

**VALUE OF SINCERITY**

Empire Day concert held in the St. Philip's church, which is daily used as a school. Mr. Donnelly presiding, Rev. P. Drummond delivered a most interesting address, which is thus fully reported by the enterprising editor of "Norwood Notes." He said:

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen, Ladies and Ladies—My speech in the programme is "Qualities Necessary in a Citizen of the Empire." I will shorten it to one word, and that word is "Sincerity."

I thank Mr. Loftus for having paved the way by emphasizing the idea that the best way to serve the empire is to improve ourselves.

"Sincerity" is derived from a Latin word which implies simplicity—that is to say, the absence of all double-dealing or pretence. To be sincere, then, is to be simple.

In order not to weary you with repeated definitions, I will give a couple of examples of what is not and what is sincerity.

When I was a boy I had a very dear friend, a boy who was strong, handsome, first in all games, very popular, and gifted with most engaging manners. He was my idol; when, at the age of 19—his age also—I made up my mind to follow the divine call and give up all things for Christ, I went to him, and to show him how much I loved him, I made him a present of a valuable gold pencil case, the best thing I had at the time. As he and I professed the same religion, I thought he would understand my motive in separating myself from him, but his only reply was "Louie, you're a d— fool!" Then I found out that his professions of friendship were all a sham. He never did love me. Later on other people came to realize that his charming manners were insincere. The poor fellow, with all his gifts, ended by drinking himself to death. This incident cut deeply into my life and grieved me bitterly at the time, but I thought it a great lesson on the value of sincerity.

My other example occurred when I went to England to study theology. I have the greatest admiration for the English character, although I have not a drop of English blood in my veins. During the five years I remained there, I learned to admire the sincerity of the English. Once I was sent to take the place of another priest for a month in one of the poorest quarters of London. When we met, this priest said to me: "So, Drummond, you are going to work among the poor; I pity you; I hate the poor."

I confess that I was rather shocked at these words, but I suppose as he had been brought up in the lap of luxury he felt keenly the privations of poverty; but when I came to know the poor people he had visited, I found that he really proved his love for them by his deeds. One woman said to me: "What a kind man Father M— is; I believe he would have given to the poor the clothes off his back."

This man pretended to be worse than he really was. This is a phase of the English character that often astonishes strangers. The Englishman hates being praised to his face and does not like to pass for a hero.

This is the extreme of sincerity. It is not necessary to go so far. But what is admirable is the practical heroism of the deeds.

My dear girls and boys, we all want to be sincere, don't we? How are we to go about it?

The first great enemy of sincerity is fear of public opinion.

A boy may be very truthful among his playmates and yet very untruthful in his dealings with his teacher. Boys seem to have two codes of morality. They must tell the truth to each other, but they can lie like the mischief to the teacher.

Now, this is not sincerity; it is slavery to public opinion. Some popular boys who are careless about the truth are much admired while they are at school, but in later years when their school fellows look back and remember the past, they will forget the popular liar and will remember only that brave girl who stood up and confessed her fault, or that brave boy who would not allow another to be punished in his place.

Thus you see that sincerity consists in not pretending to be what we are not.

In your choice of friends, choose those who are sincere. Do not take up readily with those who make affectionate advances. As Shakespeare, our great thinker and wonderful genius, makes Polonius say to Laertes, his son:

"Those friends thou hast and their adoption tried, Grapple them to thy soul with hoops of steel."

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Another great enemy to sincerity is passion, such as anger or vanity. On this subject Shakespeare makes Hamlet say to Horatio:

"Give me that man That is not passion's slave and I will wear him  
In my heart's core—aye, in my heart of hearts."

The boy that flies into a passion can't be sincere, and if he is too vain, he will not tell the truth about himself.

Polonius says again to Laertes:

"To thine own self be true,  
And it must follow, as the night the day,  
Thou canst not then be false to any man."

These words of Shakespeare, "To thine own self be true," must, I think, be taken as meaning, "To thine own self in the sight of God," because if we relied only on ourselves, we should be very likely to be deceived, whereas if we think of the all-seeing eye of God, we are not inclined to try to deceive Him who cannot be deceived. When, on the last day, we shall all stand before the Most Just Judge, we shall find that many who pass for virtuous were nothing but shams, so the best way is to remember that the eye of that Supreme Judge is always upon us.

One thing that brings out sincerity of boys is their games. In the classroom a boy may appear cleverer than he really is, simply because he has a good memory, but in the ball field nothing counts but real, sincere skill. No boy can make believe that he catches or pitches well; everybody sees whether he does or not. This is sincerity.

There is far more sincerity among children than among grown people. You, my dear boys and girls, will find when you grow up that there are a whole lot of men and women who live on flimsy reputations. The ladies have not the complexions they seem to have; the men have not the broad, square shoulders that the tailor makes for them. There are especially a great number of men who publicly condemn graft and boodle and yet who, whenever they can, steal from their neighbor and defraud him.

We read a great deal just now in the magazines about how grafters and boodlers are being exposed. Do you think that this will cure them? No; it will only make them cover up their tracks more carefully.

If you want a beautiful example of a thoroughly sincere man, I would advise you to read Mr. Lincoln Steffens's sketch of Mark Fagan, mayor of Jersey City, in last January's McClure's.

To sum up: sincerity is the most valuable thing in the world. It is the very touchstone of salvation. Even those who do not profess any form of the Christian religion may be saved if they are sincere and act according to their lights. The most important of all things is to be true—not to pretend to be what we are not. One who has tried all his life to be sincere will find when he grows old how consoling it is to be trusted by all his friends. Try to be dependable in your youth and you will find what happy results that will bring you in your maturer years;

just as nothing is so sweet as the testimony of friends that really trust you, so is there nothing more bitter than the despair of the fraudulent man who is found out and despised in his old age.

This striving after sincerity must be the work of our whole lives, and we can never succeed completely in being perfectly true. We can only hope to be more and more sincere. One great writer, Frederic William Faber, says that no man is free from self-deceit until a quarter of an hour after his death. Let us at least try to reach as high a state of sincerity as possible.

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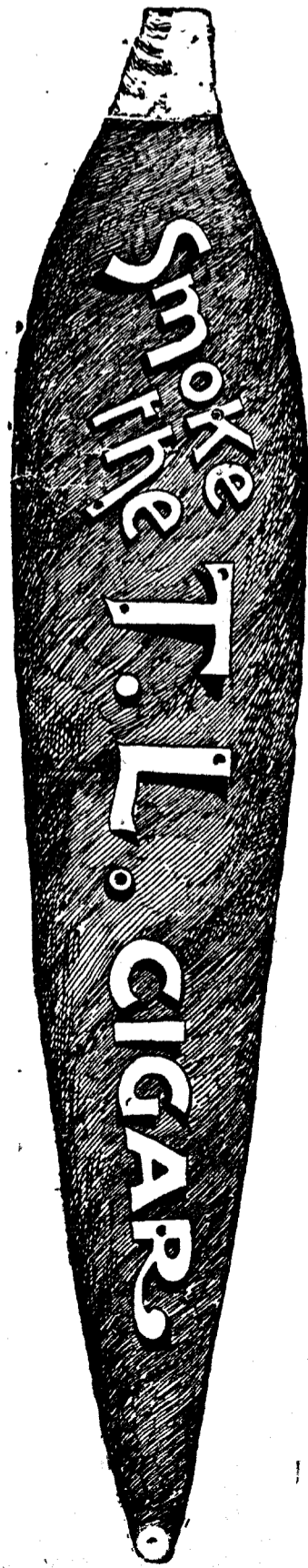
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