

CHATS WITH YOUNG MEN

ENCOURAGEMENT

One of the factors that count for much in the struggles of a young person for success is proper encouragement. As a young man faces the world on the threshold of entrance therein a new vista presents itself to his unaccustomed view. The world of childhood with its trifles and unimportant problems is left behind. New problems; unwanted situations, unlooked-for complications and undreamed-of dangers show themselves rapidly upon the approaching horizon. Youth, with the positiveness and self-assertion of ignorance and inexperience, laughs at the unseen, but age and wisdom shun the placed at the service of those who are in need even though they realize not that need.

The mistake frequently is made on the part of the older persons in demanding of a young man the successful solving of problems which only experience can disentangle. The chagrin of failure and disappointment frequently tends to depress the high spirits and the vital energy that are so valuable an asset in the young. A few words of encouragement properly placed will inspire confidence and will promote humility. Many a young person has proven a failure in life through lack of intelligent sympathy and judicious encouragement on the part of so-called friends. It is easy to blame the young for their mistakes and blunders; but it is selfish and cruel to do so. Only ignorance of the narrowest species will withhold the heartening word of encouragement when that word is deserved even by youthful failure. It is possible to blame while encouraging; blaming the motive or the deed, while encouraging the individual. Ordinarily a plant requires attention and care if it is to flourish. A few hardy perennials there are, it is true, that can subsist and flourish without special care, but they are very few. —The Catholic Bulletin.

THE CURSE OF THE "SOFT SNAP"

What a man should desire is not an easy job that has no future advancement in it, but something that will give him employment that will make him do his level best to keep up and will lead to great achievement, high honor, and a sufficient competence for his old age.

What, make that little fellow a captain! "I was the disparaging comment of an English naval officer when it was proposed to place young Nelson, physically almost a dwarf, in command of a ship.

The remark stung Nelson to the quick, and he never quite forgot it. But it did more than hurt the sensitive young sailor. It made him resolve then and there to redeem himself from his handicap and make himself felt in the world. "Little fellow!" he would say to himself. "This little fellow will yet be the biggest man in the King's navy!"

If nature had favored Nelson with a tall, handsome form, he might not have become one of the greatest seafighters in history.

The desperate struggle to do something worth while in spite of handicaps or obstacles is the very thing that often drives people to develop the latent power which makes them conspicuously successful. Without this struggle, many famous men and women would never have discovered their real selves.

I always feel sorry for a young man who is looking for an "easy job," or who falls into a "soft snap," because I know the chances are that he will never reach his highest possibility, that the biggest thing in him will never come out, certainly not while he remains in his soft snap.

Beware of the soft snap. It does not make a real man. There is nothing that will dampen one's ardor and make one's ambition sag so quickly as to fall into a soft snap, a position which pays fairly well at the start and requires comparatively little effort.

Leaders of men are not developed in such positions because they do not get the discipline, the training which begets success, the experience, the skill, the sort of fibre that stands great strain.

There are government positions which pay pretty good salaries and require little work. They are almost sinecures—watching others work, supervision, something that puts no strain on mind or body. The men who have these soft snaps are never selected for important places. Policemen who are assigned to duty in hotels are not the ones who are advanced. Firemen who simply stand around in theatres to see that the aisles are kept clear and that the fire laws are not violated, never become fire chiefs.

If Lincoln had succeeded in getting a position which he tried hard to get, in the civil service department at Washington, history would probably never have mentioned his name. To a youth who had been accustomed to the humblest sort of hard work—splitting rails, chopping wood, tending a little country store, etc.—an easy, well-paid position in the great United States government would have looked pretty good, and he might have kept the soft snap until he had dwarfed the giant.

If Charles Schwab had got a soft snap in a government department at Washington when he was driving a stage coach in Loretto, the probabilities are that he would never have become the greatest living steel

manufacturer, perhaps the greatest the world has seen.

There are young men of brilliant possibilities whose futures are being strangled by soft snaps in Washington. Nine hundred, twelve hundred, fifteen hundred dollar positions look alluring to poor country youths who are fighting their way against poverty and hard conditions. But any young man who has got stuff in him to do worth-while things, is unfortunate if he drops into a soft snap which may paralyze his development, stunt his growth, and wreck his greater possibilities.

It is the hard workers, it is those who are standing the strain, who are fighting at the front in the firing line who advance. It is in the thick of the fight that the stuff leaders are made of is developed.—Catholic Columbian.

OUR BOYS AND GIRLS

CATECHISM OF THE CLOCK

Her catechism on her knee,
Her lovely face in study bowed
A little maiden sat by me,
And conned her task aloud.

Upon the wall above her head,
The clock was ticking in the sun;
"How many God's are there?" she said,
And straight the clock struck One.

"How many natures in Our Lord?"
Again she asked, "Pray tell me true,
How many natures in the Word?"
The clock responded, Two!

"But in one God," she softly cried,
"How many persons may there be?"
The clock stared quite open-eyed,
And slowly uttered Three!

"Well answered!" laughed the little maid,
"But now the cardinal virtues o'er
I pray you count me." Half afraid,
The timid clock struck Four.

"Dear me! how very clear it sounds!
But tell me now (with love alive)
How many are Our Lord's chief wounds?"
The grieving clock struck Five.

The maiden sighed upon her perch,
And meekly kissed her crucifix,
"Pray name the precepts of the Church,"
She said. The clock struck Six.

"How many sacraments, now tell?"
The clock upraised one hand to heaven;
With gladness in its silvery bell,
It sweetly answered, Seven.

"Upon my word, your funny moode!"
She said, "astonish me. Will you state
The number of beatitudes?"
The ready clock struck Eight.

"And now the choirs of Angels bright,
I fain would number at a sign."
The clock amid a blaze of light,
Triumphant, answered, Nine.

"Well! I declare, it's very odd—
You queer old clock, I'll try again.
The great commandments of our God,
Pray tell," the clock chimed, Ten!

"The number of Apostles name
When Christ ascended into Heaven?
With thoughts of Judas, full of shame,
The clock gasped out, Eleven.

"And now, at last, the Holy Ghost—
How many are its fruits, I pray?"
The great clock gave twelve rapid strokes,
And struck no more that day.

—ELEANOR C. DONNELLY

THE WAY OF A GENTLEMAN

Cardinal Newman's description of a gentleman may be read with profit by every Catholic boy:

"It is almost a definition of a gentleman to say, the illustrious Cardinal writes 'he is one who never indicts pain. A gentleman is mainly occupied in merely removing the obstacles which hinder the free and unobscured action of those about him, and he concurs with their movements rather than takes the initiative himself. The true gentleman carefully avoids all clashing of opinion or collision of feeling, all restraint, or suspicion, or gloom, or resentment, his great concern being to make every one at his ease and at home. He has his eyes on all his company. He is tender toward the bashful, gentle toward the distant and merciful toward the absurd. He can recollect to whom he is speaking; he guards against unreasonable allusions or topics which may irritate. He is seldom prominent in conversation, and never wearisome.

"He makes light of favors while he does them, and seems to be receiving when he is conferring. He never speaks of himself except when compelled; never defends himself by a mere retort; has no ears for slander or gossip; is scrupulous not to impute motives to those who interfere with him, and interprets everything for the best. He is never mean or little in his disputes; never takes unfair advantage, never mistakes personalities or sharp sayings for arguments or insinuates evil which he dare not say out. From a long sighted prudence, he observes the maxim of the ancient sage that we should ever conduct ourselves toward our enemy as if he were one day to be our friend. He has too much good sense to be affronted at insult; he is too busy to remember injuries, and too indolent to bear malice.

"He is patient, forbearing and resigned on philosophical principles. He submits to pain because it is inevitable, to bereavement because it is irreparable, and to death because it is his destiny. If he engages in controversy of any kind, his disciplined intellect preserves him from the blundering discourses of better though less educated minds, that, like blunt weapons, tear and hack instead of cutting clean, and mistake the point of argument, waste their strength on trifles, misconceive their adversary and leave the question more involved than they find it. He may be right or wrong in his opinion, but he is too clear-headed to be unjust. He is as simple as he is forcible, and as brief as he is decisive. Nowhere shall we find greater candor, consideration, indulgence. He throws himself into the minds of his opponents; he accounts for their mistakes. He knows the weakness of human reason as well as its strength, its province and its limits."

A NAVY THEOLOGIAN

By Rev. Bernard Vaughan, S. J.

Preaching recently in a London church to an overflowing congregation from the text, "The light of Thy countenance, O Lord, is kindled upon us" (Ps. iv.) Father Vaughan said that when wandering over the Derbyshire moors in the summer he chanced to overtake a laboring man, whom he discovered to be a navy on the tramp to Sheffield. They trudged along together, and during a most interesting conversation with his friend the preacher learned some useful lessons, which he would now pass to his devout listeners. The handworker told him he had started his work-day life before he had reached his seventh year. He began with "fetting wheels," his pay being his rations; later it expanded to tenpence a day, and so went on till the preacher fell in with him, when he was over seventy, and was then getting war price pay, £3 a week for running a "steam navy."

Father Vaughan said his good friend told him he had had "no schooling and no religion," and having joined a gang of navvies, he seldom heard God's name mentioned unless accompanied by an oath. "In those days," said the navy, "we were looked upon as good-for-nothing vagabonds, and missionaries of all sorts kept away from us, and we didn't trouble to go to church or chapel." And yet, in spite of those heavy drawbacks, the navy found God, and taught himself how to read. The wage-earner said that he knew there must be a personal God, because he read that the earth went round the sun every 365 days, that the moon went round the earth in 28 days, and the earth went round itself in 24 hours. "There must be a somebody at the wheel," said the navy, "and for me that One is the Almighty God." What else has shown you the presence of God?

"Why," said the worker, "look at the seasons of the year. They never get jumbled up. There is not a farmer but knows when to plough and when to sow, when to reap and when to mow. If there is no God at the wheel how can the farmer depend upon the right season turning up? No clock can wind up itself, nor can this world of ours. Yes, there's a God, sure enough," said the navy.

Before the two travellers parted the preacher extracted from this mystic theologian what had confirmed his belief in Almighty God. He said there was something in his brain ever pulling at him when he did wrong. It wasn't so much when his temper got a bit the better of him, or when he had had a drop too much, but when he had done an injury to a "pal" or had "pinched" what did not belong to him. The poor man confessed that he felt quite sure that to get forgiveness for what he had then done he must get it not only from the injured parties, but from the Almighty Himself.

"Do you know," said the wayfarer to Father Vaughan, "that it was my black heart that brought me belief in God Almighty? The undoings of my soul brought me to my knees when I believe nothing else would have done." "Sin is great revelation of God," exclaimed the preacher. And continuing, he said: "The other day I was speaking to a child who had not yet made his first confession. I asked him suppose he was told he was to die at once would there be anything he would like to get rid of before going to God. The child drew close to me, and looking up into my face he said: 'There are two or three things I should like to know before seeing God.' Telling me what they were, the child added: 'Mumma forgive me, because she said so before I went to sleep, but I do wish God would tell me the same.'"

"Sin," continued the preacher, "is not only a revelation of God, but also a revelation of humanity's cry for the sacrament of forgiveness. There is nothing so human as Divine Christianity. Why have I preached thus simply to you who are so well brought up and highly educated? I have done so because several times during this war-struggle I have heard both men and women in Society declaring they saw no reason for believing in God and that for them there was no sin and no hereafter."

"These people," said the preacher, "have much to learn from the rough navy and the simple child I have referred to. It seems to me we ought all of us to see and feel God's presence always and everywhere. Surely there ought to be no need to go to books to learn about His immanence and His transcendence, for while He is closer than breath-

ing and nearer than hands and feet, He is also more distinct from us than the sun is from the earth. Sometimes by way of Divine condescension God deigns to prove His existence to us experimentally, or as we say in mystic vision, but indubitably of these special favors to His special friends you ought to feel the Divine presence as you feel the presence of sweet-scented bloom over a garden wall, or the presence of a friend in the same room, though hidden from sight. How often in prayer do not even little children reveal, basking in a sort of face-to-face vision of God, 'Father,' said a little child, 'I simply could not pray after Communion: I felt so happy.'"

"Between the vision of Faith and sight there hangs only a dim, translucent cloud or curtain. This has been beautifully expressed by Raphael in two of his masterpieces. In one he depicts the worship of Our Lord in the face-to-face vision in heaven. Below this enchanting scene, and separated from it by nothing more substantial than rolling clouds, the artist shows our worship here below of the same Jesus, but hidden from sight by the mystic cloud of whiteness and light. The other, Raphael reveals to us the Blessed Mother, with the Divine Child enthroned in her arms. She is seen floating down to us from heaven, which is shut off from sight by a staff curtain of green, supported on a rod neither rigid nor straight. In both pictures the artists want to bring home the nearness of God to the wayfarer on earth. As we grow older and get nearer to Nature, we begin fully to recognize Him mirrored forth in the works of His hands. Let me illustrate my meaning."

When I was last in the Canadian Rockies I visited world-famed Lake Louise. There I saw rising up before me the virgin glacier clad as it were, in bridal dress, the glistening snows all sparkling with jewels seen through transparencies of fretted old and frosted silver. Reposing in the arms of heaven mantled in softest blue, this magic earth-spirit arrested and held my eyes till they ached with the dazzling splendors of the sight. On either side of the fairy figure stood giant mountains clad like royal guardsmen in the panoply of war, their feet hidden in the lapping waters below, their loins girt with belts of pine dyed in the bleeding colors of autumn. From the shoulders of these giants fell mantles of gleaming snow, while their helmeted heads were seen silhouetted against the sky as they stood shielding their jungles, seemingly lost in their day dreams. High above them stood the face of the sun, upon His very presence bathed the atmosphere in a sea of glory, kindling into flame the rare tints of the late foliage seen through the snow-wreaths hanging on their boughs. It was a gorgeous picture painted by the hand of Nature, and uplifted in this gallery of wonders—the Rocky Mountains. As the eye travelled from the sun in his noonday glory down to the lake in worship at his feet it was almost awe-inspiring to find oneself, from her heaving bosom the scene before which she lay prostrate. There was repeated the bridal snow dress, the burnished armor, the blood-red pines and the dazzling glories of the sun.

"As I came away from this great sight I felt that I had found a new interpretation of the famous text telling us that in heaven we shall be like God, for we shall then see Him as He is. As the pure, placid, crystal waters of Lake Louise reflected and repeated the sky pageant that had held me entranced, so the human soul prostrate in worship before the Throne of God would partake of His beatitudes and glories, becoming more like Him than the picture mirrored forth in the lake was like the vision that stood out emblazoned in the sky. Take home from this sermon the pious resolution to remember when you see your own features in a mirror that one day you yourself will be more like God than the picture in the glass is like yourself. 'Signatum est super notum vultus tui, Domine.' The light of Thy countenance, O Lord! is signed upon us."

FALSE RELIGION

The publishers state that Wells' story of "Mr. Britling Sees It Through" has been enthusiastically received. It is an affecting story in some ways, but has many statements offensive to religion.

Mr. Britling's idea of God is, indeed, strange. He is a free-thinking gentleman who, through sorrow and family affliction, ends his story by declaring that he has discovered God. And, such a God! It is a God possible only to the man who holds Manichean principles. To him there is no such thing as an omnipotent God.

Britling could even scorn an Omnipotent God who had it in His power to prevent horrors and refused to do so. His God is a God limited in His nature, struggling against evil the same as His creatures, the principle of good fighting with the principle of evil, being worsted at times in the fray but confident of success in the end.

One of the critics said recently, in commending this discovery of a new God: "He is a God limited by His own nature, as any personal God must be, omnipotent, not in the childish sense that he can make two and two equal five, but that, having left power to choose, He can stand the strain of human choice even

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when it means for Himself hanging upon a cross."

Even a child can see the deplorable lack of theology in those few words. But this ministerial abettor of Mr. Wells modifies Mr. Britling's rabid antipathy to the accepted doctrine of an Omnipotent God. The old problem of the existence of evil in the world takes Mr. Wells back to the days of the earliest discarded heresies. Peculiarly enough he considers the revamping of an old heresy as a new discovery.

Today the world needs a strong abiding faith. It will not help matters to adopt the pessimism which Mr. Wells puts forth even while he pretends to believe that it is the highest optimism. It surely is not encouraging to think of God as a weak being fighting for existence against a more powerful evil. It is of course only a vagary, but it is not promising to find readers accepting it as the only true religion.—Boston Pilot.

A REMARKABLE FRESCO

THAT TELLS THE WHOLE STORY OF MEDIEVAL PHILOSOPHY

In the Church of Santa Catarina at Pisa, Italy, there is a fresco which so graphically represents the encounter between the Christian philosophy and the Arabic, that we may well pause for a moment to describe it. It was spread upon the walls in the fourteenth century by Francesco Traini, one of the most noted disciples of Orsagna.

In the center of the picture stands St. Thomas, with the "Summa Contra Gentiles" held open on his breast. On his right is Aristotle, with the "Ethics," and on his left Plato, with the "Timaeus." Well so held that Aquinas may read their contents. In semi-circles above this central group are Moses and the prophets, with the four Evangelists beside. Highest of all the Christ is depicted, a nimbus of angels surrounding the gentle Nazarene; while lowest down, and beneath the feet of Aquinas, Averroes lies prostrate, clutching his great commentary on Aristotle, and for all the world appearing as some unburied cavalier of the lists. Rays of light are reflected from the pages of Aristotle, Plato and the sacred writers, and made to converge on the open pages of the "Summa" of St. Thomas, whence they are in turn refracted against Averroes, to the apparent discomfiture of the latter, who shields his eyes with his hand.

More brilliantly than we could ever hope to do so, with the faint strokes of a pen, Traini here tells with his brush the whole story of the sources, purpose, ideal and final outcome of the philosophy of the Middle Ages. It is a suggestive picture to have in mind when considering the period of disruption into which we are about to enter. Renan thought it a skillful piece of symbolism, and someone has not ineptly said it is the history of scholasticism "painted" as Dante is the history of scholasticism "sung."

However this may be, it serves admirably to illustrate our theme and relieve its tension.—The Catholic Observer.

Perhaps, never while we are on earth shall we realize the heavenly might of prayer, nor the exceeding riches of that treasure which now, alas! we make so light of, seeing not how thereby God's glory is so much within our power. Oh, what might we not do by prayer!

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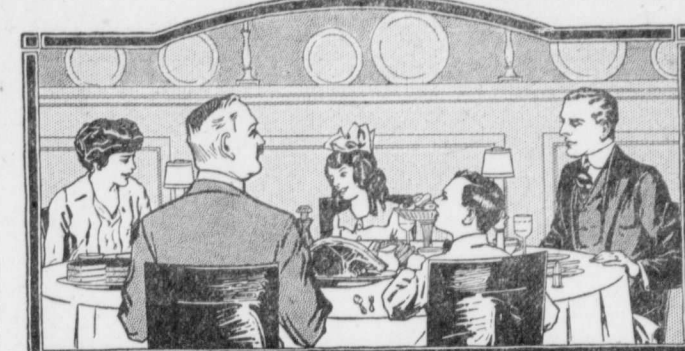
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