

CHATS WITH YOUNG MEN

SACREDNESS OF AN OATH

Should the day ever come when the solemn oath calling upon God to witness the truth of what we say or promise will be lightly regarded by the generality of men, it will be the day that sounds the death-knell of all human faith and trust, says the Baltimore Sun. The oath is the highest tribunal of conscience—its court of last appeal. For the man who realises thoroughly what it means, and really believes in a God, it is something supremely awe-inspiring; and nothing short of duty, or direct need, or at least the most justifiable utility, could induce him to take it. He uses it not as an ordinary, every-day confirmation of his good faith, but only as a last resort. If his oath won't suffice to hold him to the truth, assuredly nothing else will. His case is truly hopeless; no confidence can be placed in him.

The oath is, in truth, nothing less than summoning the Omnipotent God into court to serve as a pledge or security for our good faith. It is a bold enough venture even when we feel that we have charity and right on our side, and how can we fittingly characterize the act of one who dares to call on the name of the Almighty to sanction an injustice or to witness a lie? To make an equal—a fellow man—a party to such an infamous proceeding would be justly considered one of the most grievous wrongs we could inflict upon him; to treat a friend thus is one of the meanest and foulest acts of treachery, and it is well-nigh impossible to conceive how even the most depraved could have the hardihood to attempt such treachery with his Maker.

The oath, then, is the strongest and last surviving safeguard of human truth and justice, of human faith and trust; and if that last strong bulwark ever fails us, then will surely come the deluge. And yet, in spite of its awful sacredness, we have ample evidence from many quarters that the oath is treated very frequently with but scant respect, and that, too, by people who claim to believe firmly in God and His justice. The saloonkeeper who risks his oath by selling on Sunday or to minors, would probably resent with more the charge of insulting the Almighty. He will try to justify himself on the plea that his promise is a mere matter of form, extorted from him—compulsory, hence not binding. So, too, the saloonkeeper's Sunday customer will often deny under oath the fact of his getting liquor, and seem to think that charity or friendship will excuse, if not sanctify, his perjury. Witnesses in other criminal and civil court cases sometimes act similarly and perhaps for the same reasons as the foregoing. And as regards officeholders unmindful of their sworn oaths, we all know their name is legion. Doubtless, like the sacrament of the saloonkeeper, they regard their oath of office as a mere matter of form, entailing no serious or real obligation.

Morality is certainly at a very low ebb where things have come to such a pass as this. Few words—none, in fact—are needed to show the groundlessness and the nonsense of such excuses; and we can't help wondering if those who urge them really take them seriously. An oath freely (even though reluctantly) taken or justly exacted is strictly binding; and neither self-interest, nor friendship, nor sweet charity itself can ever make it otherwise. To treat it as a mere empty form is a mockery of the Almighty, God, and His justice in empty forms. If quibbling and equivocation are unpardonable in ordinary intercourse between man and man, they are still more inexcusable when confirmed by a solemn oath. The only conceivable explanation of this frivolous disregard of sworn obligations by people professing belief in God and His justice is thoughtlessness or a failure to realize the nature of the act by which they call the Almighty God to witness the sincerity of their pledged word.

It is high time to awaken to a sense of its serious and sacred character, for our present looseness in the matter is gradually weakening and allowing to slip from

under us this strongest foundation for civic integrity among men.

FORGIVING INJURIES

In regard to the oft-felt difficulty, namely, that we do not feel as kindly as we would to our unkindly neighbor, let us remember that we must not lay too much stress upon mere feeling or sentiment. We are not required to give the same degree of love to our enemies that we give to our tender parents or to our treasured and sincere friends. No, the love that we ought to give to our enemies, the charity that we ought to show to them, is a supernatural love and charity, founded on the fact that Christ himself so loved them that He died for them, and we are all of one family in that redeeming love. Father Schuyler says: An injury often leaves a gaping wound in the heart and through the opening of this wound * * * there come rushing in at times resentment and bitterness and even the suggestion of revenge. Yet so long as the mind does not brood on these feelings, and the will does not consent to them, we may feel sure that we are really pardoning the offense that causes them. * * * Love for our enemy forbids us to wish him evil in return for the injury which he has inflicted upon us; much more does it forbid any effort to injure him in return. If misfortune overtook him, we are commanded not to rejoice in his misfortune; if good fortune is his lot, we must try our best not to be saddened by it. It is true, certain feelings of satisfaction in the former cases and of sorrow in the latter will rise instinctively in our hearts; but we are not accountable for these first movements of weakened human nature, if we strive earnestly to put them from us.

How plain and how helpful in this teaching! Let us conclude with a very simple further lesson: Forgiveness of injuries must be accompanied, whenever conditions demand it, by the ordinary acts of charity that we owe to all men. If an enemy is in need, spiritual or temporal, we may not refuse to help him simply because he is our enemy. If he makes advances toward reconciliation, we should meet these advances favorably and do our part to effect this reconciliation. We are commanded also to exchange with him the ordinary civilities of life, if the omission of these could show where life's weary toilers must stand, with a brightness which they cannot create for themselves, and which they long for, enjoy and appreciate.

Let us hear no more, then, of these foolish words, "I will not speak to so and so," and the like. Let us study the example set to us by our Blessed Redeemer and let us pardon from our hearts anyone who may do us wrong or give us trouble.

THE PESSIMIST

The pessimist is one who is in the habit of taking a gloomy and despondent view of things. He is narrow-minded, and by countenance looks as though he were inhaling a bad odor. Although abounded by many, he is constantly poking his nose in other persons' business, and endeavors to cast gloom and sadness in every circle in which he moves. An eminent writer, in speaking of a pessimist, says: "The pessimist, when summed up, has an enormous surplus of pain over pleasure, and that man in particular recognizes this fact." When we run across this fellow he will tell us that the times are very evil; the country is going to the bad; all things are not as they should be; and with a sign says, "God help us." If all men were like him then God would have to help us.

The pessimist is never contented; put him in the mountains, where the great beauty of nature is portrayed by the jagged ridges of mountain scenery, and he will say, "Only a lot of rocks." Place him on the plains, and he will complain of a vast stretch of waste land. To him amusement and pleasure means folly and waste of time. Any proposition to inaugurate something looking to improvement is met with his view of possible failure; in fact, instead of encouraging the movement, he will do all he can to thwart it by expressions of

ROYAL YEAST MOST PERFECT MADE MAKES LIGHT WHOLESOME BREAD. REFUSE SUBSTITUTES

doubt as to its feasibility. We never read of any great deed being done by a pessimist, nor of a niche in fame that was filled by him. He is never found with the "whoop-de-do" boys, who believe the goal of success is won by trying, but will always be found among those whose motto is, "I told you so."

JOY BRINGERS

Some men move through life as a band of music moves down the street, flying out pleasure on every side through their air to everyone, far and near, that can listen. Some men fill the air with their presence and sweetness, as orchards in October days fill the air with perfume of ripe fruits. Some women cling to their own houses, like the honeysuckle over the door, yet, like it, sweeten all the region with the subtle fragrance of their goodness. There are trees of righteousness which are ever dropping precious fruit around them. There are lives that shine like stars upon a holy day. How great a bounty and blessing it is to hold the royal gifts of the soul, so that they shall be music to some and fragrance to others, and life to all. It would be no unworthy thing to live for, to make the poor which we have within us the breath of other men's joys; to scatter sunshine where only clouds and shadows reign; to fill the atmosphere where life's weary toilers must stand, with a brightness which they cannot create for themselves, and which they long for, enjoy and appreciate.

OUR BOYS AND GIRLS

GOOD LANGUAGE

Parity of speech means something more than the omission of vulgar phrases that ought not to be used by any self-respecting person. A young girl should carefully avoid talking into slang or careless modes of speech. When she says "gee whizz," or "you're up against it," or "you need nothing more to convince you that she may be good-hearted and well-meaning, but— Nobody wants to be stamped as common. To say to any one that she is a kind-hearted, good-natured, willing to serve a friend, and that she honestly pays her way, is to say that she is a respectable member of society; but to add to this that she is common and ordinary is to indicate a fatal defect.

Purity of speech requires the omission of slang and silly superfluous phrases. The latter, while perhaps not profane, are often not refined, and show that one's associations have been with ill-bred persons. To think before you speak is an excellent rule. You should make up your mind once for all to use only grammatical words and phrases to represent the things you mean to say. Never say "talking into" or "singing," or use a singular verb with a plural noun. Most girls have gone through the grammar school, if not further, and they have been taught what is right and what is wrong in framing sentences in English. Vocabulary is another matter. We acquire a good stock of words for daily use, a working vocabulary; that is partly by our own pains and care, and partly by listening to others who use good language, and partly by every day reading a few pages in a book that is worth attention. No matter how busy one is, she should try to keep one good book on hand and read it through, page by page, although to do so may occupy several weeks. More than most people think, they enrich their vocabulary by regularly attending church services. The habit of listening to sermons does more for you than its first object, which is to lift the mind into an atmosphere of devotion. It adds little by little to your treasury of beautiful and well-chosen words.—New York Evening Telegram.

GRANDMOTHER'S ADVICE

Grandmother always knew just the proper thing for a boy to do, and sometimes she would get her grandsons together, and peering over the tops of her glasses severely, would say to them: "Boys, if you want to be known as little gentlemen remember that the following things should be done: "Hat lifted in saying 'Good-bye' or 'How do you do?' "Hat lifted when offering a seat in a car or in acknowledging a favor. "Keep step with anyone you walk with. "Always precede a lady upstairs and ask her if you may precede her in passing through a crowd or public place. "Hat off the moment you enter a street door and when you step into a private hall or office.

"Let a lady pass first always, unless she asks you to precede her. "In the parlor, stand until every lady in the room is seated, also older people. "Rise if a lady comes in after you are seated and stand until she takes a seat. "Look people straight in the face when speaking or being spoken to. "Let ladies pass through a door first, standing aside for them. "In the dining-room take your seat after ladies and waiters, fork or spoon. "Never play with knife, fork or spoon. "Do not take your napkin in a bunch in your hand. "Eat as fast or as slow as others and finish the course when they do. "Rise when ladies leave the room and stand till they are out. If all go out together gentlemen stand by the door till ladies pass. "Special rules for the mouth are not all noise in eating and smacking of the lips should be avoided. "Cover the mouth with hand or napkin when obliged to remove anything from it. "Use your handkerchief unobtrusively always. "Always knock at any private room door."

HAVE YOU EVER NOTICED?

"There is one peculiar thing about dogs," remarked a well-known fancier and huntsman, "and that is you never saw one pant and wag his tail at the same time. A dog is not capable of a double emotion. He can't growl and wag his tail at the same time, for it is impossible for him to be mad at one end and glad at the other. "If a dog is glad to see his master he will bark and wag his tail. If he wants to get into the house he will paw at the door, whine and wag his tail, but they are all symptoms of one and the same emotion. In order to get a man's temper one must watch his eyes, but for a dog's you have to watch his tail. The dog is likewise incapable of deceit, and hence he is nothing of a politician. He deceives no one, not even his master. If he is overjoyed, every emotion is indication of that fact, and his whole make-up gives ample testimony to it. If he is displeased or angered it is the same way. "His oneness and fidelity under all circumstances is simply made him utterly incapable of baseness and loyalty simultaneously in appearance. If he loves you he loves you, and everything about him indicates it; but if he hates you heeshouts it from the headdo the tail."

HE GOT HIS RAISE

A few years ago a manufacturer hired a boy. For months there was nothing noticeable about the boy except that he never took his eyes off the machine he was running. A few weeks ago the manufacturer looked up from his work to see the boy standing beside his desk. "What do you want?" he asked. "Want me pay raised?" "What are you getting?" "Three dollars." "Well, how much do you think you are worth?" "Five dollars." "You think so, do you?" "Yessir, an' I've been 'inkin' so for 't'ree weeks, but I've been so blamed busy I ain't had time to speak to you about it. The boy got the raise.

MARY, QUEEN OF MAY

The alleluia, the Easter alleluia, are ringing in our ears as we pass the joyful paschal days—and find fitting echo in our May songs, for with loving hearts we greet our heavenly Mother, and hail her Queen of May. Let us bring them with laurel leaves and violets and sweet forget-me-nots, a fitting chaplet for our Lady's statue, while with glowing hearts we tell her of our love, our hopes, and fears, as Queen of Heaven, she sits by the throne of her Divine Son, fairest of earth's mortals, asking graces and blessings for us as her chosen children.

The bright days of May lift up the heart and send our thoughts heavenwards, and the Christian soul is made glad during its sunny hours by the thoughts of her to whom its beauty and sunshine are consecrated. How we glow with pride when we think of Mary, Queen of May! Her virginal purity dazzles us with its glory, while her motherly love charms us with its tenderness. Suffice to know that she is the Mother of our Lord and Saviour, to know something of her worth and her work. The Son of God would not and could not have a mother unworthy of Him. She must be by nature all that nature could be, while by grace she is made all that God would have her. Therefore was she fair and comely as the lily, and as sweet and graceful as the rose in mien and in person, while her soul was resplendent with a light and glory that threw a sheen of brightness over her face and form, which made her more of spirit than of flesh, more of heaven than of earth, and most worthy to be the mother of the Son of God, because the most worthy of all His creatures.

HELLO, GRACE!

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A CHAPLET OF FLOWERS

Dear, set the easement open, The evening breezes blow Sweet perfumes from the flowers I cannot see below.

I can't catch the waving Of chestnut boughs that pass, Their shadow must have covered The sun-dial on the grass.

So go and bring the flowers I love best to my room, My falling strength no longer Can bear me where they bloom.

You know I used to love them, But ah! they come too late,— For see, my hands are trembling Beneath their dewy weight.

So I will watch you weaving A chaplet for me, dear, Of all my favorite flowers, As I could do last year.

First, take those crimson roses— How red their petals glow! Red as the blood of Jesus, Which heals our sin and woe.

See in each heart of orison A deeper crimson shine; So in the foldings of our hearts Should glow a love divine.

Next place those tender violets, Look how they still regret The cell where they were hidden The tears are on them yet.

How many souls—His loved ones— Dwell lonely and apart, Hiding from all but One above The fragrance of their heart.

Then take that virgin lily, How holly she stands! You know the gentle angels Bear lilies in their hands.

Yet crowned with purer radiance And deeper love they claim, Because their queen-like whiteness Is linked with Mary's name.

And now this spray of ivy: You know its gradual clasp Uproots strong trees, and towers Fall crumbling in its grasp.

So God's dear grace around us With secret presence clings, And slow, sure power, that loosens Strong holds on human things.

Then hellebore, that turneth Towards her lord the sun,— Would that our thoughts as fondly Sought our beloved One.

Nay, if that branch be fading Cast not one blossom by, Its little task is ended And it does well to die.

And let some field flowers even Be wreathed among the rest, I think the infant Jesus Would love such ones the best.

These flowers are all too brilliant, So place calm hearts as these, God's last and sacred treasure For all who wait and bear.

Then lemon leaves, whose sweetness Grows sweeter than before When bruised, and crushed, and broken —Hearts need that lesson more.

Yet stay—our crowning glory, All Him, and yet all ours The dearest, tenderest thought of all, Is still the Passion-flower's.

So take it now—nay, heed not My tears that on it fall; I thank Him for the flowers, As I can do for all.

And place it on the altar, Where oft in days long flown, I knelt by His dear Mother, And knew she was my own.

The bells ring out her praises, The evening shades grow dim; Go there and say a prayer for me, And sing Our Lady's hymn.

While I lay here, and ask her help In that last, longed-for day— When the Beloved of my heart Will call my soul away.

—ADELAIDE A. PROCTER

react upon ourselves, and make us glow with the love of all that is pure and refined in nature, and all that is holy and elevating by grace. Lovely May Queen, pray that thy children may be worthy love and thy care!

God blesses generous souls and helps them much. Be generous with God and He will not be outside in generosity. Pray to Him, visit Him. Every visit to the Blessed Sacrament is an act of prayer and adoration.



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