

CHATS WITH YOUNG MEN

EASTER EVE

A world of sodden leaves and gaunt-limbed trees
That stand as in a dream. Set in
the skies
The moon, like embers of a watch-
fire, lies
Half-quenched by mists breathed up
from restless seas;
And like a lion troubled in his sleep,
The wind, high-cradled in the piney
hills,
By fits and starts with fretful
moaning thrills
The echoing air, and darkness rules
the steep.

And yet I know the sun will soon
have kist
With lip of fire the sky, so leaden-
browed
Behind the silver gossamer of mist.
I know the Easter sun that gilds
the cloud
Shall kiss God's robes where last it
touched His shroud,
And all my soul is eloquent of
Christ.

EASTER

The periodical recurrence of
Easter is of supreme importance
for Christian life. It brings a mes-
sage much needed in a world in
which so many forces hostile and
antagonistic to Christian ideals are
at work. The feast of the Resur-
rection is the warrant of Christian
hope and trust. It stands for the
final triumph of the moral good
under circumstances that apparently
proclaim the abject defeat of the
spiritual. It voices the great cos-
mic law that righteousness and
justice will survive the wreck of
the visible universe. It bears wit-
ness to the presence of spiritual
powers that cannot be deflected
from their exalted purposes and
that sweep on to fulfillment and
fruition with majestic certainty
and irresistible momentum. It
brings to those, who are oppressed
by the scorn and the malice of the
wicked, a flaming vision that kindles
in their souls a new, undying con-
fidence.

Easter and Good Friday are in-
separably linked together. One
finds the explanation of each in the
other. Both, taken together, answer
the deepest questionings of human
nature and give the fullest and
most satisfactory interpretation of
life. Good Friday, by itself, would
leave man without hope. It would
loom as a tragedy of crushing
intensity. Easter, alone, would
divest life of its tragic meaning
and its ethical import. Joined to-
gether, they are the very pattern of
our life. For life, in its most
fundamental analysis, is ever a
dramatic repetition of Good Friday
and Easter—a sequence of trials
and triumphs, a strange mixture of
seeming failure and glorious
victory, a mysterious blending of
disheartening defeat and noble
achievement. The total balance of
the moral life universally is in
favor of victory. Life cannot be
expressed in terms of bankruptcy.
The last chapter in the life of the
Christian is not Golgotha, but the
empty tomb and an Angel of Light
on guard. It does not end in the
night; it continues into the bright
dawn. It passes into a day that
knows no evening.

That is the reason why the events
of Holy Week advance with such
dramatic swiftness. It is as if they
were pressing onward to some
splendid consummation and did not
dare to linger on the way. Only for
a brief moment is the dark and
stark shadow of the Cross sil-
houetted against the sky, when
already its edges are being gilded
by the first streaks of the dawn of
Easter morn stirring on the horizon.
Time seems to be in a holy haste to
traverse the interval between the
death of the Lord and His Resur-
rection.

There is always a beautiful sud-
denness, a dramatic surprise about
the coming of morning, an unexpected
magnificent rush, an unexpected
promptness. All at once, it is a
vivid reality, a victorious presence,
scattering the shadows of night
with an absolute finality and a
joyous imperiousness. Shadows
creep, but the light leaps.

Thus Easter comes! With the
rapidity of lightning it flashes into
the dismal gloom that hangs around
the Cross. Not timidly, not with
half-hearted misgivings, not with
tentative groping, does it come. It
arrives with the assurance of indis-
putable victory, with the unfalter-
ing certainty of conquest. The
shadows make no show of resist-
ance. They must yield; they can
not endure in the presence of light.
Precipitately, they are put to flight.
Life triumphs with a decisiveness
that even death must acknowledge.

On Easter depend the hopes of
humanity! Had not that blessed
day dawned on an empty sepulchre,
the shadow of the Cross would have
assumed such gigantic proportions
that it would have eclipsed even
the sun and blotted out the
heavens. Then we would have to
write down the meaning of life in
terms of failure. We would for-
ever walk under a lowering sky and
with a crushing burden of despair
on our souls. A baffling sense of
defeat, an uncomfortable feeling of
the purposelessness of human exist-
ence would forever haunt and
mock us. We would struggle with-
out hope and toil without joy. We
would know that the very core of
the moral universe was dead; and
the thought would strike us cold
and turn everything to ashes.

But Easter is a fact! It is more
a fact than the death of Christ: the
death of Christ was only tempo-
rary; it was a shadow, a cloud, that
flitted across the luminous face of
the sun. But His resurrection is
permanent. It is even now a blessed
reality, for Christ, once risen dieth
no more. He lives and ever will
live. The seeming defeat was but
for an hour. The victory is for
eternity. The ignominy of Calvary
is overwhelmed in the glory of
Easter.

The hopes of humanity, therefore,
rest on a firm basis. Whatever may
happen, however thick and black
the shadows may become, however
deep the grave may yawn, we know
that death and defeat are not the
last words. The echo of the last
words of Christ, that rang like sub-
dued notes of despair and of re-
signed defeat, is a shout of victory.
Our hopes cannot be crushed. The
moral universe like a trumpet blast,
puts heart into those fighting the
battles of the Lord. It quickens
the step of the hosts marching
under the unfurled banners of
righteousness.

Easter is the inspiration that
prevents men from giving up the
bitter struggle for a better world. It
has demonstrated beyond peradven-
ture that wickedness cannot kill
anything which is really of God.

Accordingly, Christianity will never
give up the fight for righteousness
and justice. It does not surrender.
Not for a moment will it entertain
the cowardly and blasphemous
thought that any effort for the
betterment of man is vain and
futile. Destruction cannot prevail.
Our hopes cannot be buried. The
good may be beaten to the ground;
yes, crucified and laid in a tomb;
closed with a rock and carefully
sealed. It may ascend Golgotha
and have its Good Friday. But
tomorrow will see it rise. There is
no tomb deep enough to swallow up
and hold that which is good. With
the precipitancy of dawn and the
imperiousness of a conqueror,
Easter will come and break the
seal and roll away the stone.

The tomb is only for evil and its
allies. There is an everlasting
death—Catholic Standard and
Times.

OUR BOYS AND GIRLS

EASTER SONG

Go, spread the glorious triumph
Go, tell of Him Who late was slain;
Go, say Death's sting was all in
vain; Alleluia!

For He is not where once He lay,
And angels, watching, gladly say;
"He whom ye seek is risen today!"
Alleluia!

The burden of our sins He bore;
But now His pain and toil are o'er,
And He is Victor evermore.
Alleluia!

THE EASTER CALL
(BY ZOE MARIE HAGER)

Joyce Conkling sat before Father
McQueen and looked hard at a point
above the head of the aged mis-
sionary.

"Well," remarked the good
priest, "what are you going to do
about it?"

"Confession, I suppose you
mean." The pioneer woodsman
shifted uneasily on the chair.

"Yes, and to mean your way,
too, Joyce," gently added the
Father.

The man shifted again and broke
out petulantly.

"Why I never killed any one. I
never stole any thing. I've lived in
this community for years and I'm
considered eminently respectable. I
don't owe a man a penny, and," he
added with a smile, "sometimes I
find time and money to do a little
charity—why, I've even bought an
Irish Liberty Loan Bond and sub-
scribed to the new Knights of Col-
umbus Hall which is to be erected
in our largest city, as you know.
I can't see why you take things so
seriously. I think I'm—"

Father McQueen, old time mis-
sionary among the Indians of the
Western mountains, stared steadily
for a full minute at Conkling.
Slowly the red crept over the face
of the rancher.

It was nearly forty years since a
bright, young man left his good
Catholic home in the East, fired
with ambition for wealth and adven-
ture, and came to the far West.
There a trackless forest lay before
him. He plunged into the unbroken
wood and cleared for himself a
homestead. Soon after, he married.
With the years, came children and
prosperity. For lack of opportunity
he had become careless of religious
duty until now he scarcely remem-
bered the days when he, as a boy,
regularly attended Holy Mass and
received the Sacraments. True, his
children had been baptized and he
considered such matters as quite
settled except, perhaps, for the hos-
pitality extended at infrequent in-
tervals of time to a pious mis-
sionary who journeyed into Stann Creek
seeking the scattered members of
his flock. Deep down in his heart
was a thought that sometime he
would, of course, go to the Sacra-
ments again. When?—well, what's
the hurry? That had been his plea
for a number of years.

"I suppose you refer to that mar-
riage ceremony of mine, Father. Of
course, I do sometime intend to
have it fixed up by a Priest, but
there's no real rush about it, as I
can see. After all, it's only a
matter of form—"

The Father broke in with indignation.

"For these years you've been talk-
ing this way, Joyce. You're not
ignorant of Catholic doctrine and
you know this is serious. Were
you to go before you're God this
way, I don't know—"

Father McQueen dubiously shook
his head, leaving the remark un-
finished.

"Well, Father, the next time you
come, I'll—"

Joyce Conkling, do now what you
would wish to have done at the
solemn hour of death. You know
quite well enough that Catholics
cannot marry before a judge. You
cannot plead any excuse. Right
here and now, let me perform this
ceremony. This is your opportunity
once more! For the past eight
years He has sent me to this part
of the country, and yet you keep
putting off this all important matter
—what wonder you have not the
grace to go to the Sacraments. You
are Catholic enough to know that
before you can receive any Sacra-
ment worthily, you must make what
is wrong, right, and then you will
be able to make your peace with
God. He has decreed Holy Matrim-
ony a Sacrament which must be
received only at the hands of His
Priests, you know that. Marriage
is not, and can never be, a mere
contract, no matter what the world
may say to the contrary, and no
judge has the right to perform such
a ceremony. All the judges in the
world cannot set you right in the
eyes of God, though, as you say,
you're eminently respectable be-
fore the eyes of the world. When
are you going to settle your con-
science?"

Father McQueen arose and paced
the room twice. Then he turned
and faced Joyce.

The big rancher looked gloomily
into the fire.

Father McQueen continued:
"You're a Catholic only in name.
You're sliding down an alyes and I
know not how much longer God will
suffer you. You're taking terrible
chances—no Sacraments, no Easter
duty—nothing. Sunday will be
Easter. Let's have the ceremony
performed right now, then you go
to Confession. Then you make it
your business to come and bring
your whole family with you, to the
Mission on Easter—it's been many a
year, since you've been to Easter
services."

The good Father spoke with in-
tense earnestness and Conkling
wince under his remarks.

"But in the eyes of the world,
everything's—"

"The eyes of the world are not
those of your Maker! God is not
mocked!"

The woodsman strode to the win-
dow of his mountainous house and
gazed thoughtfully into the twilight.
A memory of his First Holy Com-
munion came over him. He saw
again his dear, pious mother, now
at rest with her God, as she fondly
caressed him after that happy morn-
ing of long ago when he received
his Lord for the first time. He
heard her words as she bade him
to be true to Holy Mother Church
wherever he might be. He sickened
in his heart as he recalled how
far he had strayed from a fond
mother's teachings. His eyes moist-
ened and he had difficulty in seeing
aright the stamping burro of the
missionary as it pawed the ground
impatient to be off.

Slowly he turned and spoke. "I
know you're right Father McQueen,
and I'm determined to settle my
conscience the very next time you
come. I pledge my word, and—"

"Do now what you wish to
do at the hour you call 'next
time.' Can you guarantee any
'next time?'"

Conkling laughed nervously.
"All I ask, Father, is just five
minutes to make up my accounts
with God."

"And how do you know that God,
in His mercy, will grant you five
minutes—even after all the time
you've allowed to pass like
this? I see there's no reasoning
with you," continued the Father,
as he held out his hand.

"Good-bye, Joyce—I trust God
will give you another, chance—I
shall pray that He may."

Father McQueen left the room
and hastily mounted his burro,
turning his head towards the
Mission, for it was rapidly growing
dark and the ride was long and
dangerous.

He had advanced scarcely thirty
feet, when Conkling called: "Father
McQueen, come back!"

"Father, I'm decided," he said,
as the good priest re-entered the
room, "after all, there's no real
reason why this matter can't be
fixed up now."

"Of course, there's no reason, and
you'll feel better when everything
has been made right according to
the Church."

After some minutes of prepara-
tion, the marriage ceremony had
been performed and a family re-
joiced in having been reconciled
with God. The Sacrament of Holy
Penance had washed the stains of
Joyce Conkling's soul, and he
realized the love and mercy of a
Master who had given him grace
enough to embrace the opportunity
presented.

When Father McQueen returned to
his burro his heart was light and
he felt his hard trip to Stann Creek
had yielded precious fruit. For many
a weary mile the missionary wound
his way up the mountain side to the
Abbey of the Saints, in the very
heart of the reservation of the Ne-
tuccas, interiorly uttering loving
colloquies to His Lord. Finally he

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reached the Mission, and when the
burro was under cover, Father Mc-
Queen stole into the little Sanctuary
and poured out his heart in fervent
thanksgivings. An hour of prayer,
then the tired priest withdrew to
his barren couch in the adjoining
poverty-stricken alcove off the
Sanctuary.

He knew not how long he had
slept when he was suddenly
awakened by heavy blows upon the
rear door. A boyish voice called
loud and long, "Father—Father
McQueen, let me in!"

Dressing hastily, the good Father
threw open the door. There stood
the ten year old son of Conkling
before him, crying bitterly.

"Can you come quickly," he asked
between his sobs, "mother wants
you. Papa was instantly killed to-

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