

CHATS WITH YOUNG MEN

ONE MAN'S WAY

This is not a pious exaggeration, nor the fruit of fancy—it is a sober tale of fact. Let me tell it to you from the beginning.

I had just got into the Pullman car and was settling myself in the seat, when a strapping fellow with a pleasant, rosy face, leaned over from the opposite seat.

“Have half of my paper, Father?” said he.

I thanked him and pointed smilingly at my breviary. But after the office had been duly said, we fell to chatting together. In the course of our conversation he came somehow to talking of daily Communion, and the difficulty most people find in delaying their breakfast day after day until they have heard Mass and received the Blessed Sacrament.

“Yes,” said he, “I found it so inconvenient that, about eighteen months ago, I gave it up altogether.”

“Well, now,” quoth I, “that isn’t quite right. It may be hard to go every day, but you should try to manage it sometimes. Do you live so far from the church?”

He turned and looked at me wondering.

“Oh,” said he, “you misunderstand me. It wasn’t the daily Communion that I gave up—it was the breakfast.”

“What,” said I, “a hearty young fellow like you, hasn’t eaten his breakfast for eighteen months past?”

He nodded his head very vigorously.

“Upon my word,” said he, “and I’ll tell you how it happened. I went to work in a C—, and when I left home the folks kept reminding me that C— was a godless town and that if I didn’t look out I’d take some harm there. So I began to go to Communion every day from the time I struck the place. I’d been used to eating a regular whopper of a breakfast, I tell you. My mother believed that the more you ate, the stronger you grew—and I stowed away so much sometimes that it was a wonder I held it. So I would start to Communion and then hurry back for breakfast, and then dash down to my work. And, I tell you, it made me sick.”

“Then I got the notion of cutting out the breakfast altogether, and believe me, it worked like a charm. After a while I went back home and took a job in an ice plant, and I used to leave home every morning breakfastless and walk to church for Communion, then down to work without ever thinking of breakfast again.”

“Well, but didn’t it pull you down?”

“I, taking a glance at his rosy cheeks—which, to tell the truth, were as plump and solid as anyone could wish.”

“Look at me, Father,” said he, “I’ve been doing the thing for eighteen months. When I started in, I weighed one hundred and forty-eight pounds, I now weigh one hundred and sixty or so, and I’ve walked my good five miles a day, to and from the office.”

“Haven’t you ever been sick?”

“Sick,” cried he, “not a minute!”

I have set down our conversation very plainly, as you see, from the notes which I made instant on the spot, so you will find it very plain. I know from other sources, as well as from his own honest word.

If I should add all the enthusiastic things he said of the spiritual benefit he felt from daily Communion I should take up much space again as this. How true it is that where there is a will, there is a way—though the way may not be always the one which this pink-faced young business man has discovered for himself of solving the problem of the Eucharistic Fast.—T. R. K., in the Queen’s Work.

CHOOSING HIS CROSS

Once, according to an old Bavarian legend, there was a man who complained to his guardian angel that the cross he was given to bear along life’s highway was beyond his strength. “I am well aware,” he said, “that in this world of sorrow every man must bear a cross, and at that I do not murmur. But the special cross that has been assigned to me is, without doubt, utterly unsuited to my capabilities; the shape, the weight, the balance, all are wrong. Could I but choose my own cross, though perchance it might prove a heavy one, I would carry it uncomplainingly, and even cheerfully; but saddled as I am with so unwieldy a burden, how can I be expected to persevere and wend my painful way on to the journey’s end?”

On hearing this his guardian angel took the man to the place where all the crosses destined for mankind were stacked, waiting for their bearers. “Choose,” quoth the angel, “and take whichever cross thou wilt in exchange for this one.” Thereupon the man quickly cast his own cross aside and set to work to find one more suited to his strength. But it was no easy task, for one was too heavy, one too long, one too rough and jagged to the touch, that one was badly adjusted, the weight of the cross beam too heavy for the perpendicular beam, and therefore impossible to balance on his shoulder. In fact, after trying some hundreds of the crosses and finding fresh difficulties and pains connected with each the man was fain to pray his angel to assist him in the choice.

Just then, however, his eyes fell on a cross lying a little apart from

the others, and he lifted it to his shoulder for a trial. It seemed to fit as a glove. The weight was right, the size was right. Although heavy, it was perfectly balanced, and although large, he could adjust it to his stride. There was no doubt about it; he knew immediately that it was the one of all those crosses that was exactly suited to his strength.

“This is the cross for me,” he cried. “I can bear this one without a murmur, for I feel it is made for me; there is even a sort of buoyancy in the substance of it that seems to bear me up, and after all those others that I made trial of, this one seems almost as a dear companion, so easily I stride along beneath its weight.” “Even so,” replied the angel, “for it is thine own, the cross that thou hast borne these many years, that was fashioned specially for thee, and that just now thou didst particularly cast aside. Take it now and bear it patiently, for only in company with it shalt thou reach the journey’s end.”

And the man looked again, and behold it was even as the angel said.

OUR BOYS AND GIRLS

LEAD KINDLY LIGHT

The Italian drew his hurdy-gurdy up to the sidewalk, close to where a score of workmen of different nationalities were seated, eating their noonday meal. He was a diplomat, that swarthy son of Italy, for before he began his penny concert he carefully scrutinized the little gathering, and having decided in favor of the children of Ham, he began to play a catchy con song.

As the strains floated out upon the air, a little girl who had evidently brought her father’s dinner, sallied forth from among the motley group, and posing herself for a moment, like some graceful wild animal, began to dance to the music, at the same time wriling the words in a sweet childish treble. Up and down, round and around she went, her raven curls flying, her dark eyes sparkling, her glowing cheeks dimpling, her tiny, twinkling feet scarcely touching the ground.

When the music had ceased, a handsome, cadaverous looking young man, who, I supposed, like myself, was waiting for a car, approached the little girl, and dropping some shining pieces of silver into her hand, said wistfully:

“Little one, can you sing ‘Lead, Kindly Light’? If you can, ask the man to play it, please.”

For a moment the child stared at him with great wondering eyes, then regaining her self-possession, she smiled charmingly and murmured a few words in the affirmative. Turning lightly to the organgrinder she gave him the money, whispering a few words into his ear, at the same time gesticulating eloquently.

Greatly elated by the hearty applause, to say nothing of the generous contributions, the Italian grinned comprehensively, and began to grind out a few lines of the hymn in prelude.

As if by way of explanation, the man who had spoken to the little girl, turned to me and said:

“I trust it has been given to the author of those beautiful words to know the good they have done me; truly, they are a rod and staff, a rock in a weary land. As you can plainly see, I am standing on the borderland of the ‘Valley of the shadow of death.’ The things of the world are rapidly slipping away, nor do I try to grasp and hold them, as I once did. Until a few short months ago I had been running away from death, seeking in other climes that which I knew I could never find. It was while I was abroad that I heard that hymn sung, and the words awakened me. So I came home, and am living in the present, like the author, John Henry Newman. I do not ask to see the distant scene, one step enough for me.”

Now I am going to meet death; not gladly, oh, no; but nevertheless, with an unflinching trust and confidence that the ‘Kindly Light’ will guide me into a better world; and that I shall find again all that has been lost to me here. Life is beautiful and good.

He broke off suddenly, for the organ was playing softly and the child was singing:

“Lead, kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom,  
Lead Thou me on!  
The night is dark and I am far from home,  
Lead Thou me on!  
Keep Thou my feet, I do not ask to see  
The distant scene, one step enough for me.”

The strains of the hymn rose and fell on the peaceful air, and slowly sobbed themselves into silence. A solemn hush had fallen on that little group of workmen, and they essayed no applause, for when the heart speaks the lips are silent. The young man, who had spoken so calmly of going out into the “Great Unknown,” turned quickly and walked away; I was glad, for the tears were in my eyes even as they would have been in my voice, but as I boarded my car, a song bubbled up in my heart, and I went on my way rejoicing.—Virginia O. Bailey, in Home and Country.

WHICH ROAD?

Life is not the straight, level road that some imagine it. There is only one perfectly smooth road, and that is the one slightly on the incline—downward. The upward path is always “hard going,” and, furthermore, it is full of turns and branches; places

where we are brought face to face with the momentous question: “Which road shall I take?” Over and over temptations come to us; and over and over we must choose the path we will go. But there comes a time, in the life of every man and every woman, when this question is brought home with a greater and more vital persistence, and when it must be answered, once for all.

The boy begins life with high ideals. He wants to “do the right thing,” to be clean and manly and honest. He clings to these ideals as he grows older; he refuses to be led away from them. He will not be drawn into shady paths; he keeps his hands clean, his honor bright. But he finds it uphill work. His labor is hard, his profits few. He comes to be regarded as over-conscientious and slightly peculiar. “Fine fellow, you know, but a little—well, a little squeamish. He’ll get over it,” and the laugh goes round.

Still he struggles on. Right is right, no matter what! But some dark day, when he is out of work or his wife is sick or the baby needs shoes—he sits down and looks the thing squarely in the face and asks himself plainly, “Does it pay?” So and so isn’t so particular. He is respected and considered a fine man, but he does these things. And others; everybody, in fact, that he knows.

Perhaps, after all, he is over particular. “You can’t be, if you are going to succeed. You aren’t the world and you’ve got to be like the rest or you’ll not keep up with the procession.” And he has a family to support—by heaven, he can’t see them suffer!

And he’s tired! And discouraged! And so he stands, questioning, at the turn of the road; which way shall he take?

The girl, too. Perhaps she also stands at the parting of the ways. Love came and took her by the hand and led her on. And she has come to a path which is fair and alluring—and nothing really wrong, you know! Only a little doubtful; not quite what her better self tells her it should be. A companion she knows but little about, a slightly questionable amusement an hour not quite seemly.

But all the other girls do these things, and they are nice girls and everybody likes them. It’s the way of the times—no one does now as our grandmothers did. Everybody goes to these dances, these theatres; she will be called prudish if she refuses to do as the rest do. And there’s really not a bit of harm in it.

She, too, is asking, “Which road shall I take?”

And everything, for time and for eternity depends, in both cases, upon the answer.

It is usually some little thing that decides the question. A father’s voice—echoing from the long ago—manly and true; a mother’s prayer at twilight; the odor of incense; the breath of flowers on a May time altar; the memory of a first Communion day—these things come back to the boy and to the girl and turn the balance like a snowy feather laid upon the scale when the beam just tips!

Alas! For the boy or the girl who has no such memories to come to them, like angel messengers, at such a moment! God pity them!

Oh, let those of us who have any, one to influence—and who has not?—let us not neglect to speak the right word, to do the kind deed, to weave the sweet and tender charm, all come back to them—and to us—by angels of blessings and strength at the parting of the ways. They will lift us up and give us anew and point aloft to where the cross is lost in the splendor of the crown! At the summit of the road!—San Francisco Monitor.

SILENCING A BIGOT

Some years ago, when the A. P. A. was rampant, the notorious “Father Slattery” was engaged by that un-American society to “lecture” in the Southern cities. It was arranged that this campaign of slander should begin in Memphis, Tenn.

The coming of Slattery was told on insulting posters. His press agent was ingenious and industrious.

As the night of the lecture drew near, the excitement grew intense, and at last even Catholics believed that there would be trouble. Then the deputations began to invade the Mayor’s office. The Chief of Police was a Catholic. He knew that apprehensions of violence were groundless. The other side pretended to be suspicious of him.

The morning Slattery was billed to arrive a deputation of ministers waited upon the Mayor. They were dreadfully in earnest. They insisted that a body of “trusted” special police should be appointed to guard the lecturer. The Mayor at last believed that the situation was alarming. He assured the ministerial deputation that he would give the matter his personal attention, and requested them to return in one hour. The Mayor was a man of superb culture and liberality, one of the leading citizens of Memphis and deserving of the confidence which his classes reposed in him. He at once sought the Catholic pastors and some of the leading Catholic laymen. When the ministers returned, plans were intended to follow. He intended to take charge of “Father Slattery” himself. All religious committees and guards were dispensed with.

He would meet the “lecturer” at the railroad station with his own



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death itself, and for the lives of our children and our wives, gave up their own.

“Look at the fourth name on that roll of angels. I do not know her name, but she was a beautiful girl, and her voice had the mellow ‘brogue’ of the south of Ireland. She was stricken down; the terrible death mark of the plague set its seal on her lovely brow. I, too, was ill. In my anguish I cried to God for help. There was a rustle at my door. That girl robed in black, holding the crucifix in her hand, knelt beside my daughter’s bed. ‘Man! do you think she could die while an angel was caring for her? No, my daughter lived, but her ministering angel died. This is enough. Now to you: Do you think that you can pollute the air of our beautiful city by your foul presence from the priesthood and those Sisters? Why, man, the very stones of our pavement should fly in your face. If the men of our city should prove so dastardly recreant to the memory of those noble men and women who gave up their lives for us, the corner of our city should rise and stone you to death. Get your foul presence from our city.’

It is needless to say that he wept, and the press were hard put to explain why Slattery did not speak at Memphis.—St. Paul Bulletin.

OUR HOLY FATHER BENEDICT XV.

PERSONALITY AND POLICY OF THE SUCCESSOR TO PIUS X. Rome Correspondence of The Catholic Standard and Times

Rome, September 8.

Were you present, reader, at St. Peter’s, Rome, at the funeral obsequies of Cardinal Rampolla some months ago, you should have seen sitting near the huge coffin an ascetic looking prelate, with a sad look about his brilliant countenance. His lips moved in silent prayer for his dead brother and chief. And somebody remarked: “If Cardinal Rampolla had become Leo XIV. in the conclave of 1903, that pale faced man would have become Cardinal Secretary of State.” However, Divine Providence disposed otherwise. And to-day Christendom reverses his name. Benedict XV, Bologna loses an Archbishop whom she found to be zealous, kind and good, and the Catholic Church gains in Cardinal della Chiesa a Pontiff in whom are combined the diplomatic qualities of Leo XIII. with the pastoral yearnings of Pius X.

IN PERSON THE newly elected Pontiff is ascetic in features, bright and vivacious. In manner, Benedict XV. is particularly charming and gracious, and well, in truth, might it be so. To the innate charm and refinement of the educated Italian has been added a life long training in the world of diplomats in Rome and Madrid, which fact weighed heavily upon the deliberations of the last three days. But gentle and charming as is the character of the new Pope it has another side, viz., that which brings into play courage, tenacity and perseverance. His success as Archbishop of Bologna evidences this. For there are sees and sees. In the history of four centuries the Archdiocese of Bologna has not been regarded as a see that a weak character could rule. The turbulent element there accounted for the broken heart of more than one Archbishop, and in the general strike that paralyzed Italy three or four months ago the city and surroundings of Bologna took the place in riots, church looting and bloodshed. One who proved unable to ride the whirlwind and stem the blast as Archbishop of Bologna with special success will know how to guide Peter’s Park amid the shoals and troubles that now surround it.

A PASTORAL-DIPLOMATIC POPE It may be early in the day for a forecast of the policy of Benedict XV.; but nevertheless one can come to a fair conclusion from his past history. Benedict XV. will, I believe, be a pastoral-diplomatic Pope—one who will embody the characteristics of the last two Pontiffs. He will be to the pontificate of Pius X. what Leo XIII. was to that of Pius IX. When Leo XIII. assumed the tiara in Europe at nearly every point in the Holy See, and he opens years in remedying the situation. And now Pope Benedict, on taking his seat on Peter’s throne, finds that France and Portugal no longer officially recognize the Church, that Spain has been retive, and that the Holy See an entirely new era.

Will he follow the line of conduct which his old friend Cardinal Rampolla would have observed had he become Leo XIV.? I feel inclined to think Benedict XV. will do so, but in a modified form. Remember, when Cardinal Rampolla filled the Pontifical Nunciature of Madrid he had as lieutenant the newly elected Pope, and when Cardinal Rampolla stood behind Leo XIII’s throne as Secretary of State, the present Pontiff filled a post of confidence in the Cardinal’s office. Up to the very last he remained Cardinal Rampolla’s close friend. These facts lead one to think the Pontiffate which has just opened will closely resemble that of Leo XIII., while the friendship that existed between Pius X. and the Cardinal Archbishop of Bologna will surely leave its impress upon the line of action which, as Benedict XV., the latter will pursue.

HIS TRIBUTE TO HIS PREDECESSOR

In his address to the faithful of Bologna relative to the late Pope’s death, Cardinal della Chiesa said: “The memory of the special ties which bound me to the Sovereign Pontiff who, after keeping me with himself for years, was good enough to confer on me episcopal consecration with his own hands, renders his death particularly sorrowful to me. Along with me the faithful will weep over the sudden loss of the Pontiff who will live in Church history for the grand constancy with which he propounded true doctrine, for the zeal with which he promoted the devotion of the Blessed Eucharist, and for the charity with which he embraced all Christians, as well as for the fatherly manner in which he came to the assistance of all his sons.”

GENTLE HEART AND MASTER MIND

In Benedict XV. the Catholic world can with strong conviction welcome a firm hand, a kind, gentle heart, a master-mind filled with charity and zeal, enlightened in the school of labor. We stand on the threshold of what augurs to be a glorious pontificate that will be full of triumphs for the Catholic Church both in the Pastoral and diplomatic fields.

VERITAS

THE MENACE BARRED

The Board of Directors of the Oregon City Public Library recently voted to remove the Menace from the tables of the library on the grounds that it was unfit for children to read. This action was not taken without stirring up sectarian bigotry. According to the Catholic Sentinel of Portland, Ore., the Board decided several weeks ago to remove the Menace and the Masses. W. S. U’Ren, candidate for Governor on the Progressive ticket, was not present at the meeting, but when he heard of the decision of the Board he wrote to every member quoting an article in the State Constitution in which the right of free speech and of free press is established. Mr. McBain, President of the Board, threatened to resign if the two papers were placed back in the library. At the recent meeting, at which definite action was taken, Mr. U’Ren introduced a resolution to keep these papers in the library and every member of the Board, except his wife, voted against him and as a result the offensive publications have been removed from the library. Evidently U’Ren is very progressive.—St. Paul Bulletin.

AN ANCIENT SHRINE

STORY OF A MIRACULOUS STATUE OF OUR LADY IN FRENCH CHURCH

In the Catholic Church at Verdais, Bordeaux, there is a statue of the Blessed Virgin carved in wood. It represents Our Lady with the Divine Infant in her arms holding a dove in His sacred hands. This statue is of very ancient origin. As far back as the twelfth century there is mention of it in documents still existing. In 1106 it occupied a position in the monastery chapel at Verdais, and we read that many pilgrimages were made to the shrine owing to numerous miracles having been worked there. In 1295 the church and monastery were pillaged and burned during the war between France and England. During the first years of the fourteenth century, when peace had been concluded, the monks returned and built a small monastery and chapel, but in 1327 the war broke out again and the building was again destroyed. The religious however, took care to hide the statue. They made a deep hole in the ground in which they buried it, placing a large stone on the spot so that they might later on know where to find the image. The monks were obliged to take flight and consequently the statue remained hidden until 1810, when the Countess Isabelle de Foix, the owner of that portion of the country, made a vow to have a church and sanctuary built in honor of the Blessed Virgin.

The Countess Isabelle de Foix had not decided as to the precise locality in which she would have the church erected, when one day she was out riding, and suddenly, close to the ruins of the Monastery Chapel, she came upon which she was mounted stopped, and no effort would make the animal move on. On the contrary, one of its feet sank down some distance in the clay, until it rested on a large stone. The Countess was naturally impressed by the fact, and she dismounted and ordered her attendants to raise the stone. Her wishes were obeyed, and when the stone was lifted the statue of Our Blessed Lady was found in the cavity beneath, where it had rested for seventy years. Isabelle de Foix said in this remarkable fact an evidence of the Divine Will. She therefore rebuilt the church and monastery, which became a great centre of pilgrimage until the sixteenth century, but alas! in 1562, during the religious wars, the Huguenots pillaged and burned the monastery and church. They massacred the monks and threw the statue into the fire. As soon as the Huguenots had gone away, the few people surviving in the district made their way to the ruins, and there, amongst the ashes, the statue was again found intact, but blackened by the smoke. The statue was then concealed in a hole in a tree.

In 1609 the church and monastery were restored by Cardinal de Lorraine and confined to the care of monks. From that time until the end of the

sixteenth century numerous pilgrimages were made to the shrine, and many miracles and cures of sick persons of whose recovery the doctors had abandoned hope were worked through the intercession of Our Lady of Verdais. However, the revolution raged at Verdais, as in other places in France, and the sanctuary was pillaged. Fortunately the statue was again saved by the Sacristan, Jean Michel. It is a remarkable fact that members of the Michel family have held the position of Sacristan for one hundred and fifty years, and a descendant occupies it at the present day. The church was rebuilt in 1887 and given to the care of the Marist Fathers, who, however, have been banished by the Government of to-day.—St. Paul Bulletin.

SIR WILLIAM RAMSAY’S CONCLUSION

The distinguished authority in the scientific world, Sir William Ramsay, said on one occasion: “When I was a young man just entering the university, I began with the firm determination that I would not accept anything which I did not understand. If you follow this course, you will soon discover one important fact—and that is what a big fool you are. We are surrounded with things which we cannot understand, and our chief difficulty is to find any-thing which we do understand. The miraculous is not the non-intelligible; it is merely the unfamiliar. Who will say that a thing is impossible simply because he is unfamiliar with it? The more we study, the better we see that there is one principle on which everything else is based. It is the principle that God is.”

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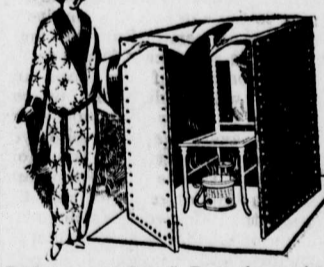
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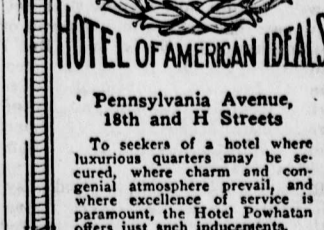
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