

CHATS WITH YOUNG MEN

A NEGLECTED BOOK

When I was a boy people read the Bible; Protestants because it was the Magna Charta of their religion and Catholics, not merely because it was inspired, but because they were loath to refute the arguments drawn by Protestants from the sacred text. A biblical allusion in a newspaper or speech was instantly appreciated and it was a common practice for ordinary folk to refer to a passage casually as a college professor might mention the battle in the tenth book of the Aeneid or the description of the shield of Achilles in the Iliad. Scriptural phrases were a part of the vernacular.

Lord Bacon could with some show of truth say in his day: "I have taken all knowledge to be my province," and likewise, the deities of those species, long gone years to which I refer, could easily claim a mastery of the good literature of their time and the first book on the list and the one best known was the Bible.

Now all this is changed. Bible society officials may state that they have last year distributed more copies than ever before, but the fact is, the Bible has been driven from its former place of pre-eminence by the flood of novels, magazines and works of all sorts that pour monthly from the presses. The present generation does not know the Bible, or at best knows it only at second hand, and is as much at a loss before a Scriptural allusion as if an episode from the Talmud had been cited. The greatest mistakes are passed over by the reader unnoted.

As I listen to the priest reading the Gospel of the Sunday, some superb fragment from one of our Lord's discourses or the account of some miracle, I wonder that the members of the congregation do not pick up the Bible on their return home to gain an idea of the context of what they have heard. Apparently they are quite content with the portion read to them as if it were a complete narrative. To put it bluntly the Bible to-day is a sacred classic, admired beyond expression in a vague way, reverenced to a degree by all—and unread.

Now, this is a great pity. I do not speak so much about the Old Testament for it is especially a book for the scholar, requiring a vast amount of side-reading, knowledge of topography and familiarity with strange idioms. What I particularly deprecate is the neglect of the New Testament, which in many ways is most modern and in a general way, quite within the scope of an ordinary reader.

Judged even by pagan standards, there is no other book comparable to it; no other orations like the Sermon on the Mount, no other letters like the vivid and piercing Epistles of St. Paul or the wondrous charity that breathes in the Epistles of St. John. However we look at it, the book is unique, surpassing everything else in print.

If the New Testament were really new; if it were discovered in some Eastern monastery or rescued from an Egyptian dust heap, the world—the cynical, unbelieving world—would go mad over it. It would banish all other topics of conversation, but instead it is an old story, a half-forgotten song. One waiting in an office or a library will take up the most interesting book in preference to the Bible, from a mistaken notion that there is in it nothing new for him; yet I am certain that if it were opened at random and read for five minutes he would be loath to lay it down.

A clerical friend of mine recently told me, with a smile, of a devout lady who asked him for a book of meditations. She had tried them all and none suited. He recommended the New Testament and she is never tired of thinking him. Publishers are to a degree blame-worthy for the neglect of the Bible.

They have issued it in volumes as ponderous as unabridged dictionaries, to gather dust on parlor tables or serve as receptacles for bank notes and pressed flowers, or else they have printed it in microscopic text. The majority of Bibles I notice are impractical for the average reader. We may take a lesson wherever we find it.

I noticed not long ago in a Boston hotel the Bible furnished by the society called the "Gideons" and marvelled at its clear type, sensible binding and handy form. Strange that it should be left to an organization of commercial travellers to get out a Bible suited for every-day people. But on reflection, it is not so strange. These men have learned by experience what the public wants. It is their trade to know it, and according to their lights they have done well.

The present generation is stupefying itself with literature that is not worth while; badly written, rousing unhealthy excitement, and sometimes positively harmful. Reading to-day is a sort of mental drug-habit with all the consequences such a habit breeds. It would be vastly better for us all if nine-tenths of the books now in circulation had never been written.

Throw away your popular novels and flamboyant magazines; procure a well-printed copy of the New Testament and settle down to read it as if you had never opened it before. Look up the geography of Palestine and read something of what learned and holy men have written about our Lord's public life and the circumstances of His utterances, and I guarantee that within six months all other books will have lost their savor for you. Men and women of varied degree of ability, learning and wicker of style have given us books after their fashion, but God has given us this book—A Looker-on, in Boston Pilot.

HASTE AND HURRY

Haste is one thing, and hurry is quite another.

Haste, like a railroad train, goes straight and swiftly on its way to its terminal. Hurry, like an aeroplane in a counter-current or buffeted by head winds, goes zigzag.

Haste helps. Hurry is but haphazard. It is usually the fretful mind that seeks to do things in a hurry. The trained mind hastens methodically.

Speed is not necessarily determined by the number of times the wheel goes around. There is such a thing as lost motion. On the bolts may be slipping. Hurry merely marks time, while haste marches directly into camp.

Ordinarily there is no call for either haste or hurry, but when the urge is on every foot must be marshaled, and swift results are brought about by making haste.

Behold the work must be the careful, predetermined plan and the resolute, resourceful mind which accurately sizes the efforts, but there must be no hurry. Hurry misdirects energy. Hurry makes friction.

Plan your job in advance. Go at it calmly and with reserve power. Be sure you are right and then go ahead—swiftly, accurately, grimly, intelligently. But, whatever you do, do not hurry. Make haste slowly.

THE SMART YOUNG MAN

A young woman was once walking with a very young and very smart man, who was inclined to air his knowledge of the languages a little beyond what she felt modesty required. She, therefore, said to him with an air of deference to his superior attainments.

"You are a Latin scholar. I wish you would tell me how to pronounce the word so-met-i-mes."

The youth, with a kindly air of patronage, replied: "I have not met the word in my Latin reading, but I should have no hesitation in saying that it should be pronounced so-met-i-mes" (giving it in four syllables, the accent on the second).

"Thank you for telling me," replied the girl, demurely. "I have always heard it pronounced sometimes, but if you say the other way, that must be right."

OUR BOYS AND GIRLS

BIG JIM'S LITTLE GIRL

He was engineer Jim Stevens on the Air Line Railroad, "the down express," No. 60. He would sometimes boast how quickly he could stop it. He would stand in his cab as royal as a king on his throne. Before him were the steel levers with their shining handles. He knew just how to make the shrill locomotive whistle shriek out, "Down brakes!" He would make his quick, strong hands fly there, shut off the steam, and bring to a prompt halt the ponderous, crushing mass of iron on the track. He did it—oh, once he could do it! But I must not anticipate.

He gave his name, "Big Jim," to Frank Davenport, the jolly blackman. Frank knew everybody, even people that he had never seen before. He had, though, once met this big, burly, muscular engineer, who ruled like a king in his grimy cab.

"Hello!" shouted Frank, when the "down express" came in one day. "There isn't 'Big Jim' the new engineer, He will make that train walk."

Walk? Say run, shoot, fly! How Big Jim beat the record made by all previous trains! And his "leetle gal"—what about her?

That was Ellie Stevens. Her mother having died, Ellie lived with an aunt, the engineer's sister. One day, the second after he appeared as the king of the "down express," there came to the station a child with a lunch basket. The blue of the seas was in her eyes, the sunshine was in her hair. The music of the wind singing in the pine forest was in her voice. She came to the station and waited patiently till locomotive No. 60 roared into the building, saying in a voice of thunder, "I am here!" and then she took her place next to Frank No. 60. The engineer saw her, leaped from the cab, seized her in his arms, lifted her, kissed her, and then went back, a good sized lunch in his pocket. From the cab he kissed a grimy hand to her, and she kissed her's in return. Her's was as white as a snowflake.

"Big Jim's leetle gal, I know," declared Frank Davenport. Nobody disputed what Frank said he knew. It wouldn't have changed his opinion if anyone had disagreed. The blackman had overheard a conversation between the engineer and his "leetle gal."

"I prayed for you at the road, papa, this morning," she said, playing with his hair and twisting a stout, iron gray lock about her finger.

Big Jim said, "That's right." "It—it is awful risky, papa. Do you pray?" asked Ellie.

Big Jim set her down. "Guess the cab of old 60 and you get along."

Then he went to his cab, and for some reason did not kiss his hand to her that day. The snowflakes, though, fluttered in the air. He only said good-bye; she noticed it, and when she turned away her blue eyes were dashed with a sudden rain.

"I tell you," said Frank to a brother blackman, "that teched me way down in the books."

The next day, at the hour for the arrival of the express Ellie was at the station, watching for it.

She was not in the habit of crossing tracks, but she had an extensive acquaintance among the dogs of the place, and a "Brownie," who had suddenly been named, was dangerously exposing his shaggy, handsome feet, and Ellie's sympathy was so violently aroused that, trying to call the dog away from the danger, she thoughtlessly ran a great risk herself. That very blackman whom Frank Davenport had often classed as a "clumsy blunderbus," proceeded to carry it. He dropped a trunk he was carrying, and down it came with crushing weight upon a weak board in the flooring of the station. The trunk would not yield, and the weak board was forced to do so. A big, ragged hole was left there, which the station agent proposed to mend as soon as the trains would let him.

Big Jim's keen eyes saw it as No. 60, in its usual roaring style, swept into the station, roaring away, "I am here!" It annoyed him to see anything "not just right," along the track, and he growled out an oath. He had been in a growing mood ever since yesterday's leave taking of his "leetle gal." He had been much dissatisfied with himself. He had reasoned with himself: "Why shouldn't I pray? My wife used to talk to me. It would have to be a prayer for mercy."

That makes a good first round in a sinner's supplication. Big Jim might have seen. Because he had all this time being unwilling to breathe a prayer for mercy, he was the more dissatisfied with himself. When he saw the ragged, deep wound in the floor, the oath in part showed dissatisfaction with the man uttering it. His soul was in a turmoil, and that exclamation was a kind of crater whereby the volcano found a vent. But what else did he see? A shaggy brown dog or something that a child was chasing off the tracks, and this child was Ellie, and she stumbled into that horrid hole, not more than fifty feet ahead of the covey of rear, thundering No. 60. Oh, how he flew about that cab, straining at every lever, and then, letting under the sooty roof of the old station, "Down brakes!" Oh, it seemed as if he would go mad!

He covered his face with his hands one moment, and the next sprang out of the cab and actually grasped the great iron dragon and tried to hold it back.

The dragon, though, crashed over something white in that hole, and then it seemed to Big Jim as if the world had come to an end.

Something awful seemed to rise up and strike him. The engine, the train, the whole railroad, seemed to be colliding with him, and he staggered as if he had been shot. Then came an awful hush! The train had stopped. Everything, the station, everything, the whole world, seemed to come to this same terrible pause, wondering what had

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happened in that ragged hole under the train. The next moment, sweet and clear, rang out a child's voice, as Ellie crawled out of the hole and towards her father's arms:

"Here I am, papa! I just lay down!" He seized her. He fell upon his knees. "O my God! I forgive a poor sinner—I thank You, I thank You!"

"I tell you," said Frank Davenport, "there wasn't an eye but what was damp all through that station. I saw it all."—Catholic Citizen.

THE QUEEN OF FLOWERS

It is said that the rose has more been written about it than any other flower. The oldest writers speak of it often and nearly always associate it with the nightingale, a bird which pours out its love in an ecstasy of song.

There is no country which has not at least one variety of this beautiful flower. China has the climbing white rose, Egypt's sand bears the rock and sea rose, Persia has the hundred leaved variety and Iceland has a vivid crimson rose, while the natives find when they scrape away the snow to gather moss for their reindeer.

The lily has always been a rival of the rose. Buddha always had the lily as his flower, while Vishnu, the second greatest god has, as his flower, the rose. Indeed in Hindu it is said that he found his wife, Lashmi, in the heart of a white rose.

There are rose festivals in every country, perhaps France having the most. One of the very prettiest is the selection, by the mayor of the most deserving girl, who is crowned queen of roses, for the year, of the steps of the church. It is not beauty or wealth that guides the selection, but a gentle nature and a sweet disposition.

The Greeks and Romans garlanded their heads with these flowers at banquets and feasts and the phrase, "Under the Rose," comes from these people, since words uttered under the rose were to go no further than the room or place in which they were spoken.

The red rose has always been the emblem of love and on joyous occasions is always in use. The American Beauty is also the emblem of love and the history of this beautiful flower has been much discussed.

George Bancroft, the historian, claimed it originated in his garden while France declares that it was imported from that country.

The full-bloom rose was the insignia of the house of Tudor, the rival houses of York and Lancaster chose red and white roses as their emblem, and the wars of the roses lasted until the houses were united by marriage.

The rose is not only renowned for its beauty but from its petals can be extracted the most costly and penetrating scent known, and the ancient pharmacist used the flower and the seeds for many ailments.

Many of the prettiest poems in all languages have been written about "The Queen of Flowers," the Rose—True Voice.

A CARELESS BOY

I am a little out of patience with a boy of sixteen whom I know. He was graduated from the grammar school last year and then had to go to work. He complains steadily that he does not have the chance that other boys are having, and that he cannot hope to accomplish much in life because of his lack of education. He has not been able to secure work more than half of the time since his

DRINK CURE A MARVEL?

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for a quarter of that hour is required for the firing out of one congregation and the entrance of the next. Take out of the remaining forty-five minutes the time necessary for the celebration of Holy Mass and the distribution of Holy Communion, and the minutes left are scarcely long enough for the reading of the Gospel and the making of the parish announcements.

Clearly the work thus hurriedly and ineptly done must be supplemented by some agency outside the pulpit. The agency best fitted to meet the situation is pointed out in strong, clear language by no less authority than the present reigning Pontiff, Pius X. who does not hesitate to say that the building of churches, the foundation of schools and the preaching of missions are all in vain unless supplemented by a sound Catholic press.

The same clergy that has built up the splendid parish organizations of our land, the zealous activity which maintains a nation wide system of Catholic education, can create and perpetuate any institution it judges necessary to the essential welfare of religion. The parochial clergy have been the builders of the Church's progress in America. If once that devoted body become completely convinced of the needs and the blessing of a representative press, full success will be but a matter of detail.

As to the people's willingness to subscribe for Catholic papers and magazines, let us be frank enough to acknowledge that the people support the religious interests which their pastors desire them to support. Let us but make it clear that the purchase of one or two Catholic publications is as vitally important for religion as any parish collection and the circulation problem of the Catholic press is solved forthwith. Nor will the results bring disaster to parochial finances. The broader and deeper the spirit of our people's Catholicity, the more loyal will be their support of the home news.—Rev. P. J. Scott, in Magnificat.

THE PARISH PRIEST

The teaching of Christ's Infalible Church contains all the saving truths necessary for man's guidance in all ages and in every possible condition; but that teaching must be brought home with no uncertain force to the layman of to-day.

How is the need to be met? How can we supply the information and instruction so widely desired which the layman of average education is unable to procure?

The pulpit can not adequately meet the demand. Whether it pleases us or not, there is no denying the fact that short Sunday Masses are to-day popular with the class of people most in need of instruction. In the large city parishes these Masses continue at hourly intervals from early morning until noon. A

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