

CHATS WITH YOUNG MEN.

Starting out in life, every young man seeks comrades, being eager to gratify that longing to love and to be loved that fills his heart. In that search he needs guidance. He will find it here.

The Influence of Companions. Everybody has heard the story of the father who wanted to give his son a practical lesson on the influence of companionship and who told him to put one rotting apple among a barrel of ripe ones. After a few days the boy was ordered to examine the fruit; and lo! the bad apple had corrupted all that it touched! Easily, then, the man persuaded the lad to give up the friendship of a youth whose liveliness and generosity had captivated him, but whose lack of morals made him like the rotting apple.

We, who are no longer children, do not need to be told that the power of companionship, for good or evil, is tremendous. We have heard of it from the experience of our elders. We have seen it ourselves.

A word of caution, a look of praise, a bit of help, have changed a destiny. An evil thought, one day with a bad associate, a foul book have sent legions to perdition.

Comparative trifles thus have, often, a prevailing influence over a career, what effect must not daily association, for weeks, months and years, with one whom you have known since childhood have on one's thoughts, principles, purposes and habits?

An old proverb says: "If you live with wolves, you'll learn to howl." Its meaning is that we inevitably become like those whose society we frequent.

There is urgent need, therefore, for young men to make good friends or none. One bad apple will rot the whole barrel. And good men will influence others to goodness.

Let our young men join Catholic societies. There are excellent organizations to suit all tastes and to provide for all needs—the St. Vincent de Paul Society for instance, the beneficial fraternities, the national organizations, the young men's clubs, etc.

And every young man, mindful of the terrible power of example, should consider the sort of influence that he is exerting day after day on all who come in contact with him. Is he clean of speech, gentle, considerate, honest, truthful, kind? Are his actions in line with the Christian life? Is his influence beneficial or detrimental to his acquaintances?

There is a wonderful restraining power over us in the presence of a friend whom we respect for virtue. We would not do anything wicked then. We even refrain in his absence from actions that would displease him, lest he should hear of our misconduct and see his love for us.

We cannot always choose those whom we shall have to work beside during business hours. But we do not have to become intimate with them. We do not need to disclose our soul to them, nor to accept their confidences, nor to cultivate their acquaintance. We can be civil to them, and charitable, and even kind; but we can keep them at a moral distance; we can silently resist their evil influence of speech or action; we can be near them in body but most remote in soul.

The question of companionship is one that should be early considered by every young man, and it should be settled according to the principle: Tell me who are your friends and I'll tell you who you are!

Evenings at Home. Nightfall comes early now, and the chill winter air makes a good fire twice grateful. The lamps are lighted and, as we gather around the table, a sense of domestic satisfaction settles down, to which in the summer time we were almost strangers. So the law of compensation ever works. We are robbed of the long days, and of much of the outdoor enjoyment, and are awarded those blessings which are inseparable from the family life and from the shadow of the old roof tree.

Evenings at home! What we owe to them can never be computed. Their influence has been powerful, far-reaching and benign. They have often entered more into the making of a perfect man than all the days and years at school or college. They have furnished the rich treasure of blessed memories and high purposes.

On such evenings the lads should have their light employments. Games and music are at times indispensable. A home well stocked with books is infinitely better than a balance at the bankers. "Books," says the author of "Dreamthorp," "are the true Elysian fields where the spirits of the dead converse, and into these fields a mortal may venture unappalled. You may walk and talk with the kings and queens of thought on a perfect equality."

They do not ask how much money you possess, what was the cost of your clothing, or what is the size of the house you dwell in. They only want you to bring an understanding heart, seeing eye and listening ear, and they will make you feel perfectly at home.

But not every book should be welcomed to the charmed circle of family life. Parents should exercise a wise supervision over the literature their children read on these peaceful evenings at home.

Grow with Confidence. As the New Year begins, we have all need of confidence. We all need strength, light, courage, comfort.

The blessed assurance that our eyes are tending toward the only light worth seeking, God, and, until we possess Him in the clear vision of heaven, a true appreciation of all that leads to Him. We need faith when all about us are so indifferent, hope when many are heartless and despairing, charity above all things and the supreme habit of charity which makes us tolerate and excuse in others the indulgence we show ourselves; and all these grow with our confidence in God.

OUR BOYS AND GIRLS.

COAINA, THE ROSE OF THE ALGONQUINS.

By Anna H. Dorsey. CHAPTER II. COAINA.

The Festival of the Assumption closed with the singing of the Litany of Loretto by the congregation, the sacred melody being led by the powerful and flute-like voice of Coaina. Swelled to a volume of rich sound, the holy chant floated out upon the calm evening air, its solemn echoes lost, in low reverberations, in the shadowy forest. Purple shadows, cast by the mountains, lay upon the lake and shore while the pines and firs along the ridges were fringed with the gold of sunset. Ere long, the inhabitants of the village assembled in a grove surrounding the great lodge, where the chief men were accustomed to hold council, and debate on any question which arose respecting the interests of their people. The chiefs and the old men, with Father Etienne in their midst, sat around the door of the lodge, placidly smoking, telling traditions of the old fierce wars with the Hurons and Mohawks, going over again the thrilling adventures of their great hunting expeditions to the north-west, or listening to Father Etienne's thrilling narratives of the early French missions in Canada. Old Ma-kee, over whose head the snows of nearly eighty winters had fallen, formed one of the group. Seated upon the grass near Father Etienne, wrapped in his blanket, with his chin upon his breast, he listened. He seldom spoke, for as he declared, "his breast was heavy at the degeneracy of his people, who had become women;" and when he did, it was to scoff at the new creed they had adopted, which he emphatically called the "smoke of foolishness." But the claws and fangs of the old lion were gone; he was harmless, and out of Christian charity he was allowed a place of honor among his people, with a comfortable support, in the hope that, ere he died, his pagan darkness would pass away, and he, at least, receive the purifying sacrament of baptism. Ma-kee had great faith in, and respect for, Father Etienne, whom he knew to be a brave as well as a good man; but he did not hesitate to tell him, on occasions, that there was no reason or sense in what he taught, because no man could understand it. And in this the old pagan was no worse than the materialist of this, our day, who reject the mysteries of faith because their human reason cannot reduce them to its own level. Father Etienne was relating the marvelous escape of the French missionaries, nearly two centuries ago, and many of their catechumens, from the house of Saint Mary's, of Ganantua, just when the Onondagoes had conspired with the Mohawks to massacre every soul of them. He described, with great spirit, the ingenuity and courage of the missionaries in effecting their escape, and the speechless amazement of their foes when they found the house so mysteriously abandoned. All listened with profoundest interest, the twinkling of keen black eyes and an occasional grunt of approval expressing their delight. When Father Etienne ceased speaking, old Ma-kee lifted up his head and spoke: "My grandmother," he said slowly, "remembered John Brebeuf. She was a Huron. When he was dying under the torture; when his fingers and thumbs were cut off; when he was pierced with lighted splinters, torn with scourges and hacked with hatchets, many of the prisoners around him, who had likewise been tortured all night, begged him for baptism. He had no water, none would give him a drop. The day dawned; at sunrise they were all to be put to death. The prisoners begged for baptism; there was not a drop of water. Brebeuf lifted his hands and eyes to the Great Spirit and prayed. Just then, my grandmother, very young at that time, came from the fields with her arms full of maize stalks. The long leaves and tassels were dripping with dew; it hung upon them like rain-drops. He saw it, and asked her for one of the stalks. He spoke our language. She had helped to torture him, but she was a woman. She gave him two or three. He grasped them with joy; he bade the prisoners look up; he sprinkled them; he signed the cross in the air over their heads with the maize, and so they were baptized with the dew of heaven and his own blood. I think that was enough. But Brebeuf was a brave man. He died like a warrior; he should have been an Indian, ugh! Having spoken, the dusky old pagan wrapped his blanket about him, and again dropped his head upon his breast, leaving his hearers variously affected by his simple and true narrative.

At some little distance from the great lodge, and nearer the lake, were the women, the young people and children of the village, standing or sitting in picturesque groups under the trees and along the shore. Some exercised themselves by running, dancing and leaping; others sought amusement in more quiet ways, while many played simple games with shells and plum-stones, peculiar to their customs. Blithely arose their cheerful voices in pleasant converse and innocent laughter, while each face wore a look of contentment and enjoyment. We said that every face wore a glad expression; that was a mistake, for Altontion, who sat apart from the rest, gorgeously attired, as usual, looked dissatisfied; but no queen ever wore royal robes more proudly than she wore her coronal of blue and scarlet feathers, her necklace and earrings of silver beads, and her embroidered sash of moose-horn and mink. She was the widow of the deceased sachem of her people, and, in default of a son to inherit the dignity and title, had the mortification of seeing it pass to the son of her husband's brother, the present chief, Tar-ra-hee, whose baptismal name was Cyril. Bitterly disappointed, and obliged to bear, not only her own mortification, but that of her kinsmen, it became a grave consideration how to retrieve the loss. The idea suddenly presented itself to her scheming mind, one day, to marry her daughter, when of a proper age, to Tar-ra-hee. Once admitted,

this idea became the ruling motive of her life; she was prepared to sacrifice everything to its accomplishment, and so pledged herself to her kinsmen, who gave their hearty approval. Altontion kept up a kind of state around herself, which no one cared to interfere with; for although she was a Christian, she was not a saint; in fact, so far from being a saint, she was—I don't know whether there is a name in any Indian dialect for it—but, in plain English, she was a ternaunt. This woman had taken Coaina, who was let an orphan at a very early age, and nursed her at her breast with her own child, who was, say, she had loved Coaina, and although she stormed at her now and then, and set her to drudgery that she spared Winonah, she was, upon the whole, kind to her. In the perilous journeys of the tribe to the distant hunting grounds, so full of hardships and privation, she cared as tenderly and constantly for the young Coaina as for Winonah, and ever to the same pains in teaching her those arts and accomplishments necessary to the complete training of an Indian girl. Coaina was skillful and expert in them all. She excelled all of her young companions in domestic handicraft; she was more expert in dressing skins and drying quills and hunting; more skillful in fishing and climbing; more ingenious in embroidering and fashioning the garments which she made with such celerity; and more quick in acquiring knowledge from the books she was permitted to read than any young person in the village. Her school tasks were never neglected; her religious duties never omitted; and she grew towards womanhood so much purer, virtuous and excellent that she was not only the favorite of the village, but was constantly held up by parents to their children as a model for their imitation. She, unconscious of her superiority, was so modest and affectionate, so generous and cheerful that, with the exception of one no heart felt malice, envy or ill will towards her, and that heart was Altontion's, who had noticed all this with ever increasing discontent and whose chagrin was now completed by the fact that Coaina had become far more beautiful than Winonah, that she was more intelligent and more beloved.

Here was a cloud, and from it dropped the very gall and wormwood of bitterness into Altontion's soul. Then arose the fear or presentiment that the superior attractions of her niece would frustrate all of her plans for her child's union with Tar-ra-hee. Henceforth her jealous misgivings gave her no peace, and on several occasions, when she fancied indications on the part of the young chief of admiration for Coaina, she became almost frenzied with rage. Coaina felt keenly the change in her aunt's conduct towards her, and although her unkindness cost the poor child many a bitter tear, she remained dutiful and patient, bearing all her humiliations with sweetness and in silence, and sought refuge and consolation only at the feet of Mary, towards whom she had ever cherished the most reverent and tender devotion, by whose life she had modelled her own, and whose graceful assistance she constantly implored. About this time Coaina was placed, by Father Etienne, at the head of the female confraternity of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, a position which Winonah expected and hoped to receive.

This added fuel to the flames of her heart of the mother and daughter, who by many a sneer, taunt and slight, aroused every indignant emotion in Coaina's nature, and rendered her life almost unendurable.

But as the storms and rains of March vivify and strengthen the roots of the forest trees, so did these tempests of ill-will and malice, which poured perpetually and harshly against her, strengthen her soul, vivify her faith, and sweeten with eternal fragrance the sweet blossoms of humility that had such deep root in her soul. Then arose another cause of bitter envy and jealousy. On a certain occasion the two girls were permitted to go, with a party of their kinsmen, to Montreal, to sell their bead-work and fashions. Father Etienne gave them a letter of introduction to the Superior of the Convent of Notre Dame, who not only received them kindly, but introduced them, at the hour of recreation, to the religious of the house, and also to the lady penitents of the academy. The beauty of the two Indian maids, the artless grace and modesty of Coaina, the proud and wildly bright eyes of Winonah, their excellent French, their low, sweet modulated voices and unsophisticated expressions, won upon every heart. The lady penitents were half wild with admiration of these beautiful Algonquin princesses, and purchased everything in their baskets, besides making them presents of gold and precious little ornaments in gold and precious stones, which they took from their own ears and fingers.

Not very long after this visit, Father Etienne received a letter from the lady superior of this convent, in which she spoke of the visit of Coaina and her cousin, and after expressing the most friendly sentiments towards them, offered to receive Coaina at the academy as a pensioner for six months; at the expiration of which term, she would also receive Winonah for the same period. After due consultation with her friends and kinsmen, it was agreed that Coaina should accept the advanced offer, and that Winonah should accompany her, while she, the present chief, Tar-ra-hee, fumed in secret, and poisoned her more Winonah's mind against her innocent cousin. She told her, under a sacred promise of secrecy, all that she designed to do for her advantage, and found in the ambitious girl a willing ally.

Coaina was very happy in Montreal. Every one in the convent loved her,

and took great pains in assisting her through her tasks. Quick and appreciative in everything they taught her, above all she showed such a passion for music, and so astonishingly was her talent developed by a little instruction, that she was regarded almost as a prodigy. Her voice was of such surpassing sweetness and compass, so full of a certain wild life, that ere long she was permitted to sing in the chapel choir, where her heart overflowing with the love of Jesus and Mary, she sang the *Salve Regina* with such sweetness and fervor that the notes soared and floated with thrilling effect above the grand thunder tones of the organ.

When the six months had expired, the good Sisters of Notre Dame would have detained her; they were unwilling to lose their beautiful favorite, but she desired to go, that she might take the place of Winonah in her aunt's lodge, and be to her indeed a daughter, in the place of her absent child. So she returned to the "Lake of the Two Mountains," and to her home, the same humble-minded, light hearted, simple child as she left, and forgetful of the past, she remembered only the debt of gratitude she owed her benefactress, and determined to be more scrupulous than ever in the discharge of the duties she owed her. There was great joy in the village when she came back. Old and young had a pleasant greeting for her; Father Etienne gave her his blessing with flowers and birds for her acceptance, and the old pagan Ma-kee lifted up his head and said: "The sunshine has come back to us, and the song of birds. It is good."

Winonah was kindly received at Notre Dame, but having no talent for music, and but little aptitude for study, the little she gained served but to increase her self conceit and vanity; and at the expiration of her term, she was full of anger and ingratitude against the good *Religieuses*, because she had failed to learn what she found it impossible to teach her. This, so far from imputing to her own want of capacity, she charged to their indifference.

This added fresh zest to the hatred of Altontion for the innocent Coaina; but she dared not, as we said before, bring public opinion by open acts of violence to her; therefore, like the wily, malicious woman she was, she bided her time, and watched for her opportunity to give crushing effect to her revenge.

Thus matters stood in the village of the "Lake of the Two Mountains," up to the day on which our little narrative opens, and we are happy to say that no more digressions will occur, having put our patient readers in possession of all the necessary facts to enable them to comprehend as mournful a tragedy as was ever written, crowned by as saintly a martyrdom as the world ever knew.

Altontion sat alone, still watching her daughter who was sporting with other girls of her age on the margin of the lake, and wondering what had become of the young chief, Tar-ra-hee, whom she had not seen since Vespers. Her keen, restless eyes had been seeking him for the last half hour, but as yet he had not appeared, either among the chief men at the grand lodge, or with the young people on the shore. She became impatient, and was about to rise up from her seat, to walk round in search of him, when some one suddenly approached her, and asked, in a quick, impatient tone: "Altontion, where is Coaina?"

She started round, and Tar-ra-hee, the young chief stood before her. "Is she not with her companions down there by the lake?" she asked. "I will go and seek her!" he replied.

Now old Ma-kee, walking slowly, approached her and asked: "Where is Coaina?" "Ask me where your grandmother's ghost is?" she said, sharply. "I do not know where she is."

"Altontion, your rattles grow finely," replied the pagan, moving on. "Where is Coaina, my child?" inquired Father Etienne. "I have not seen her since Vespers."

"I have not seen her for more than an hour, my Father. Perhaps she is in the chapel," she replied, more respectfully. He went away. Group after group of young people approached, one after the other, all making the same, inquiry.

"We are waiting for her to begin blind man's buff," said one. "We are waiting for her to dance. Tar-ra-hee is asking for her," said another.

"We want her to sing for us?" said the children. "We can't get along without Coaina!" cried one. "Everybody wants her! Where is she?" screamed another.

Almost beside herself with fury, Altontion, who constrained herself with difficulty, professed to be entirely ignorant of the whereabouts of Coaina, but she was finally left alone, but not long; for presently little Tony straggled up and asked the so oft repeated question: "Where is Coaina?" and received for answer a rousing slap, full on the side of his tawny cheek, which sent him roaring away. Soon after Tar-ra-hee came back, his gay feathers nodding over his head, his silver ornaments, and a gold medal sent him by the French Government, glittering in the last glimmer of sunset, to full of life and courage, so graceful and noble in his bearing that, for an instant, Altontion was lost in admiration; but his words recalled her to her own train of thought, and again plunged her into the abyss of her own malicious intentions. For he asked if she had yet seen Coaina.

"I have not seen her; can't the stars shine without Coaina? can't the wind blow?" she answered, in suppressed rage.

"No, the stars do not shine for me when Coaina is away," replied the young chief, with a proud nod. "It grows always dark."

Coaina no longer heeds me; she is beginning to hate her lovers. Ah! heek, the Iroquois, has been around my lodge lately. Perhaps if you can find him, Coaina will not be far off," said Altontion.

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proud to question his tormentor. Altontion thought, "he will now seek Winonah," and watched eagerly to see if he went towards her, but he strode off in quite another direction, and she lost sight of him. Tar-ra-hee wandered listlessly and moodily on, heedless of whither he was going, when he suddenly halted and bent his head in a listening attitude; then a gleam of joy lit up his swarthy features. He was within a short distance of Altontion's lodge, and had heard Coaina's voice singing, in low sweet tones, one of the hymns of the mission. He sprang forward, and swiftly made his way thither. It was indeed, Coaina, seated at the door of the lodge, with the soft moonlight falling upon her upturned face. She heard advancing footsteps; the next moment Tar-ra-hee stood beside her. A deep blush crimsoned her cheeks; she arose and saluted him, with downcast eyes.

"I have come for you, Coaina. Your companions await you on the shores of the lake," he said. "Did my aunt send for me?" she asked.

"No." "I cannot come; do not wait." "I will wait. You shall come!" he said quickly.

"Cyril!" exclaimed Coaina, who always called him by his Christian name. "Forgive me, Coaina; come!" he pleaded.

"No; I cannot go. You must return to them." "I shall stay here," he said, in a determined tone.

"Don't—don't! you must go away!" she said, earnestly. "I must go away!" he said, angrily. "Do you send others away? Why must I go?"

"Ah, Cyril, go, and do not be angry, my friend," she said, while big tears rolled over her cheeks. "I have something to do—a duty which I must not neglect—and should you stay away and be lonely here with me! Ah, Cyril, don't you see how ill it would look?"

"Listen, Coaina," said the young chief, gravely; "I will obey you now, but give ear to my words and open your heart to take them in. My lodge is empty, and before another moon I will rise up in the council, and ask for you to be my wife."

A soft blush suffused Coaina's lovely face, and a dreamy smile chased the tears from her eyes, but she only said: "Go, now, Cyril, my brother; leave me."

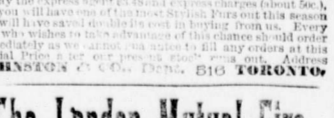
"I go, Coaina," but when the moon rises to the height of yonder red star," he said, pointing to one overhead, "you will hear my flute not far off from the lodge; will you listen to what it tells, Coaina?"

"I will listen, my brother," she promised. Then he turned, and moving swiftly away, was lost among the shadows of the night.

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