CHATS WITH YOUNG MEN

THE MAN WHO MUST WIN

He's the man who from the beginning of time has proved to the world that "it can be done." He's the most terrific force in humanity—the dogged, smiling Soldier of Hope. He stands on the firing line until his cartridge belt is empty, then digs his heels in the turf, clubs his gun and prepares for the hand-to-hand encounter. The length of his fight is the limit of his faith. It takes more than one hit to make him quit. He's never bankrupt until he has checked out his last balance of strength. You can hurl him away, but you can't possibly keep him away. You can check him, but he'll always come back. His will is made of whalebone. It has snap, but won't snap. Bend it as much as you please, but watch out for the rebound! He can't fail; his spirit is guarded by a burglar-proof combination of resolution. When the storms drive him upon the rocks, he builds a raft out of the salvage, floats away, with confidence for his compass, and always finds the shore. There's a 60 horse power courage back of his ambition. He's a battering ram of purpose—ready to crash against any opposition. He isn't impressed by the barriers of precedent, but lunges straight at them, and proves that half the obstacles which blocked those who came before him were mere strips of fancy, painted by imagination into the semblance of walls. He isn't always guided by the losses of others, and thereby shows how many quitters attempted exactly the same things before. He escapes the consequences which would overtake a coward, because he doesn't shrink from them. Consequences, like all other bullies, take advantage of the weakling. Instead of nerves, he's stung with nerve, and his soul is a wholesome thing—wherein lies the secret of his power. He won't be bought off; he can't be fought off. Back of him is something stronger than any trial ahead. His honor is a talisman which keeps him clean and resistless. There's a strange flaw in his hearing—his ear cannot detect the note of discouragement, so his ideals become ideas and not fancies, and his dreams change to blue prints from which he builds reality.—H Kaufman in Sunshine.

WORK AND INCLINATION

It is a hard saying, that we usually do our best work in the things that come hardest to us. But this is a truth that is being abundantly proved, in every walk of life, with every passing year. It calls only for a fair facing of the facts to recognize it.

It is as wrong to seek for difficulties as to seek for ease. It is not possible, but it is a positive duty, to enjoy our work. It is wrong to "hunt trouble," though readiness to meet difficulties is needful as commendable.

It is true that one's best work is likely to be hard work, rather than easy; on this account, inclination and facility in a certain direction are likely to be barriers rather than helps to real success; God is likely to call one into the work within which he can be best: and God's call, not man's best, should be the determining factor every time. We are not as a rule safe judges of our own fitness or unfitness in any line, and man is seldom to be trusted to pick out his own field of labor. It is safer to let God do this, and God's call, not personal inclination, should settle the matter for us all. If God's call be in accordance with our own inclination and liking, that does not alter the case. Duty is none the less duty because it is pleasant from the start. But it is only fair to recognize that ease in doing our best work is the exception rather than the rule.

As for enjoying our God-ordained work, that is a duty to which divine ordinance summons everyone. And there is no joy that compares with the joy of overcoming. The joy that is found in hard work makes the joy of easy work pale and colorless. This vigorous, full-blooded joy is a growth and a result; it comes out of effort, in and by accomplishment. It is possible in every form of effort to which God calls — but in no other. There is therefore no gain nor sense in seeking obstacles for obstacles' sake, of course; but there is tremendous gain in refusing to be deterred by obstacles if they lie between us and God's work and in recognizing that God's call is very likely to be in that direction.—The Angelus.

HOPEFULNESS

God has outlined this divine virtue in granting us a naturally hopeful temperament. Among the kinds of men we know, none is more lovely than he who has a particularly hopeful character. He looks on the bright side—what side but that is God's side? As we hear that the darkest cloud has its silver lining, so must we say that God always sees that side, for He is enthroned beyond the clouds. "Heaven's door is iron on our side and golden on God's side," says Wiseman by one of his characters in Fabiola.

In religious activities the busy, pushing man is the hopeful man; and he is the thriving man. He alone has daring plans for God's cause. Difficulties do not daunt him, because his temperament and his grace make sacrifices easy. A supine soul has no place in a saint's following. Cowardice never takes counsel of an energetic friend—it seeks out a minimizing confidant for its perplexities and a temporizing negotiator for its scruples, instead of abounting in plans it overflows with excuses. Reasons for not acting are abundant in proportion to the vacancy of hopefulness. A safe man, such a one is sometimes called — safe he is because he keeps at a safe distance from the firing line. He can boast that he has never been knocked down—for he is always lying flat on the ground.

One says of an evil that called for remedying. "I was afraid to make matters worse, and so I quietly withdrew." Another kind of a man says: "I did my best." God does not always give a victory to such a one, but he always comforts his conscience with inner approval.—Rev. Walter Elliott, C. S. P.

REGRETS

Never let regret poison your present or hamper your future. If you have made a mistake, try to retrieve it; if this is impossible, make the best of a bad bargain.

Some people are forever repining over this or that action, wishing they had done differently, and wondering how things would have gone if they had. This is an idle waste of time and works good for no one. We all make mistakes, some more glaring than others, but no one is exempt. "What can't be cured must be endured," as an old proverb that has good sense in it.

Here is a pithy paragraph along the same lines: "Never be sorry for any generous thing that you ever did, even if it was betrayed. Never be sorry that you were magnanimous, if the people were mean afterwards. Never be sorry that you gave. It was right for you to give, even if you were imposed upon. You cannot afford to keep on the safe side by being mean."

In other words, don't mind if your generosity is unappreciated, or kind acts misunderstood and misrepresented. You have had the pleasure of giving, and that is after all the best payment; for of the gifts of the heart it always remains true, the more you give the more you have.

AFFABILITY

When a young man starts out in the world, after his education is finished, he finds that it is not what he expected. It is altogether different from the college, where he may have been popular with his teachers because he was a brilliant pupil. All the knowledge in the world will not make one popular or successful—in fact some of our most intelligent people have been among the most disagreeable. The ability to get along with people is more to be desired than great wisdom, and is a gift that will bring us almost anything the world has to give.

Friendship, expansiveness, having a good word for everybody, helping someone out of trouble, shaking hands with another man, bowing, smiling here and there—that makes a man broad. It gives him happiness, pleasure and sympathy. It suggests to him, oh! ever so many things and makes him useful to the world. Affability is the greatest of all gifts. The man who can make others feel at ease in his presence and bring out the best that is in them is generally the man who is sought after, while the man who is grouchy, gloomy and pessimistic seldom finds anything but failure in this world.—Intermountain Catholic.

WORK, NOT WORDS

The world wants results, not excuses. The one who is quick at making excuses is rarely good for anything else. Work, not words, is needed. Labor conquers all things. Words are often nothing better than sounds. A girl has been too lazy to study her lessons, next morning she has an excuse to offer. She has an excuse for every fault she is found guilty of. She often does wrong and then tries to cover her faults by making excuses. This is an old trick. Adam tried to play it on God Himself, but it would not work. Don't be so foolish as to try to play the same trick; it will never do. Those who strive to excuse themselves when they do wrong instead of owning up that they did wrong will never win the good opinion of others.

OUR BOYS AND GIRLS

STORY OF RUBENS

The great painter, Rubens, during his stay at Madrid, in the year 1628, made many excursions into the neighboring paris, and the following occurrence is related as happening during one of them:

There was, in the environs of the city, a convent inhabited by one of the most austere and rigid orders of monks; into this Rubens entered, and observed much to his surprise, in the choir even meanly adorned, a picture which evinced the most superior talent.

The subject of this picture was the Death of a Monk. Every shade, every touch, spoke of the high soul and sublime genius of the painter; and Rubens, delighted, called his pupils, some of whom usually accompanied him in his expeditions, and showed them the picture. All joined with him in the loudest expressions of admiration.

"But who can be the author of this chef d'ouvre ?" exclaimed Van Dyck, the master's favorite pupil.

"A name has evidently been written beneath the painting, but some one has carefully effaced it," replied Van Thulden.

Rubens craved an interview with the prior of the convent, and at the old monk's approach, eagerly inquired the name of the artist whose work so excited his admiration.

"The painter is no longer in the world," replied the monk.

"Dead !" exclaimed Rubens. "He is dead. And did he die unknown ? Was there no one after he was gone to give to the world a name which should have been immortal—a name before which even mine might bow ? Notwithstanding,' added the great artist, with a noble pride, "notwithstanding, my Father, that I am Peter Paul Rubens !"

At this name the pale face of the prior lighted up with an unwonted brightness. His eyes sparkled and the fixed and eager look which he turned on Rubens spoke of somewhat more than curiosity; but this excitement only lasted for an instant. The monk's eyes were again cast on the ground, and his hands, which he had raised to heaven in the moment of enthusiasm, he once more crossed upon his breast, and repeated:

"The painter is no longer in the world."

"But his name, my Father, his name, that I may tell it to his country, and that he may receive, though late, the glory which is justly due to him."

And Rubens, as well as Van Dyck Jacques, Jordaesa and Van Thulden his pupils, one might almost say his rivals, surrounded the prior, and earnestly entreated him to name the unknown artist. The monk trembled—a cold perspiration trickled from his forehead down his wrinkled cheek and his lips contracted almost convulsively as though eager to reveal a mystery of the secret of which he alone was master.

"His name ! his name !" repeated Rubens.

The monk made a solemn gesture with his hand.

"Listen !" said he "You have misunderstood me. I told you that the author of this picture was no longer in the world, but I did not mean to say that he was actually dead."

"He is living !" exclaimed simultaneously Rubens and his pupils. "Oh, tell us then his name, that we may become acquainted with so sublime a genius !"

"He has long since renounced the world," replied the prior calmly. "He has entered the cloister—he is a monk."

"A monk, my Father, a monk !" cried Rubens. "Oh, tell me in what convent, for he must leave it. I will bring him forth and show him, the glory that awaits him. If he refuse me I will obtain an order from our Holy Father the Pope for him to return to the world, and resume his brush. The Pope loves me, my Father; the Pope would grant my request."

"I can neither tell you his name, nor that of the convent to which he has retired," replied the monk in a resolute tone.

"The Pope will command you to do so," cried Rubens, exasperated.

"Listen to me," said the prior. "For heaven's sake, listen ! Do you believe that this man, before giving up the world, before bidding adieu to fortune and glory, had not hard struggles against such resolution ? Do you not feel that he must have experienced bitter deceptions and cruel disappointments before he was brought to acknowledge that all here is but vanity ?" said he, striking his breast. Leave him, then, to die peacefully in that asylum which he has at length found from the world and its deception. On the other hand, your efforts I am convinced, would be of no avail; it is a temptation, I feel assured, he would resist," added he, crossing himself, "for God will not withdraw His help. God, who in mercy deigned to call him, will not chase him from His presence."

"But, my Father, it is immortality which he renounces !"

"My son, immortality is nothing in presence of eternity."

And the prior, pulling his hood over his face and slightly bowing, quitted the chapel, thus leaving Rubens no time to press his solicitations further.

The celebrated Fleming retired from the convent with his brilliant cortege of pupils, and all returned to Madrid, silently musing on what had transpired.

The prior sought his cell, and throwing himself upon his knees on the straw mat which was his only couch, he prayed long and fervently; then, gathering together his pencils, his colors, and an easel which was lying on the floor of his dormitory, he threw them all into the river which flowed beneath the window. He gazed for some time with a melancholy smile upon the water which bore them away from his sight. When they had entirely disappeared he returned once more to kneel on his straw mat, before his wooden crucifix, to pray.—True Voice.

A LITTLE GIRL'S DEVOTION

"An incident that I shall never forget," said Daniel O'Connell speaking to a group of Irish patriots who were discussing the woes of Ireland under a foreign government, "is one which occured when I first began my public life."

"It was when I was in the southern part of the County Kerry. I entered old Saint Patrick's church to ask God's blessing on the meeting we were to have there that evening. As I approached the Altar, I noticed a little maid kneeling, her hands clasped in prayer. Golden curls peeped out from beneath the hood of her coarse cloak, framing a face of unusual beauty.

"I watched her for a few moments, and then purposely made a noise to attract her attention, but in vain.

"I confess I was curious to know who she was, 'for,' thought I, 'if Kerry is made up of such Catholics we will win the day.'

"I finished my devotions, and arose to leave the church. I glanced at the child, she still knelt unmindful of anything except the Divine Presence on the Altar.

" 'What is your name little one ?' I said. She did not answer.

" 'What is your name ?' I repeated. She did not heed the question, but, persistent, I asked her again.

"She looked at me wonderingly for a moment, then pointing her finger to the Tabernacle, said in a whisper: 'Jesus is there.'

"I turned away, humbled at the sublime Faith of that little child, and thanked God for the Church that in the past has made Ireland the land of saints and heroes, and in the future will guide her until once more she takes her place among the nations of the world."—Sunday Companion.

HOW TO BE MISSED

"Oh I shan't be missed !" a girl said the other day when she was asked to join with her people in some little outing. She said it very bitterly too.

But if things are like this there must be something wrong somewhere.

Everyone has a place to fill in the world, no matter how small or insignificant that niche appears to be, and if we find that others do not miss us it must surely be because we have not yet learned how to fill our niche properly.

As a matter of fact it isn't enough just to fill the niche Providence has given us. We must hold that little corner by being as kind and helpful to other people as ever we can.

If we do that I do not think we shall long have to complain that we "shan't be missed."—True Voice.

IMPROPER CONVERSATION

It is a well-known fact that certain snakes have poisonous fangs. Woe betide the unhappy traveler in the forest who is bitten by one of them! The poison circulates in his blood, the wounded member swells up, fever sets in and not unfrequently death follows. The Psalmist speaks of the poison of snakes and the venom of asps and indicates that a similar poison may flow from the mouth of man. "They have sharpened their tongues like a serpent; the venom of asps is under their lips." This poison is the wicked words and the foul language which proceed from the mouth of some. As the poison of snakes injures the body so and in a greater degree evil conversations injures the soul of man. To these the Apostle refers when he says: "The tongue is indeed a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold how small a fire kindleth a great wood" (James iii, 5.) Impure conversation kindles a great fire, laying waste both the soul of him that speaks and of him that listens.

Impure language is a disgrace to him who utters it on account of the source from which it comes. It proceeds from an illregulated heart. Who, as a rule, are they that indulge in this kind of language? Silly young men that do not weigh their words, who think themselves smart in speaking of such subjects. Or they are frivolous men whose age has not yet taught them the gravity due to good manners or good morals. They think they can not laugh unless there be scurrility and impurity in their conversation.

Impure language arises from an impure heart. Have you ever met with a single modest and well-behaved young man who indulged in impure language? Saintly youths, such as St. Aloysius and St. Stanislaus, actually swooned away if anything unfit for chaste ears was said in their presence, such was the sensitiveness of their pure souls. Our Lord says: "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." (Luke vi. 45.) "From the heart come forth evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications." (Matt. xv. 19.) The axiom of St. Chrysostom was: "As the heart, so the words." St. Bernard tells us, "The inmost heart is often revealed by the testimony of speech because the tongue expresses that of which the heart is full. Impure conversation is the index to an impure heart. Such a heart is like a swamp from which evil words arise like a poisonous exhalation."

The subject of impure conversation is one which every one ought to be ashamed, for it is impurity. Impurity brings the curse of God upon those that practise it. The man who talks in a filthy manner proclaims his own shame by showing that he delights in what is low and degrading. Moreover, the subject of impure conversation is one that gives great scandal. Immodest words fall like red hot sparks into the soul of the listener and cause it to burn with a great flame. It is an incitement to sin. To lead others into sin is a shameful and accursed deed, which our Lord condemned in the strongest terms: "Woe to the world because of scandals. For it must needs be that scandals come; nevertheless woe to that man by whom the scandal cometh," (Matt. xviii, 7.) Such a one disgraces himself and calls down the condemnation of God upon his head. Shame upon him who prostitutes his lips by uttering such language!

The instrument used in uttering words that are unchaste is the tongue. God gave us speech to praise Him, and the unclean man abuses it for filthy language. "Let no evil proceed from your mouth, but that which is good, that it may minister grace to the hearers." (Ephes. iv., 29.) He who talks in an immodest manner frustrates the purpose for which God gave him the tongue; he employs it for a purpose directly opposed to that for which it was made.

The tongue is the member on which we receive the body of Christ, and the evil speaker defiles it with impurity. No other member is allowed to touch the sacred Host than the tongue; as often as we receive the body of Our Lord the tongue becomes for a few moments the throne of His Majesty. Thus the tongue is sanctified. By uttering filthy words it is desecrated in the most shameful manner. "How shameful a thing it is," exclaims St. Chrysostom, "that the tongue, the noble member, the tongue which has often touched the body of Christ, which has been moistened with the blood of the Lord, should be misused to so vile a purpose! Is it right and fitting that a speech or a song that outrages decency should proceed out of the mouth of a Christian, the same mouth which has so often received the body of the Lord?" He who speaks indecently disgraces himself and defiles the tongue which has been sanctified by contact with God.—Rev. Joseph Schuen.

PROTESTANT MINISTER

GIVES HIS IMPRESSIONS OF CATHOLIC CONGRESS AT MAYENCE

The Liberal and Protestant organ, the Frackfurter Nachrichten, publishes some impressions of a Protestant pastor Dr. Maximilian Maurenbrecher, on the recent Catholic congress at Mayence. The writer says:

"Instead of seeing, as I had expected, but a performance of marionettes, I only saw gravity, conviction and fervor, such as their adversaries might well themselves turn to account. Politics were not at all to the front; rather that which was much more in evidence at the congress was solicitude for the security of the Catholic religion, and it was just because of this that persons of a different way of thinking could not but be struck by its sessions."

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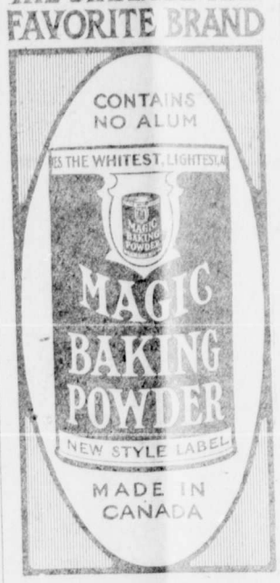

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