

CHATS WITH YOUNG MEN THE FUTILITY OF BITTERNESS

A friend of mine, an author whose novels have delighted thousands, met with a great sorrow, one sufficient to shadow the life of an ordinary man. I often wondered how it would affect his work. A few weeks ago I chanced on a short story from his pen, a little tale so sprightly, so daffily told and so shot through with sunshine that I marvelled how he could produce it even under the happiest circumstances.

I sent him my congratulations, adding at the close that I was glad to see that sorrow had not embittered him. At the end of his characteristic reply, he set down these words: "I do not understand embitterment as the result of anything." That phrase has given me food for thought ever since.

How often do we notice men of more than average ability, people who are valuable to the community, giving away beneath some stroke of misfortune and allowing it to render their cynical and discouraged. Metaphorically they throw up their hands as if fate had ruined their lives and absolved them from further effort. What a detestable obsession; what moral cowardice!

The children of men have been suffering these blows since the expulsion from Eden, and most of what we enjoy in the intellectual sphere as well as in material comfort, we owe to the period after the calamity in each life, the fruits of dauntless struggle, the victory gained amid the throes of mental or physical pain.

Milton wrote his great poem after he was stricken with blindness. Carlyle forged his massive productions in the agony of dyspepsia. Stevenson labored over the classics that will long transport the reader—wrote them with the grisly specter of consumption ever before his eyes. It is not necessary to accumulate instances—each reader can easily compile his own list. I note these as they occur to me while writing. But the lesson in all such cases is the same. The great souls of history, the benefactors of mankind, rose superior to trouble and went on to do their appointed work with the best that was in them.

I have often noted in long railroad journeys the barren marshes near the sea. Years have not changed them. There they are with their useless growth of swamp grass and dismal salt ponds, a misery even to the eye of the traveler. There are dispositions like those salt marshes. The individuals have in many cases had hard lots, much labor, frequent disappointments and these have soured them. They view every acquaintance acridly; they have nothing good to say of anyone; they seem to take a fearful joy in the misfortunes of others as if in some diabolical fashion these fed the fires of resentment.

You meet with such a person; his cynicism makes an impression and you go your way. You return after five years. Every day in those years has been marked in your memory with death, bereavement, financial ruin, pitiful cases of disease, and you feel a great compassion for them all and admiration for their courage under dire distress. While these thoughts are in your heart you happen to encounter the acquaintance of five years gone. Not a change! The same sour grimace, the same morbid comment, the same unholty glee in the knowledge that another poor soul is suffering. Human salt marshes!

You are on a journey and the train is nearing a point that has always been distasteful to you. It was sterile, neglected, offensive to sight and smell. You stare in amazement. Has Aladdin's genie been at work. Instead of the same pools, land strewn with rubbish and smoldering profanity, there are trim lawns well-kept houses and children laughing and desporting on the grass. Now it took hard work to effect that transformation, but how beautifully worth the while it was! Thus, too, grace and experience transform un-

pleasant dispositions when their owners eschew selfishness and make up their minds to be of use to their neighbors.

The fact is, embitterment is synonymous with selfishness; concentrated, unreasonable selfishness. It is individual nihilism. Those who give it domain over them say in effect: "If I cannot have health, ease of mind and the good things of life I shall do my best to keep them from others and when I cannot do that I shall exert myself to spoil their enjoyment." Of course, this is not all conscious. Much of it is entirely unconscious. It can co-exist with a measure of exterior devotion. The victims are left alone as a rule. People recognize that such cases are generally incurable and they do not wish to risk their peace of mind and perhaps their reputations by expostulating. It takes a stout heart to reclaim a salt marsh.

But what a living encouragement, what a trumpet note of courage do they send forth who cause men to rub their eyes and lift their heads and take heart again at an exhibition of indomitable cheerfulness and spirit only ennobled by pain and sorrow. Such rare souls little know the good they do, but they will know one day when He who presided the Sermon on the Mount gives them their reward. But meanwhile as a sample of sane philosophy devote a little thought to my friend's remark: "I do not understand embitterment as the result of anything."—Looker-on in The Tablet.

OUR BOYS AND GIRLS

Here is a true story about two ordinary boys, one of whom mastered all these rules, with most emphatic attention to the first one. The author calls the lads Smith and Brown. These two boys were graduated in the same year from the same High school. They had been chums, more or less, for years, and decided to start in the turmoil of life in the same business house if possible. Positions were secured in the largest dry goods store in Boston. More than that, both young men were assigned to work as typewriter salesmen behind the lace counter.

"This isn't much of a place," remarked Brown, dubiously. "It's not a bad place," returned Smith, consolingly, "and we're getting \$5 a week to start with. Not very bad pay for boys."

"There were long hours to be served, and the work was hard. There were many impatient customers to be waited upon. As both boys lived some twenty minutes' walk from the store, they walked home together in the evening. "Pretty slow life, this," grumbled Brown. "Think of the pay we're getting."

"It's not bad for youngsters," rejoined Smith. "It might be worse." Neither boy had any living expense to pay, save for noonday luncheon and laundry. Smith brought his luncheon; Brown didn't. Smith brought a bank account. Brown went to dances as often as he could afford the money. He soon found other pastimes of evenings that absorbed all his money and what he could borrow from his father. Naturally the two boys began to drift apart, except for that little evening walk home. Brown began to grumble at what he termed the slowness of promotion.

"It will come all right," returned Smith. "We work for it." At the end of the first year Brown observed: "I guess you're right. My pay has been raised a \$1 a week. A fine return for hard work, isn't it? Did you get a raise?"

"Yes; I've been raised to \$7. Brown whistled his amazement, looked very thoughtful for a few moments and then blurted out: "That's a sample of favoritism that goes on in the business world. Whom did you get on the right side of?"

"I don't know," answered Smith, and he told the truth. "I'm going to find out about this," grumbled the other boy, and he did. It was the department manager who sup-

GILLET'S PERFUMED LYE



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plied the information. While both boys had done everything of a routine nature that was required of them it had been noted that Smith was always more anxious to please customers in all ways possible to a salesman.

But the matter rankled in Brown's mind. He was brooding over the thing one day when a woman customer approached the lace counter and inquired for a certain make of lace.

"Sorry; haven't got it," said Brown, briefly. In a second Smith was at his side whispering: "Jack, you'll find it on the third lower shelf down."

Turning, Brown went to the shelf indicated, found the goods, produced them and made a sale. As soon as the customer departed the manager, who had been looking on, stepped up and asked: "Brown, why don't you learn to know your goods?"

"I can't remember everything, sir." "Smith seems to be able to do so, said the department manager as he moved away.

That remark about knowing one's goods struck deep in the mind of the listening Smith. He had already a very good knowledge of the laces that he had to sell, but he went to the department manager and said:

"I would like your permission to cut a small sample from every one of those laces in the department."

"What do you want of them?" "I want to take the samples home and study them evenings. I want if possible, to become so familiar with every make and pattern of lace that I could tell it by touch in the dark."

"Take the samples," was the brief reply. After a few weeks of patient evening study, aided by the use of a microscope, Smith discovered that he knew three times as much about laces as he had ever expected to know. Out of his savings he bought a powerful hand magnifying glass that he carried daily with him to the store. By degrees he was able to demonstrate to customers the relative values of the different laces. The department manager looked on approvingly and added all the information in his power.

At the end of the second year Brown's salary remained at \$6. Smith's pay had been increased to \$10. "Favoritism!" snarled Brown. "I wonder, Fred, why the manager cannot see anything in me. I work as hard as you do."

"Not in the evenings," was the quiet answer. "I spend most of my evening's time studying the laces. Why don't you do the same? You're a good fellow and willing. Come up to the house with me to-night, and after supper I'll show you some of the things I've been studying."

"Can't do it," negatived Brown. "Got an engagement." There was an evening High school course in chemistry. Deciding that he knew as much as he was able to learn about the fibres of every kind of lace sold in the store Smith decided to take up chemistry, in the hope that he could learn something more about laces.

The course was an elementary one, but he applied himself with so much diligence that the professor soon began to take an especial interest in him. Then the young man explained what he wanted most to learn.

"Study a few minutes every evening after class is dismissed," advised the professor. "Bring samples of your laces with you, and I'll see what help I can give you."

"Pitoh in and study, Jack," whispered Smith. "I've three days yet before I sail. Come around and I'll get you started."

"Sorry, but I can't do it. I've got engagements for every night this week."

Two months later Smith returned to the store, strolled through it and went up to the lace counter. Brown stood there, looking most disconsolate. His face brightened up, however, as he saw his friend approaching.

"Fred," he whispered excitedly, "I guess you can do me a great favor. I've been discharged. The fellow they put in your place told me I'm through Saturday. Said a man who had been here so long and who was advancing so slowly wasn't worth keeping. I suppose, though, eventually, you've had another rise of pay?"

"Yes. Mr. Stallman, the foreign lace buyer, has retired, and I've been put in his place. I'm to begin with \$4,000 a year and traveling expenses."

Brown threw up his hands in a gesture that expressed a variety of emotions. "Favoritism!" he muttered, scowling at the ceiling.—Catholic Telegraph.

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STREET PREACHING BY CATHOLICS A correspondent, writing to the Catholic Times from Southampton (England), thus advocates street preaching by Catholics: Father Fletcher recently stated the following: "I feel more than ever anxious to develop the work of street preaching. We have proved that it can be done, that people will listen to us. We notice that the Methodist street preachers have very small audiences; we have large ones. We have the opportunity of taking their places. Why not take them? The impression that no religion is so well received by the London crowd as ours is. That impression grows and grows. * * * I earnestly call upon priests to attempt with me and the few others who have begun this mission of street preaching. * * * I have been told that Monsignor Benson, in America, said: 'We shall never convert England unless we go out to the people in the streets.'"

Father Fletcher and the earnest band of priests—alas! far too small in number—who are doing this noble and heroic work, are worthy of the greatest praise. It is certain that a majority—possibly a large majority—of the English people are willing and even desirous to hear the Catholic Faith and its practices, etc., explained in the open air—in the streets and squares of our towns, and also in our villages. I will remember Mr. Moore's visit to our town a few years ago. He spoke about the Catholic Church one Sunday after

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mon in the Avenue. A large audience, of course, mostly non-Catholic, soon gathered round him and listened to his exposition and arguments with marked attention and respect. Afterwards a Non-conformist said to me: "I was thoroughly interested. I like to hear the Catholic religion explained in that way." Although Mr. Moores is a layman, Leo XIII. bestowed a decoration on him for his outdoor expositions of Catholic truth, and the present Pope has given him a similar honor. I will conclude with three queries: (1) Why do not Catholics develop and extend this open air work far more than they do? (2) Is it right that while Non-conformist and Socialist errors are constantly preached and taught in most of the cities, towns and villages throughout the land, the important and saving truths of Our Lord's One, Holy, Catholic Church are hardly ever heard in our streets and in our hamlets? (3) Can the Catholics of England have since our sad firm hopes of the conversion of this country and also expect a full blessing from God, if they do not give this open air method of propagating the One True Faith a fair trial soon and in a large way?

THE RETRIBUTION

The story with a moral does not always meet with the appreciation it deserves. In fact the world of pleasure and gain is anxious to be rid of moral teaching, and so it derides the old words of wisdom and the ways that lead to life's only real success—the successes won through character. But still the story with the moral is told, and still it does its quiet, helpful work in making men more worthy. As an illustration we quote the following story told by the Rev. John H. O'Rourke S. J.

"There is a story of a wicked fisherman who dwelt along the rock-fringed shore of the sea. On stormy nights he was accustomed to hang a light on the cliffs to decoy storm-tossed vessels onto the rocks. The captains out at sea, sighting the light upon the shore, thought it a beacon directing them into a harbor of safety. Joyfully then they would turn the prows of their vessels toward the shore. On they rushed, pushed by the wind, wave and tide, every heart aboard filled with the hope of safety, till suddenly in the dark the vessel struck the rocks with a crash and split to pieces, becoming a plaything of the wild waves. One night after he had lured to destruction an unfortunate ship, when the winds had calmed and the waves were rolling in ripples upon the sandy shore below the cliffs, the fisherman, as was his custom, came stealthily out with his lantern to collect the blood-stained booty from the wreck. Along the beach there was a caulk of wine, a case of cloth, a broken rudder a torn sail, but suddenly his foot touched something soft; turning it over and flashing the light down, he recognized the white face of his dead son who had been the captain of the wrecked vessel. On the horror of the thought. He had lured to death, decoyed onto the rocks of destruction his own son, his own flesh and blood.

"Can this story not find an application in a spiritual sense in the lives of many parents? What are they doing who hand over the care of their sons and daughters to schools where there is no definite religious training? Do these parents think that the fine flowers of Christian virtues are like weeds and spring up spontaneously in the hearts of their children? Daily experience proves that flowers of Christian virtue grow and flourish only under constant and vigilant cultivation. Such fashionable schools are rocks of destruction for the souls of Catholic boys and girls. And parents who send their children to such schools are more guilty than the wicked fisherman whose hands were red with the blood of his son."—Sacred Heart Review.

LORD BRAMPTON'S CONVERSION

BROUGHT ABOUT BY A STUDY OF THE CATECHISM RECOMMENDED BY CARDINAL VAUGHAN

When Lord Brampton, (Justice Hawkins), the great jurist, came into the Catholic Church he explained his conversion as follows: "I had long been dissatisfied with myself and my religious position. I always felt that I would have to face the matter some day, but my arduous duties on the Bench caused me to shelve it year after year. In the end I thought that I would wait until my retirement, which was close at hand. I had, however, here and there, read a good deal on both sides of the controversy.

"When I was free at last, I went to see Cardinal Vaughan, whom I had often met at certain gatherings, and for whom I entertained profound respect. I talked matters over with him, and at the close of my interview, I asked him if I might read with profit and which might help me. He thought for a little while and then said: 'Well, Lord Brampton, you remember what Our Divine Lord said, 'Unless you become as little children,' etc.—you know the rest. I cannot, I think, do better than give you the Penny Catechism. It contains in essence—all that we teach. Read it carefully and pray much. I consider that answer a very good one,' concluded Lord Brampton; 'and I took the little volume home and studied it with care. I thought it an excellent and logical exposition of dogmatic teaching, admirably summarizing and explaining all that Scriptures contained. Prayer and the grace of God accomplished the rest. And for that which was accomplished I thank God every day of my life.'

Pain comes to us from the hand of God for our good. Great are the rewards in store for those who know its value and accept it as a mercy. "They who recognize by the light of faith the sovereignty of God in all things will recognize the sovereignty of God in the daily and hourly details of their own personal life and in the changes of their lot."—Cardinal Manning.

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