

CHATS WITH YOUNG MEN

STOCK TAKING

The coming of the new year is an appropriate time for every young man to take "an account of stock" as to his conduct, habits, environment and future. He can usefully take a quarter of an hour for an interview with his conscience. He may divide it into three parts and may ask himself some questions on each of them, as follows:

1. As regards God. Am I in the state of grace? If not, what makes me a slave of the devil? Can I break away from sin and lead a Christian life?

Do I say my night and morning prayers? Do I offer up the thoughts, words and actions of every day, so as to do them for God's sake, and so put a divine motive back of my daily life?

Do I make a brief examination of conscience every evening and say the Act of Contrition? Do I avoid the occasions of sin? Do I resist my own flesh as an enemy of my soul and do I endeavor to bring it under subjection? Do I control my thoughts? Do I guard my eyes?

Do I refrain from obscene or profane language?

Do I go to Mass every Sunday? Do I abstain from meat on Friday? Do I fast on fast days? Do I go to Holy Communion at least once a month?

Do I put myself under the protection of the Blessed Virgin by invoking her patronage, by wearing her medal and her scapular, by joining her sodality, by reciting her rosary every day, and by saying three "Hail, Marys" every morning in honor of her spotless purity?

Do I cultivate the friendship of my guardian angel and my patron saint? Am I making any growth in holiness? Is it any easier for me to practice virtue now than it was at this time last year?

Have I the courage to deny myself? Am I a thrall to my stomach? Do I give it everything it craves? Am I master of my passion?

If I were to go on until the end of my life as I am now, where would I land in eternity—in Heaven or in Hell?

2. As regards the neighbor.—Do I do my whole duty as a son, as a brother, as a relative, as a friend, as a neighbor, as an employee?

Do I give good example in word and work? Am I a model member of any Catholic society?

Am I prudent, modest, self-restrained and chaste in my dealings with women? Have I any one reason to condemn me before God?

3. As regards self.—Am I making the most of myself? Of my time? Of my opportunities? Of my talents? Do I have anything I ought to know that I don't know?

Am I a perfect gentleman in principles, in morals, in manners, in dress, in consideration for the rights and feelings of others?

Have I as much in my bank account as I should have saved?

Do I contribute my share to the support of religion? Do I pay for my share of a church pew and give to the needs of the parish? Do I offer an alms to the poor regularly?

Do I take proper care of my health, by exercise, by securing sufficient sleep, by bathing regularly, by eating only digestible food? Am I abstemious or gluttonous in food or drink?

Am I advancing in business? Can't I do anything further to better my condition?

These and similar questions will give every young man sufficient occupation for fifteen minutes right now.

It is useless, however, to see where one stands, if one does not follow up this investigation by a firm purpose to mend whatever is in need of improvement. Resolutions are now in order. Let them be few, short, practical, and sent to the weak spots in your character.

Arise and be a man and a Christian. Take Jesus Christ for your friend and your constant companion. Live for Him. He will be your strength now and your reward hereafter.

NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS

With the dawning of a new year, the tearing down of the old calendar and hanging up of the new, the discarding of the old almanac and the perusal of the new, the closing up of business accounts and settlement of affairs which marked our operations for the closing year, it has come to be a custom to make new resolutions for the better year than we did last. New Year's resolutions are sometimes made with good intent, and sometimes in a joking spirit. The jokers make it pretty hard for those who seriously contemplate reform to maintain their good intentions. Usually the jokers recognize their inability to effect any reform in their personal conduct, not because they have reached perfection, nor yet because they have arrived at that happy state wherein their conduct is above reproach, but because they are unable to control their desires and they know it. They hide their deficiencies by making a joke of New Year's resolutions, and try to act just a little more unbecomingly than they are.

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In framing up your resolutions, no matter what their purport, so long as they are good, the one most important which should be written in them is the resolve to keep them in spirit and in letter. In other words, resolve to do something, and then do it. The man or woman, boy or girl, who does that, who resolves upon a course of action, and then sticks to it, is sure to win—not only his resolution, but in the battle of life.—Intermountain Catholic.

SMILE AND WAIT

One of the hardest, and yet one of the most useful lessons we can ever learn is to smile and wait after we have done our very best.

It is a finely trained mind that can struggle with energy and cheerfulness toward the goal which he cannot see. But he is not a great philosopher who has not learned the secret of smiling and waiting. A great many people can smile at difficulties which cannot wait, who lack patience, but the man who can both smile and wait, who has the tenacity of purpose which never turns back will surely win. The best of things can only be done by optimism. Little successes are left to pessimists people who cannot set their teeth, clean their data, and smile at hardships or misfortune and patiently wait.

Smile and wait—there are whole volumes in this sentence. It is so much easier for most people to work than to wait.—Church Progress.

THE FOOTPATH OF PEACE
To be glad of life because it gives you the chance to love and to work and to play and to look up at the stars; to be satisfied with your possessions, but not contented with yourself until you have made the best of them; to despise nothing in the world except falsehood and meanness, and to fear nothing except cowardice; to be governed by your admirations rather than by your disgust; to covet nothing that is your neighbor's except his kindness of heart and gentleness of manner; to think seldom of your enemies, often of your friends, and to spend as much time as you can, with body and with spirit, in God's out-door—these are little guide-posts on the footpath to peace.

OUR BOYS AND GIRLS
WILL'S NEW YEAR RESOLUTION
It all happened because Will found a motto that stuck in his memory.

On Christmas day he had gone to the home of his chum, Walter Bradford, and the motto he had been invited to help himself to some candy. He took a small cornucopia. It contained almonds, raisins, chocolate creams, nut caramels, and one big peppermint drop, done up in green paper. He found the peppermint rolled in a slip of white paper on which was printed these words:

"If you want to be happy to this give heed—
Let no day pass you without a kind deed."

He read out the motto to Walter, and said: "What an unusual motto to find in a candy. Most of 'em are silly. I like the sound of that one."

"So do I," echoed Walter. "Read it again."

And Will read it out to his friend once more:

"If you want to be happy, to this give heed—
Let no day pass you without a kind deed."

Will put it in his vest pocket and went on having a good time at Walter's, seeing the latter's presents and talking over their common affairs.

The motto was forgotten until the day before New Year's. Then when Will went to confession, the priest said to him:

"Make a few good resolutions to guide you every day. Take something simple, something against laziness, or selfishness, or disobedience, or greediness at table, especially against your predominating fault. Put them down in writing. Try like a man of will-power to keep them."

Will answered: "I'll do it, Father," but when he went home he had to get a dictionary to find the meaning of predominating.

Then he could not see that he had any predominating fault. He was weak in half a dozen ways and fell in one of them about as often as in any of the others. He blew a long whistle.

"What! I must have six predominating faults. I'm rich in the wrong way." Just then he remembered the motto that he had gotten at Walter's. He searched his pocket and found it. He opened the crumpled paper carefully and read it:

"If you want to be happy, to this give heed—
Let no day pass you without a kind deed."

"That's good enough to be one of my resolutions," he said. "I'll do some kindness in word or act to some one every day."

Then he made six other resolutions—that he'd get up promptly in the morning, that he'd be more obedient to his mother, that he'd not "tuss" with his brothers and sister, that he'd do his chores faithfully, and he'd do his chores faithfully, and he'd do his chores faithfully.

Whether or not it was the rhyme that helped him by keeping kindness in his mind, certainly it was that Will kept the resolution of the motto better than any of the others. He began to be kind in word and act. It grew on him. He seemed to rise to an opportunity to do a kindness, until it was done so became a habit with him. Soon there was a notable change in him. He grew more thoughtful, more considerate, brighter. For everybody became kind to him. So he looked for good to find from everybody, but also he helped to shape his career. It was his friend who opened up to him a chance to enter an occupation that eventually became his life-work and

gave him congenial employment and a comfortable competence. But that is another story. Sufficient to us to day is to know that his observance of the motto made Will that most charming personage, "a nice boy." And for our own sake let us get it by heart:

"If you want to be happy, to this give heed—
Let no day pass you without a kind deed."

—True Voice.

AFFECTION OF THE DOG

A few days before the fall of Robespierre, a revolutionary tribunal in one of the Departments of the north in France condemned to death an ancient magistrate, and a most estimable man, as guilty of conspiracy.

He had a water spaniel, ten or twelve years old, of the best breed, which had been brought up by him and had never quitted him. Every day at the same hour the dog left the house, and went to the door of the prison. He was refused admittance, but he constantly pined at the door, and then returned. His fidelity at length won upon the porter, and he was one day allowed to enter. The dog saw his master, and came to him. It was difficult to separate them, but the guard forced him away, and the dog returned to his retreat. He came back the next morning, and every day, once each day, he was admitted. He licked the hand of his friend, looked him in the face again, licked his hand, and went away of himself.

When the day of sentence arrived, notwithstanding the crowd, and the vigilance of the guard, the dog got to the hall, and crouched himself between the legs of the unhappy man, whom he was about to lose forever. The judges condemned him, and he was reconducted to the prison, and the dog from that time did not quit the door.

The fatal hour arrived, the prison opened, the unfortunate man passed out. He clung to his hand—that hand which he had so often seen in the face of his friend. He followed him; the axe fell and his master died; but the tenderness of the dog did not cease. The body was carried away, but the dog walked at its side; the earth received it, and he laid himself upon the grave, refused nourishment, pined away and died.—Sunday Companion.

BE ADAPTABLE

The girl who is adaptable will never criticize the customs of the place that is to be her home. She will not announce: "We did so and so in Blanktown," she may disapprove and feel she can improve on it, but she keeps it to herself. The adaptable girl does not force her opinion, obtrude her wishes or become a regulator. She does not groan over past luxuries when fortune has turned out to be less than she expected. She is not at all touchy.

She may not like circumstances, but she makes the best of them. So doing, she finds them not half so bad as pictured.

It is well not to be too adaptable. Where this trait is merged into yielding a point of conscience, because others see no harm, he becomes a man with a mind that wobbles toward the last person, it is not to be desired.

LEGEND OF THE ROSARY

There once lived a pious youth who daily venerated Our Lady's statue with roses. He became a monk in course of time and to his sorrow, was no longer able to twine for his Queen his daily rose garland. But he was consoled by an old monk, who bade him offer her instead the rosary crown of Aves. This he did faithfully.

One day, while travelling through a deep forest, he recollected that he had not yet offered his greeting to Mary. Kneeling, he at once commenced his rosary, beset by a robber band surrounding him. These robbers men about to lay violent hands upon him when they suddenly perceived a lovely and majestic Lady standing before them. She was taking a walk in course of time and to his sorrow, was no longer able to twine for his Queen his daily rose garland. But he was consoled by an old monk, who bade him offer her instead the rosary crown of Aves. This he did faithfully.

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spots into the lives and hearts of the generations that are gone. Tender in deed are the memories that sweep through the mind as gazing on these lofty piles there is recalled the days when England was our Blessed Lady's dowry, and Ireland—beloved of the heart—the land of saints and scholars. Here through these old lanes the winds of heaven blow, and the sunlight streams down on broken arch and lofty dome. Here the gentle-souled Franciscan and the saintly Benedictine chanted the sweet psalms of the divine office—that incense of holy prayer, wafted to the throne of God. In those olden days the abbey was the world's workshops of literary learning and profound scholarship, of scientific research, of historical and archaeological lore. It was the golden age of education, when the torch of knowledge was kept brightly burning, and the great universities of Catholic Europe were thronged with students. It was an age of music, when the old masters composed those soulful, inspired melodies, those sublime conceptions that through the centuries have held the world enthralled with their exquisite and entrancing beauty. It was an age of architecture when the Gothic cathedrals—classic monuments of classic art—were erected, to be followed by the Byzantine, Corinthian and Greek models, truly a work of love for the glory of God. The builders of the old abbey churches seem to have been heaven-inspired, for in them they put all that was beautiful in outline and delicate in tracery, uniting and blending in one harmonious whole. These old piles are fast crumbling to ruin, yet they speak eloquently of the ages of faith, and the holy purposes for which they were erected. They are the landmarks of a time when the world was Catholic, when faith and piety, and loyalty to God and country, were the characteristics of the age. Around them all the holiest and tenderest memories cling, for at the altar of the Most High, the Infinite Lamb of God came down from Heaven at the consecration, to dwell in a humble tabernacle made by hands. Here beneath the soil sleep in peace the holy dead, who once trod these sacred corridors to honor and worship their Creator. Back in the dim and dusk of the centuries to the amphitheater and the lions, to the catacombs and the eternal home, their fathers and mothers, and the world was Catholic, when faith and piety, and loyalty to God and country, were the characteristics of the age. Around them all the holiest and tenderest memories cling, for at the altar of the Most High, the Infinite Lamb of God came down from Heaven at the consecration, to dwell in a humble tabernacle made by hands. Here beneath the soil sleep in peace the holy dead, who once trod these sacred corridors to honor and worship their Creator. 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