

CHATS WITH YOUNG MEN

TO THE "TOO MUCH TROUBLE" MEN

If we did but the things that we wanted to do; If at "too much trouble" we always shied; And stopped to rest when our strength was tried; If we never went out of our way or stayed close to our task while our neighbors played; If all that we did was to wear a smile We'd never accomplish a thing worth while.

Work is the father of all that's good— He gets the fire who will saw the wood; He reaches the top who will dare to climb With his face set upwards all the time; This you could nail on the highest post; He gets the most who has worked the most; And he who dodges the trouble here is dodging his chance for a greater sphere.

Do it, whatever the task may be, For it may hold glories you cannot see; What if you'd rather lie late in bed Or go out fishing or play, instead? Few of us here on the earth today Would go to work if it paid to play.

And this is the secret of each man's quest— He gets the best who will give his best.

A fellow must earn what his dream demands; Must pay for his joy with his brain and hands; Must bow to trouble and keep his grin And conquer his whims if he hopes to win.

Fortune or glory will never find The man of the "too much trouble" kind; For this is the lesson that all must learn— We'll get no more than we're glad to earn.

—EDGAR A. GUEST

CONFIDENCES

"Thus ever by day and night, climbing the dusty hills and toiling along the weary plains, journeying by land and journeying by sea, coming and going so strangely, to meet and act and react on one another, move all we restless travellers through the pilgrimage of life."

These sentiments of an eminent man of letters strike us most forcibly as the feelings of one who had observed life deeply, who had spent solitary moments either by choice or of necessity, when, thrown upon his own resources, he could pause and look out over the vast procession of people moving along the highways of the world, from different points of starting in widely diversified directions to meet sometimes along the road, to pass without saluting one another, to come together finally in the bosom of their common mother the earth. It is a fitting procession: now and then figures cross the path diagonally and seem to merge into one.

The most resourceful of men at times desire to hail their fellow-travellers on this journey, and to unburden themselves of intimate confidences. Feet up in the human heart there are things not necessary to be told, but which must be told in order to relieve one of an unendurable burden. So, in the vast procession that files past him on the highway of the world, a man scans the faces of his fellow-travellers eagerly to see if he may choose for himself one who will not fail him.

Men are usually wary of bestowing confidences, lest they prove by bitter experience the fallacy of dependence on their fellow men. They realize the selfishness of the world; they know that it does not wish to be burdened with the cares of others. It follows after a smile, but it has no interest in sobriety.

Even the child treads softly when there is question of confidence, when it is about to invite someone into that inner sanctum where things intimate and sacred dwell away from the shop-windows of life. Children are usually wise in this matter; they are distrustful of certain characteristics. And, on the other hand, an unimposing exterior does not always prevent the child mind from recognizing a prepossessing interior.

Witness the two prisoners in the villainous dungeon of Marseilles in the long ago, when the author of "Little Dorrit" wandered there in the glare of the sun. Two men are waiting like caged birds, to be fed. The very light of day has become for them a brigand staring through dark chinks in the wall.

The keeper of the prison comes with his little daughter to bring them their evening meal. One of the prisoners, Monsieur Rigaud, is sleek and smooth, with fine white hands,—the other, John Baptist, is repulsive, with hands coarsened and gnarled, and with all his nails broken and deformed.

The child scanning the two men attentively, places a portion in the smooth hands of Monsieur Rigaud, trembling as if with fear. A slight shudder convulses her tiny form and her fair brow darkens in distrust.

Whereof, she places the rude lump of bread in the ugly palms of John Baptist with ready confidence, and when he kisses the little hand, passes it caressingly over his face.

It is a strange coincidence which brings men from far ends of the earth together. Men of different birth, training, station, environment, temperament. Perhaps they have journeyed diverse paths until middle years; they have made friends, they have lost friends, they have bestowed confidences, they have been betrayed by their counsellors. Links have been forged, have grown strong with time, only to be rudely broken. All their lives, as it seems, they have been waiting for the one who has not yet come. And then—like the flash of a meteor, he appears on the path. It has been ordained that this meeting shall take place, but men have not realized it or been concerned in the working-out of the plans.

In the long day many faces pass and many smiles die into shadow. The human heart looks eagerly for one on whom it may place reliance, the blood calls for sympathy and support in this darkening valley where there are so many shadows.

In the flourishing days of the University of Paris, two men were studying with the same ambition for great achievements. They shared the same room, and were the best of friends. Confidences must have been spontaneous with these men who were laboring soul to soul in their ambitions.

The younger, a peasant by birth and former shepherd boy, unknown to his companions who was of noble lineage,—suffered from the most painful interior disturbances of a nature which he believed himself unable to disclose. So acute did these phantoms become that he lost all peace of mind, and in this sad state could no longer find enjoyment in anything.

And then, one day, when the two men were together, he suddenly came to a decision to humble himself and to confide the whole miserable affair to his friend.

The happy outcome of the matter amply proved the worth of such confidences, for the young man was from that time forth delivered from his trial, and in a short while became noted for his sweet serenity of soul which nothing appeared to disturb.

In order to invite and sustain confidence a man must sometimes do violence to himself. It is difficult to be always at the beck and call of others, when possibly one's natural impatience asserts itself. But to bring a little strength and comfort to one who suffers from some mental spectre is recompense for such sacrifice.

An eminent ecclesiastic has well said: "Happy is the man who on his death bed can say: 'I have never been scandalized in my life.'" And by this statement he does not mean that a man should condone wrong-doing, but rather that he should always show sympathy for the sinner when he cannot excuse the sin.

The man who shows ready and willing sympathy, even by simply listening to the confidences of another, must effect a great deal of quiet good in the world, and in his hidden way does much to bear up the burden which all must share.—The Pilot.

OUR BOYS AND GIRLS

LITTLE BOY BLUE

The little toy dog is covered with dust, And sturdy and staunch he stands, And the little tin soldier is red with rust, And his musket moulds in his hands.

Time was when the little toy dog was new And the soldier was passing fair; That was when our Little Boy Blue Kissed them and put them there.

"Now, don't you go 'way till I come," he said, "And don't you make any noise." So, toddling off to the trundle bed, He dreamed of the pretty toys.

And as he was dreaming an angel song Awakened the Little Boy Blue, Oh, the years are many, the years are long, But the little toy friends are true.

Aye, faithful to Little Boy Blue they stand, Each in the same old place, Awaiting the touch of a little hand, The smile of a little face.

And they wonder, as waiting the long years through, In the dust of that little chair, What has become of the Little Boy Blue, Since he kissed them and put them there.

—EUGENE FIELD

THE SOUL

Some years ago a doctor who did not believe in God or the existence of an immortal soul tried to prove to a priest the non-existence of the soul. His questions and the questions the priest asked him in return are interesting. He asked the Rev. Father three questions.

Have you ever seen a soul?—No.

Have you ever heard a soul?—No.

Have you ever tasted a soul?—No.

Did you ever feel a soul?—Yes, thank God, said the Father.

"Then see," continued the doctor, "here we have three senses against one, in proof that there is no soul."

The Reverend Father replied with these questions: "If you are a doctor of medicine tell me—"

"Have you ever seen a pain?—No."

"Have you ever heard a pain?—No."

"Have you smelled a pain?—No."

"Have you tasted a pain?—No."

"Did you ever feel a pain?—Yes."

"Then," continued the Father, "here you have four senses against one, which shows there is no pain, yet you know it exists, and in the same manner the soul exists."—Catholic Transcript.

VALUABLE READING

To get the full value of a good book one must come to it with a thirst for knowledge, with a determination to pluck the heart out of it. He must approach it as a student approaches a great picture which he has crossed continents to see.

Contrast the light, flippant, half-hearted way in which many boys glance through a book, with that of a Lincoln, who works early and late that he may get sufficient time on Saturday to borrow a coveted volume which he has heard that someone in the wilderness many miles away possesses. How eagerly he turns its pages, drinking in, as he trudges home, every paragraph, as if he might never get a chance to look at it again, and as if everything depended upon his memory to reproduce the precious volume, were it to be burned or lost to the world.

Compare the dilettanti manner of a society girl, glancing over the latest novel, with that of the eager longing of Lucy Larcom, after a long, hard day's work in a mill, or of Louisa M. Alcott, reading at night, snatching the coveted odd moments to store up treasure which would make her life richer and her womanhood more glorious!

When Webster was a boy, books were scarce, and so precious that he never dreamed that they were to be read only once, but thought they ought to be committed to memory, or read and re-read until they became a part of his very life.

That is the kind of reading that counts, that makes mental fiber and stamina.

The kind of reading which Lincoln did, strengthens the mind instead of weakening and demoralizing it as much modern reading does. It stretches the grasp of thought so that it can seize and hold broader subjects, and it cultivates, to a remarkable degree, the power of concentration, without which nothing of value can be accomplished. It buttresses the mind on every side, braces the memory, stimulates the intellect, and increases a hundred-fold the power and ability of the reader.—True Voice.

LOOKING FOR THE FLOWERS

The morning was dark, the heavy clouds hung low. It had rained steadily two days and nights, and there was little sign of the sun appearing. Miss Eliza Brendon, a small sweet-of-face and gentle-of-manner little woman with most of the years of her life behind her, was out in her dooryard stepping around slowly as if she were looking for something. As she walked above the wet grass, Maria Dayne came along. Maria was the very antithesis of Miss Eliza. She was large and her face had a discontented look, for Maria was not noted for her cheerfulness.

Good morning, Eliza. Did you ever see such weather as we have been having of late? Rain, rain, rain! I've kept count, and it has rained nine out of the last fourteen days, and it looks as if more would come any minute.

"Well, you know that we were having quite a drouth before the rainy weather set in. My cousin, who lives on a farm in the country was in yesterday, and he said all this rain would bring the hay along fine. Then we have had a good deal of sunshine along with the rain."

"Mighty little. I'm sick of so much rain and cloudiness. You seemed to be looking for something as I came around the corner and you seem to be looking for it now. Lost something?"

"Oh, no! I was just looking for some flowers. The other day I was out here I found two or three such pretty violets and a little star-shaped white flower. They were so pretty I thought I would come out and see if I could find any more. I am always looking for flowers. I love them so. And it's surprising how many pretty flowers you can find in the grass if you really look for them."

"Who but you would think of coming out such a morning as this looking around almost in the mud for flowers?"

"Well, you know, Maria, some pretty flowers grow in muddy soil. You can find them there if you look."

"Eliza, I guess the difference between you and me is that you see the flowers and I see only the mud."

Little Miss Eliza laughed softly at this and said: "It's so much better to look for the flowers than the mud, Maria. I forget all about the clouds and the rain when I come out to look for the flowers."

Happy the young person who starts out in life looking only for flowers and unmindful of the shadows. It all depends upon our mental vision and that we can control if we wish.—True Voice.

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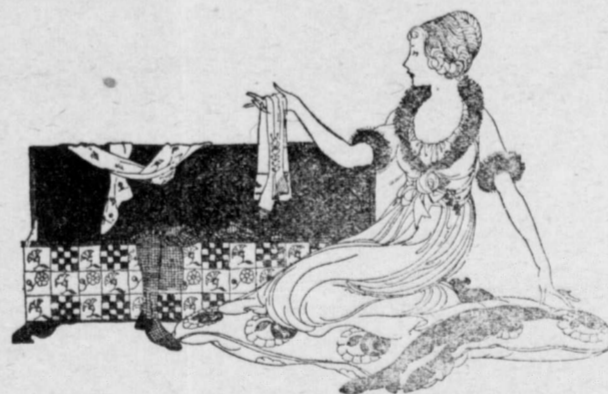
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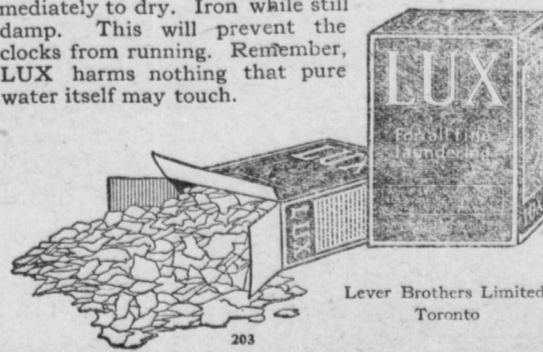
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