

CHATS WITH YOUNG MEN

KEEP SWEET

We cannot, of course, all be handsome. And it is hard for us all to be good; We are sure, now and then, to be lonely. And we don't always do as we should. To be patient is not always easy. To be cheerful is much harder still. But at least we can always be pleasant. If we make up our minds that we will.

WHAT IS AMBITION?

We are all ambitious. There is no man who has not at some time or another looked into the future with aspirations and dreams. Stimulated by the imagination, youth builds castles and dreams of Utopia. They will play at being heroes in their realms. Fancy makes them grown up. Unconsciously and indeed constantly, they reveal their desires and ambitions. On the sands of the beach they dig laboriously, making fortresses and castles with tunnels and secret passages. Scarcely have they completed their monument when the incoming tide brushes it aside and carries away all signs of their morning toil. Undaunted by this seeming tragedy, they begin anew to build a better and stronger place, further removed from the last citadel.

Where ambition is lacking, there is boredom and ennui. Idleness, like a torpor, takes possession of the mind, and like a rotting maldy, eats away all desire for work and progress. Like a stagnant pool, it is good for nothing save to breed discontent and malicious evil.

It is natural and human to be ambitious. Civilization depends on the ambitious for its progress and welfare. How very much are we indebted to the builders of our nation? Ever looking forward working and toiling, the ambitious have given us the greatest of cathedrals, the best in literature, in painting and all the arts.

Behind this word "Ambition" are two meanings. Let it be understood that by ambition we mean the real, earnest and laudable ambition,—the honest fulfillment of the duty which lies before us, done to the best of our ability. It looks for no honor, glory nor fame, but modestly and humbly trudges along the path, honestly and sincerely trusting that it is doing right. This sort of ambition is Heaven's incentive in man which realizes the value of every hour and makes the best of each minute that is allowed him in his work.

On the other hand there is the selfish ambition, which is misdirected. It seeks only personal fame and glory. It knows no scruples or conscience. Fair or foul means may be used, heedless that "The evil that men do lives after them; the good is oft interred with their bones." The true goal is mistaken. The distinction lies in the difference of the ends of ambition. Work is no sin. Indeed it is man's life and one of the tools of salvation. Work is the stimulus of ambition, leading us on and on, for man is ever reaching out and seeking to expand. Much wished for more, great aspires to greater things. Upon the goodness dwelling in the heart of mankind depends his steps in the right road of ambition. He must stoop at intervals and ask of himself, "What am I seeking?" Ambition must be checked and held in rein by the will or it will carry us beyond our depths and we are lost. Tenneyson says,

"Ambition is like the sea wave, which the more you drink The more you thirst—yea—drink too much, as men Have done on rafts of wreck—it drives you mad."

To the wise and foresighted man the course of ambition is discernible, if he has planned his life wisely. Honesty, faith, diligence and perseverance are clearly marked as milestones on the road which leads to the fulfillment of his ideal. He has reasoned the value and the worth of his ambition, and finding it wholesome and good, is loyal to it. The briars and underbrush of selfishness, avarice and worldly gain clutter the path, and they must come out by their roots before the road is clear to travel. With a firm foot he tramps over difficulties and troubles with a satisfaction that he has crushed them. The glow of toil urges him to continue. Along the path are strewn the wrecks of misdirected ambitions, the victims of their own egotism. In their greed for gain, fame and glory, they lost sight of the real goal, and believed that the old saying, "The paths of glory lead but to the grave" was not meant for them, but for their fellow men.

A steady and earnest perseverance in the daily duty bring success. Great things are accomplished by great resolutions. Ambition is the gift of the present minute. Peace of mind and contentment come with the realization of a true ambition. Men have trudged and toiled a lifetime in their ambition to perfect their work. They have made a contract with themselves, and have been loyal and faithful to the very end. Each little duty as it presented itself brought new difficulties, which could not be slighted. The builder dreams of erecting a great cathedral. His dreams become ambitions, and his ambitions become resolutions. The mass of

endless detail confronts him and at times threatens to bury him under its yoke, but with hope and expectation of attaining the goal, he does not hesitate to allow the petty trials to thwart his plans and ambitions. In the end he is the victor, alive to see the noble ambition realized and his work well done.

Ambition is worth while for its own sake. It is good for man. It makes life keener. It gives energy and force to the world. It urges man to great work. It has its practical uses. When man considers the real end of ambition he will realize the folly and sham of greed and avarice, of pseudo-ambition masquerading in glory, fame and fortune. A sane and vigorous ambition brings man to success,—a success that brings with it happiness and joy; and the loftier the ambition, the greater the joy. Man owes it to himself to be ambitious, for Huyeman sends his message that "God vomits the tepid." A man without ambition is useless—a dead-weight, and a burden to society. Each one in his own world should lift high his ideals, and earnestly endeavor to fulfill his duty in being loyal to the work for which he is ordained. In this is found the ambition of the right kind, and it usually follows, as night follows day, that success is gained in generous measure.—The Pilot.

OUR BOYS AND GIRLS

YOUTH

Your own fair youth, you care so little for it, Smiling towards heaven, you would not stay the advances Of time-in change upon your happiest fancies, I keep your golden hour, and will restore it. If ever in time to come, you would explore it— Your old self, whose thoughts were like last year's pansies, Look unto me; no mirror keeps its glances; In my unflinching praise now I store it.

To guard all joys of yours from times estranging, I shall be then a treasury where your gay, Happy, and pensive past unaltered is.

I shall be then a garden charmed from changing, In which your June has never passed away, Walk there awhile among my memories.

THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF DOGS

By J. W. Hodge, M. D.

Many and marvelous have been the achievements which history has recorded to the credit of faithful, sagacious and courageous dogs of the past.

History chronicles that the wonderful dog, Xanthippus, heroically swam for miles by the side of his master's galley to Salamis when the Athenians were forced to abandon their city, and the body of that devoted and courageous canine hero was buried by his grateful master on the crest of a beautiful promontory, which to this day bears the name of "The Dog's Grave."

In ancient history it is recorded that the city of Coriath was saved from enemies who had planned to capture it, by fifty faithful war-dogs who attacked the invading foe that had landed under the cover of darkness whilst the garrison slept, and fought the invaders with unbounded courage until every dog but one of the fifty valiant canine warriors had been killed. That one surviving dog succeeded in rousing the garrison from their slumber in time to save the city.

Among the many pathetic incidents in the lives of famous dogs of history may be mentioned the touching incident in the life of the devoted dog, Hyrcanian, who, on beholding the dead body of his beloved master burning on a funeral pile, leaped into the flames and was consumed with it.

It is quite natural that the Switzers should venerate the memory of the Great St. Bernard, who had over whose grave at Berne, Switzerland, a stately monument has been reared.

There is a large and beautifully kept cemetery for dogs near Asnières, on the outskirts of Paris, France. When Consul-General Grouce was lately conducting a party of friends through this canine cemetery, pointing to the tomb of the Great St. Bernard who had saved the lives of forty human beings, he asked, "What man can boast of having done so much?" Can we wonder that Keturah, that faithful, patient, tireless canine sentinel and guardian of the "Seven Sleepers of Ephesus" was welcomed into Paradise by Mahomet?

The desperate combat, to the death, between the devoted dog of Aubry and his master's murderer was a notable event in the annals of history. In that deadly conflict Aubry's valiant dog proved himself the matchless hero of the hour. That dog's heroic act in his master's defense has never been excelled by any human soldier on the battlefield of war.

It is a deep mystery, this animal world in which we live and of which we are an integral part. Since the dawn of history the dog has distinguished himself for notable deeds of courage, devotion, fidelity and affection. No other animal on earth is so fond of man

and so loyal to him. The dog's life is given up to the service of his master whom he looks up to and worships as if he regarded him a deity. The dog has a religion in which his human master is his god. The only heaven a dog knows is a welcome place in the heart of him whom he delights to serve. With that possession his happiness is complete.

Human friends may prove deceitful, false and treacherous, but the dog's friendship is unflinching and enduring. It is proof against all temptations. If every other friend in the world turns traitor to a man, his dog will stand by him and refuse to "turn him down." When dire misfortune overtakes the master, his dog is the one true friend who does not desert him in his extremity but clings the closer to him. And at the end, that last sad scene that comes to all—friends, home and family gone—the loving and devoted companion of poverty, want and rags, the ever-faithful and loving dog, follows his master's lifeless body to an unmarked grave, and there, prone upon a cold damp mound of clay, he lays his head between his paws and mourns a requiem until he dies of grief.

The dog's sincere love, unswerving devotion and rare fidelity have shone in song and story, since the dawn of civilization. There can be no reasonable doubt that we share a common nature and a common fate with our mute fellow-creatures around us, which we are pleased to call "lower animals," and it may be that our poor dumb relations share a common destiny with us. The Rev. Henry Ward Beecher, who for nearly half a century represented the heart and brains of the Christian clergy of America, in the course of an eloquent sermon on "Men and Other Animals," declared: "Why, if horses and dogs have not souls to be saved, what in Heaven's name will become of their masters? For fidelity and devotion, for love and loyalty, may a two-legged animal be far below the dog and the horse. Happy would it be for thousands of people if they could stand at last before the Judgment seat of Christ and truthfully say, 'I have loved as truly, I have lived as decently as my dog.' And yet we speak of the dog as being 'only a brute.'"

THE DANGERS OF LIGHT NOVELS

There is an old adage that wisely says, a man is known by the company he keeps. It is only a particular application of this aphorism to say that a man is also known by the books he reads. "Tell me what you read and I will tell you what you are" is the twentieth century adaptation of this old saying. And it may be taken at its face value. For if from the associates of a person we judge his character, how much more clearly and correctly we may pass judgment upon his moral and intellectual attainments from a knowledge of the literature he reads.

What a person reads enters into his mind, moulds his thought, directs his judgment and forms his character. The mind feeds on the ideas it receives, and, in our day and under our complex civilization, most of our ideas are received through the printed page. Hence the importance of feeding our mind and developing our character by the right kind of reading.

We are so accustomed to read denunciations of bad books, that we are likely to think that our duty in the reading line is the merely negative duty of avoiding bad literature. On the contrary, if we wish to make the most of life and develop our God-given faculties in the way that God intended, we must also perform the positive duty of reading good books. And there are so many good books to read, that it is a criminal waste of time to fritter away hours and days reading frothy ephemeral trash. So-called light reading may be innocuous enough in itself, but it is time destroying and mentally and spiritually unprofitable, when it is not morally dangerous. There is a prevalent fallacy that arises about this time every year, that people should read light novels in the summer time. Vacation reading is the imaginative appellation given to this class of literature.

To spend a whole vacation reading the lightest of light reading is like making a dinner on candy. It pleases but it does not satisfy. And the aftermath is often unpleasant. For many people the days of vacation are set aside as a time for systematic reading. They promise themselves that they will brush up on many subjects, and improve their mind while they are recreating their bodies. Here is a wonderful opportunity, alas too often neglected, to acquire a taste for good reading, and to lay the foundation of future self improvement.

We owe it to ourselves, to our religion, and to our country to make the most of our mental and moral attainments. That cannot be done without serious study and instructive reading. In our days the man who does not read is hopelessly handicapped. He must view life as an idle spectator rather than as an active participant. His talents instead of being developed are being allowed to atrophy. And the pleasure, solace, instruction, edification, and improvement that he might have from the great thoughts and ennobling inspirations of good books are denied him. He suffers, his

family suffers, society suffers, and the cause of religion suffers in consequence.

What a melancholy figure then is the Catholic who does not read Catholic literature. He is the heir to all ages in the domain of truth. He has only to reach out, and the wealth of the intellectual world, in the shape of uplifting thoughts, noble ideas, and brave resolves will come tumbling into his lap. But he prefers to exchange this priceless inheritance of Catholic truth, for the mess of pottage that goes by the name of light modern literature.

Catholic books, and Catholic magazines and newspapers cry out to you to read what is good; to enoble your mind, and to refresh your soul. The summer time is an appropriate occasion to begin or to revive the laudable and profitable habit of good Catholic reading.—The Pilot.

A WORD OF COMFORT

By Mgr. Canon Barry, D. D., in Catholic Times

If I may judge others by myself we all have need of a word of comfort in the days passing over us. Are they evil days or good? In richness and swiftness of crowded experience, not any age of civilization has ever equalled them. Our senses are multiplied, vision goes from the single electron to the far-off stage-scene, transmitted by a series of photographing adventures; while no burst of eloquence or violence breaks forth which cannot be seized by broadcasting. The streets are filled with clamor while innumerable flying figures rush by; there is no quiet, and the old musing country-stroll has changed to a death-trap; the lane sequestered once romantically dream-like, behold it is now perilous more than any railway-section, for it has neither block-system, nor time-tables, nor danger-signals. To all this perpetual motion round about us corresponds an equally bewildering rush of mental pictures inflicted upon our imagination by news from everywhere, by advertisements which insist on our knowing a thousand lying legends about objects we do not want to look at. Tenneyson, dipping into the future "saw the vision of the world, and the wonders that would be"; but upon our own age they fling such an unrest, and so invading is the anarchy projected from these countless unrelated impressions, that we lose our centre, and are carried headlong we cannot tell whither.

BEYOND THE TUMULT Enough of these motives, then, for seeking an escape into the region of the Quiet. Not all the world's tumults, physical or mental, can do more than make a show of having conquered its everlasting tranquillity. The divine stillness reigns on high, in the depths, at the heart of existence. Our senses delude us. What is all this rushing to and fro, with no motive except a kind of nervous intention, or vile gain, or mad rivalry? The soul, gazing upon Truth, Wisdom, Beauty, Goodness, dwells in its own sphere, and is happy. But we must enter into ourselves: there we shall find Him whom our soul loveth, and the word of comfort will be spoken. The soul must never give in. Neither should a man signed with Christ's cross imagine himself to be alone. The presence is always there. We are by a freak of fancy to suppose that all was fixed in the dim and distant era when worlds came into being. But it is not so. Worlds come into being still; and our spirit, because it is immortal, does not grow old like the body. Let us then oppose to the raging storms outside, a soul which relies on God, the unchanging, who was, and is, and is to come. "Dominus regnavit," the Lord, He is King! Let our soul be stayed upon Him. While we contemplate the divine order shown to us in universe beyond universe, we learn how the laws of change are illustrations of a principle that governs change. And since in God there is nothing abstract, but all must be real, He is that principle. As it is written: "Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundations of the earth; and the heavens are the work of Thy hands. They shall perish, but Thou shalt endure; and as a vesture shalt Thou change them, and they shall be changed; but Thou art the same, and Thy years shall not fail."

MAN'S PREROGATIVE

None other creature moving over the face of the earth enjoys this intuition of Eternity save man, who conquers time by his knowledge of realities where change cannot be thought of. Why has Nature, as we term it, given us the power, not granted to any earth-born species but ourselves, of transcending mutability? For good, surely, not for harm; as a means of advance towards perfection, since Nature does not act to no purpose, or in vain. How different would this generation of ours, now so unhappy, find itself, once a Divine purpose were kept in view as the law of our being! Religion proclaims it; the Gospel makes it central to human history. When, as now, we feel helpless to subdue the forces of confusion, a refuge opens whither none of this violence can break in. For it is unable to reach the mortal who flees to his Saviour. "Underneath are the everlasting arms," which will bear us up. I mean expressly this: so long as we have kept our belief in the Christian standard of virtue as absolute,

and by God's grace and free resolution cleave to it, we need fear no evil; for the Supreme Good is with us.

TRUE VALUES HIDDEN

The scale of values—all turns on that. We should value things according to their worth for humanity, for character, for kindness, valor, truth, justice, and love of the highest. Look out a few moments on the wild procession reeling by of pleasure-seekers, and try to estimate how many of them are pursuing these ideals. We will make every fair allowance, and not be too hard on the children of Adam, in whose nature good and evil are so strangely mingled. God will judge them, not I; and He will judge me, too. At all events, I am compelled to seek for comfort in the unknown yet certainly hidden good, veiled or even mocked at in the world's unceasing masquerade and Carneval de Vieilles, yet somehow not wanting to these millions. "Intoxicated"—that is the gentlest way of putting it—carried off their feet by such an incredible rush of amusements, such violent yet cheap delights, and never trained to self-denial, the crowd are borne along by the springtide of an utterly New Age.

YET SOMETHING WON

Candor must gladly recognize how much more like pleasant well-conducted homes our schools for the people's children have become. Children, no longer timid, are happy. Medical science is tracking down and stamping out the maladies of the young, while the infant death-rate is falling fast. Temperance celebrates a splendid advance; and old age (except, alas, in cases like mine) is a kind of endowment. Crimes against the law have diminished to such an extent that many prisons have been closed and sold. The working class, tried by the Peace acutely, has yet succeeded in retaining large portions of what may with perfect justice be considered service-pay earned during the War.

HEROISM WAITING

And there is a strange sort of comfort latent but most to be relied upon, in the hearts of all these men and women who, at their country's call, would forego Vanity Fair, going out by every issue to challenge death as if it were a Bank Holiday. So baffling, so incomprehensible, is human nature! If, like most of the lower creatures, men did not realize the significance of death, we could better analyze the war-temperament. But I am convinced the explanation lies deeper. That greatest among modern Jew philosophers, Spinoza, formulated a state of mind which is part of our constitution when he wrote, "We know and feel that we are immortal." In spite of our ignorance, misery and sin, we have not lost our kinship with everlasting truths: we are still, somehow, at home in eternity, capable of angelic feats, with a lofty disdain for perils which cannot wound our honor, that is to say, our very selves.

THE ABSOLUTE GOOD

What is absolutely good in all possible worlds, and under every condition of being? Kant replies: "A morally good will," or, "to will the right because it is right." All else may be ascribed to Fate or Fortune; but the good will is the soul of choosing, deciding, acting. Not of course, without God's help; but such divine cooperation leaves to man his freedom. If, then, we seek this good will earnestly, it will be ours, and with it comes that peace we are yearning after—"the rest which remaineth for the people of God." The word of comfort is waiting until each one of us replies, "I will do right because it is right, the grace of God being my aid." Then shall we know the presence which brings the longed-for message to us over stormy waters, "Peace, it is I." What more can we ask, even in a time of unrest, when the foundations of East and West are shaken by science, by revolution, by the act of God? We shall do wisely to renounce our own poor vanities, to keep away from our hearts which may serve as a holy place. The true Christian is a pilgrim. He is in it, not of it; nevertheless, upon him will rest its salvation when all other hearts are failing.

UNSEATED BY TRICK

Dublin, Ireland.—It has transpired that, through an omission that seems to have been deliberate on the part of the officials, the only Catholic candidate for the Senate of the Belfast Parliament was debarred from getting a seat at the recent election, although on the votes he had actually won it. The Catholic candidate in question was Mr. Devoto. The law required that the ballot papers regarding him should be sent by registered post to the Speaker's office, and this was done in good time. Mr. Devoto obtained the quota of votes that would have ensured his election if the contest had been properly carried out. The post office, however, was unable to deliver the voting papers because the Speaker's office was closed and did not open until after the scheduled date for the reception of such documents. As a result the Catholic candidate, despite his success, was disqualified as late, and the person who was defeated and declared elected in his stead. Thus the Catholic voters who complied with the law have

been disfranchised by an official trick and are left without a single representative in the Belfast Senatorial Chamber.

On the ground that these methods would render public representation a simulacrum and a sham, urgent demand was made on behalf of the Catholic electorate for the quashing of the false election and the holding of a proper one. The Speaker of the Belfast House of Commons has refused this request. He denies any negligence for failure on the part of the officials. His explanation is that it was a postal election, but that the onus of ensuring that the voting papers would duly reach their destination lay entirely on the voters themselves.

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