

Concerning Boys

By Herbert Fiddes

SAVED BY A MATCH

How often do we hear boys say, "Oh chucks, I'm only a kid. I can't do anything." Are you one of them—pal of mine? Well, just listen for a few minutes, while we consider the situation. What value do you place on a match? Not very much, eh? Well, a number of years ago a certain gentleman and his family were yachting on the Clyde. It was a beautiful day and they enjoyed their trip immensely. So much so that darkness fell upon them before they realized the hour of the day, and were without lights. Just to add to their helpless position, the wind fell and there was a great calm. They could do nothing but wait. After some hours out of the darkness appeared two lights—a red and a green. It was a mighty liner starting on her trip across the Atlantic. The Leviathan was coming straight towards them. The occupants of the small yacht shouted in fear, for it was imminent that they would be run down, and crushed like matchwood. Still the great towering vessel came on. Their shouts were not heard and death stared them in the face. Suddenly the owner of the yacht remembered he had a match in his pocket. He struck it and held it up. It was seen just when all seemed lost, and the mighty vessel steered aside, and their lives were saved.

That gentleman today is Principal of one of the largest and most influential educational institutions in Canada. Saved by a match. Don't depreciate your worth and powers, boys. If you were meant to be a Gladstone, you would have been given his ability. If you were intended for General Foch, you'd be General Foch, but you are intended to be YOURSELF, and you must play your own part, however humble it may be. You may not lead nations, but you may help a needy friend. You may not appear in the limelight, but you may, by your cheery smile, bring joy to a weary heart. Don't say "I'm only a boy"—but say "I AM a boy," and do your BEST.

I am but ONE,
But I AM one;
I can't do EVERYTHING,
But I CAN do SOMETHING.
And what I can DO,
I OUGHT to do,
And what I OUGHT to do,
God helping me,
I WILL DO.

VALUE OF NOW

"Aw, tomorrow will do." "Never leave to tomorrow what you can do to-day," is a good motto. Good resolutions and good intentions too often are left till tomorrow. "NOW," you have; in a few seconds it will have sped into eternity. Tomorrow is not yours to mortgage. Boys—what are you making of NOW?

PARENTS AND THE TEEN-AGE BOY

No problem is so urgent today in boy life as that of the teen-age boy—the lad who is passing from boyhood to manhood. In Canada the problem is being faced more squarely than in many countries, but even here the duties of parents are often shelved on to the shoulders of others, or ignored altogether. Mr. Parent—are you playing the game with your boy? That boy who is unconsciously experiencing new life, and new conditions? Have you told him the things he ought to know, so that he may be prepared to meet the temptations of the world, or are you depending upon his gaining knowledge through the school of chance acquaintance?

Remember, "A little knowledge (or learning) is a DANGEROUS thing"—and many a lad to-day has reason to carry bitter regrets at the false modesty of his parents, who neglected to send him into the world fully prepared, and many a lad to-day faces the world handicapped, and with bitter thoughts, the harvest of ignorance, because he was not told the truth. Mr. Parent, it is YOUR DUTY to explain the mysteries of life to your boy, and if you neglect that duty he may have reason to curse you instead of bless you. HAVE YOU TOLD YOUR BOY? You cannot? Well, why not place in his hands one of those splendid books which are written by Canada's best men, for the very purpose?

OUR DEBT TO THE WORLD

Boys, did you ever think how much we owe to the world? We came into it tiny little babies, were carried around, and taught to speak, and walk and play, until to-day we are big and strong. Have you given the world anything in exchange? Are you taking everything OUT of the world and putting NOTHING in? Whether we wish to do so or not, we are influencing others and the world generally. We are influencing them for GOOD or EVIL. Either people are better because of our presence or worse. Does your account with the world balance? How much have you drawn, and how much have you deposited? Remember—

"The smallest barque on life's tumultuous ocean
Will leave a track behind for evermore;
The lightest wave of influence, once in motion,
Extends and widens to the eternal shore.
We should be wary, then, who go before
A myriad yet to be, and we should take
Our bearings carefully, when breakers roar
And fearful tempests gather; one mistake
May wreck unnumbered barques that follow in our wake."

CRITICISMS—ANONYMOUS AND OTHERWISE

Some days ago a subscriber 'phoned to the editor of this magazine regarding certain paragraphs which appeared on this page. Criticism is welcomed, and cordially invited, but usually publicity can be given only where the people concerned support their comments by their names. Names will not be published, if not desired.

Constructive criticism is healthy and acceptable and the writer of these notes does not expect everyone to agree with him, and has the highest respect for the opinions of others, but most cordially dislikes "anonymous" critics.

We are endeavoring to teach the boyhood of the nation to be frank, and if an opinion is worth anything at all, there is no need to hesitate about giving it. On the contrary, the personality of the individual may add considerably to the value of the criticism. There is no man more open to criticism than the man who criticizes freely, but is afraid to give his name; and there is no man more welcome than the man who has an opinion and is not ashamed of it.

We do not pretend to be infallible, and are ever willing to learn. Although adopting one method of Boys' Work, we most sincerely support all organizations which have for their object the upbuilding of a strong, healthy, worthy manhood.

If you have a suggestion worth while, let us hear from you. Don't be selfish, but pass it on to others—BUT PLEASE GIVE YOUR NAME. If modesty forbids you coming before the public gaze, we will respect your wishes and consider the matter confidential.

(At the same time, in passing this criticism, it may be in place for the editor of this magazine to thank those readers, not a few, who have written or spoken appreciatively and encouragingly of the work of this section.—Ed. B.C.M.)