

match with Tim Tation as pitcher. He's the fellow who knocks every boy out sooner or later. His pitching may be "swift", "slow", or "curves" and includes "ins," "outs," "out-drops," "high in shoots." Now here is what I call "a swift" when a boy will tell a sudden lie when he would have told true if he had had a minute to consider. This means that a boy is really two boys if he has been born again into the family of God, a bad boy and a good boy. Now the bad boy is usually on the spot first. It takes a few seconds for the other as it were, to come up, and before he arrives the mischief is done."

"But why should the bad boy turn up first?"

"Because he was born first, I suppose, and is stronger. The good boy is born later. The thing is to grow the good boy and starve the bad till he is too thin and broken down to do harm."

"How can a boy be born twice?"

"Ah, that is a miracle which only God can perform. When He sees we are ready for it, that we really desire it and have made a clean-cut decision to look to Him for eternal life, He gives it, and we begin to see things differently. The things of God begin to be real to us. But to go back to the game, when the pitcher sees you are up to "swifts" he turns on "slows". What makes them so deadly is that they look so insufferably stupid. The average boy is fairly proof against very big temptations but it is the little ones that play the mischief. Notorious sins are bad form but when quiet temptations come which no one knows about, even the strongest may break down. I suppose you know that every boy has some one weak point to which nearly all the pitching is directed. Beware of slow sins—the temptation which is powerful in its continuance.

Then there are "the curves". A curve goes wide at first and suddenly rounds upon you. When you are constantly on the watch for curves the game is half won."

"But," said Baxter, "why do they let Temptation play?"

"To make a good game, of course. Every boy who is worth his salt likes to play in a great match, and there cannot be a great match without it.

"I thought it a disgrace to have anything to do with it."