

CHATS WITH YOUNG MEN

JUST HUMAN

He was so human! Whether strong or weak, Far from his kind, he neither sank nor soared, But sat an equal guest at every board, No beggar ever felt him condescend, No prince presume; for still himself to have At mankind's simple level, and where'er He met a stranger, there he left a friend.

TODAY

Yesterday is gone forever. Tomorrow never comes. Today is in my own hands. If I shirk Today's task, I shall be adding to my wasted Yesterdays. If I postpone Today's task, I shall be increasing Tomorrow's burden. If I accomplish what Today sets before me, I shall be doing my best to atone for Yesterday's failures, and to prepare for Tomorrow's successes.

Therefore, I will endeavor so to use my time and opportunities that Today shall leave me a little wiser and abler than it found me.—Anon.

WHY THEY ARE POOR

Their ideas are larger than their purses. They are easy dupes of schemers and promoters. They reverse the maxim—"Duty before pleasure."

They do not think it worth while to save nickles and dimes. They try to do what others expect of them, not what they can afford.

They never dreamed that a mortgage on their home could ever turn them out-of-doors.

They think it will be time enough to begin to save for a rainy day when the rainy day comes.

On a six hundred-dollar income they try to compete in appearance with a two-thousand-a-year neighbor.

They subscribe for everything that comes along—organs, lightning rods, subscription books, pictures, bric-a-brac—anything they can pay for on the installment plan.

They have not been able to make much in the business they understand best, but they think that they can make a fortune by investing in something they know nothing about, especially if it is far away.—True Voice.

A SERMON FROM BASEBALL

There are sermons in stones, and a powerful sermon for our American boys in the sordid story of the recent baseball "scandals." And the burden of that sermon is that dishonesty never pays, that it is usually a losing game financially, that if it pays in money it ruins by destroying peace of conscience. Here is a ballplayer, trained to make his living by the shifty use of his muscles and, in the present instance, trained to nothing else. He has engaged to sell his skill to an honest man who in return pays him an honest, even a generous, salary. He is bound by every law to give his best to his employer. If he does less, he is dishonest.

In an evil moment the tempter comes. The series of games which will decide the world's championship is about to begin. For months dishonest gamblers have planned that this series is to be a dishonest series. They approach this player, His honor, they think, can be bought for \$10,000, just the price of a year of honest work, and this sum they offer him to "throw a game." The temptation is strong. There is a mortgage on his home. He is skilful in the game, and he can be skilful in hiding his dishonesty. "No one will ever know." He will not permit himself to reflect that if he works honestly in the game, he will receive almost that amount as a bonus, or that if he is found out, his means of livelihood will be taken from him, and he will be left to his dishonor. "But you will not be found out. No one will ever know." He takes the bribe. For a time all goes well, but one year later he is "found out." Never again can he play the game, and he has no other way of making a living. In the meantime, this had been his life:

"I was thinking only of the wife and the kids, and how bad I needed the money. O, if I had only known what it was all going to mean, the taking of that dirty money! If I had only thought of the moments of mental torture, the days and nights of living with an unclean mind; the weeks and months of going along with six or seven crooked players and holding a guilty secret, and of going along with the boys on the team that had stayed straight and clean and honest, boys who had nothing to trouble them, while I couldn't work I was so troubled—if I'd thought of this then, I wouldn't be going through this hell now."

No, dishonesty does not pay. Not only our boys, but the young man who at the outset of life thinks, as he should, "only of the wife and the kids" can find a valuable lesson in the downfall of this ballplayer. "Be sure your sin will find you out," not always in the courts of men, but always in the courts of God. Far better is it to go along in poverty with the boys that had stayed straight and clean and honest than to rise to wealth on an initial capital of sin. With sin there is no peace of conscience, that nearest approach to happiness which this world can offer.

OUR BOYS AND GIRLS

TO A SMALL BOY

What shall I write in your album, Jack? Shall I tell you a tale of the sea? How you went to float In a beautiful boat To a land that was fair and free? Then you found that your boat was the world, Jack And Heaven your port to be. It will all come true If your whole life through You're the chap that you ought to be.

BOYS MIGHT REMEMBER THEM

A very successful teacher of boys gave six "reminders" to his pupils: First—That a quiet voice, courtesy and kind acts are as essential to the part in the world of a gentleman as of a gentleman.

Second—That roughness, blustering, and even foolishness are not manliness. The most firm and courageous men have usually been the most gentle.

Third—That muscular strength is not health.

Fourth—That a brain crammed only with facts is not necessarily a wise one.

Fifth—That the labor impossible to the boy of fourteen will be easy to the man of twenty.

Sixth—That the best capital for a boy is not money, but a love for work, simple tastes and a heart loyal to his friends and his God.

BETHLEHEM

The making of pearl rosaries is the chief industry of the little town of Bethlehem, in Palestine. Most of these, as well as the carved shells on which religious scenes are depicted, are sold to tourists. The pearl paste from which the beads and rosaries are made, is exported from the United States, and the Americans are the principal purchasers of the rosaries. The outfit of the bead worker is very crude, consisting of files, borers, and a wood device for holding the pieces of pearl waste. A ring is fastened on this and the piece of pearl placed between the ends. These are hammered together until they grip the pearl in a tight manner. The worker then files the pearl until he has it the required shape and size. After a quantity of these pieces are prepared, they are cut into beads, and a hole is bored into each one. To give the beads a smooth finish they are placed in a special crockery vessel half filled with water, and by being constantly kept in motion the rough edges are knocked off by knocking against each other and the sides of the vessel. They are then placed in boiling water, to which a little nitric or muriatic acid has been added, and rinsed in cooling waters. This gives them the gloss and sheen that is so beautiful. The beads are now ready to be strung on cords, silk, or wire.

The wire is usually used for rosaries. Women and girls string the beads, and they earn from twelve to twenty-five cents a day, while bead makers average anywhere from thirty-two to sixty-five cents.—Sunday Companion.

DISPLAY COURTESY AT HOME

Courtesy in the home is vastly different from that which is practiced in public as an exterior form of kind consideration and conventional politeness among strangers. Wholly free from all indifference and sham, it is the sincere expression of hearty appreciation of one another; it is the expression of a kind heart, and there follow in its wake the curbing of one's temper, consideration for the needs and wishes of others, and patience with another's faults.

But what is the cause of this courtesy in the home being so rare? Why is that generous bond together by which the ties of flesh and blood, who should cherish the love and esteem of one another more than of anyone else in the world, will begrudge one another what they would be ready to give a stranger at any time? Is it because we feel so secure in this tie that we feel no need of making any efforts to strengthen it by giving expression to our affection for one another? Must we be separated by fate before we will acknowledge our affection? Why not be equally solicitous of winning the favor of our own as that of any stranger?

If we will make some observations, we find that the cause for these deplorable conditions can be traced to negligence on the part of the parents in the training of the children. It was neglected by the parents towards each other; the sham courtesy of courtship days was cast off like a tool that had served its purpose; the "Good Mornings" is but a grunt, also the "Goodbyes" and the "Good-nights" are usually forgotten; there is no "Please" or "Thank you, or "May I do this?" "How would you like that?" "Will you do this for me?" "Certainly, with pleasure." All these pleasant little sentences that cost nothing but a little kindness and add so much towards attaining a congenial atmosphere in the home, with which one may check one's wishes and which infuse the one so addressed with a desire to carry out these wishes immediately, they are thrown aside and a blunt, domineering attitude has taken its place.

Now, if we consider that the children grow up to six years of age are entirely under the influence of their parents' example, and in the game that grades get scarcely more than a theoretical knowledge of the meaning of courtesy, it is small wonder that when entering the business world with its polished mannerisms they are utterly at bay.

Why do we not make greater efforts to give the young this valuable

asset of life? Why do we depend on the unsympathetic outer world to cultivate that which we could have done long ago by example or encouragement? And furthermore, courtesy that has been practiced from childhood must necessarily become a part of the nature, whereas that which is acquired in later years is never thorough, and frequently fails at critical moments.—The Echo.

WHY VICTOR HUGO IS ON THE INDEX

By Rev. Albert Muntach, S. J.

Catholic teachers are so often asked why the Church forbids the reading of Hugo's "Notre Dame de Paris" ("The Hunchback of Notre Dame") and of "Les Misérables" that it seems worth while to set forth briefly the reasons of this condemnation. Both works are explicitly condemned, the former in a decree of July 28, 1884, the latter of June 20, 1864.

Popular opinion ranks both books among the outstanding productions of world-literature. Those who share this view are frequently unable to give any reasonable ground for their admiration. They have heard others speak in glowing terms of the romances and have never formed an opinion based on close reading. Unfortunately, many books which have no literary or artistic value whatever thus achieve a wide reputation which all the opposition of sound criticism cannot restrict to sober limits.

In the case of Hugo's "Notre Dame de Paris" the germs of real greatness which the work undoubtedly contains, have been unduly exaggerated by some of the modern literary critics. Even such a reliable critic of world-literature as R. G. Moulton has, through love of antithesis, been led to say: "In the 'Hunchback of Notre Dame' we have society in the grasp of Ecclesiasticism, at a time when the Church is at its full strength, while in 'The Man Who Laughs' society is in the grasp of aristocracy."

Now it is precisely because Hugo attempts to show in his grotesque story of the Middle Ages that the Church is an incubus upon society, and that she even panders to the baser vices of man, that both books are pilloried and branded as foul fruit for Christian minds. In the first place, every sincere Catholic will resent the charge implied in Moulton's words—that the Church ever made it a consistent policy to dominate society; that it is to assume full control over the entire life of any community. Whenever such "domineering" did take place, it was the exception, and could often be explained by the unsettled political and social conditions of the times.

DISTORTION OF TRUTH But this is not the real reason for our grievance against Hugo's romance. The book does not give a true picture of the wonderful Ages of Christian Faith, but is an odious calumny against the priesthood in the person of the villainous Archdeacon Frollo. We do not deny that such wretches, who misused their high power, existed in those times. But what reason was there for taking such a hateful character from the ranks of the clergy and insinuating that he was a type of the profession which he so dishonored by his criminal conduct? It would have been more consistent and more in harmony with the spirit of the age to have chosen a reckless cavalier or adventurer, or a haughty knight-errant as the villain of the tale. Had Hugo done so, there is no reason to believe that the story would not now be heralded as one of the great books of the world's fiction.

A novel falls short of the standard of literary perfection to the extent that it fails to give an accurate picture of the life, or times, or characters of the epoch or nation chosen for the background of the story. From this point of view "Notre Dame" is a lurid and loathsome misrepresentation of the splendid life of the times which saw the rise of the mighty cathedral dedicated to the Mother of God in the heart of Paris. The romance is free to exaggerate the liberties given to the writer of fiction, but Hugo need this privilege to the utmost and with detriment to his story. Hence, even from a purely literary point of view "Notre Dame" is far from being the masterpiece it is said to be by uncritical admirers.

GOETHE'S VERDICT Sane literary critics, as for instance, Schöler and Birch-Hirschfeld, in their "History of French Literature," have referred to Hugo's work on account of its contortion of historic facts and its wild fantastic ravings, as "a romance of horror." Goethe read the book in the last years of his life, and in his diary speaks of "his disgust concerning the magical puppets whom the author presents as human beings, whom he allows to play the most absurd antics, whom he scurries and whips about, while he plunges us (the reader) into despair. It is a revolting, inhuman style of writing." (June 20, 1831.)

While Hugo thus gives his monstrous fancy free scope in the creation of scenes and characters, he leaves the reader in the dark as to the real meaning of the vast pageantry that is unfolded in the course of the story. The very existence of the old Cathedral, around, about, and in which, all the iniquity is supposed to have its origin, appears puzzling in the extreme. The

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"LES MISÉRABLES"

"Les Misérables," a social romance, begun in 1848, was finished in 1862, and is an indictment against the existing order of society. The work glorifies opposition to the established order, and through some of the characters are inspired by high ideals, the tendency of the work, as a whole, is revolutionary and ungodly. It may be called a great Socialist epic. There are of course eloquent pages in the book, and the social evils so mercilessly exposed, unfortunately weigh heavily upon large sections of every community. But this does not justify the tenor of the development of the tale. There is not only no need to spread a sentimental halo around an unfortunate mother like Fantine, from whom the first part of the story is named, but it is ethically wrong to do so. A moral transgression is always deserving of censure, and the writer who uses his literary art to ennoble wrong-doings is an enemy to society. His book ought to be branded as evil.

HUGO'S METHOD

As an illustration of the method employed by Hugo, we believe, and even to calumniate, as much as lay in his power, a sacred institution of the Church, we mention the strange and shockingly grotesque picture of religious orders in Part II, Book 7, of "Les Misérables." We read: "From the point of view of history, of reason, and of truth, monachism (the religious life), is condemned."

Monasteries are detestable in the nineteenth century." In the same paragraph it is said that Italy and Spain are beginning to recover from the curse of monachism, "thanks to the sane and vigorous hygiene of 1789 (the French Revolution)." The long eulogy of the book in the opening chapters of the book make this distorted and calumnious sketch all the more abominable. For unthinking persons may be led to believe that Hugo writes as a loyal son of the Church.

No matter how one regards "the Index of Prohibited Books" drawn up by the Church, a sane mind will recognize the wisdom of the precautionary measures taken by her to safeguard the spiritual interests of her children. That promiscuous reading of pernicious literature has caused untold harm, no one can deny. A large amount of the irreligiosity of the modern world, and the general looseness of morals may be attributed to the vicious productions of the press. Just now the works of Blaise Pascal are widely advertised "with a great noise of tom-toms and circus parades," as one critic has well expressed it. But works like "The Shadow of the Cathedral" sow the seeds of anarchy and discontent among unthinking classes. To banish them from our people, or at least to restrict the sphere of their evil influence, is not an offense against art, but a high form of social service.

EXPERIENCE TEACHES

The divorce evil was the subject of some very pertinent and enlightening remarks by a Supreme Court Justice in Books recently. Commenting on the change in the status that allowed guilty parties to marry again after three years instead of five as the old statute required the judge went on to elucidate from his own experience the harm of easy divorce laws. In the course of his talk he declared: "It has become my firm conviction after many years' experience upon the bench that the only really effective way to cure the so-called divorce evil would be to make it practically impossible for either party to the marriage to marry any one else during the lifetime of the other party. I am aware that such a rule would in a small number of cases work an apparent hardship. After listening to the evidence in many hundred actions of this sort I believe that a very large proportion of these actions would never have been prohibited from contracting a new alliance, arrangements for which are frequently made before the suit is begun."

Human nature is human nature. You must take it as it is. It is ever trying to throw off restraint. Man is fickle. He is carried away by the tide of passion, he craves new pleasures, he is irksome of laws. Almighty God knew this when he instituted marriage. He knew that marriage was absolutely necessary for the preservation of family life. He ordained therefore that Christian marriage should be the permanent union of one man and one woman. And he knew too that some men would try to break the sanctity of the mar-

riage bond. Therefore Christ expressly taught the doctrine of the indissolubility of the marriage bond. And the Church has consistently echoed His teaching that valid Christian marriage is indissoluble save by death.

It is strange that men should experiment with the laws of God. Man-kind should have come to the realization at this period of the world that what God has ordained for man is in the ultimate analysis the best for man. Trifling with marriage laws brought the downfall of the greatest nations of pagan antiquity. Derogations from the strict laws of family morality have thinned the blood and decimated the descendants of some of the greatest names in history. And yet "split-or" discuss, and legislators enact divorce laws that will make for the still further disintegration of family life.

We need more public men of the stamp of this Brooklyn judge to combat the evil of easy divorces. Looking at it from a purely human standpoint he has come to the conclusion that divorce is a failure. With the clear revelation that they have received from Christ and His Church all men should long ago have convinced themselves of the same fact. God's way is always the best way. And when He said, "What God hath joined together let no man put asunder," he was declaring not only a precept of morality but also giving a formula for individual happiness, national prosperity, and family peace and security.—The Pilot.

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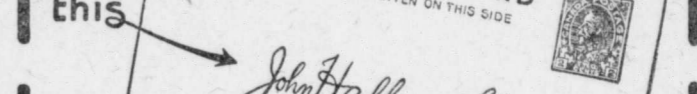
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