are surrounded, or into whose society we are thrown. The more trying and irritating these persons happen to be, the more valuable to us will be the discipline to which we voluntarily subject ourselves. To smile on an enemy—or even a friend—when every inclination bids us frown and condemn is no small victory. By such commonplace, ordinary means is character strengthened and ennobled. What is more exhilarating, more exalting it may almost be said, than to feel the capacity for strong self-control under circumstances that might well be excused for arousing within us a natural storm of wrath! The attainment of this self-mastery is worth much, spiritually, as well as morally, if it were never question of "opportunity."

The grasping of opportunities means putting self and selfish inclinations aside, and involves a firm resolve to perform necessary, if unpleasant, tasks or duties at the present moment in spite of strong repugnance. There must be no delay nor procrastination no "putting off till tomorrow." Promptness and decision are essential to the state of being ever ready to seize the fleeting advantage, for:

"There is a tide in the affairs of men which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune; Omitted, all the voyage of their life is bound in shallows and miseries."

The lines, though hackneyed, contain much truth; but it must be realized that those only are borne to success by fortune's floodtide who by little everyday efforts and sacrifices have fitted themselves for the highest and best to be attained in their allotted sphere.—Clara, in Catholic Weekly.

OUR BOYS AND GIRLS

THE ROSARY IN IRELAND To my memory idly roaming comes a vista of the gloaming,— Comes a breathing from the meadows of the shamrock and the peat; With the mellow twilight gleaming, I am sitting now and dreaming.

Of my lost and vanished youthtime, with its fancies fond and sweet, To my raptured ears come wooing tender notes like wood-doves cooing, I've a sense of fingers straying over harp-strings sweet and low,— Ah, the music that came winging was sweeter far than singing.

When my Mother said the Rosary in Ireland long ago!

Oh, well do I remember when by crackling log and ember, And the family all were gathered from the twilight and the sea, With her eyes upraised to Heaven, in a cadence low and even, She called each decade with its sad or joyful mystery!

There were cherubs in the gloaming, and the childish eyes went roaming Through the shadows for the shapes of angels moving to and fro,— And, ah, the fadeless beauty of that scene of love and duty When my mother said the Rosary in Ireland long ago!

I remember how in boyhood, just a bit advanced from teyhood, How I loved to clasp the Beads her gracious lips had prest; They were made of Irish berries, they were carved like to caskets, There was healing in their stary spheres and loveliness and rest! When the curls all were hiding, and the swans the waves were riding, And the stormwinds in the darkness made a sound of grief and woe,— Ah, the comfort that came creeping, ere the children fell to sleeping, When my mother said the Rosary in Ireland long ago!

—EDWARD WILBUR MASON

A DEBT TO COLUMBUS It is customary to praise Christopher Columbus for many noble characteristics, to say nothing of his far seeing intelligence, but the South owes him a special debt of gratitude for the presence that led him to bring the watermelon to America when he first came. The first watermelon seeds were turned loose to hussle for themselves on San Salvador Island, and thence the hungry Spaniards took them to Florida. When once the succulent melon was started in America it took care of itself in the struggle for existence. The watermelon is said to be the most ancient of all the edible vegetables in Asia, where it is supposed to have first originated. The melon was cultivated in France certainly as early as 1629, and was a favorite dish with the early Greeks and Romans. So much for its ancient history. Its present record is a brilliant example of what even a melon can do by steady attention to business.—Our Young People.

COST OF CHARACTER Many people have fine dreams of moral and spiritual beauty which never become anything more than dreams, because they will not work them out in pain, struggle and self-restraint. Here is an incident from a private letter:

"One day, lately, one of my little music pupils, an old-fashioned, sweet, little girl, about nine years old, was playing scales and octaves, when she turned to me and said: 'Oh, Miss Graham, my hands are tired!'

"I said, 'Never mind, Norma; just try to play them once or twice more. The longer you practice them the stronger your hands will grow, so that after a while, you will not feel it at all.'"

"She turned the gentle little face wearily to me and said: 'Miss Graham, it seems as if everything that strengthens hurts.'"

"I gave her something else, but I thought: 'Yes, my dear little girl, everything that strengthens hurts!'" The child was right. It is true in the making of character; everything that strengthens hurts, costs pain and self-denial. We must die to live. We must crucify the flesh that we may find spiritual gain.—J. R. Miller in Catholic Transcript.

A SECRET

Can you keep a secret? It is an unpleasant and difficult thing to do, and yet sometimes the breaking of it may have distressing and even serious consequences. The best way, therefore, is never to encourage anybody to tell you one. Too often the very fact of knowing a thing to be a secret makes one long to tell it and at last it is confided to a friend under strict injunctions not to tell. This eases one's conscience, but the friend also tells another friend who tells another, and so forth, and under the promise of secrecy the story gets published around, often in fact even more completely than if it had never been a secret. And if there was a real cause for secrecy, great mischief is done.

However small and insignificant a secret is, remember it is a point of honor to keep it. Train yourself carefully to do this whenever necessary, and it will keep you from much mischief. As a rule it is best not to repeat what you have seen or heard of others, for backbiting and unkind remarks about people are sinful, and often do incalculable mischief. There are even times when we should be willing to die rather than reveal a secret.

I remember seeing a touching picture called "Where did you last see your father?" In the center of it stood a slight, delicate looking boy, his head high, his hands clenched, his eyes calmly defiant. He was surrounded by a whole band of Cromwell's fierce soldiers trying to frighten him into betraying his father's hiding place. Will he tell! No! You may be sure of that by the look of that resolute mouth and those steadfast eyes. He is but a defenseless child, they can, and very likely will kill him, many of them have already their hand to their sword, but he is a little nobleman in the true sense of the word and he will die sooner than betray his secret.

Please God, you may never be put to such a test, but one never knows what may happen and in any case there is nothing like being prepared. So train yourself to keep great secrets by never, never telling even the smallest one.—Selected.

Humor is that trait which makes what, to the acid-minded, seems ridiculous, simply ludicrous.

FRIENDLY WITH OUR BEST FRIEND The holy and sustaining truth of the presence of Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament is a real power in the lives of those who, beyond the exact duties of religion, find time to be present at Mass on work days, and to make a visit to some convenient church in the course of the day.

Our churches in the centres of activity bear continual testimony to this proof of real religion in the hearts of our people. The wonder is that so many good, practical Catholics neglect these intimate personal relations with our Saviour. How many Catholics could at the cost of small inconvenience, especially these bright autumn mornings, sanctify and enliven their day's toil by spending the short time of Mass in the presence of and in dear companionship with the One who is their whole hope and trust. How often, too, could a few moments be found to spend in some silent church in the sole company of God. Such treasured moments are their own reward and are sure sources of comfort and new hope in the humdrum and weary routine of daily life.—Catholic Standard and Times.

THE GOLD STAR It is not to be seen, but in the window of every Catholic home whence has come a vocation to the sisterhood, there lies a gold star. It is woven by the hand of the Blessed Mother herself. While properly we thus honored men and women who gave their lives in the service of our country, is not a similar tribute due women who, unheralded and unseemly, make similar sacrifices for religion and humanity? It was a new sense of vocation which in war time we learned to place upon lives dedicated to our country's service, and ours. It should help us now in a newly acquired appreciation of lives given up, just as freely, in service just as commendable, only too often ignored. Lives passed in the schoolroom directing our children, in care of orphan, the poor, the aged, the sick and infirm, surely these are individuals who make the supreme sacrifice, who give their all in the cause of Christ. Hospital patients in great number, countless aged and infirm people, thousands of parents watching the development of their children in the parish school, have reason to thank God daily that some time ago a young girl left her home forever. Life looked bright to her. The world beckoned and promised much pleasure. It was a good home

that was here, yet, like our war hero, she turned her back upon it. She went out into a strange path into unfamiliar places, where sacrifices and unselfishness replaced pleasure and comfort. She gave up the life that she knew, having heard the summons of her vocation. She followed in the footsteps of Christ. Nor did she refuse to postpone the call, although the world's attractions counted as much for her as for any other.

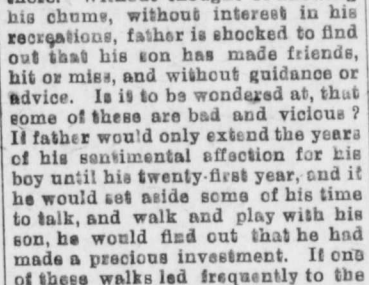
One day she will find place which only a tiny white cross will mark. The world may never grant fitting recognition. Yet for the girl whom vocation has called and who responds, bravely and readily, our Blessed Lady has surely fastened with her own hands a most beautiful Star of Gold.—Truth.

FATHER AND THE BOYS

This title may provoke the question from many a mother: "Well, what has father got to do with the boys?" And the answer alas! must too often be, "Practically nothing." And the answer is the point. But why has he no interest in the boys of his own family? Truly in their infancy and early childhood he is a loving parent. He showers all sorts of favors on his young. He may even be a nuisance in declaiming their virtues. But the ardor cools, and all too soon they are as the birds of last year's nest. At the very time when a father's influence is most needed, then the relation between father and son, becomes merely a formal tie of blood, and nothing more. Of course affection persists, but it is locked up to be called on only in a crisis. And there would be far less crises, if that affection had taken shape in some comradeship with the boy. Whatever malign influence it is that draws away the father from the friendship and companionship of his boy, it is a prolific source of evil. Craving for friends too often drives the boy from home. He simply does not find them there. Without thought of knowing his chums, without interest in his recreations, father is shocked to find out that his son has made friends, hit or miss, and without guidance or advice. Is it to be wondered at, that some of these are bad and vicious? If father would only extend the years of his sentimental affection for his boy until his twenty-first year, and if he would set aside some of his time to talk and walk and play with his son, he would find out that he had made a precious investment. If one of these walks led frequently to the Church, and if companionship was sealed by kneeling side by side at the altar rails, the work of the boys' courts, the juvenile courts, and of the Big Brothers would be by way of being very much lightened, if not abolished.—New World.

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