

CHATS WITH YOUNG MEN

A VISION OF HEAVEN

There's a charm in the springtime surpassing all art. When the saffron-hued crocus bids winter depart. There's warm lay of gladness dispelling all gloom. When the sweet violets and the butter-cups bloom. There's a joy yet unsounded in glenside and dell. When the daisy awakens the lovely blue-bell. The wild mountain rose and the blushing dogwood. In a world of repose, join the gay sisterhood. Deep in these ereations of green, blue and gold. A beauty is mirrored like to Eden of old. Ah! Nature is blending in her own wondrous way. A vision of Heaven in the splendors of May.

—MICHAEL V. HANLON.

ARE OUR BOYS AND YOUNG MEN AT THEIR BEST?

Young men of the present day are so egregiously inflated with an idea of their own social value that they have neither respect nor reverence for any other person. They take unheard-of liberties with their seniors, and even in the society of ladies they find it impossible to veil their egotistic estimate of themselves. The well-bred man or boy never makes this mistake. Even when he takes himself too seriously as the sun of his social system, he is never over-familiar, and is never guilty of omitting those little attentions that mark the gentleman. He is as polite to the elderly woman as he is to the pretty girl; and if a certain amount of empressment is distinguishable in his manner to the latter, as compared with the former, it is only natural. He never remains seated while a lady in the room is standing. He jumps up to open the door for her if she should rise to leave the room, or to pick up an article she may have dropped, or hand her anything she wishes for; a cup of tea, a newspaper, a book. If a lady is taking her leave after having paid a call he, in the absence of any other gentleman, may be asked by the hostess to see her to her motor car; or should he know the caller very well, he may wish on his own part to pay her this attention in the absence of any gentleman belonging to the house he is in. The well-bred man never smokes in a room when visiting without permission. He opens carriage doors in trains, and never smokes without permission when with ladies. Butler Lytton said that "manner will do more for you than anything more than money." No one can learn a happy manner. It must be, in some sense, the outcome of good sense, good feeling, and the habit of mixing with good society. Christian gentleness is at the root of it, and true manliness is its staff or stem. The leaves and blossoms are graceful words and thoughtful deeds, and a good memory must not be omitted, but may be included as the branches.—Southern Cross.

FRIENDSHIP

Friendship must be cultivated. In the world of today as in past ages as well as in time to come men look for friendship. They furnish for lack of it and our very lives are scarred or refreshed by such a union. The pagans held friendship as the very end and purpose of life. Our Lord held it up to us as a thing right and good, for He had His chosen Twelve including a special three and of the three an especial one—John—whom He called the "Beloved Disciple." "Friendship is openness between friends, confidence, the absence of all reserve; between friends there can hardly be any secrets." To each other as well by silence as by the spoken word, it must be revealing to one or the other—secret thoughts; unconsciously, they are allowing each other to come into the depths of the heart that is hidden by a thick veil from all outsiders. If such a friendship exists, the effect of each upon the other is incalculably great and the difference in rank, age, aptness, riches, temporal or spiritual endowments are of no consequence though one be a prince and the other a beggar. "Friendship, then is not wrong; indeed, it is to be found in the Holy Scriptures, in the life of our Perfect Model, in the stories of the saints. It is even, as the poems declared, the most perfect gift of God to men. There is nothing else which gives greater joy in life, nor the loss of which makes the leaving of life more easily accepted. But because of the very fascination of it, for its due exercise certain qualities have to be observed; Friendship must be loyal; there must be no fair-weather friendships nor any friendship that allows an attack to be unparried. Constant—for constancy is of the essence of friendship. Those who are always changing their friends, full of affection for one today, and tomorrow seizing on another and making him a recipient of their tales, know not what is true friendship. To be changeable of friends is bad for them and worse for me. Many acquaintances, yes; many friends, no! Frank—it must be based on sincere confidence and trust, but this does not justify constant correction, which is an over-hasty attempt to reach the results of friendship. Ideal—I must see my friend as he

is and as he might be. Respectful—for passion destroys friendship by destroying respect, and cheapens the precious signs of love.—Catholic Columbian.

THE MAD RUSH

A noted man arrived in Boston the other day. He was late for an appointment he made. Leaving the train he hastily called a taxi and shouted to the driver, "Drive fast." The taxi raced down the street and dashed around the corners with undiminished speed, until the question suddenly arose in the man's mind whether he had told the driver where to go. The passenger leaned forward and shouted, "Do you know where you are going?" "No sir," replied the driver, "I don't know where I am going but I'm driving fast." So many people of today, fascinated by the pleasure-seeking life about them are "driving fast" without knowing where they are going. They begin by spending more than they can afford upon dress, theatre-going, dances, and the myriad indulgences that entice on every side. To pay for these luxuries they must retrench expenditures that duty demands of them. Their contribution to the support of home is minimized indefinitely. Those who should be nearest and dearest to them are in want of many little comforts which ordinarily would be in their power to bestow. But the spirit of extravagance transforms generosity into selfishness and sense of duty into irritation at all restraint. Yet God desires that we enjoy the many pleasures that life offers, but always with our eyes on the light of our soul. It was Christianity that taught men the secret of real abiding happiness. It gave life a meaning, labor a sanctity, poverty a dignity, and suffering a sweetness. Its message was a good message, and it set the hearts of men pulsating to a heavenly music quite unknown before.

Once two little boys coming from Sunday School were talking of Elijah's ascent in the chariot of fire. Said one: "Wouldn't you be afraid to ride in that chariot?" "No," said the other, "not if God drove." Today God drives the chariot of human progress, and it mounts as it advances. In the ride we touch the pleasure and the pain, the Cross of sacrifice and the symbol of love, the material and the spiritual. We temper laughter with tears, sunlight with shadow. But all through our life, with God at the wheel, we shall never drive too fast. Though the road may be filled with dangers, with St. Philip Neri we may say: "I despair of myself but I trust in God."—The Pilot.

OUR BOYS AND GIRLS

I will start anew this morning with a higher, fairer creed; I will cease to stand complaining of my ruthless neighbor's greed; I will cease to sit repining while my duty's call is clear; I will waste no moment whining and my heart shall know no fear. I will look sometimes about me for the things that merit praise; I will search for hidden beauties that elude the grumbler's gaze; I will try to find contentment in the paths that I must tread; I will cease to have resentment when another moves ahead.

I will not be swayed by envy when my rival's strength is shown; I will not deny his merit, but I'll strive to prove my own; I will try to see the beauty spread before me, rain or shine; I will cease to preach your duty and be more concerned with mine.

A CHARMING CHILDHOOD

Leaves from the Life Story of Father Bernard Vaughan, S. J. "You ask me," wrote the Jesuit to Mr. Snead Cox, "to send you my memories of Courtfield when I was a child. I was only a little boy when we lost our mother. It was a loss I cannot think of even now, after half a century and more without a shudder. To all of us she was the very ideal of everything that is lovely and holy. We thought, and we were brought up to think, that she was in every sense perfection. Hence her blessing was more to us even than her caress. Well do I remember how we used to rush at her coming in to the nursery to see who should be the first to kiss her hand with reverent devotion. Then she would sit on the floor with half a dozen of us clinging to her, while she would give us her little crucifix and incense to venerate and fondle, or perhaps take out her watch, and placing it against the ear of one of us, would say, 'Life is passing away just like that tiny ticking watch, but when the little heart stops beating here, we shall all know that God didn't wind it up any more because he wanted you home with Him for a never-ending holiday. Of course we used to kneel around her lap morning and evening to help after her our childlike prayers, and then we were carried off, two in her arms, and others clinging to her skirts, to the chapel, where on great Feasts we were privileged to kiss the altar-cloth, or even the altar itself. Our mother reminded her children that, there in the Tabernacle, One who loved us more even than she did was always abiding, ever ready to greet us when we went

to see Him. She loved her garden, but would have been shocked if the fairest flowers had been sent to her boudoir instead of to the chapel. She herself would gather nosegays for her children to place on our nursery altar or before the statue in her bedroom. When I look back it seems to me she could talk only about God, or the poor, or our father. She made Heaven such a reality to us that we felt that we knew more about it, and liked it in a way far better than our home, where, until she died, her children were wildly, supremely happy. Religion under her teaching was made so attractive, and all the treasured items she gathered from the lives of the Saints made them so fascinating to us, that we loved them as our most intimate friends. "As she herself could not seek perfection in the religious state, she strove to attain it in the sphere of life to which God had called her. I am told that she said the Divine Office daily, and when too ill to say it herself had it said for her. She died while Compline was being said in her room. So serious and earnest was her pursuit of spiritual perfection that in later life she became positively greedy to follow all manner of saintly practices. A Jesuit brother-in-law of hers observing how like a lumber room was her boudoir, she made the excuse that she preferred it as it was, and that no servant was allowed into it. Whereupon he went on to say, 'Well, I am surprised to find anyone seeking perfection amid such disorder as this.' Looking up to him, she exclaimed, 'Do you really think God would be more pleased with me if the room were in apple-pie order?' 'It would be a better object-lesson,' was his reply, 'to the children.' She thanked him, saying no more, but in later years this uncle told me that from that date he never saw anything out of place in her boudoir.

"It was not our mother's practice to bring us any dainty from the dinner-table. We were never allowed to go down to dessert, our father thinking it might encourage greediness or undue fondness of food. We dined at our parents' lunch and then we were allowed to take what we liked. I remember one day being offered some dish which I rejected with the incautious remark, 'Thank you, father, I don't fancy it.' Should I live to the age of Methuselah I shall not forget how he turned upon me and in solemn voice said, 'I do not wish any of my boys to indulge in fancies about food; fancies are the privilege of your sisters.' On another occasion, when I had shown over-much reliance for some dish, my father reminded me that it was a poor thing to be a slave to any appetite or practice. Blushing to the roots of my hair, I ventured to retaliate, saying, 'Well, father, how is it that the snuff box is brought to you every day at the end of dinner?'—you always take out a big pinch.' For a moment he was silent, and then made me fetch the box, and while in the act of tossing it into the fire, he said, 'There goes the box, and that is the end of that bit of slavery.' His training was somewhat drastic, but it was a fine counterpart to that of the ever-tender mother.

"There were some fine customs which our father insisted on; for instance, that we should take our places with the village school children when they were catechised on Sunday afternoon in the chapel; and the chaplain was encouraged to be especially severe with us if we did not answer correctly. Father liked us to give of what we had, and not merely our used-up toys, to the less well-off little ones, and nothing pleased him more than to see his children "trudging off with their mother laden with good things for those who most wanted them. . . . "When I look back to those young days so crowded with life I cannot remember any quiet games entertaining us. Birds, dogs, other pets, and ponies were our chief delight. I fear we were dreadfully noisy, loving hare and hounds, blindman's buff, snap-dragon, and, above a theatricals, in which movement was a safety valve for what was called 'the Vaughan spirits.' Of the Feast of Holy Innocents, when it was our custom to dress up in the habits of different religious orders we use to hold high religious functions and preach one another down till the result was a sort of pandemonium, ending in clouds of incense and a blaze of candles round the schoolroom statue, where we made peace."

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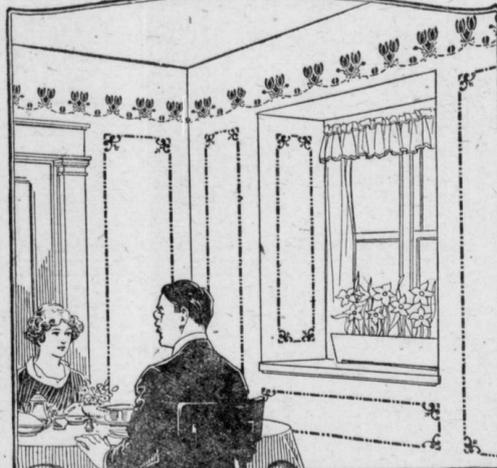
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