THE READER'S CORNER

CONDUCTED BY "COLUMBA"

"Eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die," is hardly synonymous with "take up thy cross and follow Me." Hedonism and Christianity are as distinct as the poles. Still within legitimate bounds it is not forbidden to cultivate happiness. We must not forget that He went about doing good to all, and so we who are imitators of Him in all things should do our little best to increase the sum of human happiness. We should endeavor to make the world a little happier because of our presence.

"He prayeth best who loveth best, all
Things, both great and small,
For the dear Lord, who loveth us, He made
And loveth all."

We are at one with the American reviewer of Dora Melegari's book, "Makers of Sorrow and Makers of Joy," when he says that the shrew, the family bully, may be actually as culpable as one who kills in anger. If nagging, bad temper, jealousy, lack of charity and consideration drive others to suicide or make life more bitter than death, may not those who indulge those "minor faults" be morally as guilty as those who commit crimes of violence?

We have space but for a few brief quotations from this interesting volume. "The day will come when every sincerely good human being will be as careful not to be a maker of sorrow as not to commit deeds that are dishonest and cruel. . . . There are those who on their path through life, quietly trample under foot the little flowers that grow by the way side. Their brutal hands break and bruise all that comes in their way, and put aside with scornful indifference obstacles that annoy or impede their progress. The violent, the sullen, the unjust and the jealous torture the lives of others quite unconsciously, so freely is it admitted that detestable dispositions of this class do not deter possessors of them from being esteemed. This is exactly a point on which humanity needs to be reformed."

"Have you known any maker of Joy! . . . Without the smiles they have called forth, the songs that rise in the hearts they have cheered, and the radiance they diffuse into the lives of others, the sun would have long ceased to shine on a world sunk in sadness and gloom, the earth would have grown cold, and the last shivering man would have expired."

This is no new doctrine. "By this men shall know that you are My disciples if you love another," was spoken two thousand years ago. The Christian Gospel is a gospel of Love, built on the two-fold foundation of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man. But charity, more than anything else, is growing cold in our hearts. The voice of the Galilean Prophet is drowned in the din of commercialism and materialism. A world that forgets God has no place for this theory of fraternity. Unless I see in my fellowman the image of Christ, unless I believe him to be a brother and co-heir to the Father's Kingdom, why should I put myself out to help him? Why should I consider him if our interests clash? The joy-makers are the true followers of Him Who went about doing good. Hedonism is egotism-selfishness. Self-constituted philanthrophists are but voices crying in the darkness. Here, as in everything else, we must seek our motive and inspiration in the carpenter's Son.

Of very few of us can it be said as of Macbeth that we are too full of the milk of human kindness. And yet when we are unkind we are less than human. Let us not forget Cardinal Newman's definition of a gentleman as "one who never inflicts pain." And let us try to be kind to everybody, but kind above all to those of our own family circle, for it is strange but true that many who are urbane and polite abroad are the very reverse at home. Let us not leave

"The best portion of a good man's life;—
His little unremembered acts of kindness
And of Love,"

to be offered at the feet of a dead idol. Let us plant the seedling of kindness in the living heart, not on the cold mound of the departed. These are some things that cost no money. things, indeed, that cannot by possibility be brought under a standard of money value, but that yet are the dearest things that a man can purchase. Foremost amongst these is sympathy. Sympathy inspires purpose, sweetness, effort; it gladdens the heart that was growing sad with lonely thoughts, it nerves the flagging energies and cheers the overwrought spirit that was nigh to fainting, if not to death. Life is not so short but there is always room for courtesy and kindness, Emerson tells us. And Moore, too, had a proper appreciation of the value of kindness.

"The thread of our life would be dark,
heaven knows,
If it were not with friendship and love entwined"

he wrote and wrote truly. A modern Irish-Ireland poet, Brian O'Higgins, writes thus beautifully

"Better a word that is kindly spoken—
Even one little word than wealth untold;
Never forget that a heart nigh broken,
Sighs for affection and not for gold."
May we never forget it, and then it may be we will find, like Keats, that "the little sweet doth kill much bitterness."

It is hard to overtake a lie; it is hard too, to kill a slander, be the slandered an individual or a nation. We have become so used to hearing the adjective drunken applied to the Irish that we are half inclined to assent to the propriety of this qualifying epithet. Now even though we never saw the Liffey or the Shannon we should resent this insult to an old Catholic people. We are too parochial in our interests. Let us be Catholic more than name. And let us cultivate an intelligent interest in all things Catholic. We should have an answer for the slanderers of our brother Catholics whether they hail from Mexico or the Argentine or the Congo or Ireland. They are slandered, not because they are Mexicans or Irish, but because they are Catholics. Now, no country to-day has such a perfectly organized temperance army as Ireland. No country can point to so much solid work done for temperance. Every town, village and country parish boasts its temperance society. Special temperance missions are being given up and down the land. Great temperance meetings are being held like that recently at Dundalk, when thirty thousand heard the address of Cardinal Logue, or Bishop Hoare's meeting at Longford—the largest demonstration seen in the midlands since the "monster meetings" of O'Connell. To show the thoroughness with which they do their work, we may mention that Bishop Brown of Cloyne, not content with administering the pledge to all the children at confirmation, is now establishing special boy confraternities with special priests to look after them. Thus they will be able to see that the boys keep the pledge. It is alright to take the pledge. Everyone feels more or less heroic during a moment of enthusiasm. But that all do not persevere the ranks of the "weary wobblers" testify. The boys' confraternities are a step forward.

Spend God's day like a Christian. Don't take Sunday for carrying in coal, splitting up the wood-pile, mending the back fence, or cleaning out the cellar. Take out the screens some week-morning early, and get up the next morning and nail on the weather stripping, but don't save it all for Sunday.—Father Eagan, C. SS. R.

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CHATS WITH YOUNG MEN

THE YOUNG MAN'S AIM

We are to reach heaven by journeying through earth's pilgrimage, for this is the path to heaven. God has ordained that we strive to win heaven, that we earn heaven as a reward. For this purpose He has placed us on earth and enjoined upon us our task that we so pass through things temporal as to become worthy of things eternal. Our life upon earth is, therefore, the path to heaven, which we must pursue courageously.

Faith teaches us that the road which leads to heaven is a steep and rugged one, encompassed by formidable foes. "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence." Our Lord speaks of the "burden and heats of the day;" and St. Paul tells us that "our wrestling is not against flesh and blood; but against principalities and powers, against the spirits of wickedness in high places." "The whole world is seated in wickedness." Therefore it requires courage if we would walk by this road to heaven—courage to bear with patience the hardships and trials of this world—courage to resist and conquer the enemies who come to meet us with drawn swords, and who endeavor to deter us from pursuing our journey to the end. Woe betide him who lacks courage! Woe betide him who deems too difficult and laborious what God requires of him, and who allows the enemies of his salvation to triumph over him! This life is the path to heaven and we must pursue it successfully.

It is by no means sufficient to walk along the road bravely for time; we must finish our course, and finish it victorious. Of what use is it for one in a race to keep ahead of the others for a time, and then to stand still or even to turn back before the race is finished? Just as little does it profit a man to go forward courageously on his way to heaven for a time, and then to weary and to turn aside into the easier and smoother road which leads to hell. Witness the fate of Saul and Judas. "He that shall persevere unto the end, he shall be saved." "Be thou faithful unto death: and I will give thee the crown of life. They who do not persevere can expect no reward.

Our life is the seed-time for the heavenly harvest. "What things a man shall sow, those also shall he reap." "He who soweth sparingly, shall also reap sparingly: and he who soweth in blessings shall also reap blessings."

Every man must sow the seed of heaven. If the husbandman forgets to till the soil and sows no seed, he cannot look for a harvest. When the autumn comes he can leave sickle and scythe untouched, for he will have no need of them. Our hearts are the field which we must cultivate to obtain fruit for heaven. In these hearts we must sow good seed, the seed of pious resolutions. Then this seed will bring forth, in the warm rays of divine grace, the most beautiful blossoms, and the fairest fruit: humility, meekness, charity. Blessed is the man who tills this field assiduously! Blessed is he who "in the morning sows his seed, and in the evening lets not his hand cease." Blessed is he who is "zealous for that which is good always."

It is also necessary to watch the crops carefully. It is by no means sufficient to plough a field and to scatter the seed. The crops may come up and look promising, the grain may even begin to ripen; but how easily and how speedily all may be destroyed, if the husbandman have no care of it. Animals may break into the inclosure of the field and make sad havoc there: malicious men may enter and trample the crops under foot or carry them off. The same is true as regards the fruit we grow for eternal life. We must watch carefully over its growth and development, guard it against injury from man or beast. The beasts are our passions: anger, revenge, impurity, drunkenness. The spiritual crops are ruined if but one single beast breaks in—if but one passion is indulged. The men against whom we must be on our guard are evil companions, undesirable friends, who by their conversation and their bad example do us incalculable harm, and ruin in a comparatively short time a heart that was in the best of dispositions, "Take ye heed, watch and pray." "Let us not sleep, but let us watch." Happy is he whose garner is filled with sheaves, who can appear before his Judge rich in good works! To him will be addressed the words: "Well done, good and faithful servant; I will place thee over many things; enter into the joy of thy Lord."

Now, Christian young men, you know the purpose of your existence. It is to reach heaven by means of this earthly life. To attain to the possession of heaven is your true, your glorious aim. "Millions before you have reached this end. I saw a great multitude which no man could number, of all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and in the sight of the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands." May it be your happy lot also.—Rev. Joseph Schuen.

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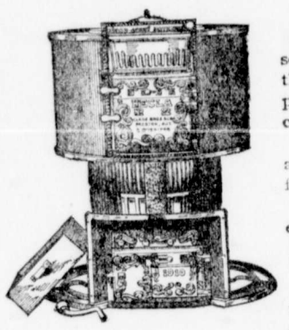

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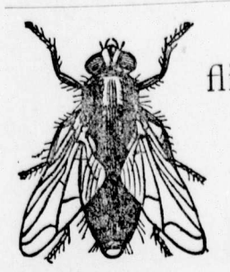

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OUR BOYS AND GIRLS

GOOD MANNERS AT HOME

Our home ought to be to us the dearest place on earth, and it is the duty of every member of the family to make it so. As children, we spend the long period of our growth at home, where we are fitted to take our place in the large world of men and women. We should, therefore, be more polite, more thoughtful, more entertaining and more helpful at home than anywhere else. Thus, when we go out into the world, we need not put on a show of good manners, for these will have become part and parcel of ourselves.

Good manners will become natural if they are habitually practiced in the family circle. The children's behavior towards their parents must ever be marked by love and respect. They must love their parents because, after God, they are their greatest benefactors. They owe respect and obedience to their parents who hold the place of God and have their authority from Him.

A child that loves its parents will seek every opportunity to render them some little service, will grieve when it cannot add to their happiness, will never be carried away by anger, will never permit a harsh or offensive word to cross its lips in their presence, and will assist them, in health and sickness, with every kind attention that love will suggest.

A polite child will always speak to its parents in a respectful tone of voice, will gladly accept their advice and follow it, and especially will never contradict them. An obedient child will never show dissatisfaction by pouting or grumbling, when parents refuse a permission or forbid anything that would be to its liking.

The father is the head of the family. It is he that labors for the support and education of his children, and therefore, the gratitude which they owe him will teach them to act with kindness and respect. Polite and grateful children will always salute their father when meeting, will never forget to say "Father," when addressing him, will quickly and cheerfully obey not only his commands, but his very wishes; and in general will be solicitous for his comfort.

The mother shares the government of the family with the father, and with him works for the welfare of the children. The same motives should therefore prompt children to show every mark of love, respect and obedience to their mother.

A polite son will act towards his mother with more civility and gentleness than he would towards any other person. He will remove his hat when he is in the same room with her, or when metting her in public. A polite child will open the door and allow her to pass through first, will pick up any article she may have dropped, give her the best side of the walk, and help her in or out of car or carriage; will accompany her to the store or the market, will carry a parcel, and will wait upon her anywhere.

Old age always commands deference and respect, but more especially in the person of a grandparent. A polite and courteous child will surround its grandparents with delicate attentions; will respect their tastes and ways of doing; will remove nothing belonging to them without asking their permission; will furnish what they ask for, and will listen to their advice with respectful attention. It would be very rude to laugh at their shortcomings, or to hurt their feelings.

Rude ways of acting and speaking are faults anywhere, but they are greater faults at home. Therefore, children must strive to acquire a kind and pleasant manner of acting and speaking; they must learn to be polite and courteous in all things and at all times. The surest means of acquiring this is to imitate the mild and gentle child Jesus, who himself has said: "Learn of Me, for I am meek and humble of heart!" What a happy home that would be, in which the children would all be as kind and gentle, as obliging and forgiving, as their Divine Model in His humble home at Nazareth!

Never forget, each morning, to greet all the members of the family with "good morning," and at night, never retire before respectfully bidding your parents, every member of the family older than yourself, "good night."

Never rush boisterously into a room. If, upon entering a room, you should find company there, salute them with a "good day" or a "good morning." You need not shake hands with the visitors, unless they first offer to do so. Never whistle in the presence of your elders, or drum on a seat or on the wall, or make unnecessary noises of any kind when people are near. Do not shout when you want to speak, whether in doors or out.

Brothers and sisters can do much for one another. This relationship ought to be one of the most pleast and most pleasant and most helpful in life. Living under the same roof, they must avoid all disputes, all bitter words and looks; they must ask pardon of one another, when they have done some harm, and willingly forgive each other when offended; they must avoid all mockery, tale-bearing, and jealousy; and by mutual acts of kindness and forgetfulness of self; they must "bear each other's burdens."

The ideal boy is the one who always tries to be a little gentleman. He will never wear his hat in the house, nor whistle at the dinner table, nor leave his books or playthings lie scattered about. He will have a place for everything, and everything in its place. Moreover, he will not fret and show his displeasure when he is told to bring in the wood, to run an errand, or to do some work in the garden. He will raise his feet when walking and will avoid all noise when going up or down the stairs. He will not stand about with his hands in the pockets of his trousers, nor will he tease his sisters or younger playmates.

Above all, he will not do a mean or sneaking act. It is just as dishonorable to deceive by indirect means as to tell a lie squarely.

A kind and gentlemanly boy will try to find occasions to help his sisters; he is stronger, and can render many a little service to oblige her. He will not let her go about on his errands, run up stairs for him, or get his hat and coat. He will offer to light the gas for his sister, put coal on the fire, place a chair, open a door, escort her after dark, or call for her and bring her home from a friend's house.

A sister will always gratefully acknowledge the kindness of a brother. She, too, will find occasion to render him a service, to sew on a stray button, or to mend a rip in his glove. Girls are apt to be more gentle and refined than boys; they can do much by their example and kind advice to make a brother gentler. Girls must not be snappish if their brothers tease them. Boys ought not to tease, it is true; but nothing makes teasing of so little account as taking it amiably and pleasantly.

A polite and gentle daughter will gladly do a little sewing; will help to take care of younger children; and she will especially take great care of her own things.

It is a mark of true politeness to be courteous towards the servants. Always speak to them in a pleasant tone, saying "Please," or "Kindly do this for me," when asking a favor, or "Thank you," for any service rendered by them.

When you are awakened in the morning, get up at once and say: "Thanks be to God!" Thus you will begin the day with God, by thanking Him for the refreshing sleep, and for having preserved you from all harm during the night.

Do not leave your room before you are properly dressed. Then take holy water, make the sign of the cross, begging God to bless you for the day that you are about to begin.

Be very particular about washing yourself thoroughly, and learn to comb your hair decently. Cut or trim your finger nails, but never do this in the presence of others. Then kneel and say your accustomed morning prayers devoutly and with attention.

Before you go to school, see that your books and pencils are all in good order. Brush your clothes, if necessary, shine your shoes, and do not forget your handkerchief.

Upon your return from school, greet the members of your family politely. Then put your books away carefully, bearing in mind this rule, which will often save you much trouble: "Have a place for everything, and everything in its place."

Have a special time for study and for your home-work, and perform this part of your daily duty faithfully. Never put off till to-morrow what ought to be done to-day.

See that your books are all neatly covered, and sharpen your pencils for the next day.

Never spit upon the floor, but use your handkerchief or the spittoon. Do not spit out of the window, nor down the stairs, where people might be passing. It is not merely impolite, but very shameful to spit at any one.

Whenever you have to yawn or cough, place your hand before your mouth. Should you have to sneeze, use your handkerchief. Never put your fingers to your nose, or bite your finger nails.

A polite and orderly child will go to bed at the proper time, without waiting to be told. Say your night prayers on your knees, and with devotion, and never fail to examine your conscience. Then bless yourself with holy water, and retire, saying: "Praised be Jesus Christ!"—The Polite Pupil.

FAITH IN THE REAL PRESENCE

The editor of the Catholic Sun, of Syracuse, N. Y., writes:

"The other day we happened to be in a neighboring city. On a street car were half a dozen men, one of them a priest, and one woman. The woman occupied the seat with the priest. It could easily be seen that they were not acquaintances. Presently a church came in view, and strange to relate every man save one lifted his hat. They were Catholics and the church bore a cross.

Shortly after passing the edifice, we noticed the woman in the case pass her card to the priest. Now our readers will kindly forgive us if we do a little eavesdropping.

"Tell me, Father," said the woman, addressing the priest, "why do you lift your hat when you pass a church?"

The clergyman was evidently taken by surprise, for he did not reply at once, finally saying simply, "Our Lord is there."

Then there was a silence of several moments, followed by questions and answers. At last, as the priest prepared to leave the car, we heard the woman say, "if I could only believe that my Saviour was in the church, I would spend the rest of my days before the altar in adoration."

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