

CHATS WITH YOUNG MEN

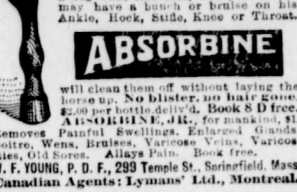
DO YOU KEEP THE FAST? Sir: Do you know any young man who observes the fast of Lent? The young fellows I know of me, from twenty-one to forty-one, almost to a man ignore the fast or invent excuses to avoid it. They don't take the trouble to get a dispensation from their confessor. They dispense themselves. Even the very robust among them don't seem to think it a mortal sin every time they break the fast. They appear to have no sense of sin in the matter, no appreciation of the gravity of their guilt in deliberately and persistently violating the commandment of the Church.

A crusade is needed against sensuality. A revival of the truth should be made vivid that the flesh is our enemy—our own body is, through its inclinations and its hatred of suffering linked with the world and the devil in the effort to ruin our soul. Our young men need discipline in self-denial. They should glory in being masters of their animal nature and should delight in bringing it into subjection. They need to fast. They require the training in will-power. With too many of them their stomach is their boss. They obey it. They pamper their appetites, yield to their passions, coddle their flesh. They willingly spend for it—for food, for drink, for clothes—in excess of its needs. They are spiritual weaklings. They have no vitality, no stamina, no strength, no stability. They say, some of them, that religion is for women. Evidently it is too much for them. They have no manly enough to meet its requirements. They ought to brace up, mark themselves with the Cross, the sign of suffering, and begin to lead the Christian life. Stand up, young fellows, and have some courage. Begin to deny yourselves. Learn to do your duty, cost what it may. As an evidence of your new spirit, observe the fast for the rest of Lent.—Catholic Columbian.

WORRY One who could rid the world of worry would render greater service to the race than all of the inventors and discoverers that ever lived. We Americans pity ignorant savages who live in terror of their cruel gods, their demons which keep them in abject slavery, but we ourselves are the slaves of a demon which blasts our hopes, brightens our happiness, casts its shadow across all our pleasures, destroys our sleep, mars our health, and keeps us in misery most of our lives. This monster dogs us from the cradle to the grave. There is no occasion so sacred but it is there. Unbidden it comes to the wedding and the funeral alike. It is at every reception, every banquet; it occupies a seat at every table. No human intellect can estimate the worry. It has forced genius to do the work of mediocrity; it has caused more failures, more broken hearts, more blasted hopes, than any other one cause since the dawn of time. It has made us what have not men done under the pressure of worry? They have plunged into all sorts of vice; have become drunkards, drug fiends; have sought very sorely in their efforts to escape this monster. Think of the homes which it has broken up; the ambitions it has ruined; the hopes and prospects it has blighted; the demon! If there is any devil in existence, it is not worry, with all its attendant progeny of evils? Yet, in spite of all the tragic evils that follow in its wake, a visitor from another world would get the impression that worry is one of our dearest, most helpful friends so close to us that we part from it.

It is not unaccountable that people who know perfectly well that their health and happiness both depend on keeping themselves in condition to get the most possible out of their energies should harbor in their minds the enemy of this very success and happiness? Is it not strange that they should form this habit of anticipating evils that will probably never come, when they know that anxiety and fretting will not only rob them of peace of mind and strength and ability to do their work, but also of precious years of life? Many a strong man is tied down, like Gulliver, by Lilliputians—bound hand and foot by the little worries and vexations he has never learned to conquer. What would be thought of a business man who would keep in his service employees known to be robbing him for years, stealing a little here and a little there every day? Yet one may be keeping in his mental business house at the very source of his power, a thief who robs him of his vitality, and bankrupts him of all that makes life worth while. We borrow trouble; endure all our lives the woe of crossing and recrossing bridges weeks and years before we come to them; we disagreeable tasks mentally over again before we reach them; anticipate our drudgery and constantly suffer from the apprehension of terrible things that never happen. Work kills no one, but worry has killed multitudes. It is not the doing of things which injures us so much as forming them mentally over and over again, but anticipating something disagreeable in that performance. Many of us approach an unpleasant task in much the same condition as a runner who begins to start such a long distance away that by the time he reaches his objective point—the ditch or the stream which is to test his agility—he is too exhausted to jump across. Worry not only saps vitality and wastes energy, but it also seriously affects the quality of one's work. It cuts down ability. A man cannot get the same quality of efficiency into his work when his mind is troubled. The mental faculties must have perfect freedom before they will give out their best. A troubled brain cannot think clearly, vigorously, and logically. The attention cannot be concentrated with anything like the same force when the brain cells are poisoned with anxiety as when they are fed by pure blood and are

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clean and unclouded. The blood of chronic warriors is vitiated with poisonous chemical substances and broken-down tissues, according to Professor Elmer Gates and other noted scientists, who have shown that the passions and the harmful emotion cause actual chemical changes in the secretions and generate poisonous substances in the body which are fatal to healthy growth and action. The brain-cells are constantly bathed in the blood, from which they draw their nourishment, and when the blood, loaded with the poison of fear, worry, anger, hatred, or jealousy, the protoplasm of these delicate cells becomes hardened and very materially impaired. The most pathetic effect of worry is its impairment of thinking powers. It so clogs the brain and paralyzes thought that the results of the warrior's work merely mock his ambition, and often lead to the drink or drug habit. Its continued friction robs the brain-cells of an opportunity to renew themselves; it aggravates a nervous horse more than the drink or drug habit. It causes other nervous ailments, and sometimes becomes hopelessly insane. If you never accomplish anything else in life, get rid of worry. There are no greater enemies of harmony than little anxieties and petty cares. Do not let them aggravate a nervous horse more than his regular work? Do not let little nagging, constantly touching him with the whip, or jerking at the reins fret and worry him more than the labor of drawing the carriage? A great deal can be done to correct the causes of worry by keeping up the health standard. A good digestion, a clear conscience, and sound sleep kill a lot of trouble. Worry thrives best under abnormal conditions. It can not get much of a hold on a man with a strong physique—a man who lives clean, sane life. It thrives on the weak—those of low vitality. Nothing else will so quickly drive away worry as the habit of cheerfulness, making the best of things, refusing to see the ugly side of life. When you feel fear or anxiety entering your thought, just fill your mind with thoughts of courage, hope, and confidence. Refuse to let any enemies of your happiness and success camp in your mind. Drive out the whole brood of vampire.

OUR BOYS AND GIRLS THE AWKWARD BOY WHO BECAME FAMOUS Turning his head neither to right nor left, the roughly clad boy made his way up the path leading to the house of Wylam's school master. Wylam at this time was a little village near Newcastle, in Northumberland, England. And the home at which the lad of eighteen knocked was a very simple one. "Well, what do you want?" asked the schoolmaster, as he shaded his eyes from the light carried in his hand. He did not altogether like his fashion. Studies interrupted in such fashion. For a moment the schoolmaster looked scornfully upon the homely face and poor clothing of the lad. Then he said scornfully: "Very well, you may attend, but an awkward, bare-legged laddie like you had better be doing something else than learning his letters." Theroupen he slammed the door in the boy's face. But the lad was not discouraged. At last he saw a chance for the fulfillment of his ambition. While the years were being growing. Up until now his father had been too poor to send him to school. Born in 1731 in a very poor, with clay door, and walls and bare rafters, at the age of five he began to work for his living, herding cows in the daytime and barring up the gates at night. Later he picked stones from coal, and afterward drove a horse which drew coal from the pit. He was fourteen when he became assistant to his father, the foreman of a colliery in Wylam. When the lad called on the schoolmaster he was pluggan of a pumping-engine, every detail of which he studied so carefully that he could with ease

have taken it apart and put it together again. With eagerness the boy plunged into his studies. Acting as fireman and brakeman at the colliery during the day, he attended school in the evening, and even found time to earn money by repairing clocks. So diligently did he apply himself to learning that in two years he knew all that the schoolmaster could teach him. Soon the world discovered in the lad a great inventor. In 1816 he invented a miner's safety lamp. For some years he had been experimenting with steam locomotives, believing it was possible to put them to practical use. He finally induced the Keilworth colliery to construct a locomotive under his directions. Much ridicule did he meet about his engines. One gentleman said to him: "Suppose you invent an engine capable of running nine or ten miles an hour. And suppose while it was running a cow should stray upon the track. Would not that be a very awkward circumstance?" "I should think it might be very awkward for the cow," was the reply. At length he made an engine, the "Rocket" which attained a speed of fourteen miles an hour. People marvelled, not so much at its length. And when, in 1825, he so improved the "Rocket" that on a trial run over the Liverpool and Manchester railway, it made thirty miles an hour, thereby winning a prize of £500, he found himself famous. He was consulted upon all railroad projects, and grew very wealthy. But he still was simple in his manner, in spite of the honors heaped upon him. His king wished to make him a knight, but he insisted upon remaining plain George Stephenson.

FLOWER LEGENDS There are some very pretty flower legends woven about the history of the Christ Child. Here are a few of them: The peasantry of Spain say that rosemary brings happiness, and that on Christmas Eve, because the Blessed Virgin hung the little frocks of Jesus to dry upon rosemary bushes. The stowdrops or "hair" flowers of February blossom in memory of the time when the Virgin presented Jesus in the temple. The pretty little wayside flower known as "Lady's Bedstraw" was so called because Mary made the manger bed of it. The sycamore attains its great vitality and verdure because, the Mohammedans say, it is the spirit of Joseph and Mary, and sheltered them in their flight to Egypt. The rose of Jericho is also called Mary's rose. The Mohammedans say that the Blessed Virgin's feet touched earth on her way to Egypt. "Once as our Saviour walked with men below, His path of mercy through a forest lay; And how all the drooping branches shew What homage best a silent tree may pay. Only the snow stood erect and free Seeming to join the voiceless worship pure. But see! He cast one look upon the tree; Struck with amazement, she trembles evermore. An old legend tells that by the fountain where Mary washed the swaddling clothes of the Holy Child beautiful flowers are an increasing gentleness in speech and behavior. She quietly remarked one day: "Miss Brown has been teaching you politeness, I see." "Why, mother," said the child, "she never says a word about politeness." "She doesn't? I'm surprised." "No, she doesn't say a word. She just walks around, but we feel as polite—as anything." One of the most striking peculiarities of personal influence is that it is often unconscious. It is a good impression, to set a good example, to say a word that should be said in the best way and to fit the audience, are you most successful in accomplishing your purpose. The influence that emanates from you when you are simply going about your work without a thought beyond the task of the hour, when you lay out your plans and outward acts, as automatically as the heart sends the blood to the head, hands and feet, is the influence that helps or hurts in your home, classroom or business office. A YOUNG DEFENDER OF THE FAITH There is at least one small boy in Brittany who bids fair to be a great man when he grows up, says Rome. His parents told him that he must not use a text-book in school which had been condemned by the Bishops as untrue and against his faith. He obeyed them faithfully, but there was trouble waiting for him when he reached his class room without his text-book and without his lesson. He explained the reason to the master, who after soundly rapping him, threatened him with all kinds of penalties if he did not take down faithfully from dictation there and then the neglected lesson. The boy took up his pen and began to write carefully as the teacher proceeded to read for him, but when it was over and the little fellow handed up his paper this is what he wrote: "I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, and so on down to 'life everlasting. Amen.'" WHAT YOU DO It is not so much what you say you are going to do, as it is what you do that counts. A certain bright boy laid great plans as to what he was going to do in school one term; how he was going to come out at the head of his class and all that. While he was talking about it, another fellow who was just as bright, but not so talkative, was studying and doing all the necessary work to win the coveted laurels. When he came out ahead, the talkative one felt bad about it; but he was bright enough to see the point, and profit by his mistake another term.

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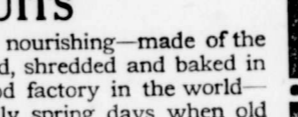
A TRUE STORY "Which one is it?" he asked, in a puzzled tone, without raising his eyes. He stood before three fresh mounds in the little burial place at St. John's. I had noticed him standing there as I came along, but thought that he was one of the gardeners.

"Which one is it?" he asked, in a puzzled tone, without raising his eyes. He stood before three fresh mounds in the little burial place at St. John's. I had noticed him standing there as I came along, but thought that he was one of the gardeners. "Which one is it?" he repeated, and looking up, he hastened to add: "I beg your pardon—thought you were Bill." "Whose grave were you looking for?" I ventured, feeling rather embarrassed. "No," Father Van said, "I was looking for the grave of a friend of mine, as it happened to be in my way. I know it's one of these three, 'cause he was only buried two weeks ago." "I'm sorry I can't help you," I said slowly. "You don't know?" he queried, in a doubting tone. "Wasn't he at the funeral?" "No," I confessed, wishing that I had been, if for no other reason than to give him the desired information. "Were you a friend of his?" He hesitated, and making a nice distinction, replied: "He was a friend to me and Bill." "There was something in his manner that held me, but wishing to conceal my interest, I said, in a matter-of-fact tone: "Tell me about Father Van." "You don't know Father Van?" he said, looking at me with an incredulous air. "Why, everybody knows—know Father Van." "I assured him that I hadn't enjoyed the pleasure of his acquaintance. "Why, don't you remember the man who rode at the head of 10,000 of the happiest unfortunates that ever took part in a New York parade?" "I couldn't recall the incident, and noting the disappointed look in his face, I steered the conversation into another channel by asking how he had become acquainted with Father Van. "Oh, that was a long time ago," he said, and besides, we've changed since then. He glanced at his new shoes, and rolled into shape the flattened brim of his hat, continuing: "Yes, he'd a froze to death that night if we hadn't met Father Van. I took us down to one of his homes and told the head clerk to see that he got a berth and something to eat. My, but that hot supper smelt good—we had a good meal. The next day he came down to us and made us take the pledge and promise to brace up and act decent. That was a bad winter, and we came back to him many times before it was over, but he always made us take the pledge before he'd give us anything." "Weren't you afraid to come back after breaking your promise so often?" I asked. "No," he said, thoughtfully; "we always knowed he'd give us another chance. We tried to do right, but it was too hard." "What a splendid example of patience that ensued." "I thought to myself during the pause that ensued, "he continued, "he got us a job with a man who was rumlin' a lumber camp up in Maine. After that we kept straight for about six months and then broke out again. That was the last time. We went back to the lumber camp, but used to come to New York every year during the dull season. We always called on Father Van, for we knowed he would

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