

CHATS WITH YOUNG MEN

SONNET TO MY MOTHER

And can't thou, Mother, for a moment think
That we, thy children, when old age shall shed
Its blanching honors on thy weary head,
Could from our best of duties ever shrink?
Sooner the sun from his high sphere should sink
Than we, ungrateful, leave thee in that day,
Or shun thee, tottering on the grave's cold brink.
Banish the thought—where'er our steps may roam.
O'er smiling plains, or wastes with out a tree,
Still will fond memory point our hearts to thee,
And paint the pleasures of thy peaceful home;
While duty bids us all thy griefs assuage,
And smooth the pillow of thy sinking age.

—HENRY KIRK WHITE

DOES WRONG-DOING AFFECT YOU?

Youth is the season of impatience. And it is a glorious impatience, born of un-disappointed ambitions, and of unspooled enthusiasms. It is the time of earnestness in the pursuit of ideals. Confront the man who sneers at a boyish ideal, even though he may not think it is likely to be ever attained: He is like, but worse than, the man who roughly tells his big eyed children on Christmas Eve that there is no Santa Claus.

The fact is, the ideals of youth can be realized. They are in their nature, capable of being realized. It is men and women that fail, not ideals. Ideals are not realized because the living beings who could realize them fail, of their own fault, and lose their grip. This is the usual cause of the enthusiasm of twenty-one being found with a blase, "what's the use" air at fifty.

God bless the man who has not given up his ideals. We are not speaking of certain very high-pitched ideals of which, at first glance, one may be sure that they reach so high that they are not general questions. But God bless the man who, at fifty years of age, is not content to let the world wag on in its wickedness without trying to block some of that wickedness. God bless the man who gets angry enough at a thief to try to pluck some of the stolen goods out of his hands. God bless the man who has not subscribed to the easy political gospel that the Ten Commandments have no place in public life. God bless the man who can not see the future wives and mothers of the nation tempted to impurity for the gain of a few dollars, without feeling his wrath loosen his tongue.

Do you get vexed at serious wrongdoing—at least when it is done in a way, or on a scale, that amounts to a scandal and a menace of a public character and affecting many? Or, have you drifted into the cheap and unhealthy cynicism which pretends to itself that virtue is the exception and vice the rule? If so, shake yourself up. That's the gospel according to General von Bernhardt, in his "Germany and the Next War." Leave to German "might is right" the devil's plea that self-interest rules the world. Self-interest does nothing of the kind, and, please God, never shall.

Does the boldness, the brazen success, the weak toleration of wrongdoing vex you? Do you feel that you want to put up a round or two for the square deal, for an honest man against a rogue, for the purity of womanhood against organized temptation for cash profits? Do you count yourself a partisan of the right, or are you indifferent?

Minding one's own business is an admirable occupation, but let us not make it an excuse for selfishly burying ourselves so deeply in our own affairs that we have not a word or a thought for a good cause. Give us the man who is not yet satisfied to let greed tempt young womanhood to unchastity and young manhood to drunkenness, without making a vigorous protest; the man who refuses to accept Bernhardt's cynical doctrine that most human acts are done through selfish motives.

In ordinary, every-day life, not one human act in every ten is done with a selfish or wrong motive. Even the apparently selfish actions involved in making one's living, which comprise by far the greatest number of the total of all human acts, appear as unselfish actions when we reflect that a man seldom works for himself alone. Is the father fighting for food and shelter and schooling for his children, acting selfishly? Sometimes his own carcass may be dearer than all to him; but usually it is not. Is the mother who frets and worries over a hundred details of making ends meet, acting for her own selfish interest? Not she. High or low, old or young, rich or poor, whenever you look around you in the world, you can see more unselfishness than selfishness, if you don't permit your own selfishness to put a bandage of cheap cynicism across your eyes.

The human race is very far from being wholly selfish. And we have emphasized this because, when men pretend to get cynical and say "what's the use," and that people will follow their bent anyhow, and that "what's bred in the bone will come out in the flesh," and that "everyone is playing for his own hand," and that everyone governed

by the idea of gain or profit, and that if young people sin it is because they wanted to and no one is to blame, then one may whisper to such men another little bit of philosophy—truer than theirs—they've got callous spots on their conscience; the "undignified citizens" of the world have bluffed them out; their wisdom is non-sense; their trouble is selfishness and they don't know it.

The aggressive elements in humanity's battles can be understood: The frank creed "get all you can," is bad doctrine, but it is plain doctrine, and the motive behind it is easy to see. Greed for money is back of most of the human wrongs that effect numbers of people, and that of most of those that affect merely individuals. Greed for money is back of the liquor trade, and of the rotten book trade and the lascivious play and picture. These are aggressive elements; and they can be understood at a glance. On the other hand the aggressive elements in the fight for right and justice can be placed quite readily. Few men fight public evils for the money they can make by it. Occasionally, a campaign for decency is capitalized; but as a general rule, and almost always, money does not lie in that direction. The opponents of wrong-doing are, in nearly all cases, in earnest and are unselfish. The two main opposing forces are thus readily recognizable, and their positions easily understood.

But what of the non-combatants? These are not so easy to understand. Why are they willing to let evil go on unchecked and good fight on unaided? Why don't they warm up at the sight of great evils? Usually, we think, for either one of two reasons: The evils of the world have hardened them into an unconscious selfishness, or else they have failed to realize that there is a fight going on around them to which no man ought to be indifferent.

To those who give their brain and muscle, time and toil, to advocating good causes, there are two classes of people who afford more discouragement than all the forces of evil combined: first those who say, "Yes, it is too bad," but will lend no aid; who say, "What's the use," or who feel or affect a certain cynicism, and say: "Oh, people will do just about what they feel like doing; you might as well leave them alone; who, theoretically, wish to see society and justice and normal cleanliness prevail, but who seem to suppose that men have nothing to do in such matters. Some of them assume an air of piety, and say: "God will deal with it in His own good time," overlooking the fact that God expects us to use legitimate human means to forward good causes; forgetting also that the devil's side of the case has active agents on earth at all times, and that by human means they should be met as far as possible.

The other class is worse, and very bad—in effect. To the shame of human nature, and the puzzlement of students of human nature, there are people who live decently, do justice in their personal affairs, and yet are unmistakably pleased when a neighbor falls or some human weakness is discovered in those who were thought to be good. To the student of human nature this class affords a rather difficult problem. How is it that persons of good lives, and who even show some signs of religious inclinations, are found to entertain this strange malice against their kind? For it is malice; it is an evil feeling; this feeling of satisfaction in detecting someone in a grave fault. In the frank adherents of evil living the thing is easy to understand. It is part of their character; it suits their game. But in persons who are not themselves involved in evil courses, it is hard to account for.

Yet it exists. Men who never sin by impurity themselves, take an evil delight in deriding the smallest appearance of it in other men, and when found, sometimes when only imagined,—they relate it with evident enjoyment. Men who are conscientious in money matters, go to ingenious lengths to find the material for an accusation of dishonesty against others, and at once create a hazy vapour of their surmise into a solid bank of cloud that overshadows their neighbor's character. There is scant room for non-combatants, and no room at all for those who seem to be friends of the right, but act as friends of the wrong. The divine teaching is: "He that is not with Me is against Me."—The Casket.

OUR BOYS AND GIRLS

CHARITY

Unarmed she goeth; yet her hands Strike deeper awe than steel-caparisoned bands,
No fatal hurt of foe she fears— Veiled, as with mail, in midst of gentle tears.

'Gainst her thou canst not bar the door;
Like air she enters, where none dared before;
Even to the rich she can forgive
Their regal selfishness—and let them live.

—GEORGE PARSON LATHROP

"ASK OUR LADY"

"I don't know how I'll ever get geometry into my head," sighed Dorothy Glynn. "The more I try, the more stupid I get."

"Ask Our Lady to help you," advised little Polly Grady. "I was just like that on algebra, and now I don't mind it a bit. Promise a rosary every time you get to a hard place,

and I just know our Blessed Mother will help you over it. Just ask her." Polly's advice is so good that Uncle Jack passes it along to his young people. He has the greatest confidence in Our Lady's power to aid, and feels quite sure that she will help Dorothy just as Polly says. If you are faithful in making little acts of love and devotion to God's Mother, she will be your friend and helper. "Just ask her."—Sacred Heart Review.

WHAT HE COULD DO

Two boys left home with just money enough to take them through college. They both did well at college, took their diplomas in due time, and got from members of the faculty letters to a large shipbuilding firm with which they desired employment. When the first boy was given an audience with the head of the firm, he presented his letters and said: "What can you do?" asked the president.

"I should like some sort of a clerkship."

"Well, sir, I will take your name and address, and if we have any thing of the kind I will write you."

The other boy then presented himself and his papers. "What can you do?" the president asked him. "Anything that a green hand can do, sir," was the reply. "The president touched a bell that called a foreman, and the college graduate went to sorting scrap iron. A week passed, and the president meeting the superintendent, asked, "How is the new man getting on?" "O," said the superintendent, "he did his work so well that I put him over the gang."

In two years that young man was the head of a department and on the way to a salary larger probably than his friend will ever earn.—Youth's Companion.

VACATION TIME WORK

A mother has requested us to indicate some vacation-time work for children in line with our former editorial. This we are very happy to do. Consider, for one thing, an important phase of recreation—reading. At fourteen or fifteen begins a period which is rather difficult to control: for it is then that children evince a taste for highly colored stories. It requires tact and patience to direct their taste to good literature. But it can be done if you take the trouble to learn how. Music, for those of your children who are studying it, should also receive serious consideration. No mother should allow her children to neglect their practicing all summer and confine their playing to music of the "jazz" variety. When they resume their lessons in the fall it will take them a month or more to regain that which they have lost through lack of practice in their vacation months. Have it definitely understood at the beginning of the summer that a certain amount of time is to be devoted to practicing. The same rules should be applied to the study of a language. It would be rather unfair to demand written translation; but the reading of a simple book in a foreign language during the vacation would not be an unreasonable request: and it would prevent a boy or girl forgetting what he or she has already acquired, increase their vocabulary and make easier the work of the next term. If a girl is interested in cooking, give her a chance to do it; but do not allow fudge and chocolate cake to be the only experiments. Where it is practicable, let the young daughter take some of the household responsibility off her mother's shoulders. It is an excellent plan to have her attend to the marketing, even though it may be a rather expensive experience in the beginning. Have a garden and let the boys take care of it. Set a certain amount of work for accomplishment and try to live up to a reasonable schedule. Do not expect your children to punch a time clock; but try not to let them get into the habit of loafing. When they have done well, when they have actually achieved something which has saved either money for the household or labor for their mother, they should be complimented and rewarded. The reward, however, should not be given as pay, but rather in the way of some little treat or surprise the parents know to be desired. Every normal child, even one as young as eight or less, can be interested in something which will be to his benefit, if the mother will but cast about a little and find his natural inclination. It is really only an application of the kindergarten theory. The idea is not to deprive the child of one hour of play; it is rather to guide part of his recreation into useful channels.—Catholic Columbian.

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The trouble with the Public schools," said a teacher, "is this: the teachers are afraid of the principals, the principals are afraid of the superintendent, he is afraid of the schoolboard, the board is afraid of the parents, the parents are afraid of the children, and the children are afraid of nobody." There is more truth than humor in this declaration, and the "trouble" so skillfully traced is not confined to the children who frequent the Public schools. As the old-fashioned ideals of home-life grow dim in this busy age of materialism, the evil influences which take their place have their effect even upon Catholics. A craven fear is an evil thing, but the fear that is born of reverence is the beginning of wisdom. No parent wishes to play Lord Jeffreys with the child, but every

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Catholic parent knows, or is inexcusable if he does not know, that he falls grievously in the obligation of his state of life, if he does not do what he can to fill the heart of the child entrusted to him by God, with a wholesome filial fear of violating the law of God and man.

Whatever remedies may be suggested by sociologists, we shall not proceed far along the road to peace and prosperity, if the way is blocked by the wrecked home. And wrecked homes are not the peculiar property of the poor in the good things of this world; they are found quite as frequently among the rich. Neither poverty nor wealth is the deciding factor. Homes that are like sanctuaries, homes that are nurseries of little ones who in their day will do much for God and for their fellows, are made by fathers, and especially by mothers, who realize that their first duty is to train their children. Training means restraint as well as exercise, and despite the garish "sweetness and light" theories prevailing so much modern child psychology, fear may well be reckoned as one element of restraint.—America.

BIRD COLER ON SOCIALISM

Between the covers of that excellent volume entitled, "Two and Two Make Four," by Bird S. Coler, may be found many a gem of thought sparkling with brilliant diction. The following observations on Socialism may be taken as a fair example of the soundness of view that characterizes the entire book:

"The initial impulse of Socialism was materialistic. It was projected in that line. Efforts have been made by politicians here and elsewhere, but particularly here, to change its direction, but the efforts have been futile because the impulse was stronger than the politicians. Christian ministers have tried to draw Socialism into coincidence with Christianity, but the result has been invariably that they have been drawn away from Christianity. Their little discourses have been drowned in the great materialistic chorus of the movement."

"The economic philosophy builded upon the materialistic conception of history" cannot be wrenched from that foundation. You may find here and there a Socialist who protests that Socialism does not clash with the family ideal, but you will have to seek him among thousands of writers and speakers who frankly denounce marriage as a bourgeois arrangement altogether incompatible with economic freedom and quite incapable of surviving capitalism."

"The Socialist who tries to reconcile his economic creed and his religion will be found to have so modified his religious beliefs in the process of assimilation as to make such a reconciliation possible only at the expense of his religion. It is never his Socialism that is strained; it is always his belief in a personal Creator and Ruler of the universe."

"Among the most paraded of the so-called Christian Socialists is the Rev. George D. Lunn, mayor of the city of Schenectady. Dr. Lunn has vigorously asserted many times that they are unfair who assert that Socialism undermines religion. He made such a declaration in a debate at Hartford Conn. when I was his opponent; but with questions and quotations I was able to force from him the admission that if compelled to choose between religion and Socialism, he would choose Socialism."

"What kind is the Christianity of a Christian minister who admits his willingness to relinquish what must be infinite and eternal truth in order that he may retain what he himself describes as a mere economic program? If Christian be an adjective of any meaning at all, then Dr. Lunn is not a Christian Socialist, for no man, knowing what Christianity is, and what Socialism is, can be both."

"It does not answer the argument to say that there are many kinds of Christians. There is no kind of Christian who is an atheist. There can be no kind of Christian who believes in the materialistic conception of history. Catholic and Protestant may differ as to the meaning of some things Christ said, but between them there can be no difference of opinion as to what He meant when He said He was the Son of God."

"Catholic and Protestant believe what Christ said—that is what makes both of them Christians—but no man who does not believe what Christ said has any right to be called a Christian. Having ceased to believe, he has ceased to be a Christian; he has become a mere Socialist, bell-wether."—Catholic Union and Times.



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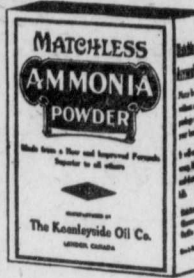
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