

CHATS WITH YOUNG MEN

THE COMMON TOUCH

I would not be too wise—so very wise
That I must sneer at simple songs and creeds,
And let the glare of wisdom blind my eyes
To humble people and their humble needs.

I would not care to climb so high that I
Could never hear the children at their play,
Could only see the people passing by,
Yet never hear the chattering words they say.

I would not know too much—too much to smile,
As trivial errors of the heart and hand,
Nor be too proud to play the friend while,
And cease to help and know and understand.

I would not care to sit upon a throne,
Or build my house upon a mountain-top,
Where I must dwell in glory all alone
And never friend come in or poor man stop.

God grant that I may live upon this earth
And face the tasks which every morning brings,
And never lose the glory and the worth
Of humble service and the simple things.

—EDGAR A. GUEST

OLD LETTERS

They lie in neatly-folded piles in attics,
locked securely away from the rude gaze of those who would not appreciate the secrets which they contain.

In the stress of modern life people give themselves scant time to put their thoughts into shape.
The modern invention of the telephone, that boon to mankind since we must accomplish so much in a limited space of time, has done much to eliminate the old-time correspondence which was apt to begin: "I take my pen in hand."

Recently a busy man of the world received a letter from an old-schoolmate from whom he had not heard in a long time.

Fortunately for us, there are many interesting specimens of letters extant, some of which have been collected into volumes, and we know from experience how fascinating such a collection can be.

Unfortunately there sometimes creeps into such a collection letters which should have been destroyed, which introduce a discordant element into a story otherwise flawless and inimitable.

Men are usually frank in their correspondence. There is a tremendous temptation to suffer the facile pen to race at will over the smooth sheet when one has a clear field for expression of his thought.

But—to view the situation from a more pleasing aspect, how much mankind owes to the kindly cheerful letters of those beautiful souls who walked a short while among us and passed on.

How many a one, struggling against a swift current of despair, has been encouraged by the kindly suggestion of a letter, and how many a one, endeavoring vainly to progress amid the commonplace things of life, has been renewed in trust by the sympathy of a kindly written word!

ages, whose noble intellects bowed humbly before the great simplicity of Christian truths.

How charming are the letters of Frederick Faber,—written to the grave and learned men of his day,—how much more charming his letter to the "Little Lady Minna" on the day that she was seven years old: "This is your birthday, and you say that you mean to be a nun. Well we must begin right away."

Witness the glowing descriptions of nature penned by a man already far from his sunny home in France, about to begin his last martyrdom: "Without doubt the country is beautiful, as you say. The heavens are high above you, the earth is verdant, the sea wonderful in its depths,—but more beautiful is the Creative Hand which formed all these things."

Many sweet errands of charity have been worked through the instrumentality of letters. To those who are sick or sad, who are confined in a narrow sphere from which circumstance renders escape impossible,—how many a bright ray of hope has been infused through the medium of a gracious letter!

There are letters left behind which tell of yearnings in many a human breast for the sympathy which was denied during their brief earthly pilgrimage.

It was a favorite axiom of a great man that one should always make a point of saying at least one beautiful and elevated thought in every letter which he wrote, even though the correspondence be of the briefest kind.

It is sometimes good for us to over-care old letters, too beautiful to have been destroyed, and go over them in some quiet moment.

OUR BOYS AND GIRLS

While walking down a crowded city street the other day, I heard a little urchin to a comrade turn and say: "Say, Jimmie, don't you know I'd be happy as a clam, if I only was de feller dat me mudder tinks I am."

"She tinks I am a wonder, and knows her little lad Would never mix wit not in' dat was ugly, mean or bad. I often sit and tink how nice 'twould be, ge whiz! I told him if a feller was de feller dat his mudder tinks he is."

So, folks be yours a life of toil or undiluted joy, You still can learn a lesson from the small, unlettered boy; Don't try to be an earthly saint, with eyes fixed on a star— Just try to be the fellow that your mother thinks you are.

"Here, boy. You can't sell papers on this corner." Officer Carney shouted to a small boy with a large pack over his bent shoulders. "This is Vanni Maestro's place."

"Please, sir, I'm Vanni's brother. He's one of Father Martinelli's Boy Scouts, and this afternoon he is selling Thrift Stamps, and I'm just taking his place."

"Ah, I know. You're little Tony." He looked with pity upon the white pinched features, with the deep spots of red on either cheek. "Will Vanni be here soon?" "Yes, sir."

"Well, I'll try to keep an eye over you until he comes." As the officer turned away, a car containing two ladies stopped at the curb. "Give me a Post, boy," one called to Tony. "How much? Three cents? Here, Mildred, hold Fido for a minute. Oh, here's a nickel," she exclaimed, after considerable fumbling in a bag.

"Now, give me my dear little doggie, Mildred. Poor little darling, I fear he has taken cold. I must wrap his blanket about him. Now, we are ready to go. Oh, the change—my change, boy!" With eyes that fairly bulged in surprise and indignation, Tony watched the women cuddle the poodle with the same loving attention that mothers in the neighborhood gave to their babies. And he knew of so many poor, chilled, little bodies without a blanket to warm them.

"Lady, I gave you the change—two cents. You had the pennies in your hand when you put the cover over the dog."

"Oh, the little prevaricator! Did you hear what he said, Mildred? Give me my change at once, my boy, or I will have you arrested."

"Thief!" the woman shouted, angrily. Another spell of coughing kept the boy from answering. "Do you see his trick, Mildred? He is pretending to cough? Here, officer!"

"What is the trouble?" Officer Carney demanded, as he ran toward them. "He is a thief," she pointed to the boy. He refuses to give me my change."

"Well, Tony?" the officer demanded. "I gave her the change—two cents," he insisted, gasping from weakness. "Two cents!" the man shouted. "I thought perhaps 'twas a ten-dollar bill you were making so much fuss about!" indignantly.

"I gave him a nickel. It isn't the money—the two cents. It's the principle of it. He must give me my change!" The officer's eyes were steely. He thrust his hand into a pocket and drew out a dime. "Here's your two cents, madam, with interest. The boy's all right, and sick, too. I know his family. He's honest through and through."

"How dare you insult me so? Take that boy to the Police-Chief at once. I shall report you, sir, for your insolence!" "Come, Tony, we'll go up to the station and explain it to the chief," and, taking the boy's hand, he turned his back upon the occupants of the car.

Glancing again at the child's face, he saw a faint little smile curve the boy's thin lips, wrinkling the chin, mounting up past the vivid, red spots on the cheeks, till the black eyes caught and held the glow, so much like the faint ray of sunshine after a storm, as it chases cloud after cloud from its path.

"That's right, boy. I like to see that smile." "Oh, I'd almost forgotten we were going to the chief. I got to thinking of what Father Martinelli told me last week. I'm thinking of it most all the time, now."

"What did he tell you?" "I was so discouraged. I heard the doctor tell Vanni it wouldn't do any good to send me to a farm now, cause I'm too far gone. The pain's all here, he pointed to his chest. "They don't know, at home, that I heard Vanni talking to the doctor, so I didn't dare cry or say nothing 'cause they would feel so bad, and they're all good and kind to me. But I was scared and disappointed. I always thought I'd get well and be a priest, like Father Martinelli, and try to help all the poor people just like he does. And then to hear that I could only live a little while! I went to church—and Father found me there and took me into his house. I told him all about it, and do you know what he said?"

"The child's black eyes danced with pleasure and excitement. "Tell me what he said, Tony." "He said I would not go, to my heavenly home until my work was done here, and by being patient when the pain's so bad and helping mother all I could, I was making a big bouquet of red roses to carry to the Sacred Heart when I went to Heaven."

"A beautiful thought," said the officer, huskily. "Father said each good deed, each pain endured with patience, for His sake was a rose for the Sacred Heart, and I've such a little time to finish my bouquet. And this trouble now, don't you think it will be another rose?"

"Surely it will, Tony. Another rose—and a thorn." "A thorn!" cried the boy, in distress. "Oh, not a thorn for the Sacred Heart!" "The rose is for the Sacred Heart, Tony, and the thorn will one day prick the heart of that woman," he pointed toward the curb where the woman, still holding the dog, awaited their coming in front of the station.

Officer and boy, followed by the woman, entered the chief's presence. Somehow, Tony had lost all fear. His thoughts were centered on the huge bouquet he was making daily, and through patience and suffering, for the Sacred Heart, and today, by enduring this injustice with humility, he could add another rose, a great velvet rose, to the bunch. A smile played about his lips, his eyes had a faraway look.

"An extra rose," he muttered, "for the Sacred Heart!" Loud voices broke the stillness, but for some time they could not break into his prayerful reverie. "Two cents, two cents, two cents," buzzed about his ears. What were they saying? What about two cents? Then, suddenly, he remembered.

"I gave the change—two cents—to her," he pointed to the woman who held the dog. "But the rose—the rose—the big, red rose."

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A sudden spell of coughing stopped him. A stream of red, blood red, that would match in color the petals of that rose stained his lips and clothes as he sank into the officer's arms.

After they had made the boy comfortable on a hastily improvised couch, Officer Carney turned to look at the woman. She moved uneasily under his stern gaze and nervously shifted the dog to another position. Something dropped from the folds of the dog's blanket and fell upon the floor. It was a copper cent! Then another dropped!

"The two cents that Tony said he gave you." "They must have caught in Fido's cover," she tried to explain. Then, overcome by the horror of what she had just done, she threw the poodle from her in disgust. "What have I done?" she moaned. "How could I have done it?"

"Shall I take you home, little Tony, home to mother?" the officer asked. "Home?" the child repeated, as his lips parted in a wondrous smile. "Yes, I'm going home—up there—to my Heavenly Mother—with a rose—a big, red rose—for the Sacred Heart!"

"Dear little Tony," 'tis a beautiful little rose you have for the Sacred Heart today," murmured Officer Carney, unshamed by the tears that ran down his cheeks as he looked at the little pinched face, so beautiful in the sleep of death.

A gasping choking noise caused him to turn to the woman. She stood there, white-faced and stricken dumb, with eyes full of unspeakable misery gazing at two copper cents upon the floor. "A rose for the Sacred Heart, little Tony," repeated the officer, "and for that woman a thorn, a big, terrible, piercing thorn that will prick her heart until her dying day!"—Catholic Bulletin.

THE STORY OF A CONVERSION

The visit of the Archbishop of New York has revealed a remarkable story of conversion on one of the islands of the Bahama group, Harbor Island, which is situated about sixty-seven miles from Nassau, the chief city of the Bahamas, was the scene last year of a direct manifestation of grace from Almighty God.

Harbor Island has a population of about 2,000 persons, not one of whom was a Catholic. One of the inhabitants of the island, Miss Clotilde Johnson, a devout Methodist, and a school teacher, chanced to read an article on the Blessed Sacrament, and became instantly convinced of the truth of the Real Presence.

This young lady had never come into contact with Catholics, and had never made study of the teachings of the Church, so that her conversion is regarded as all the more remarkable. Not only did she herself receive the light of faith, but she was also instrumental in bringing the faith to others. Her Methodist pastor, hearing of her belief in the Real Presence in the Blessed Sacrament, sent one of the sterner pillars of his church, a sort of woman missionary, to reason and pray with the young lady in an attempt to hold her to Methodism.

What was the result? Before the young lady had an opportunity of entering the Church herself, the good woman sent to prevent her conversion was herself converted to the True Faith, and had entered the Sisters of St. Joseph as a novice, and is now laboring in one of the southern States.

The young lady's own brother sought to reason with her in the family's attempt to keep her in Methodism. But she answered all his arguments. Their arguments failing, some of the girl's friends fell to reviling her and her new religion. The brother then, knowing his sister's irreproachable character and recognizing the loftiness of her ideals, began to come under her influence and to see the light of faith himself, and as a consequence, he is today a student for the priesthood at the Benedictine College at Collegeville, Miss.

Miss Johnson was assisted in her study of the teachings and practices of the Church by Father Chrysostom, to whom she applied for spiritual guidance. Father Chrysostom recognized in the conversion of Miss Johnson a direct manifestation of God's

grace and favor. He immediately began preparations to open a Catholic mission on Harbor Island, and last November he purchased suitable property for a church, a substantial stone building, advantageously situated on a prominent street, which was quickly converted into a school and chapel.

Both school and chapel were formally opened on Feb. 2, the thirty-first anniversary of Father Chrysostom's arrival in the colony. Sisters Giovanna, Catherine and Agatha of the Sisters of Charity of Mount St. Vincent on the Hudson were introduced to the mission by Assistant Mother M. Regina accompanied by Sister Maria Rose, and the school, which is to be a select school, was opened on the above date with an enrollment of twenty-two non-Catholic pupils, and bright prospects of an increase to fifty or sixty in the near future. The house of two devout Catholic converts Miss Clotilde Johnson and Miss Rita Thompson, was placed at the disposal of the Sisters as a temporary convent. A large and commodious store building is in process of reconstruction as the future St. Vincent's convent and school. The church is dedicated to the Blessed Sacrament, owing to the remarkable circumstance of the first conversion from which others so rapidly followed.—The Sentinel of the Blessed Sacrament.

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The first Christians had all things in common, as we read in the Acts of the Apostles; but when that equality of possessions ceased, as it did even in the Apostles' time, the agape, or love-feast, was substituted in the stead of it. Upon certain days, after partaking of the Supper of the Lord, the Christians met at a common feast in some large room, the rich bringing provisions, and the poor, who had nothing, being invited. This meal was a symbol of brotherhood and Christian fellowship.—St. Chrysostom.

"For the motives of a man's actions, hear his friend; for their guidence and propriety, his enemy." —Gruess at Truth.

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