THE READER'S CORNER

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"The holiest of all holidays are those
Kept by ourselves in silence and apart;
The secret anniversaries of the heart,
When the full river of feeling overflows;
The happy days unclouded to their close;
The sudden joys that out of darkness start
As flames from ashes: swift desires that dart
Like swallows singing down each wind that blows!"

—Longfellow.

Apropos of my remarks last week on the subject of religious vocation I would call your attention to Father Daly's thoughtful article on "Parents and Vocation" in America. Every good tree bringeth forth good fruit, the Scripture tells us, and the fruit of a good Catholic community is truly the Master's call to some of its members. The need of vocations was never more urgent. As of old the Saviour prayed the Lord of the Harvest to send forth laborers into His harvest, so to-day from the lips of those divinely appointed to rule God's Church the cry goes up to heaven, "Lord give us vocations." The father or the mother who dedicates a child to God does more for the extension of Christ's kingdom than if they built great churches or endowed hospitals. Give us the living tabernacles and the material structure will necessarily follow.

Why have we not more vocations here in Canada? Why do even good (!) Catholics express surprise that young people should feel drawn towards the service of God? How far removed this from the faith of the Irish mother whose unceasing prayer ever since the first baby cry gladdened her hungry heart, is that God would bless her with a priest or nun in the family. In an Irish home side by side with pictures of the Sacred Heart and the Blessed Virgin and St. Patrick you will find as near in honor a photograph of "Father John" or "Sister Mary Rose." Why are vocations so plentiful in Ireland and other Catholic countries, and why is there such a dearth of them here in Canada? Is it that these Irish fathers and mothers love their children less? No love in the world can nearly equal the affection of an Irish mother for her child. Is it that these children of Irish mothers care less for home and home ties? Every fibre of their hearts are entwined round that echo of heaven—an Irish Catholic home. The pain of parting is no less keen in Ireland. The sacrifice is none the less. But they are generous by nature these children of Ireland. They never stop to weigh the difference—to count the cost. The Master calls, and like the fair disciples, they rise up and follow Him unquestioningly. There are tears and heart-throbs and bitter partings. The empty chair brings many a silent tear to the grey-haired mother's eyes. And the echoing corridors of some large seminary are not at all like home. But God asked them for the sacrifice, and how can they refuse. God bless their generous hearts!

Why have we not more vocations here in Canada? It must be that the home environment is not suitable for the growth of vocations. There is too much worldliness in their upbringing. There is too much so-called freedom permitted the children. There is no religious atmosphere about the home. There are no family prayers.' There is nothing of God or the beauty of religion. Then again, parents can't bear to part with their children. They love them too much to see them bury themselves in some lonely convent or monastery. Their boy is too delicate to be a missionary priest. Mamma could never let him go. And so they reason. Well, some fine day they will go any way. Like the little birds in the nest they will learn to fly, and they will set about making a nest for themselves. And whereas the priest or the nun only grows in love as the years roll by, the boy or the girl who leaves the parental roof to set up a home for themselves is lost to these foolish parents for ever more. So if you want to keep your children's love encourage the growth of religious vocations in their young souls. And think not but God will bless you for the sacrifice, for when the evening of your life is merging into the darkness of night the terror of the final summons will be lessened by the consoling thought that your children are pleading for you at the altar of God.

"Anglican" does not sleep well at nights since the mercury approached the century. "Anglican" does not say so himself but one is pretty safe in deducting such a conclusion from his letter. "Anglican" is not a believer in the fashionable theory that faith counts as nothing provided we do right. What we believe does matter, he admits. But he is pretty sure *his* church has got the truth. His is the church of Christ—our Divine Lord was a good Protestant. "Anglican" does not attempt to prove what he implies. He is wise in that. Can black be white, dear "Anglican?" Can truth be false? If Christ promised to be with His Church all days; if the Spirit of Truth was to teach it all things and to abide with it forever; if the gates of hell were not to prevail against her how does "Anglican" explain Protestantism at all? If God was with His Church how could it fall into error? So you see, dear "Anglican," you've got to choose between Christ and Martin Luther. And since it would be against *freedom* to take God's word for it you believe the other person. But did you never hear that though an angel from heaven preached another Gospel than Christ's you should not believe it. And you have not even that consolation, for on his own admission Luther was anything but an angel—from heaven.

"Pete Johnson" does not believe in equal rights for the sexes. "What is a suffragette?" he asks, and answers it himself:—"A being who has ceased to be a lady and is not a gentleman." Surely the "Suff's have matter for a libel action.

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CHATS WITH YOUNG MEN

DETERMINATION WINS

It makes all the difference in the world whether you go into a thing to win, with clenched teeth and resolute will; whether you prepare for it thoroughly, and are determined at the very outset to put the thing through, or whether you start in with the idea that you will begin and work your way along gradually, and continue if you do not find too many snags or too great obstacles.

There is in the very determination of a man to win at all hazards; something in his grim resolution to conquer and never turn back that not only inspires our admiration but wins our confidence and carries conviction. We believe that the man who can take such an attitude is a winner; that there is a great reason back of his superb self-confidence; the consciousness of the power to do the thing he undertakes.

It is astonishing how all the mental faculties rush to one's assistance when he has committed his whole soul to one unwavering aim; to accomplish one definite thing. What a tremendous impetus such a resolution gives the mental faculties! How it multiplies every faculty of the mind and stimulates every function of the body!

If you are so thoroughly committed to your aim that nothing will turn you back, you will not see many of the obstacles which those with a loose aim and a half-committed purpose see. Your firm resolution to conquer will frighten away a great many of the bugbears which deter the faint-hearted. A grim determination to do a thing gets rid of a lot of obstructions and difficulties. How the success enemies get out of the way and skulk out of sight before such a power! There is no use trying to keep back a man with such determination. Doubts and fears flee before such a resolute soul.

Grant's decision was like inexorable fate. There was no going behind it, no opening it up for re-consideration. It was voiced in those memorable words, which he sent back to General Buckner, who asked him for conditions of capitulation: "Immediate and unconditional surrender."

Napoleon had an officer under him who understood the tactics of war better than he, but he lacked his commander's power of rapid final decision.

The world makes way for the determined soul, the man with a will in him. It wonders, admires and stands aside. It was not half as hard for Napoleon to win after he had gotten his reputation for being invincible.

Improve your health and you will improve your power of decision. Any bodily weakness, lassitude, or lack of tone or vigor is perhaps first felt in the weakened or debilitated power of decision.

The undecided man is like a turnstile at a fair which is in everybody's way but stops no one.

There is nothing more pitiable than a man who never knows his mind; who is always on the fence; who is always vacillating, questioning; who has nothing established in his life beyond possible reconsideration.

On the other hand, it is deplorable to see men and women spend years and tears trying to undo the results of impulsive, impetuous decision which was made in a thoughtless, unguarded moment, or fit of depression under the impulse of temporary depression.

I know men who have a mortal dread of deciding things without an opportunity for reconsidering. They are so afraid they will make a mistake and regret it that they ruin their judgment by not trusting it. They can not bear to decide anything of importance without having their judgment reinforced with other people's opinion. The result is that they are always weak, they lack self-reliance, independence, and soon become negative characters instead of creators, producers.

Indecision runs in the blood of many people. They never seem to be able to burn the bridges behind them. They always want to leave a way open for possible retreat. They do not realize that committing themselves unreservedly to their aim and depending *entirely* upon themselves would very soon develop a strong self-reliance and cure the vacillating habit.

If you feel that indecision runs in your blood, that you have inherited the fatal balancing, wavering tendency, just make up your mind that you must break it, or it will break you.

There is nothing more demoralizing than the habit of putting aside important matters to be decided later. If this is your tendency, compel yourself to the practise of quick, firm, final decision. No matter how serious the thing you are called upon to decide, throw all the light possible on the matter in hand, weigh and consider it, but beware of postponement of your decision. The temptation to reconsider is fatal to forceful action. Better a thousand times to make mistakes than to be a victim of the insidious habit of indecision. "The greatest thief this world has ever produced is Procrastination, and he is still at large."

Decide quickly, firmly, finally. Let there be no going back, no reconsidering, no opening up of the matter for further discussion. Be firm, positive.

The vacillating man belongs to whoever can capture him. He is ever at the mercy of opposing or interrupting circumstances. He is the tool of the man who had the last chance at him. Just as the driftwood on a river is whirled by every little eddy or blocked by some obstruction, he is always at the mercy of other men's opinions. He does not possess himself; he does not have an opinion. If he does, it is at the mercy of the first man who presents a counter one. No matter how firm he may be in what he decides upon to-day, to-morrow he will meet a man who will change it all. In helpless passiveness he is tossed from one individual to another, ever the property of the stronger personality with whom he talked last.

It is astonishing that the victim of vacillation, the man who can not positively decide anything of importance to-day feels very sure that something is going to happen to enable him to decide to-morrow with more ease and certainty, and if he can only put off the responsibility of deciding *now*, he feels that it will come out all right. Victims of indecision are always victims of overhopefulness. They think the future will bring everything out all right; will bring the object nearer and make decision easier. "To-morrow" is their talisman.

Napoleon used to say, "If your adversary can bring a powerful force to attack a certain post ten minutes sooner than you can bring up a supporting force, you are beaten, even though all the rest of your plans be the most perfect that can be devised." Life is full of crises when to act promptly and with decision means victory, and to waver, means failure.

When someone asked Admirable Farragut if he was prepared for defeat, he said: "I certainly am not. Any man who is prepared for defeat would be half defeated before he commenced."

Most people lose so many precious years before they get up a momentum, before they commit themselves completely, unreservedly, and burn their tempting bridges behind them, that they do not have time to do the great work they are capable of, or else they arrive at the goal so late that they have few effective years left.

Tens of thousands of youths of this land are waiting at the dock with their ship prepared for sea, and yet they do not dare to hoist anchor, for they have not quite decided upon their port, or they are afraid they will meet with rough weather, or they will go to pieces on the rocks.

One of the most demoralizing things in the world is the habit of indecision, of vacillating, of hanging on the fence half-decided. Nothing is more fatal to effective action or progress. It destroys all force for doing things; it paralyzes action and is fatal to all efficiency. It also destroys confidence, and when one loses faith in himself he is a weakling and will never do anything, strong, forceful or original.

If the positive man makes a mistake he is not likely to be long rectifying it; but the man who never makes up his mind until he has consulted everybody, and then is always ready to open up every question for reconsideration, will never accomplish anything.

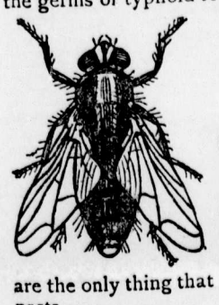
Roosevelt says, "The man who doesn't make a mistake is no good." The man who is always after a sure thing, who has no dare in his nature, who is afraid to risk anything until dead sure that it is going to turn out right, never amounts to much. It is a thousand times better to make a mistake now and then than never to settle anything, but to be always balancing, weighing and considering.

A man who does forceful work must be able to dismiss a subject from his mind when he is done with it, so that he can do something else. This increases his power of mental grasp for the thing under consideration. But if the mind is entangled in confused surroundings, in a hundred and one half-decided things, if its energy is split up, the focusing power is impaired. You must concentrate your powers upon what you are doing, and you can never do this when a score of things in your mind are intruding themselves for consideration. When you have anything in hand, settle it and then dismiss it. Half decided things clog the mind. Study your problem carefully, make your decision firmly and let it be final. Let it stand, no matter what others may advise or suggest.

If you form the habit of making your decisions final, you will learn to use your best judgment before you decide. If your decisions are all tentative, if you know that they are not final, that you are liable to take them up for reconsideration, you will never develop a fine, strong judgment.

When you make your decisions absolutely final and burn all bridges behind you, and when you know that you must suffer the consequences of an immature or a poor judgment, you will be more careful and your judgment will improve just in proportion as you trust it, depend upon it, use it.—O. S. M. in Success.

Dr. Gordon C. Hewitt, Dominion Entomologist, says, referring to the infantile death rate from intestinal diseases and diarrhœa spread by the house fly, he believes that the so-called harmless fly is yearly causing the death of thousands of infants, as well as spreading the germs of typhoid fever.



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OUR BOYS AND GIRLS

THE PLACE FOR THE BOY

The problem of the American boy is a great and serious one. Boyhood is the period of life reaching from birth to manhood's morning, which begins at the age of fourteen. Certain physical changes takes place in the lives of boys about that age which take them out of the catalogue of boys and place them in that of the young men. The problem of the American boy, then, is the problem which faces us concerning our male population under the age of fourteen, and includes 12,000,000. The problem is not to make them all rich, not to make them all scholars or preachers, lawyers or merchants, or to make them successful in any other particular avocation, but it is to make them develop into the highest type of manhood.

It is said that every man is the result of three factors—his surroundings, ancestry and individuality. When he is born into the world he is linked to the past. His ancestors have been laying up instincts, tendencies, traits and dispositions for him to inherit and bring into life with him. Some are born poets, some artists, some with the grip of the dollars in their hands, some are born drunkards, some criminals. These things are as sure as scrofula or cancer; they are not merely matters of conjecture, but of actual investigation. Here is the first factor of the American boy, to get him well born, to get him a good parentage, a father and mother who will not transmit a stream of evil tendencies to hamper and degrade and damn their own children before they are born.

The boy is often born into poverty, squalor and vice. Ten thousand boys are without a home or a den worse than home, and a Chicago judge declares that each one of them forms the nucleus for a history of crime and that most of them will turn out to be criminals and thieves. Even when the American boys are born into respectable homes they face a coterie of associations and companionships which are liable to ruin the average boy before he is twelve years old. They face a system of licensed temptations which makes it hard for them to do right and easy to do wrong. They face a condition of things where the ranks are already full, a score of applicants for every good position, competition grinding to the lowest wage, the weakest going to the wall, the wealth in the hands of the few, and poverty and the bare necessities of life making workingmen a host of slaves to the exacting demands of organized greed and avarice. Coming as the boy does with all these inherited tendencies, and facing as he does these uninviting conditions, how is he to make his way forward and solve his own problem?

With all the places for innocent amusement and recreation and entertainment that have been provided for him, we are absolutely certain that the best place for the American boy to spend his evenings is at home with his father and mother, brothers and sisters. We need a greater love for home in this age. If a boy begins to run after pleasure he will always run after it. He will kill time and manhood. Let a boy learn to love his home and make it happy, and when he becomes a man he will love it and make it happy. Too many boys make the mistake of spending all their earnings when single to have a good time, thinking that when they marry and settle down in life will be time enough to practice frugality, but then they find that they have begun too late. The habit is formed, expenses are heavier and there is nothing to save. —Michigan Grange Bulletin.

IF YOU WOULD BE HAPPY

Do not tease dogs, cats or horses. It makes them unhappy and cross. Never speak loud to a horse. He is man's best animal friend, and will do better work if you speak softly and pet him. No horse is vicious or ugly unless man has made him so. The same thing is true of dogs and cats. If you see any one ill-treat an animal, speak to them, showing thereby your disapproval.

Do not hold a pet cat or dog after it struggles to be free. They feel as you would if a big giant crushed you in his arms and would not let you go.

Do not yell or scream at stray animals. Feed and water them when you can.

Do not say anything behind another's back you would not dare to say to his face. No matter if you do hear older people do this, it is wrong. Set them a good example.

If you see a woman or child drop bundles offer to assist in picking them up.

Never stare at deformed persons; never laugh or make sport of any one who is old, crippled, poorly dressed or queer. It is a sign of bad breeding to do this, to say the least.

Begin every morning by saying: "Now what can I do to-day to make some one happy."

Treat every one you meet every day just as you would if you knew you were never to see them again.

Do not whisper or laugh behind your hand in the presence of others. It makes them uncomfortable, and it is anything but graceful.

Remember always that your parents are older than you are and better able to know what is best for you to do. Remember that there is a lot of care, trouble and expense connected with bringing you up and clothing and schooling you. Try and make your parents glad and proud instead of miserable.

GIRLS WHO HAVE FACULTY

We need more girls to-day who have what they used to call "faculty" in the early days of our country. It was a compliment to a girl to say of her that she had "faculty." What was meant by that was that she was skilled in all the domestic arts and was competent to look after the ways of the household when she should have one. She could use her needle with the utmost skill, and could go into the kitchen and get up any kind of a meal. She was intelligent in every department of domestic work. No matter what a girl's position in life may be she should have this information. So it is that we want more girls who have "faculty." It is of more importance than a knowledge of many other things on which girls are spending their time. A girl may have the advantage of the highest culture and at the same time be well versed in all the domestic arts. The happiness of a home often depends more on domestic than on any other kind of art. Now and then we hear of girls who have "finished their education," when the fact is they do not know the A B C of a good many things imperatively necessary to the complete education of a girl. A diploma from the kitchen and the sewing room would be a good one to hang beside a diploma from the college.

Having a Good Time

The Catholic Columbian's idea of a good time is thus set forth: "I wanted a good time," said the young girl. The result of her craze for pleasure was ruin. We are here, not to have a good time, but to do our duty. A fair share of innocent enjoyment will come to almost everybody. Nobody should expect to make a good time the chief aim of his life. This is the time of trial. Our good time is to be in Heaven during eternity."

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WIT AND HUMOR

History was the subject.

"Now tell me," said the inspector, "who was the mother of our great Scottish hero, Robert Bruce?"

He pointed to the top boy, then round the class. There was no answer. Then at last the heart of the teacher of that class leaped with joy. The boy who was standing at the very foot had held up his hand.

"Well, my boy," said the inspector encouragingly, "who was she?"

"Please, sir, Mrs. Bruce."

"Yes," said Mrs. Wordsworth; "the family are most interesting. John dances divinely, Tom sings like an angel, David is a famous footballer, Susanne paints with great taste."

"And Henry?"

"Oh, Henry! Well, he's rather a dull sort of a fellow, you know. He only works and supports the others."

Here is a peculiar advertisement which recently appeared in a Brisbane paper: "Permanent.—Wanted, a man to look after one horse and a few cows and pigs. One who can impart the rudiments of French singing, and the piano to children preferred."

A suburban minister, during his discourse one Sabbath morning, said:—

"In each blade of grass there is a sermon."

The following day one of his flock discovered the good man pushing a lawn-mower about his garden, and paused to say:—

"Well, parson, I'm glad to see you engaged in cutting your sermons short."

The politest man in Boston collided violently with another man on the street. The second man was angry.

"My dear sir," said the polite one with a bow, "I don't know which of us is to blame for this encounter. If I ran into you, I beg your pardon: if you ran into me, don't mention it."

The Good Old Family Prayer

How good a custom was that of the forefathers, the custom of assembling for prayer the members of the family before retiring to rest. How great a blessing must have come upon that home. It wonderfully helped to the recognition of God's place in the family life; it contributed largely to that atmosphere of true piety which should characterize the Christian home; that piety which dictates a loving, reverent service of the Father and a ready obedience of His holy law. Prayer is a necessary ingredient of the spiritual atmosphere of the home, inasmuch as it has a necessary and constant place in the spiritual life of every man and woman.

American Catholicism

The Outlook, perhaps the most influential of all non-Catholic religious periodicals has this to say:

But America to-day stands in peculiar need of that contribution which the Roman Catholic Church is peculiarly fitted to furnish. One of the chief lessons America needs to learn is reverence for constituted authority and willing obedience to law. This lesson the Roman Catholic Church is peculiarly fitted to teach. And within the reach of its influence are those who most need to be taught. That church is a vast spiritual police force, a protection of society from the reckless apostles of self-will. But it is far more. Wherever it goes it teaches submission to control and that is the first step toward that habit of self-control in the individual, which is an indispensable condition of self-government in the community. . . . The Outlook congratulates America upon the evidences of spiritual prosperity in the Roman Catholic Church in this country, and it gratefully appreciates the service which is rendering to the community by inculcating the spirit of reverence for law and lawful authority which is the foundation of civil and religious liberty.

The chief end of study is the learning to think; and the best books, therefore, are those which most effectually impel to exercise of mind.—Bishop Spalding.

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Catholic Record
Richmond St. London, Canada

The gold in human nature remains gold, whatever it alloys from base contacts; and it is worth the mining, though there be but a grain of it to the ton of dress.

A devout thought, a pious desire, a holy purpose is better than a great state or an earthly kingdom.

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