

CHATS WITH YOUNG MEN.

Catholic Columbian.

An assistant pastor in a poor city parish, determined to do something expressly for young fellows from fifteen to twenty, to keep them Christian and make them manly, tried, and at first not succeeding, tried again to help them. What he failed to do and what he did, he himself will tell us:

THE LADS OF ONE PARISH. Grieved to see how many promising boys fell gradually away from attention to their religious duties as soon as they left school and went into the world to earn a living, I determined, if possible, to form an organization which would keep them faithful. Securing the cordial co-operation of the pastor, I first had some little gymnastic apparatus put up in a large lot behind and belonging to the church. This, however, was appropriated by the younger boys chiefly, and was soon deserted, even by them, for baseball. It was plain, then, that I was not working in the right direction.

Next I organized a sort of sodality, composed of all the boys up to sixteen, who had made their first Communion. For a time this worked well, but when the next first Communion class came in, the larger boys, now growing into young men, dropped off from the general Communions, and it became evident that that plan could not work as I had hoped.

At last, I decided upon another, the one at present in operation. I called a meeting of all the youths of the congregation between the ages of fifteen and twenty-one, without stating its object. The result was a very fair attendance of such drawn by curiosity to see what was to be done. I made a little speech, showing them how necessary it was for their advancement in the world to get a better education than most of them had had the opportunity, or the willingness to use the opportunity, of getting it. Then I assured them that it was not too late to repair this misfortune, or error, at least in part, and unfolded the plan I had for enabling them to do so.

I would have a room opened for them in the basement of the church two nights in the week from dark until bedtime; would provide some little games for their amusement; would furnish a small library of entertaining books; and would, if they desired, give them half-hour lectures on some useful subject, and assistance in any branch of literature or science they might wish to pursue. They were to be at liberty to go and come as they pleased without question or offence, and could withdraw when they saw fit. They were pleased with the offer, and every one present gave his name to the proposed organization.

Some younger boys wanted to join, but it was seen that to admit such would drive away others whom it was more important to keep, and they were refused, the only exception being the admission of a very few over fourteen who were as tall as the average youth of sixteen.

The meetings began on the first Tuesday of October, 1884, and have been continued during the autumn, winter and spring. No formal organization, took place until December, when, at the urgent request of almost all the attendants, a "Young Men's Union" was formally organized, a simple constitution adopted, and officers elected. Since that time regular minutes have been kept, the roll has been called at each meeting, and such business as was desirable, transacted, and though it was intended to open the rooms until the first of April only, from the idea that no considerable attendance could be expected when the nights became short and pleasant, it was unanimously resolved to continue the meetings for the present, and they have so far been fairly attended.

During the long nights of the later autumn and winter, the boys began to collect from 7 o'clock and amuse themselves by playing checkers or dominoes, or in conversation. At first, there was a disposition on the part of some of the younger members to skylark a little, but this was soon checked by the determination of the executive committee, to suspend them under a clause of the constitution giving it that power, and, thenceforth, there was excellent order. By 8 o'clock the attendance was good, and then the roll was called, the minutes read, and whatever business there was, transacted.

Then the writer began his lecture, and briefly sketched the history of Phoenicia, Assyria, Egypt, Greece, and Rome, as far as the establishment of the Roman empire, besides giving some readings germane to the subjects treated of. He was heard with strict attention and endeavored to make his subjects as interesting as possible. After the lecture, the library was opened; it was, at first, well patronized, but, gradually, the number of readers fell off, the books, such as Scott, Dickens, Thackeray, Cooper, etc., being evidently too heavy for most of the members; but the few Catholic stories provided, unexpectedly took well and have been most read, much to the writer's satisfaction. When the giving out of books was over, games etc., were resumed, and often there was some very good singing. At 9:15 the lights were put out and the room closed.

The monthly Communions are on the same day with those of the younger boys, but the Union occupies a separate place in the church and the attendance of the older boys is much better than before, and they have begun to join, when old enough, the literary society of Catholic gentlemen, which is doing much good in the city. Much remains yet to be done, but a good beginning

has been made, and better results are hoped for.

The question of expense naturally arises when considering such matters; so it is well to say that, aside from the lighting and heating of the room, which costs but little, and about \$25 worth of books given or loaned, only \$28 has been expended. This was not collected from the members of the Union, the writer thinking it inadvisable to have dues, as they were mostly poor, working boys with wages, but was supplied from another source.

Fidels. Why cannot other pastors or assistant pastors do as much for the youth, for whose souls they are responsible?

OUT OF WORK. To those who are out of work there is one piece of advice. Don't lose heart. Cherish the belief that God has some work waiting for you somewhere, and will show it to you, if only you trust His care and guidance. Look away from men and things to Him; and as you leave your house each day to go from place to place, to scan the advertisements, to make known your needs, let the heart repose in His fatherly love.

When the graft answer is given, when the door is slammed in your face, when you are just too late, dare instantly to look up into your Father's face, and accept it as His will. Learn the lesson of patient trust, and cast on Him the responsibility of finding food and other necessities for yourself and those depending upon you. God's general method is to supply our needs through the labor of our hands; but if this fails us, He is perfectly able to provide what we need in other ways.

A good quiet time in prayer before you leave your room in the morning; a cheery song of praise; a hopeful heart, casting a light on the face; a patient bearing of disappointment; an unbroken confidence, fed by the promises of God's Word, that He cannot fail, and is bound to give you bread to eat, clothes to wear, and what is needed for wife and child; an unremitting diligence to secure work—these are the conditions to be observed.

PRINCIPLES MAKE THE MAN. Behind all character there are enduring principles, and it is by these principles, handed on from sire to son, that developed for the first time sometimes by him in whom they are illustrated, and greatness is nurtured and the truest kingship achieved. We see, now and then, men of the humblest lineage, as the world reckons such things, who mount to the loftiest eminence from the lowliest and most obscure beginnings, and we see all along in the history of such men, certain dominant aspirations, certain clear convictions, a faith and courage and majesty of rectitude, which rule and mould them from the beginning. Such men, whatever their origin, seem to be born of great truths and nurtured by grand ideas. By these their intellects were nourished, their wills disciplined and their consciences enlightened.

GOLDEN NUGGETS. (Gathered at the Baltimore National Purity Congress.) The average length of the Englishman's life is thirty-five years; the average for the morality-loving English Jew is forty-six; the average for the English "Friend," who is known for his correct habits, is fifty-five years. This is sufficient proof that purity lengthens life.

Examples of men who lived lives of strictest continence, attaining a green old age: Michael Angelo, Emmanuel Kant, Sir Isaac Newton, Isaac Watts, August Neander, Lord Macaulay, Henry Wilson.

An experienced physician writes from Bombay, India, that he has never known one soldier in the British army to be injured by his loyalty to the laws of God, but has known thousands that were utterly ruined by their vices.

Intemperance and impurity go hand in hand. They are closely allied. Drink turns a young man's mind out of its balance, and his mental capacities and his body become impaired. His will-power becomes destroyed, and the higher faculties are sluggish and dazed.

God has absolute power to give life. All creating centers in Him. He has conferred infinite honor and indefinite responsibility on man by giving him power to re-create and perpetuate his kind. Fatherhood is one of the most sacred functions. In this life alone its exercise is wrought with measureless results for good or evil: considered in view of the endless life on which all men have entered, the possibilities and results are beyond conception or computation. The indifference which abounds among men—otherwise well informed—concerning fatherhood and its obligations, are startling and criminal; while the wickedness which degrades this function to the low level of animalism is a shameful badge of degradation.

Fatherhood demands physical purity and soundness. Whatever one may have received by the laws of heredity, he must make the most and best of himself for the sake of those who are to carry his life and name into succeeding generations. Physical soundness and physical purity are inseparable. These form the best basis for all that is best.

While we all concede that purity is an essential attribute to a true man, some persons reserve to themselves an undefined feeling that a Joseph is somewhat effeminate in character. In this they are mistaken. Natural law is inviolable; it carries its own penalty. The power of unrestrained imagination means loss of purity irreparable and loss of chivalrous regard due to woman. The man who loses these fine feelings has committed moral suicide.

We may deceive ourselves, not others. Your sin will find you out. It is found out when you know it yourself.

self. The march of evolution throws out the man of self-indulgence and brands him as unfit to perpetuate the race. A godly life is a life prolonged and ennobled. It earns respect of good men and women. How to gain this high ideal may be answered in a word: "Overcome evil with good. Be to-day what you wish to be in the end."

A TRUE INCIDENT.

A Badge of the Sacred Heart.

In the vicinity of a town, in a mountainous district of India, stands a large house, a private school for the sons of Protestant gentlemen. The lady of the house, a kind, motherly woman, is now in the greatest anxiety. The civil surgeon has been called in to see a small boy of eight, who went for a ramble during the morning, and had slipped down to about the height of twenty feet, then again fell over the rocky edge of the precipice double as far. Reaching the ground he was taken up unconscious, and carried back to the school much weakened by the loss of blood. He got concussion of the brain and raved in wild delirium while the doctor is endeavoring to stem the blood that flows from four gaping wounds. The cuts on the head are large, open gashes, and now that the dressing is completed, they are kept together by five stitches. The cut over the brain, the doctor says, is to the bone, and is fully an inch and a half in length. Although there is shallow hope for his little patient, who is a Catholic, the lady, though a Protestant, thinks that a priest ought to be acquainted with his critical situation, and, acting on the blessed impulse, wrote to the nearest convent, where little G— was known and loved. \* \* \* Evening was now far on the wane; the chaplain, a kind-hearted Capuchin Father, who had himself been ill for days, but hearing of the boy's danger, cast all care of self on the Good Master, and, with a servant carrying a lantern to light the way, hastened on his errand of love. Trudging for hours up the steep mountain road, he reached the house by 10 o'clock. Here the fullest scope for his sacred ministry near the sick child was given. How deeply the Father was touched by the scene before him! The nice, gentle boy, who had paid him a visit only two days before, now looking so mutilated. He has gone back to sweet babyhood days, and speaks in Hindostani to his ayah. After half an hour's prayer and trying without success to find the boy in a lucid moment, the priest left the house to reach his way down the mountain side, reaching his own humble abode by midnight.

The Sisters of the convent, to whom the account of G—'s sad accident and danger had been a great shock, were not idle. On receiving Mrs. L—'s note the Reverend Mother requested the Sister in charge of the chapel to give our Blessed Lady a lamp for the night, and as the blue lamp was raised to the foot of the statue a humble petition was made to the Sweet Mother of Sorrows, begging that she would intercede for the life of the boy to be spared until he had been to confession—after that God knew what was best for him, and His holy will would be accepted. Next morning a servant was sent with a kind note of inquiry to Mrs. L—.

The last paragraph of it ran as follows: "I am sending up a Badge of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and if you will be so good as to attach it to G—'s clothing, or even place it near his bed, I feel assured that the loving Heart of the Saviour, whose tenderness for children was so warmly manifested while here on earth, will now be moved with mercy to restore this dear child to consciousness, and maybe even to health." Finally, anent putting the Badge into the envelope, it was placed on the high altar in the chapel, where a supplicant, kneeling with extended arms before the Blessed Sacrament, of all the promises He has made in favor of those who honored His Sacred Heart, and asked Him, too, to manifest His glory before so many Protestants. That morning another priest went to see G— and anointed him; he was still delirious; there was no confession, and the Father feared he would die without one.

Mrs. L—, in replying to the note, said that she regretted to say there was no improvement in G—'s state, and that the Badge had been pinned on his clothing as requested. Who can tell what marvels took place in that Protestant assembly? Little G— remembered nothing and knew nothing then about the Badge; however, next morning he asked for something to eat, and in less than twenty-four hours his wounds had all healed without discharge. The Protestant doctor, who knew nothing about the lamp and the Badge, said it was a most wonderful thing, and at the end of his visits, his patient was quite himself, though well marked. A couple of weeks later he left the school and was prepared for confirmation. He paid the convent another visit, where a Badge of the Sacred Heart was put on him, and he was taken to the chapel to thank Our Blessed Lord and His Virgin Mother for his recovery.

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A FRIEND OF CARDINAL MANNING.

Monsignor Doane, pastor of St. Patrick's cathedral, Newark, N. J., in a letter to the New York Tribune, has given the following interesting account of Cardinal Manning:

"If it be permitted to review a reviewer, I should like to say something 'per contra' to the writer who reviews Purcell's life of Cardinal Manning, my old friend and my father's friend, in to day's Tribune. I say my father's friend, for he dedicated the first volume of his Anglican sermons to my father, whom he met when he went to England to preach the sermon at the opening of the parish church at Leeds, at the invitation of Dr. Hook. It is an inherited friendship as well as a personal one, the latter founded on my seeing him on several occasions when I was in Europe. I first heard his silvery voice and his persuasive words in the Church of St. Andrea delle Fratte, in Rome, over forty years ago.

"No one who has never been through the throes of conversion from Protestantism to Catholicity can form any idea of what it is, especially when the mind is losing hold of the old ideas and has not yet grasped the new. It is a period of perplexity, uncertainty and difficulty, and must have been doubly so in the early days when the converts were pioneers. I know of no sadder book than 'The Letters of Cardinal Newman,' describing that period of his own life. He had lost faith in Anglicanism, and yet he was uncertain as to his own conclusions, fearing lest he might be misled and misled others, and knowing the grief that his leaving the Church of England would cause to so many who were dearer to him than life. This, in his case, and in the case of Cardinal Manning, led to apparent oscillation and charges of dishonesty and duplicity, of which neither of them were capable. As soon as they saw their way clear before them they made the tremendous sacrifice, humanly speaking, and bravely entered upon it.

"That there were differences of opinion as to undefined dogma and policy of action between those two great men is not to be denied. Just as Paul withstood Peter to the face, so Newman and Manning differed about certain matters, and their difference was public and well known.

"One statement of your reviewer, that Cardinal Manning never did a noble or disinterested deed, is to me astounding to be passed by. 'Eo uno discite omnes,' and almost all his criticism is of the same character and of the order of travesty. Toward the end of his life, when the golden jubilee of his priesthood (or perhaps the silver jubilee of his episcopate) was celebrated, offerings amounting to many thousand pounds were made to him. When the money was given to him, he gave it all away to hospitals, asylums, seminaries, churches, and one of the most beautiful things he ever wrote was the address that he delivered on that occasion. I have not yet seen Mr. Purcell's book; but surely that must be mentioned, and this act was in keeping with his whole life. 'Per transitu benedictio' (he went about doing good, might have been said of him, as was said of his Divine Master. When he acquired the site of his new cathedral, he said he would never build it until every Catholic child in London was in a Catholic school.

"His devotion to the laboring classes was most marked, and though persona grata at Court and to the nobility and aristocracy of England, and a member of the Athenaeum Club (so that there was a joke about his being an apostle of the genteels), it was not among them that he was to be found, but in the slums, among the poor, leading the temperance crusade, and trying in every way to promote the spiritual and temporal interests of his flock. He led a most mortified and abstemious life, and died leaving almost nothing behind him, acting on his own principle that a priest should be without money and without debts. His manner was cold and irresponsive, and he was often misunderstood, but a nobler man or more faithful priest never lived than Henry Edward Manning, second Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster in the restored hierarchy of England.

"The last time I saw him was a few months before his death, when his emaciated frame and impaired hearing showed the ravages that time had made upon him, but the fire was still in the eye and the kindliness in the voice which I had remembered in bygone years, and which once seen and once heard could never be forgotten. I am glad to have the opportunity of offering this tribute to his memory.

THE CHURCH AND THE THEATRE.

The remarkable success of Mr. Wilson Barrett's new religious play, "The Sign of the Cross," ought to encourage thoughtful Catholics who have long mourned over the degeneracy of the stage. It should also spur them on to vigorous action. The drama is here to stay, and obviously it will continue to exert a powerful influence on the morals of the people. At present that influence is deplorably noxious. Young people sit side by side in our theatres and lock unblushingly upon scenes which would shock them in real life, and which could not be so much as mentioned in respectable company. Whoever glances at the theatrical posters which make our cities hideous, whoever skims over the dramatic reports in the newspapers, must be convinced that the atmosphere of the theatre is, to speak in general terms,

grossly immoral. Actors and actresses vie with one another in shamelessness. Who will outdo the other in reckless criminal obscenity and still escape the clutches of the law?

Now, the step between witnessing immoral scenes on the stage and enacting them in real life is a short one. That familiarity with crime lessens our horror of it is the merest truism, and Pope has given us this memorable genesis of wrong doing:

Vice is a monster of so frightful mien As to be hated needs but to be seen; Yet seen too oft, familiar with her face, We first endure, then pity, then embrace.

The Puritans are dead. The taste for salacious drama grows apace; and as the coming generation gives no promise of being more reverent, modest, or conservative than the present one, the question arises, Where will it all end?

Twenty years ago the late Professor Blackie asked: "Is it not a strange thing that in modern times, with our high strung religion, we have made a divorce between the stage and morality and religion; whereas in ancient times, growing out of mere joviality—out of the harvest-home, as it were—there came up a Greek tragedy, which became a pulpit from which you have sermons upon conscience which go to move the inner strings of the heart as much as any sermon which was ever preached? Recall the opening chorus of 'Agamemnon,' or read over the choruses of 'Eumenides,' and tell me if it is not a most monstrous thing for men preaching the gospel to say that there is anything in these tending to a divorce between the Church and the theatre."

The question is still pertinent. It is idle to speak of the "essential immorality" of the drama. The first modern theatre was a convent, and the first dramatist a nun. It is idle to propose shunning the stage and delivering it up to a reprobate sense. That is not the way of the Church. When an offensive institution can not be banished, she endeavors to change its character and make it an ally. Thus some of the feasts of the ecclesiastical year had in so far a Pagan origin. And if churchgoers would insist that all man-agers should be like the lamented Mr. Booth, the theatre, too, might become not merely a place of innocent amusement, but a pulpit of truth, a handmaid of the Church. On one occasion Mr. Booth was asked by a minister if he could not enter the theatre by a side door to avoid being seen. "No, sir," answered the great actor: "there is no door in my theatre that Almighty God can't see through." Here was a conscientious manager, and one who more than any other succeeded in lifting from the theatre the odium which unscrupulous management and depraved patronage had cast upon it.

The Church can not banish the drama, but organized and enlightened Catholic opinion—at least, to a large extent—can change it. It is purely a question of dollars and cents. Managers are like most other public servants: they give people what they want and what they pay for. Let it be shown that the dangerous drama is not profitable, and the dangerous drama will be promptly abandoned. Let it be once understood that the public wants decent plays, and the public will have them.

Ours is a day of agitations and movements—many of them stupid or useless, or worse. But there is work for one more agitation, reasonable in its demands and vigorous in its methods. If the patronage of the better element of theatre-goers were withdrawn from plays of doubtful character, and from theatres where such plays are enacted, the managers would very soon be brought to a sense of their responsibility. A strong Catholic league, organized by priests in every parish, and supported as it would be by the best non-Catholic opinion, would speedily transform the drama, and conduce to a higher tone in public morality. The need of such a league is great and immediate.

The drama in itself is a legitimate form of entertainment; and if it is offensive, it is so because of accidental and wholly unnecessary perversion. Let us aim not to banish the play-house—an impossible feat,—but to purify it. To quote Professor Blackie again: "If they who are God's children know not how to use the drama, depend upon it the devil is far too clever a fellow not to use it for his own ends." A healthy public opinion in revolt against indecency has already suppressed the erotic novel; let us hope that a similar movement may suppress the erotic drama.—Ave Maria.

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James E. Nicholson.

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Should be used, if it is desired to make the Finest Class of Cakes—Rolls, Biscuits, Pancakes, Johnny Cakes, Pie Crust, Baked Paste, etc. Light, sweet, snow-white and digestible food results from the use of Cook's Friend. Guaranteed free from alum. Ask your grocer for McLaughlin's Cook's Friend.

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