

CHATS WITH YOUNG MEN

THE CHEAT

A dishonest business man is as despicable as an impure woman, and for the same reason. He has betrayed his greatest trust in life. His sin is deliberate perversion. He has turned the enormous powers given him into instruments of hell.

Nor is it always the size of his crime that makes him despicable. The greater a man's trust in life, the more we look to him not only for fulfillment of that particular trust but for sterling example in all his acts. Here as nowhere else is the falseness of over-specialization based to our eyes. You can not specialize in one form of goodness. If you fulfill one trust nobly, the world expects nobility from you in other things as well. And the world is only just. If you have managed a railroad honestly, and then cheat a widow in the management of her tiny estate, you are as despicable as if you had flogged thousands from every stockholder in your gigantic company.

A certain American consular in Europe this summer gave a distracted refugee 3000 francs in exchange for the 2000 franc draft. He was not accepting somewhat over two hundred per cent commission for this little transaction mattered little. He actually boasted of the case with which he could make money on this plan. The man had offered him these terms; he accepted them. Why not? He had acted as a private individual, not as consular agent. What he forgot was this; the refugee came to him only because he was agent of our Government. He trusted him. And this consular agent betrayed his trust—openly and shamelessly, to be sure, but none the less basely.

A large employer often betrays his trust in exactly the same way. Laborers, generally in more or less distress, come to him and offer certain terms. They come to him because his reputation and position are good. He takes advantage of their offer and employs them at starvation wages. His conscience is clear. To all outward appearance he has made a simple contract to which the other party acquiesced. What more could one ask?

What such employers forget is the economic pressure on the other party. Our consular agent forgot this. Thousands of men who make unfair contracts forget this every day. They think that because a man watches you rob him and makes no protest (no effective protest at least) you can not really be robbing him. They forget (or pretend to) that he is bound hand and foot, and gagged as well.

Nearly all the dishonesty that poisons our economic system is of this sort. The dishonest contract which the law allows and equity condemns is actually a Bible for some men. The guard it as a sort of *Vade Mecum*. Of course, they run a risk. At rare times equity is applied; and then the scoundrel shrieks his protests at what he delights to call an infringement of personal liberty. The liberty to steal the goods of a sick man is always strangely prized. Every vague but distinctly defined clause of the national Constitution is given a mean and sinister meaning. Coaches and four are driven gaily through libel suits; police power is invoked, and commissions are set at work on lengthy reports; all that the personal liberty of the dishonest man may be kept sacred.

In this chaos of activity, the liberty of the other man is lost. It may very well be that labor unions have sinned; but at least one of their principles is economic justice. No contract is equitable unless both parties are free; and that means free economically as well as legally. Labor has sought freedom in union. Perhaps that is the wrong way; or perhaps only certain methods of union are wrong. But in any case the motive for union is equitable. The demand to be economically free before making a contract is just; and if more of our courts could exercise equity jurisdiction and annual unfair contracts half the necessity for strikes and social war would be cut away.

But equity still has a little vague in this country. In many places, there is a general tendency to make more of its doctrines available. But this tendency is feeble. It will be some years before its strength will force definite action. In the meantime what can we do? The Church's message of love is also a message of equity. Love inspires and guides equity. Love is the source of God's eternal justice. Where and how can we apply the justice to a chaotic business life of to-day?

A little conscience cleaning must be our very first act. The insidious pervasions of personal liberty on every side have not failed to touch us. When we have to grope about in a gray mist for so long, we sometimes forget what pure light is. Our own judgments get warped, and our own consciences get smeared with a dirty deposit. The disguise of the dishonest contract is so clever that it often galls deeply. Before we pose as advocates of equity and justice, we had better examine a few of our own contracts. We had better see just how often we have stroked our own uneasy souls with the phrase: "I merely gave what was demanded. Surely it's not my fault if the demand was too small!"

Real public opinion is often ineffectual because the specialist despises it. But public opinion, in the narrower sense, that is, the collected opinion of specialists in the same field, is

the greatest force, for good and bad, of to-day. Sometimes it condones the most contemptible crimes; again it works a transformation for good. The opinion of laborers will not reform the society drunkard, but the opinion of other society men will. In exactly the same way, once we have cleaned our own consciences, we, as Catholic business men, can create an opinion right in our own field that will brand the dishonest contract with the mark of the devil.

Do you remain on good terms with the man who cheats at cards? Do you continue to welcome him to your house, to introduce him to your wife and children, and show him every sign of respect? Of course not. Then why do you keep on showing respect for the man who makes notoriously dishonest contracts? Is it simply because our imperfect law has not yet reached him? If so, you are only a hypocrite. You want the forms of respectability and nothing else. It is simply because society in general is not yet awake to his crime and you are afraid to be called scrupulous and a cad? If so, you are a coward as well as a hypocrite.

Ask yourself this question: Just why do I want to keep the friendship of a man who cheats a poor laborer, or a humble shopkeeper, when I would loathe the very sight of a man who cheated at cards? If you are not a hypocrite or a coward, if you are not afraid to be one of the formers of opinion instead of being its slave, then there is but one answer. You are not awake. You are in a torpor. The gray mists have both blinded you and made you dull. Then awake; be strong; be just, and force others to be the same!—Richard Dana Skinner, in America.

THE MAKING OF A GENTLEMAN

The first element which goes to the making of a gentleman viewed from the standpoint of civilization, is "justice." Justice in general is defined as "the will to give to every one his due," and therefore applies equally to our neighbor's rights of every kind whether mental, corporal, or proprietary. But as we have separated off the question of "property" and place it under the second head of honesty, our attention will here be confined to those rights of life, liberty, and well being of body and mind which are more intimately personal.

Now, we may take for granted that our candidate for the rank of gentleman is already sufficiently schooled in virtue to be free from the grosser outrages of personal justice. Thus, for instance, it is unjust to attack the life and limb of others, or prosecute them for our own advantage. This is precisely what the savage will do if he finds any advantage in it and gets his chance. We twentieth century people don't do that sort of thing. We don't murder; we don't stick knives in our brother; we don't bite his nose off; we don't burgle; we don't highway rob; we don't kidnap, abduct, lock up in dungeons vile. But some of us do certain other things more subtle.

ENCROACHMENTS ON LIBERTY

We find other people doing things which they have a perfect right to do, but which in some way conflict with our interests, or fill us with dislike. Our spirit of opposition is aroused which, if yielded to, means that we shall lay ourselves out to interfere with his liberty; to bluff him, to bully him, to intrigue against him, to make his life disagreeable until he conforms to our taste. If we are honestly convinced that his way of going on is not a good one, and therefore try in a friendly way to influence him to a better direction, this is a virtue and not a vice—provided it does not degenerate into meddlingness.

Injustice begins when we secretly or openly take up a hostile attitude, and try to force our own notions or ways upon a man, when all the time he has just as much right to his taste and judgment as we have to ours. It must be recognized that in this world we can not have all our own way. "If," says A. Kempis, "we can not wish all our efforts make ourselves to our own liking, how can we expect others to be to our own liking?" We are bound to take men, as we find them; not to expect that every one shall be perfect to his own ideal, still less that he should conform to our own ideal.—Bombay Examiner.

OUR BOYS AND GIRLS

WHY LUCY'S FRIENDS LOVE HER

Sometimes when girls think of anyone in particular as being "nice," it is because that one wears especially pretty clothes, or lives in a beautiful home, or, perhaps, because she often has candy to share with them. It is for none of these reasons that Lucy's friends think her "nice."

Lucy lives in the smallest cottage on the street, and it is in the rear; her clothes are often patched, and when she has a penny to spend it is such a rare occasion that she seldom buys candy, but something that is more lasting. One reason why Lucy's friends think her nice is because she never repeats unkind things she hears about others.

"Lucy is just the same all the time," Greta said. So you see she is a very comfortable body to know, and it is a pity there are not more like her.—From Mothers' Magazine.

THE HOUSE THAT JACK BUILT

"Mr. Conductor," said a little boy as he pulled at a gilt-buttoned sleeve, "please tell me a story."

"Bless my life!" exclaimed the conductor of train No. 55. The train had just pulled out, and as there was a long run without a stop the tired conductor had dropped into a back seat to rest a bit when Louis came up and asked for a story.

"Bless my life!" said Captain Sam. "I don't know a story to my name, except 'Here is the house that Jack built.'"

"Don't tell me that," answered the little boy. "I know that myself," and he began to rattle off:

"This is the house that Jack built, This is the rat that lived in the house that Jack built; This is the cat that caught the rat that—"

"Stop right there!" said the conductor; "that reminds me of something. On my last trip east, as I went through one of the coaches to look at tickets I found a little girl about your size sitting by herself. 'Tickets,' I said, without thinking."

"'Mamma has 'em,' she said, 'an' she's gone to get a 'dink of water. But won't you please take my orange to that little girl back there with the red handkerchief on her head.' Her mamma has forgot to give her any."

I looked for the little girl with the red handkerchief, and saw a poor woman with five children. They didn't have on much clothes, they didn't look as if they had had much to eat, but nobody was paying any attention to them.

"'Maybe your mamma won't like you to give away your orange,' I said."

"The little girl opened her eyes very wide, and said: 'Why, cap'n my mamma loves me to give things.' 'All right,' I said, 'and I went back to the little party and gave the orange; and this I said in a loud tone of voice: 'This is from a little girl whose mamma just loves her to give things.' At that ever so many mothers pricked up their ears and presently I saw another little girl bring a box of lunch to the poor children."

"Ah," said I to myself, "this is like that old song about 'the house that Jack built.' This is the cat—' When I got that far, I pulled a pretty little cap of her bag, and said: 'Won't you let your little girl wear this tam o' shanter?'"

"I went on singing easy to myself: 'Where is the dog that worried the cat that killed the rat that lived in the house that Jack built?'"

"And, sure enough, here was a boy giving something out of his pocket. 'I don't know what. So it went on till those forlorn little chicks had more things than a few—all because one little kind heart gave 'em her orange. Now, small boy, get off my knee. I've got to ring the bell for the engineer to whistle. Go and see if you can't start another 'house that Jack built.'"

FORGET YOUR FAILURES

I believe that some people make failures of their lives by constantly thinking of the long list of failures behind them. There is no better way of creating a lack of confidence. The other day I was standing on a corner waiting for a car. Near me were two girls with their hair still in braids down their backs. One of the girls was trying to teach the other to ride on her "bike." But the girl who was being taught seemed hesitating and afraid, and at last she said:

"Of course I feel afraid. You know how I tumbled off both yesterday and the day before, when you were trying to get me to ride." Then the other girl said with a sharp note of reproof and disgust in her voice:

"Oh, yesterday and the day before! Why do you want to keep thinking of what happened yesterday and the day before? Of course you are going to tumble off if you think that you are just because you took a tumble yesterday and the day before! Let what happened those days go hang. See what you can do now!"

It would surely help every woman who reads this to make successful the efforts of to-day if she, too would let the blunders of yesterday and the day before and all the other days of the past "go hang." You want to forget your failures if you expect future triumphs. Young women starting out in life for themselves should have the most abundant supply of that fine asset we call self-confidence. You will never get it by remembering the failures of life. The most successful men and women of all ages have been those who have made stepping stones of their failures, by putting them under foot and not allowing them to rise and confront them with taunts of any kind. Failures sometimes serve the good purpose of showing us wherein we are weak and helping us to strengthen the weak places in character and in ability. I know a woman who always says when she makes a grievous blunder of any kind:

"Well, I will at least have sense enough not to be such a fool again." Failures are not bad things when they beget a determination to acquire wisdom from them. I do not think that we should dwell constantly on even the great sorrows of life. I know a woman who has never been known to smile since her husband died several years ago. She says that she feels that she would be showing a lack of respect for his memory if she lapsed into merriment. So she keeps herself awathed in black and says that her life is all in the past.

Of course she is a kind of a "wet blanket" no matter where she goes, and no one regards her as a very welcome visitor. I think that a constant memory of the failures of

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life is the surest way of adding to the failures of the future.—True Voice.

THE FOLLY OF SUPERSTITIONS

A sermon in the Homiletic Monthly points out the folly of believing that certain charms and articles give protection against harm. For instance:

Some one, perhaps, wears a four-leaved clover, fancying that it will bring him good luck; another thinks it lucky to nail a horse shoe over his door; others carry about with them some wonderful prayer, on which is stated that if any carries it about and repeats it daily, he is sure to be safe from misfortune by sea and by land, from fire, thieves and highway robbery, or from an unhappy death. In order more thoroughly to deceive good, God-fearing people, such prayers refer to our Holy Father the Pope, who is said to have attached great indulgences to them. Who ever carries about such prayer signs by superstition, for God has never promised that no misfortune will befall us, nor that we shall be protected from fire, thieves and highway robbery.

A superstitious person trusts, not in God, but in things that are often very trivial and foolish; he hopes in them, and expects them to help him. This is, of course, an insult to our Father in heaven, for He alone is our God, and there is none other who can help us; He has said: "Thou shalt not have strange gods before Me." thou shalt trust Me alone.

Forgetting the future is also dwelt upon. God has often foretold important events. He allowed Jacob to dream of the wonderful ladder, and Joseph to dream of the sheaves in the cornfield, and the Lord made Pharaoh dream of the kine and the corn, that his people might prepare for the years of famine; the three Wise Men were permitted to know of Herod's designs against the Child of Bethlehem; and St. Joseph was warned in a dream to take the Child into Egypt.

Thus it is seen that God reveals in one way or another anything that should be known to us, but He will not reveal what is not necessary for us to know. And any attempt on our part to secure such knowledge from other sources is foolish. The writer goes on:

Many are very anxious to pry into the future, and because God tells them nothing about it, they have recourse to fortune tellers, as if these people knew everything, or had received a special revelation from the Almighty God. Foolish persons allow by means of a pack of cards, or by looking at the lines on their hands, and they believe all the nonsense told them as if it were Gospel truth, and find out when it is too late, that they have been cheated. Others try to find out the

future from dreams. They know God sometimes has allowed people to have true dreams so they go to old women who profess to be able to interpret every dream, or they buy dream books, in order to interpret them for themselves. How very foolish! Pharaoh had a wonderful dream, and sent for all the interpreters and prophets, but none of them could tell him what it meant.

Only He who sends a true dream, He always gives the interpretation of it one way or another.

Silly signs are next considered, "they are always saying what a thing portends;" spilling salt means there will be a quarrel; thirteen at table means death to one of the party; occasionally a happening seems to bear out the sign, but believers in such signs never stop to count the number of times nothing has happened. "If they did they would soon be cured of their superstition," says the writer, and he closes his sermon with the admonition: "You ought to put all your confidence in God alone, for He has said: I am the Lord, thy God, Who alone can willing and able to help thee; thou shalt have no strange gods before Me."—Sacred Heart Review.

LIBERTY OF CONSCIENCE

At a great Catholic meeting held a few years ago in Nottingham, England, the Right Reverend Bishop of the Diocese being in the chair, Cardinal Manning thus forcibly expressed himself, amidst the repeated applause of his hearers in regard to the coercion of non-Catholics in religious matters:

"And here let me say in passing that I have seen, I may say, a challenge thrown out to us in this form: 'Catholics know that if they were in a majority, they would coerce the matter of religious education.' To that I say, absolutely, no, and I say no, as a Catholic, for this reason: by coercion you make hypocrites; you can not make believers.

"If the English people were to come to me to-morrow and offer themselves to conform to the Catholic Church without Catholic faith, I should say, 'I will not admit one of you.' And if any man were to say that by acts of the supreme power of the legislature a Catholic majority may coerce the people of England into Catholic schools and Catholic churches, I should say that in doing so we would violate one of the most vital principles of the Catholic faith. In order to be as brief as I can, I will give one, and only one example. What is faith? The free spontaneous act of the intellect and the will, accepting upon due and proper evidence, the revelation of God. And you will observe that it is not only the act of the intellect, but

is the act of the will. And the reason why multitudes of men reject the truth is not to be found in their intellect, but is to be found in their will. Our Divine Master said, 'He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be condemned.' But can any one be condemned for an involuntary act, for an act in which his will has no part, for an act that has no mental act? Faith is eminently a moral act; it is an act of the will as well as of the intellect. And if to morrow, by an act of legislative coercion, the whole people of England were to be constrained into conformity with the faith which I believe to be the sole faith, I should say, in the name of God, let no such legislative coercion ever be made."

A MARVELOUS RECORD

The Congregation of Missions continues to do most excellent work. The record returned by the members laboring on the Foreign Mission for the year October, 1913, to October, 1914, is certainly a marvelous one—31,908 baptisms of adults, 445 conversions of heretics, and 181,841 baptisms of pagan children.

The number of Bishops and missionaries is exactly 1,400, and that of the Christian villages under their zealous care 1,567,468. In the vicinities confided to the care of the Missionary Fathers there are 911 active priests, 3,277 catechists, 5,850 churches and chapels, 50 seminaries, with 2,382 students; 4,785 schools, with 157,140 pupils; 389 orphanages, with 12,291 children; 628 hospitals and refuges for those afflicted with leprosy. A marvellous record indeed of work done for God's glory.—Church Progress.

Perseverance does not mean never to fail, never to hesitate in our way, but it means to begin every day, and not only every day, but every moment in the day.

Getting over life's rough places bruises some and leaves them helpless; others it hardens and makes stronger than before.

There is a communion of saints, there is a communion of noble minds living and dead.

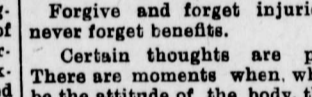
The real business of life is to get ready for eternity in heaven. Forgive and forget injuries, but never forget benefits. Certain thoughts are prayers. There are moments when whatever be the attitude of the body, the soul is on its knees.—Victor Hugo.

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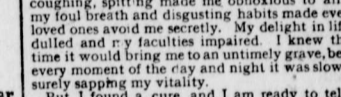
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