



LETTERS TO JACK

Written by a priest  
to his nephew.



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# LETTERS TO JACK

WRITTEN BY A PRIEST TO  
HIS NEPHEW

By the

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“THE LAST BATTLE OF THE GODS,”

“THE CITY AND THE WORLD,”

“THE BOOK OF RED AND YELLOW,”

Etc., Etc.

*With a Preface by His Grace*

ARCHBISHOP MUNDELEIN

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## PREFACE

BY THE ARCHBISHOP OF CHICAGO

We are living in a town which possesses a most energetic public official. I have rarely, if ever, found a harder-working head of department than the present Commissioner of Health in the city of Chicago. When he goes in pursuit of a disease-germ, it is all over with the germ; for the attack will be made with a ferocity that is appalling. So say his friends, and they are many. Nor will he neglect to ally himself with anyone who can be useful to him in stamping out disease when existing, or preventing its spread when threatening. The writer has good reason to know, for he fell a victim to the doctor's persuasive powers, and became an ally in the campaign. All this brings me to one of the great subjects of discussion at the present time.

The tendency of medical research to-day is directed far more towards prevention than cure. As soon as a new disease raises its head, or a contagion appears to spread among children or adults, at once the laboratories of the country work day and night to find the inimical microbe,

discover its origin, isolate the germ, and ferret out its fertile soil; it is the application in medicine of the old adage "an ounce of prevention is better than a pound of cure." If it holds good in this corruptible body of ours, why should not the same rule apply to the soul? If we try to ward off disease from the infant and the growing child, why should we not adopt the same precaution in training the growing boy or girl, young man or young woman? Especially does this hold good in the case of youth budding into manhood. It is then that a lad is angular, somewhat rough and uncouth, and by no means attractive in his personality; simply because he is emerging from boyhood and settling slowly into manhood; because then his character is forming, his habits becoming more fixed, and he still lacks the finish that experience will supply. It is a time when he needs good sane advice, given in sugared capsules, administered in patient, kindly doses; when he should have the prompt infusion of "friendly microbes" by a wise physician in order to fight the disease germs that he will take in from bad companions, from vile literature, from careless, conscienceless elders and superiors. It is here that this little volume will play its part. I do not know whether the author is an uncle or not, but he certainly can talk like one. A father really ought to be a boy's closest friend, especially in the

years when he feels that he is emancipating from the domination of the maternal apron-string. But most of us know that the father feels he is too busy to play that role, or he is fearful that it may bring about an infringement on the sacred rights of his paternal authority. Of course such an attitude never would undermine a father's jurisdiction; rather such friendly intercourse would strengthen, preserve, immortalize it; but most fathers find that out too late in life.

But sometimes you will find a bachelor uncle in a family who brings in pocketfuls of candies to the youngster, bushels of roses to the debutantes and smiling good advice to the awkward squad of young nephews, and to them all he is ever a hero, an idol and, later, a depository of secrets and a never-ending source of advice. Just such a role has the author of this book assumed. In an easy conversational style he talks to the young fellow about pretty nearly everything. Without adding any irritation to his reader's sensitive spirit of adolescent pride, without brushing the furry mustache of the young man the wrong way; finally, without letting the interest lag, he is giving him just as much salutary advice as the young fellow's system will absorb with ease. At the same time he does not assume the preaching attitude of a reverent relic of a past generation; but rather he lets the young man feel that he is

listening to the advice given by a chum, a friend who has the one thing that he lacks, namely, experience. And it is one of the experiences of those who have dealt with young men of today, that they listen gladly to advice, just as willingly as their sisters. But they do require from the one offering counsel and guidance certain qualifications to make what he offers palatable and attractive. They want to be talked to without any patronizing attitude—"man to man," as they say. Then they require that the other possesses the necessary qualification of knowledge, that he knows what he is talking about, that "he has the goods," as one of them expressed it to me. Finally they want absolute sincerity,—“on the level,” as they term it. And then, if the young man once becomes attached to you, even though he may fail sometimes to follow your advice, he is and remains loyal to you, even the devil himself cannot tear him from you. After many years of dealing with Catholic young men, recognizing their frailties, the deficiencies in their make-up, and the disappointment of one's hopes they often produce, yet I maintain that one of the most beautiful works in God's creation is an honest, clear-eyed, clean-minded young Catholic American. I assure you, he is well worth saving; and anything that will help to keep him good, hold him steady, prevent him from straying, should receive the encouragement of all

of us who are interested in the saving of souls. One of the means to accomplish this is by giving him a book that is written especially for him, that will interest him, and will prevent the disease germs of corruption and bad habits from eating their way into his soul. I believe this book of letters will help some to accomplish this; and so I cordially second the sentiments of the official censor of Catholic literature in this Archdiocese, who concluded his examination by saying: "I would, if I could, put a copy of this book into the hands of every young man."

GEORGE WILLIAM MUNDELEIN,  
Archbishop of Chicago.



I  
NOISE

THE noisy boy is a delight. The noisy man is a nuisance.

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DON'T be noisy enough to make people think you are not genuine; but don't be quiet enough to make them think you are a nonentity, or afraid.

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THE biggest noise is always made by the biggest failure.





## NOISE

*My dear Jack:*

This morning you started down from your bedroom on the third floor like a barrel of nails, and landed with a thud in front of the breakfast table. It is true that you had only a few minutes in which to bolt your breakfast, rush for a car, and get down to work at the office. Knowing that, I said nothing about the noise; and then I wanted to see how far it would go. Breakfast over, there was a rush to the door, a bang, a hurry down the steps, and peace descended upon me again. My Matins finished, I sat for a moment to think you out; and I made up my mind that you were too much like your uncle at the same age; so I resolved to write you a series of letters, and begin on *Noise*. But the letters that I am going to write are not entirely for you. I am in hopes that they will reach a multitude of Jacks, living all over this broad land of North America; every one of them the son of Catholic parents, every one of them beginning life as you are, every one of them full of hope and ambition; and, too, every one of them just a plain Catholic

boy who makes a noise now to bother more ancient nerves than those possessed by youth; but who expect to make a noise later on in a different way that will better, not bother, the world. Inevitably I will have to make the general theme of my letters the old theme of success; though, frankly, I dislike the word. You see, *success* means a different thing to almost every individual. My idea of it may not be yours; but all of us know the idea by the same name. I wont attempt to define what I mean by it, nor ask you what you mean. I am going to try to make these letters the definition.

The worst way to begin a day—any day—is as you did this morning. You were due at your office at eight-thirty. It is a forty minute walk from this house. I heard you get up, because you dropped one shoe at exactly seven-thirty. You were at breakfast twenty minutes later, which means that you dressed carelessly, splashed into your bath and out again, had no time to shave, rushed through your breakfast and then caught a car, though you are young and needed the walk. You arrived at your office with the beginnings of an indigestion in your system which will be in full control of your stomach at thirty. By walking you would have saved five cents, though, of course, you would have lost it by the wear and tear on shoe leather; that, however, would not

have been entirely a loss, for you would, by walking, have made a beginning of a good habit, and laid the foundation for good health. A walk would have meant entrance to your place of work with a clear head, a bright eye and a cheerful disposition. You read a paper all the way downtown—at least you took a paper as you left the house. You, therefore, saw nothing. Had you walked, you would have noticed the sun and the fact that it is springtime. Had you let your thoughts run, you would have been storing up things good for you later on. People are far more interesting to read than morning papers. A certain friend of mine has a habit, he tells me, of reading the daily paper standing up, so that he wont lose time over it. It is a good habit, worth cultivating. As it is, you got to your office with the wrong sort of a tired feeling, the feeling that is born of insufficient sleep—you were up late the night before, you know; and I was not able then to drive you to bed. In addition, you had twenty minutes of the bad air of the street car; and you started your labor when you started that paper. You had already been working for yourself before you began to work for your employer; so you did not, therefore, give him what he was paying you for—the fine fresh hours of the day.

It was really only a symptom, that noise. You

are not yet old enough to have gotten over the habit. A boy who makes a noise around the house is a healthy boy; but you are just on the verge of manhood. The noisy *boy* is a delight. The noisy *man* is a nuisance. Nobody wants to have a noisy man around, because he isn't natural. There is something of the cheat about a noisy man. He is like a shouting mob that hasn't anything really back of it but excitement. His good nature is too often assumed. He is afraid people will get to know him as he is, so he shouts to keep some one from asking questions which he cannot answer. At twenty it is wise already to have passed two years trying to eliminate a boyish disposition, so that, when you begin the life of business, you will have learned something of the gentle art that a certain statesman calls "pussyfooting". I do not, however, quite counsel that. The Latins say "In medio stat virtus", which, by enlargement means that in moderation is good sense. It is a wise saying. I had a friend, a bachelor, who hired a Japanese servant. The Jap stayed about one month and was then incontinently fired. Now the Jap was a good cook and a good valet, so I asked my friend why he had let him go. He answered: "Because I became afraid of him. I never knew out of what dark corner he would glide at a most unexpected time. He had feet like a cat, and eyes that didn't show in the dark. He

got on my nerves. I wanted a little noise to relieve the monotony—so there you are.” The lesson from both extremes is: don’t be noisy enough to make people think you are not genuine; but don’t be quiet enough to make them think you are a nonentity or afraid. Don’t shout; but then don’t whisper. Don’t talk all the time; but then don’t be silent. Come down stairs as if the stairs were intended to be walked on, not pounded; but come down as if you were walking on stairs, not air. Don’t shout “*good morning*” from another room; but come in and say it as if you meant it. Give yourself time to dress, and learn the pleasure of walking and observing as you walk. Form the habit. It is worth while. I wish I had formed it when I was your age.

But this noise question is bigger still. The average boy who is working for success, says that he is “going to make a noise in the world”. Now get it out of your mind, my dear Jack, that the man who makes a noise in the world is successful. He isn’t. The biggest noise is usually made by the biggest criminal. It is easy enough to make a noise, if you care only for the fact of it. The man who starts out with the idea that success consists of having people notice him, or having his picture in the paper, often gets it through most devious ways; and his noise is good neither for his fellows nor for himself. It ends sometimes

by a choking sensation after dropping from a platform.

There is another kind of noise often coupled with the idea of success. It is the noise of simple failure. It is much like the noise you made this morning. You hear the rumble of it and then the thud that ends it. It isn't good for anybody, but we all have to notice it. The thud is the failure; for, mark you, the biggest noise is often made by the biggest failure. There is no thud at the end of the pleasing noise that is made by a successful man. It begins small and it grows. Its volume increases, but it is musical and pleasant, even at its height. It doesn't end even when the man dies. It merely begins to soften, and then melts away rather than ends. How long it takes thus to melt away, depends upon the measure of success that the individual who was responsible for it has had. That's the kind of a noise to make in the world, and you can make it if you want to. Let me tell you how.

You begin at the simplest thing possible—opening your eyes in the morning at a fixed hour. When they are open they stay open. You waste no time in being alive. You master yourself by *not* closing them to take another nap. In other words, you begin your day with a victory, and thus you help to cultivate a will. You get out of your bed after an offering of the day to your

Maker, and so He has the first moment to Himself. You dress like a gentleman, not because your clothes are tailor-made and of fine cloth, but because you see that they hang right and are clean. You hurry through nothing, even your morning plunge. You put "snap" into your dressing. You take the measure of your own weaknesses, and therefore of yourself, by an act of humility. You get down on your knees to the One Who alone is Great. You have a cordial smile for every one you meet in the morning, particularly for those who wait on you; since you, like myself, like my superiors, and like their superiors, and then like their superiors, are servants. We must all of us serve; and service is honorable. Since *you* have a heart, every servant has a heart and kindness reaches it. I would rather, my dear Jack, be loved by those who serve me than by those whom I serve. There is a priest of my acquaintance who once said: "Mine has been a strange fate. Every one under me loves me; every one of my equals is suspicious of me; but my superiors all seem to dislike me." I said to him: "You are a successful man. If your superiors seem to dislike you, perhaps it is because you are too big for them. If your equals are suspicious of you, perhaps it is because they envy you. But if those who serve you love you, it proves that you are good."

When you leave the house you will remember that God made the sun for you, and that the grass and trees bloom for you. Part of your inheritance is the glory of nature that is around you. If you do not enjoy that inheritance, you are losing one of the finest things in life. The people you meet are destined to educate you; you may read the lessons in their morning faces. You thank God for His care of you when you see how much better off you are, or think you are, than others. In the luxurious motor cars that glide past you, you have an incentive to work. You have good health offered as you inhale the fresh air and exercise your limbs. When you enter your office, your geniality will make others genial, others who may not have taken advantage of the things around them as you have. You will remember that you have only two commodities to sell—your brains and your hands. These your employer bought for the space of eight hours. He owns them. You made a contract with him as binding as a mortgage or a sale. It has not been registered in the public records, but it is registered in your conscience, and therefore before God. You give to your employer's work exactly the same attention that he gives to superintending it; it makes no difference that he earns twenty-five thousand a year, and you earn only twenty-five dollars a week. He took you when



you were not worth even that; and he came up, just as you will come up, by giving an honest measure of attention and time to little things. Your first noise will be made in that office, and it may not be much of a noise. But it will grow slowly and surely, until someone hears it; and then you will have taken the first step upward. That's the noise that is worth while.

Now to sum up. Each day that you begin is like the life that you begin, at twenty. If you begin right, you will end right. If you plant good seeds, good things will grow. If you begin by being thoughtful, you will end by being thoughtful. If you begin with God, you will end with God.



## II RELIGION

THE strongest willed people in the world were saints; and the happiest and sanest people in the world were saints.

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To live a good example is to do a double good.

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NOTHING is little that is done for God's honor and glory.



## RELIGION

*My dear Jack:*

In yesterday's letter I mentioned two things that gave me an idea as to what I should write today. One you will find in this quotation: "You begin at the simplest thing possible—opening your eyes in the morning at a fixed hour. When they are open they stay open. You waste no time in being alive. You master yourself by not closing them to take another nap. In other words, you begin your day with a victory, and thus you help the cultivation of a will." The other follows immediately: "You get out of your bed after an offering of the day to your Maker, and so He has the first moment to Himself."

I have always had an idea that the thing lacking in most young men who are striving to make a noise in the world is the cultivation of the will. A few weeks ago I was delighted to read a book on that very subject by a Father Barrett, an Irish Jesuit I believe, who seems to have made a special study of the will. In it I found all my poor ideas admirably expressed, and better ones in addition. By all means, get that book and read it. It will do you a world of good; and, if he again writes

something on the same subject, follow him up. He knows what he is talking about. Father Barrett suggests a certain number of exercises for the cultivation of the will which doubtless are of great value; but you must remember that he is addressing a very general audience. If he were addressing his brothers in religion, he would probably suggest the Exercises of St. Ignatius. If he were addressing an audience of Catholic young men, he could easily and admirably sum up what he has to say by telling them to cultivate practices of religion. The best treatise on the cultivation of the will is the best treatise on the cultivation of a spiritual life. The strongest willed men in the world were saints; and the happiest and sanest people in the world were saints. There are many saints who were never canonized. The reason is that the average saint first learned how to conceal from the world the fact that he was a saint. The only canonized saints are those who were discovered; and the fact that they were discovered was always their greatest annoyance.

The best way to be a saint is to start on your path to sanctity with the greatest possible secrecy. Keep it dark—as dark as you can. Of course, it is true that we are told on extremely competent authority that we must not hide our light under a bushel; in other words, we are expected

to give a good example. But a saint does not have to worry about that; for, the more he tries to conceal his light, the sooner will his good example be noticed and the effect follow. The most effective good example does not come from shouted prayers. When I was a boy in the old Cathedral, where you followed me as a chorister, there was one man whose voice was always heard over all others in the answers to the Rosary. In my youth I was simple enough to think he was a saint. When I grew up, I knew that he was a little of an oddity. No grown-up person ever mistakes eccentricity for sanctity; and one thing you will discover very soon is the fact that the average man is suspicious of the neighbor whose religion is too much on his lips.

To begin to cultivate religion in a quiet, secret way is to start work on the little things. If you do not close your eyes to take another nap in the morning because you know that God wants you to cultivate being alive, and because He does not want you to acquire habits of self-indulgence and sloth, it is an act of religion that is, at the same time, a cultivation of the will. It is a splendidly good way to begin a day. If you get out of bed while your eyes are heavy with sleep because it is your religious duty to do so, you make it easy to get out of bed. There is no satisfaction like the satisfaction of having done a little thing right,

but nothing is little that is done for God's honor and glory.

When you start a day right, it is easy to keep it right. You may be in a hurry, but your morning prayers do not take up much time; and if you get into the habit of missing them you are losing, not only the spiritual benefit of the prayers, but also the benefit that comes from the cultivation of your will. You are losing, too, the little act of humility that is so powerful in putting you where you belong and keeping you there. You are losing the force that holds you to your work when you really do not care to work. You have stumbled on the first step that leads to the vague thing which men call Success. The fact that you were weak in the morning when you stood in the presence of God will weaken you all day when you must stand in the presence of men. If you fail to do a simple little thing for your Maker, how can you expect to do other worth while things for the sake of filthy lucre?

Now I know, Jack, just as well as you do, that religion isn't popular in the world; and I am going to say an astonishing thing: what passes in that same world for "religion" is not particularly popular with priests. Priests know, better than other people, what it is that passes for religion in a great many men—loud-voiced proclamations, assurances that one has it, efforts to in-



fluence in business or politics through it, a self-righteous manner that implies a scorn for others. This is the sort of thing that parades as religion, but it is not religion; and there is no one who hates that sort of thing more than the average priest, because he sees through the sham.

Again going back to my boyhood days, I remember well a family of two, man and wife, whose names I never knew and do not know to this day. That man and his wife impressed me more than any others in the great Cathedral parish, where we had a governor, some judges, and the nearest approach to a millionaire in the whole country. This man and his wife were not millionaires, nor did they hold any great offices. He was just a clean, upstanding, rather good-looking and very quiet man. She seemed to fit his companionship, and that's all I can say about her. She belonged to him and he belonged to her. I never spoke a word to either of them; but Sunday after Sunday, at the same hour precisely, they took their seats in a pew near my father's. Month after month, I saw them go to Communion together. If I went to a gathering of any kind amongst the parishioners, I looked around to see if they were there; and if they were not, I seemed to have some sort of a suspicion that the gathering was not an entire success. I once had charge of a concert given by the choir boys. All the lads

except myself sold tickets for it. I had the management and was freed from the duty of ringing doorbells. But for weeks I would find myself wondering if the concert was going to be a success, and somehow in my mind letting it depend upon whether or not that couple came to it. I stood at the door of the hall on the night of the concert. My man and woman appeared, and I then and there handed over the tickets to another boy. It was time for the concert to begin; *they* had arrived. Mark you, Jack, I was not worrying about the governor, or the judges, or the so-called millionaire, though I respected them all. The people I was looking for were just the plain simple people I had picked as the best.

Now what was it that made me think these people were really the most important in the parish? As a matter of fact, they were not, taking them as merely two individuals or one family. But in the aggregate they were the most important. The parish depended, not upon its few influential and wealthy people, but upon the many who were like these—clean, honest, unpretentious, quietly good, and faithful to every obligation. They represented a type. More than that, the whole Church, under God, depends upon such people; the whole country depends upon them even more; and, making things still stronger, the whole world depends upon them. The other day, I was reading a book

on Mexico, written by a lady who had lived for a long time in Mexico City. I stopped to think over two remarks. One is a quotation made from General Huerta, who said: "Mexico is like a snake. All its life is in its head. I am the head." The other is from herself: "How can a nation be successful that depends only upon the extremes?"

The General was wrong and the lady was right. No nation depends upon its head. It depends upon its heart and its stomach, since it is from the stomach whence comes the strength that feeds the brain, and it is the heart that feeds the blood coursing through all. People such as those I admired are the heart and stomach, not only of nations, but of the world. I would rather see you succeed in making people look for you as these people made me look for them, than that you should become a millionaire.

When an athlete starts to run a race, the things that count are his muscles and his wind. For a long time he was preparing in quiet to strengthen both of these necessities. But in the race he forgets his training. He does not have to think about it. That's about the way it is, Jack, with regard to religion. The thing is, to be what religious training makes us; and everybody will know we are trained without telling them. It is the consequences of religion that a man should

have. It is the consequences of religion that the world should chiefly see. I once met a man who was a very ardent admirer of the Catholic Church, but he was not a member of it. During his conversation with me I learned that he knew practically nothing about it; and so I asked him, out of curiosity, how he had become so enthusiastic. To my utter astonishment, he told me the reason why he admired the Catholic Church was, because every Sunday morning at half past five he was awakened by the tramp of hundreds of feet passing his open window, rain or shine, hot or cold, on their way to six o'clock Mass. "The Catholic Church," he said, "is the only Church that can make people do that. I acknowledge the sacrifice of my Sunday morning's sleep is too much to ask of me. The fact that the Catholic Church asks it of her children and gets it, is a testimony to her that I cannot ignore." Now this was a very little thing, but, as I said to you before, it is the little things that count.

To live a good example is to do a double good. It is to bless yourself and to bless others. The real preachers of religion are not those who deliver sermons, but the people who go out and preach the same sermons by their daily lives. Every time I preach I feel very humble when I look at the congregation; for there is a certain exhilaration to preaching, a sort of a glow that

makes one feel he is accomplishing something. But the faces of the people looking up at me, devotion written on them, bring the humility to me at once; for these are the people, Jack, who are going to carry the gospel in its lessons out into the great wide world, and make it practical. These are the people who are going to use the lessons for the good of the world. It is through these people that the gospel will regenerate the world. After all, the last word is not with me, the priest; it is with you, the layman.

Of course, you know that before a priest is ordained he must make a retreat; in other words, he must give a period of time to meditation upon his responsibilities and his duties. I often think that retreats for laymen, especially for young laymen, are more necessary than for priests. If you could understand what depends upon laymen, not only for eternity but also for time! If laymen could only for a little while brush aside the veil the world draws before their eyes, and see unclouded the opportunities lying ahead of them! I am sad to-day as I write this letter, for I am snatching minutes to read that story of Mexico's tragic hour, to which I have already referred. It is the story of a nation whose leaders forgot God, whose great men thought they no longer needed Him, who believed that religion was for women and that men were too strong for it. And

behold, the star of their country's destiny is drowned in an ocean of blood. It will be the same with us, Jack, if those who are just reaching their majority loose the grip that faith has on them. Some old emperor said: "If justice should be driven from the earth, it would find its last refuge in the hearts of kings." He was mistaken. Its last refuge will be where it should be, in the hearts of the faithful poor. But I am not mistaken when I say to you, that if religion is ever driven out of our country, its last hope and its strongest hope must be in the hearts of Catholic men. When Catholic manhood loses religion the nation is irretrievably lost.

You will find that youth is inclined to scoff in these days. Very often you will find that you must cultivate your will by resisting with it the thought of scoffing, for you cannot always avoid the companionship of the foolish. If you had a "pearl of great price" you would treasure it beyond measure. You have a stone more precious than pearls in the faith that was handed down to you. Guard it for what it is worth, and that means—guard it above every other possession. It has more to do with that vaguely defined success than you dream of; for success is not what men think it is, but what God thinks it is.

Religion, and the keeping of it in life, is the simplest of all life's processes. It means only

fidelity to the little things ; the doing well of what is not very hard to do, and what takes so little time to do properly ; the raising of the heart to God in the midst of temptations if only for an instant ; the murmur of a secret prayer when no one seems to want to believe ; fidelity to the virtue of humility when everything beckons one to pride. Out of these little things steps forth an honest man, the noblest work of the *grace* of God.





III  
LIVING

WE go about learning how to live and begin at the wrong end. We ought first to learn how to die.



## LIVING

*My dear Jack:*

I saw a book in your hands yesterday on "The Art of Living Long". I understand that you are considering the idea of pushing its sale through your department. If you decide to do so I commend your judgment. The title will carry the first effort to success; and the contents, through which I glanced, will sustain it. Men like to read such books, for they want to live a long time. They would succeed in doing that if they followed the book's counsels; which, in spite of the fact that they chiefly concern themselves with the question of diet, yet get down to the fundamental Christian rule for longevity—self-restraint and sacrifice. The monks taught the "Art of Living Long" before Louis Cornaro was born. But the best sort of a book on the subject would not bother about diet at all. It would be called, *How to Die*.

"The Imitation of Christ" is, perhaps, the most wonderful and comforting of all uninspired, or doubtfully inspired, books that ever were penned. It is comforting to the busy man who has learned to know it, because it tells so much about the art of living. But have you not no-

ticed that that part of it is quite accidental? Its aims and purposes are plainly to teach people *how to die*.

The happiest folk I ever saw were some cloistered nuns in a small Quebec village. They fairly radiated happiness, though they were enclosed, by their own free will, and confined to their house and garden. By special permission, I was shown their cells. They were clean, white rooms, without ornaments or pictures. There was always a cot, one chair, a table and a kneeling bench. On the kneeling bench, where the eye naturally fell when dropped in prayer, was painted an ugly black coffin. I wondered for a little while, until I began to understand that these nuns were happy because, through having learned the art of dying, they had learned the art of living. They worked with their hands, and produced beautiful things which were useful to the world; but they worked also with their spiritual hands, and produced more beautiful things, useful to themselves, and thus learned the art of dying. Their great business and their greatest happiness was in learning *how to die*.

When you think about it, it is not so hard a lesson to learn, once men try to learn it. There is a whole library of good things in one text of Scripture which everybody knows but so few think about: "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God

and His justice and all else shall be added unto you." This is practically an admission that we need not go about learning how to live. We begin at the wrong end. We ought first to learn how to die. If we make the world everything, fight for everything in it and win, we are only making the dying harder. It is not *business* to do that. No commercial man, when laying his plans, would ignore an event which he knows must be faced, for he is not a fool. He foresees, and plans according to his foresight; and that explains his success. But, strange to say, the same man ignores a greater and surer eventuality, which means, so far as he can see, the loss of all that he has gained, and perhaps his beginning all over again under conditions he has never tried to understand.

Religion is rejected by too many business men, men of the type of the age, because they think it is a gloomy thing and gives them no information about what is to them the great question—how to live. In reality religion is the one thing they need, because it, alone, can teach them the essential lesson of living, by teaching them how to die.



#### IV TEMPTATION

I NEVER knew anyone who had "humanly reasoned" himself off the path of evil; or who had really overcome dangerous temptations, merely because they interfered with his temporal success.





## TEMPTATION

*My dear Jack:*

I never knew anyone who had "humanly reasoned" himself off the path of evil; or who had really overcome dangerous temptations, merely because they interfered with his temporal success. I have heard doctors lecture to young men on the horrible consequences of a life spent in yielding to lust or gluttony. I have known young men to give up evil ways for health's sake, or for the sake of prosperity; but I also knew that they did not entirely give them up. Those who are strong enough to be moderate for worldly reasons are wise enough to know that moderation avoids nine-tenths of the physical dangers, and are willing enough to chance the other tenth. There is only one way to face temptation with any hope of success against it; and that is the Christian way. Let me explain it.

There is a great palace which is called Life and, by the grace of God, we are all in it as residents. The King dwells in the palace, but our corporal eyes never see Him. We only know that He is under the same roof with us. You have entered houses that spoke most eloquently

of their owners, though you did not see the owners at all. Something about the rooms, the furnishings, the books, the pictures, the order or the disorder, told you the owner had left himself there even when absent in body. In this great palace you see and note the same thing, only the wonder of its Owner's power to be there and yet not be seen is infinitely greater. He permeates everything about you with His unseen presence. He vivifies and beautifies and inspires, till you ask yourself, "What am I here for?" and receive the answer before it is corroborated by your fellow-residents. You are in the palace *to serve the King*. You have no other purpose in it; but by this service you are made happy and contented. You do not think of pay, yet you know that your pay will be dealt out to you with lavish generosity.

In gardens around the palace multitudes play constantly, but stop often to weep and gaze upon the buildings. The gardens are splendid; but you know that the fruits are beautiful only to the sight—at a touch they fall to ashes. The flowers have beauty, too, but no perfume. The multitude calls to you from the ground, as you now and then look out of the windows. They ask you to come out and pluck the fruit and stroll amongst the odorless flowers; and sometimes you long to go. They call to you that you have a duty of mercy or charity to come. You

shut out the thought of the Presence sometimes and go.

But your place is in the King's service. His call may come at any time, and woe to you if then you are absent; for the door may be closed against you, and your strength, which comes from the Presence, will be too much weakened to enable you to enter again.

It is better for you to keep within and to call those outside to come to you; for any of that great multitude may enter and join you. If they do come there is great rejoicing in the palace, and a deep peace and satisfaction in your heart for the gaining of other servants for the King.

There are things in the palace, inanimate and animate, that you may use for your comfort, your convenience and your pleasure. There are things in the gardens below, or in the distance, upon which you may feast your eyes to satiety. But you know that all these things serve but one purpose—to help you serve the King better. Shall you use them? Yes, as far as they promote good service. No, as far as they take you from that service. To use these things as far as they promote the service you are to render the King, is wise and good. To use them when they hinder, is to succumb to temptation and fall from grace; then the Presence seems to be less felt, and you languish in your vigilance for the King's call.

I have never known, my dear Jack, a better way "to avoid evil and do good" than to keep this picture before my mind. Father Diertens sums it up splendidly: "All other things on the face of the earth are created for man and that they may help him in the end for which he was created. From this it follows that man is to use them as much as they help him to his end, and ought to rid himself of them as far as they hinder him as to it."

There you are. To overcome temptations, remember the palace and the Presence, the windows looking out on the fruit that is ashes and the flowers without perfume, the voices that call, the doors that can be opened only by spiritual strength, the service that you must give, and the call that will surely come to the Chamber of the King. Learn that all things about you are yours, and feel your freedom to use them; but ask your soul the question, "Are they going to promote my efficiency as a servant of God, or hinder it?"

This, with humility, is the best means of overcoming temptations.

V  
THINKING

MEDITATION in its best form is like talking to God with the tongue of the spirit and hearing Him answer with the ears of the soul.

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BRING thought to your problems and see them vanish.

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AS serious men become older they grow to dislike crowds.



## THINKING

*My dear Jack:*

You have heard me speak before, in an incidental way, of meditation; and you knew that it referred to some exercise of piety common to priests. I do not think you know much more than that about it. It is an exercise which, however, is known to others besides priests; and happy is the man or woman who not only knows of it, but practices it daily. Meditation is simply prayer without words, prayer of the soul and mind and heart. In its best form it is like talking to God with the tongue of the spirit, and hearing Him answer with the ears of the soul. It is spiritual training. It is filled with consolations unknown to those who never practice it. At its poorest it is the highest form of prayer, but at its best it is a foretaste of heaven's joy. To those who try it, even in the crudest way, it is full of rewards. To those who let themselves be led by its beauties, it has ended in visions that themselves are only the beginnings of visions. No, I am not in the clouds. The best thing about meditation is that, while it sends the soul exploring the heavens, those who feed on it are the

sanest and most sensible of men. My follies are at their greatest when I neglect my meditation.

Now, meditation has not only a spiritual and religious lesson to teach, but a worldly one as well. The way to goodness is through the flower-bordered path of meditation. The way to worldly success is through the pleasant path of thought. Bring thought to your problems and see them vanish.

The greatest evil of the age, my dear Jack, is thoughtlessness. I could almost say that we live in an age when nobody thinks. We seem to be too busy to think; but he who is too busy to think is too thoughtless to succeed. Let me bring the point home to you. Every day you are at your desk from early morning till evening. After the evening meal you want pleasure, or think you do. As a matter of fact, you only need relaxation. Play rests the mind by changing the current of thought, not by stopping it. Too much play, however, does stop it. If you merely work and play you will get nowhere. Some sailors do that; but those who ambition to become masters, do not. There must be someone on every ship to *think out* the problems of the voyage. The sailor who learns to work, play and *think* is the sailor who, later on, will command. Every young man is a young captain of his fortunes. He is either going to bring his boat safely into port laden



with a precious cargo, or he is going to pile it up on the rocks. Cargoes may vary, but a real cargo and a real port mean success. Every day of the voyage is a day that has its problems. So every day should have one bit of it given up to the solving of them—to thought.

Do I mean that every young man should deliberately sit down every day and do nothing? No. I mean that every young man should deliberately sit down every day and *think*. If he really is interested in his work he will not find it difficult to think for, say, a half hour. If he is not interested in his work he should still think and plan—and get interested; for that is just what his thinking and planning will do for him.

Harriman had his railroad kingdom in his thoughts long before he got the Union Pacific, the key to his greatness. Pullman was carrying thousands in his sleepers, long before he could sleep himself, with the assurance that many men were working out his small problems. Rockefeller now, in his old age, may play golf all day, but only because he never played in the time set aside for thinking and planning, when he was young. If you want examples, you can have them in plenty; but there is the Great Example, for the whole of creation was but the thought of God, supplemented by the Word of Power. Your future is in yourself. Every

thoughtful moment is bringing it closer to you. Some day it will all be clear if you are faithful to thinking and planning. Then it is for you to imitate God, and speak the Word of Power He has placed in your mouth for utterance at the right time.

You cannot think if you always use your leisure for "a good time". The head does not work well in concert with the feet, so you cannot think and dance together. Company is not an aid to thought, but solitude is. Your room ought to be more than a place in which to sleep. It ought also to be a hermit's cell, for at least a little while every day.

Do not imagine that you lose the time you give to yourself alone. Too many young people think that they must be in a crowd or they are losing something of what they call "life". They are really losing all that is worth while in life when they are in a crowd. The only inspiration that is in a crowd is for an orator, but then it is a case of thought joining thought. A man who listens and drinks in a discourse is as much alone as if he were locked in a solitary cell. The magic touch of oratory is in so moving people as to make them forget the speaker in the thoughts he inspires. The magic of a crowd on a speaker is in the communication of the sympathy of their individual thoughts with his own. The only

crowd worth getting into is the crowd that listens or prays, which sometimes amounts to about the same thing. As serious men become older they grow to dislike crowds. A growing love for being in a crowd is not a sign of perennial youth. It is more often the sign of a shallow mind. Sometimes, alas, it is the sign of a depraved heart.

Do not imagine that to be alone with your thoughts is really to be lonely. A certain poet put the case well when he said: "*Alone, but yet not lonely.*" You can make your thoughts very friendly, as well as the pleasantest of company; and the best of it is that such company grows better as you intensify your associations with it. The man who said that he liked to talk to himself because he "liked to talk to a good man, and liked to hear a good man talk," was perhaps trying to be funny, but, like Mr. Dooley, he succeeded in being a philosopher. Thinking is really talking to your better self. You can always talk better and straighter to yourself than to anyone else, because you have more freedom. The restraints of human respect are removed. You are not suspicious of motives. You can test and weigh without fear or favor, and, if you practice proper humility, without undue affection.

The greatest poems never made me love them

(and you know how I do love poetry) half as much as Father Ryan's "Song of the Mystic", which begins:

*"I walk down the valley of Silence,  
Down the dim, voiceless Valley—alone."*

This verse of it keeps coming back to me as I write:

*"And I have had thoughts in the valley,  
Ah me, how my spirit was stirred!  
And they wear holy veils on their faces,  
Their footsteps can scarcely be heard.  
They float down the Valley like virgins,  
Too pure for the touch of a word."*

Of course, again all my hopes for writing a real practical business letter have fled long ago. I try and try not to preach, and only succeed in preaching the more. Well, perhaps after all it is for the best.

VI  
FRIENDS

IF I were a saint, I should be more afraid of flattery than of anything else; and, because I am not a saint, I ought to fear it still more.

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No friendship will stand the shock of a sin.

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BE at least as much of a gentleman to your friend as you are to a stranger.



## FRIENDS

*My Dear Jack:*

All friends are rare; wise friends are rarer; but foolish friends are worse than enemies. Fervently do I pray: "From my foolish friends, good Lord, deliver me." It sounds a little uncharitable that I should consider any of my friends foolish, but alas, I know that some of them are. The most foolish friend of all is the one who thinks that he has to overpraise in order to do his duty of friendship. Listen to him and you will think yourself a demigod, but no one else will. Because he overstates his case, he makes listeners doubt the actual truth. He drags your name into his conversations constantly. He basks in the sunlight of your supposed greatness; but, in nine cases out of ten, he thinks that in this way he makes a little glory for himself. He is not a real friend of yours, but a very real friend of himself. You are the steps of the ladder upon which he hopes to mount. One would not mind it, but that he insists on scraping the steps with his rough, hob-nailed shoes as he climbs, and that hurts. You must just live down this kind of a friend. It is hard to rebuke him; indeed often he will not be rebuked.

Sometimes, however, you find this sort of a friend absolutely unselfish. He does not want to mount at your expense. He is only an enthusiast about you. He thinks he has discovered virtues in you that nobody else suspects. He looks on himself merely as an humble admirer; but, though he doesn't know it, he is really swinging incense to his own astuteness. The less he understands of that, the harder it is to save yourself from him, for he sees no flaw in you. This man hurts you because he flatters you; and flattery *always hurts*. If I were a saint, I should be more afraid of flattery than of anything else; and because I am not a saint, I ought to fear it still more. It is an insidious poison, and no armor of righteousness is strong enough to make you fearless of it. It strengthens your enemy because it makes *you* self-satisfied. It increases your pride, which is especially bad. It kills the humility that is your real strength. This kind of a friend, while not to be avoided, nevertheless is one to reason with. Do not let him flatter you. Have a heart-to-heart talk with him, and own up to the truth. I knew two men who passed as friends so well that I had come to call them Damon and Pythias. Pythias seemed always lost in admiration for Damon. One day I met them together, but Damon was hopelessly drunk. Now both of these men were parishioners of mine, and



I thought it was time for me to act. I called Damon aside and reproached him, adding to my scolding: "I never saw you in this condition before." He had sense enough to answer, wisely enough: "Yes, I am drunk and I know it; and more than that, Father, I am glad of it. That pest of a friend will now know that I am only a human being." I always suspected that Damon played drunk that day for a purpose.

The real friend is the man who knows all about you and loves you in spite of it. I am sure some one must have said that before; but I do not know who it was or I would give him credit for it. Friendship is really founded on generosity. I am not a believer in the intimate "friendships" between men and women that are often called "platonic love." If such intimacies are platonic they may not be classed as love; and if they may, why the adjective? I believe that friendships between men and women are almost always lacking in the essential of equality; for women are governed more by the heart than are men, and in friendship, therefore, are far more generous. Friendship will not, as a rule, stand the strain of great inequality. "Platonic love" either becomes real love, or ends in a break. The truest friendships are between persons of the same sex; and there is nothing of what is usually called "love" in them. The man who knows your faults

and is still your friend overlooks a lot of defects. He, therefore, is generous; but, at the same time, he is humble, because he is thus confessing, in his own way, that he has some defects to be overlooked on your part. Do not conceal your defects from your friend. When you talk to him do not boast. Minimize your virtues; but it is not wise to emphasize your faults too much. Let your friend know that you have faults. It makes the bond of union closer. The fellow who is always striking his breast is not safe, because he is not sincere. The publican in the parable only struck his breast and confessed his sins *in the temple*. Had he gone out and proclaimed them, he would have been as bad as the pharisee, though in another way. You may confess faults in the temple of friendship: but remember, that to be always disparaging yourself is to be seeking praise. To get down to the level of knowledge with your friend, and then find equality, is a pretty good way to make a friendship last.

On general principles it can be asserted that there is no possibility of friendship between a superior and an inferior—between one who rules and one who is under his jurisdiction. A superior who has friends amongst his “subjects” is running the risk of violating justice toward those not thus honored. The nearest approach to friendship of that kind, so far as the superior

is concerned, must be admiration and appreciation. When an inferior has what people call friendship for his superior, it is usually devotion; and it ought to be absolutely unselfish to be worth anything. The day may come when equality will raise this devotion to the plane of real friendship; but, until it does, the devotion ought to be whole-hearted, and rather for what the superior represents than for himself. Such devotion ought to ask nothing; for if it demands special consideration it loses its virtue and is, therefore, in danger of losing its utility. The best way to consider superiors is by thinking of them as not detached from their offices. He is a happy superior who makes those under him have regard and devotion for what he represents. Personal friendships between superiors and those they govern provoke jealousies and misunderstandings; and so, in general, do not work out for good.

Get it firmly fixed in your mind, Jack, that friendship never demands anything that is wrong. No friendship will stand the shock of a sin. The friend who asks you to lie for him, or to do some other wrong act for him, or to place your own position in jeopardy for him, is nothing more than a *supposed* friend. A business man in Detroit has a motto stuck over his desk that is more to be praised for its truth than

its eloquence: "That which takes gall to ask, takes no gall to refuse." The man who places before you the suggestion, that because he is in trouble your friendship for him must be tested by the sacrifice of your honesty, ought to be put out of your life at once. If he is a true friend, he will admire the good in you and he will not attempt to destroy it. He should be willing to cut off his right hand rather than ask you to do wrong; and yet the whole business world of to-day is full of men who think that they have a right to demand, in the name of friendship, things that sully the soul. In the world of politics this is especially true; and it is because of that fact that there are really no *political* friends; or rather that a political friend is no friend at all. The man who happens to be a politician may have a man's friendship; but *political* friendships are based upon selfishness, pure and simple; though the adjectives are misleading, for selfishness is neither pure nor simple. Selfishness is to the highest degree impure; and, far from being simple, it is as cunning as a serpent. You may often trust a politician in matters other than those that are political; but in politics one should seldom trust him. You may trust a statesman in everything except statecraft; but the word "craft" has been well applied in this connection. A statesman is often only a post-

graduate politician. An ecclesiastical friend is safe for your spiritual self; but he is hard for a worldly man to understand. If he is worth anything to you it is because his motto is: "All for the greater glory of God." Unless you have that motto yourself, you cannot understand the ecclesiastical point of view. The things that you believe are necessary the ecclesiastic very often puts down as "vanity and affliction of spirit". He is a safeguard, but unless he has many worldly faults, he is not capable of the friendship that a man of the world demands. He is too unbending. Friendships between the clergy and the laity are usually very imperfect, and are not particularly to be encouraged. Though you have one priest in your family, with a possibility of having more, yet, as a priest, I would not encourage you to form friendships with other priests. Their duty toward you is in the way of guidance and direction. Your duty toward them is implied in the definition of their duty toward you. The foundation of equality is lacking in the friendship of a layman and a priest; and hence such friendships very often are failures. The best way to deal with a priest is to appeal to the *father* in him.

Do not then seek friends; because in seeking you rarely find them. You want them too badly, and in your eagerness you may buy shoddy instead of good cloth. Wait until they come into

your life unasked, and then consider well before you surrender. Look first for unselfishness; but find out there and then if you are yourself capable of it; for you are an equal partner in friendship. You cannot expect what you cannot give. Study every possible friend as if he were a possible enemy. See that he is as near your equal as he may be; but try to think of him always as just a little superior to yourself. Be open and honest with him. Let him be open and honest with you. Never praise him to his face, and do not praise him unduly behind his back. If he has faults—and he surely has them—show them to him by calling attention to the same possible defects in your own character. He will see the point. Lean on him in your little weaknesses, but do not put your heavy burdens upon his shoulders. To lean lightly is to make him happy that you come to him in your troubles; but to throw on him the heavy burdens that you should carry yourself, is to prove your own selfishness. Be at least as much of a gentleman to your friend as you are to a stranger. He has greater claims on you than any stranger. Ask nothing of him that you would not want him to ask of you; and thus you shall keep your friend, and in his friendship you shall find a great deal to help and sustain you.

## VII ENEMIES

THE way to change into friends the enemies who misunderstand, is to find out the way to tell them the truth; and one doesn't lose the time taken in scheming to that end.

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ENMITY at bottom is a sin; and the only thing with which a sin can be successfully opposed is the opposite virtue.

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CHERISH your enemies.





## ENEMIES

*My dear Jack:*

I have noticed that you are inclined to be popular. The people you meet in my house like you. The people who have met you in the office say nice things about you. If I reach for my coat when you are around, you jump up to hold it for me. That isn't particularly complimentary to me, for I am not so very old, nor have I been accustomed to a valet around to make me think myself a petted child of fortune. But let that go. You have acquired a good habit in always trying to help other people. It is inevitable that, under such a system, you are bound to be popular; but I would not have you close your eyes to the fact that, with popularity, you are also going to accumulate a few enemies. While great popularity reduces the number of our enemies, it surely makes very bitter ones; for it appears to be half a law that the hands which stretch up from immediately beneath the pinnacle of success, are hands reaching for feet to pull down. You will have your enemies; you may have incipient ones now. It is wise to begin already to think how you are to treat them.

I had a chat once with a statesman possessing more enemies to the square inch than any other man I ever knew. He had just passed through a terrible ordeal and his enemies had almost beaten him. Amongst other things he said: "Revenge is not worth while. Your whole life is a procession from birth to death, and the procession is a race. If somebody hurts you, you cannot afford to stop and wait for him to come around to strike back at him. If you do that the procession will have gone on while you are waiting, and you will be just that much behind." I was so interested in the views of this man that I watched his career. No one ever suffered so much from enemies; but I never saw him try to strike back. A friend once said of him: "Why, the fool, he would compromise with his worst enemy." I would not have put it that way; I would have substituted "wise man" for "fool". An enemy who can be conciliated hasn't any excuse for existing. Richelieu said that statesmanship is to make friends out of enemies; and Richelieu was right. Nine-tenths of my own enemies are people who misunderstood, and thought that their enmity was for my good. Nearly all of the other tenth were people who, while they did not misunderstand, nevertheless in a vague sort of way thought I had injured them. All of them were wrong. I never tried willfully to injure anybody in my life; but,

nevertheless, I may have been at fault, for sometimes a man doesn't know when he is doing harm to another. The way to change into friends the enemies who misunderstand, is to find out the way to tell them the truth, and one doesn't lose the time taken in scheming to that end. The way to change into friends enemies who think they have been injured, is not by building up a case for yourself and remaining self-righteously stubborn; it is to take it for granted that you are wrong, whether you are or not. There is no better way of making an enemy realize that you are right.

I can truthfully say, Jack, that if I have any enemies today, and doubtless I have, they are enemies I never met, or of whom I am blissfully ignorant. The people I might know later on as enemies will never find out from my conduct toward them that I acknowledge or notice their enmity. The best rule of life that I find for such situations is to ignore the fact that anyone dislikes you.

Of course, sometimes this conduct does not seem to work out well, for a man who hates you sometimes will hate through everything. But what difference does it make, except that of momentary annoyance? The thing is to be at peace yourself, and you cannot be at peace with yourself if you must add, to the ordinary wor-

ries of life, the extraordinary ones of plotting and planning how to circumvent an enemy. There is really only one way to circumvent him—the scriptural way of heaping coals of fire on his head. Enmity at bottom is a sin, and the only thing with which a sin can be successfully opposed is the opposite virtue.

A harder situation arises when you find a man dislikes you as a matter of duty. We all have superiors, and it is the superior's business to know those who are under his jurisdiction. He rarely gets his knowledge direct, for he has to depend upon others; and out of a multiplicity of opinions expressed to him, he draws his conclusions, sometimes unconsciously. As he has power, these conclusions often work out to your undoing. The superior may think that he is eminently just, whereas he is disgracefully unjust. He may *want* to do right, but succeeds only in doing wrong. He may not consider the fact that no man looks upon his neighbor as quite perfect, and that most of us, alas, will talk about imperfections rather than perfections. How are you going to handle such a case as that? The first rule, of course, is to see that your own conduct squares with integrity and honesty, so that, if the charges are made against you openly, you may prove your innocence. That's what might be called preparation for the break, but with that

preparation the open break is often averted. It is an uncomfortable feeling, that of being obliged to work under the power of a superior who suspects you and your motives, who is an enemy of the worst kind because an enemy through what he considers his duty. The rule to follow then is: never betray yourself into a resentment before him or before others. Never criticise him or his actions. Never show pique because he does not like you. Praise him whenever you can; and, by the way, it will be easy to pick out things in the life of that sort of a man to praise, for he is usually honest. Help him even more cheerfully than you help anyone else. Rise to every occasion that he puts in your way; but, above all else, even if you have the power, do not try to injure him. You will be tempted to do so. The devil will put it into your power sometime to do so. The time may come when he is caught, and when a word from you may ruin him; but that is the day of *your* trial, not *his*; that is the day *your* mettle is being tested; that is the great occasion that God gives *you* for growth. Right there you have the chance to be a big man or a little man, to be a success before God or merely a human so-called success. You are there before the caskets, of which there are but two: one moth-eaten, cobweb-covered and ugly, because so few people ever touch it; the other gilded and

jeweled, cleaned and garnished, because it is popular. But in that last casket there is only reproach and regret: while in the other is the prize of self-conquest, that admits you at once into the outer circle surrounding the Kingdom of Heaven.

The worst kind of enemy, the one hardest to deal with, is always the man who has already wronged you by act or thought. There is an old advice often given, and it comes in very *apropos* here, to the effect that one should never lend money to a friend—if one values the friend. Of course, like most bits of worldly philosophy, this is not always strictly true; but it is true enough to make it a general rule of conduct. The man who has received a benefit from you, very often resents in his heart the fact that he was humiliated by accepting it. At first it is only a resentment, but it has a strange and unreasonable growth that arrives often at hatred. Every time this man does something to actually injure you the hatred increases, and grows on its own unreason. There seems to be no remedy for this kind of enmity. New favors only add fuel to the flame, for they bring a return of resentment by giving hatred a fictitious justification. Such enmity goes very far to prove the doctrine of total depravity, whose only remedy was and is the grace of God; which, by the way, you need

as much in facing the situation as your enemy does in shaking off his blinders.

It takes your self-discipline, and all of it, to stand up under the feeling of rankling injustice that overflows your very soul, when you become conscious of this sort of unreasonable and ever-degrading enmity. Always fall back on the consciousness of eternal justice before the fact of human injustice; *and then stand to your guns.* Make the unreasonable enemy respect your firmness and the right of your position. Do not give such a man an inch. Demand from him your own—all your own; not because you want it, but because you know it is good for him to restore it. He is entitled to no consideration from you; but just the same have all consideration for him within the limits of reason, justice and charity. Take no more than is yours; take that and—wait. When you are through with that sort of enemy be through with him forever and ever, so far as giving him a chance at you again is concerned; but do not forget that he remains one of a multitude for you, one out of thousands for whom you still ought to have kindly feelings, honest intentions, and overflowing charity. Just forget your trouble in all but the experience you have gotten out of it. It will pass, but it would never pass if you let it have its evil way.

Enemies have their uses, for they make us

careful. They teach us how to govern ourselves. They show us how naturally unreasonable we might become if we permitted ourselves to go wrong. Cherish your enemies, Jack, since you must have them; for a strong and powerful enemy is often a help up the ladder, spiritually as well as temporally.

To avoid making enemies one would have to avoid living at all. There is another old adage which says: "To avoid enemies, say nothing, do nothing, be nothing." This is unhappily only too true; yet though we cannot avoid enemies, the wise man always keeps trying to do so, and thus cuts down their number and their malignity. The best rule to follow in avoiding the making of enemies, is always to impute good motives to the acts of your neighbor. After all, we cannot read hearts; only God can do that. An old Scotch lady made it a rule to praise everybody. She disgusted an uncharitable neighbor once to the point of making him blurt out: "Ye auld hag, I think ye'd praise the deil himself." The old lady was not taken aback, but smilingly answered: "Aweel, he is a vera industrious body." I would not have you arrive at the point where you could find something to praise in the devil; but, except for the devil, you can imagine a good motive to nearly every act that is not a sin. Even that you can leave to God. There is always an



excuse; there is always an explanation; there is always the chance of good intentions; there is always a weakness; there is always something you can pick up to explain. When you do that, you never know how far your words go. I met a certain man once, and never thought of him afterwards until he forced me to do so. He said a nice thing about me to some one else, when there really was no call for him to say it. He had no obligation toward me. I had never done him a favor. I had merely shaken hands with him once and chatted for two or three minutes; but when the chance came he went out of his way to say the thing that helped me. Now, I am watching my opportunity to say good things about him. It is by practising charity in thought, word and deed that you avoid making enemies and succeed in making friends.



VIII  
RULE AND SERVICE

THE strong man is the man who feels his responsibility and accepts it in the spirit of humility.

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THE wisest ruler is he who gives the fewest orders but looks for the greatest results.

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No man can be just and selfish at the same time.



## RULE AND SERVICE

*My dear Jack:*

It has been said that “no one has learned how to rule until he has learned how to serve”. The statement is quite true, quite smart and quite catchy; but I like to express it in another way. I believe that no one has learned how to serve until he has learned how to rule. If you analyze the two statements you will find that they really amount to the same thing. Everybody is called upon to rule, and everybody is called upon to serve. You do the one only as well as you do the other. When a king, for example, ceases to serve his people well, he ceases to rule them well, and vice versa. Every man, woman and child born into this world is destined to rule. We are all destined, for example, to rule ourselves. If we fail in that, the depravity in us gets the upper hand, and there is nothing left in life. Every task you set out to do gives you the opportunity of ruling; and as you rule you serve. There is no such thing as an absolute ruler in this world, for even the monarch most unlimited in his powers is ruled by some elements in the things

that he believes he is ruling. It is said that the Czar of Russia is the most absolute of all rulers; but the Czar himself knows that there are a thousand things he cannot do, and therefore that there are a thousand things and conditions that rule him. If you do well the work that is put under your hands to do, the work for which you are responsible, you are ruling much more than you are serving; in fact, while you are doing the work you are entirely ruling. It is only when the work is done and the results are placed before your superior that you show your service; but it is so hard to mark the point where rule ends and service begins, that you might truthfully say that while you serve you rule, and while you rule you serve.

So, as I look at it, the first thing to learn is the art of ruling instead of the art of serving. We are made to the image and likeness of God; and man is given the earth for his kingdom. We have, therefore, a higher appreciation of our dignity when we learn how to rule rather than how to serve; but when the spiritual steps in and shows us that we really serve when we rule, we understand perfectly, and thus strong men are made. The strong man is a man who feels his responsibility and accepts it in a spirit of humility. Such a man has the elements of greatness in him and will overcome every obstacle and

every handicap. Because serving is so intimately bound up with ruling, I am going to devote most of this letter to speaking of rulers rather than of subjects.

You are now at the head of a very little department, and rather young for even that small responsibility. If you succeed in that department, within a short time your responsibilities will be greater, and you will have a number of others under your charge. As soon as you arrive at that stage, you will face two great obligations: one toward your work, the other toward your workers. Since the greatness of the work depends upon the workers, I am going to consider them first. The head of a department, a superior of any kind, is given his place that he may produce *results*. The priest gets results in souls; the business man in money. Keep that idea before you always in your work. You are there to get *results!* Your superiors selected you because they thought you had in you the ability to obtain them. They depend upon you. In your turn you must depend upon others; and in their turn they become, in smaller things, responsible parties themselves. Now the best way to secure results from those under you is to make them feel that they are shouldering part of your burden. Responsibility is the most sobering thing in the world. A baby would never be able to walk if the

mother always carried it in her arms, or wheeled it around in the perambulator. The mother's responsibility is to see that the baby does not walk too soon, so that it later will walk correctly; but the mother cannot walk *for* the baby—that the baby has to do itself. Did you ever see chicks come out of their shells? They break out and are busy at once. It is worth remarking that they arrive at maturity very soon. The reason is because they are active early. When the time has come for them to earn their own living without assistance, they have the advantage of having been doing it partially from the very beginning. Instinct told the mother hen to have no hesitation about forgetting them. The more responsibility you put upon a subordinate, the bigger and brighter you are making that subordinate. It is by ruling that he learns how best to serve. The wisest ruler is he who gives the fewest orders but looks for the greatest results.

I believe that the business man understands this much better than the ecclesiastic, and the ecclesiastic understands it much better than the statesman. Republics rarely get efficiency in government, because they cannot always enforce the basic rules that it requires. Influence counts too much for one thing. The self-seeker has too much chance. Favoritism has opportunities that are not present anywhere else. To have an efficient



government, we would have to demand an absolute monarchy. In other words, we would have to model the state after the business corporation; for the lack of efficiency is the weakness of republics. This weakness is always a danger and it can only be removed by dragging others into it. Since republics never want to become monarchies, their only safety is in making republics out of monarchies. If a monarchy were established in any great state of the Western Hemisphere, it would be a menace not only to the prosperity, but to the very existence of every republic on the Western Hemisphere. The Monroe Doctrine is a very good example of a nation recognizing its own weaknesses. The test of anyone is his work, and the test of his work is the result. It is for the superior to see that the means are as worthy as the end.

A certain Pope managed to select the most beautiful title ever taken by a ruler in this world. He called himself "Servant of the Servants of God". Here is an acknowledgment from one of the greatest of men that rule and service practically amount to the same thing. Men are selected to rule only for the purpose of advancing the interests of their fellow-men, which means that they are merely in the service of their fellow-men. The trappings, the pomp, the dignity that go with government, are only necessary on the

same principle that liveries are necessary. A democracy is a great thing if people would first learn how to be democrats; but the real reason why democracies are not entirely successful is because perverse human nature insists on forgetting that service means dignity as well as responsibility, that "to serve is to reign". No democracy can exist amongst ignorant people, because the mental training is not there to make them understand and use their responsibilities intelligently. No democracy is possible amongst an irreligious people, because there is no higher sanction than themselves for public service. No democracy is possible amongst a sinful people, because one sin breeds another; and soon, by the very weakness of the people, the state is corrupted for the sake of individuals.

To be a good servant-ruler over the small things is to have the reward later on of being placed over what is great. The parable told in Holy Scripture about the three servants who were made rulers over their masters' talents, like all of Christ's parables applies universally. Since rule and service mean responsibility, they call for vigilance, activity, honesty, fairness and *results*. When you are placed over others, look upon each one of your employees as a person you are training for future leadership. The first

requisite for you is to secure confidence in yourself. You cannot secure confidence in yourself by antagonizing your employees through irritableness, dishonesty and unfairness. If you expect those under you to be cheerful and happy in their work, be cheerful and happy yourself. If you want to be met with a smile in the morning, have one of your own on hand for early use. An even-tempered superior is the best kind of a superior to get along with. You know where such a person stands, and he radiates confidence. The meanest thing you could say about a superior is that he "meant well" as an apology for his occasional outbreaks. It really does not make any difference whether he "meant well" or not. He did not *act well*, and that's the thing that counts. I do not admire the superior who carries his good nature to the point where he thinks he ought to be always cracking jokes and telling stories, to make those under him believe that he really is a good-natured person. There is more solid good-nature in a merry twinkle of the eye than in all the stories in a joke book. Stories take time, which is precious. A smile and a twinkle take no time. Any fool can tell a story; but nobody can look kind when he is not kind, and deceive anyone.

Honesty and fair play, which, after all, amount to about the same thing, are appreciated more

than any other virtue in a superior; and it is right here that a man or a woman in a position of importance has to constantly keep examining his or her conscience. The easiest thing in the world, is to let yourself get the habit of judging what is good for others by what you like yourself. It is pretty hard for a farmer to answer the nod of a passer-by who assures him that it is a "fine day", when the farmer knows that it is not a fine day *for him*, because his land needs rain. Everything in God's world works out for the best and for the general good; but individuals rarely can think of a general rule when they are hit themselves. As an example: there is not really any argument for divorce from the standpoint of the general good. From that standpoint divorce is a curse to the world and a curse to the human race. Every argument, therefore, that you hear in its favor is a selfish argument, because it is an argument for the individual case. It is merely the lack of logic in the national mind that allows divorce to continue. This logic, however, is not lacking when it comes to the treatment of another kind of criminal—the one who commits murder. If you consider the murderer only as an individual, he should not be hanged or put in jail for life, because it is not going to do *him* any good. But he is not hanged or jailed for his own sake, but for the sake of society—for the general

good. Here is where the public mind works logically. In judging others and their actions, try to get a little of the logic required for the general mind, and consider the work and deeds of your subordinates from the standpoint of the results you are expecting for the business or cause, rather than for the results to yourself as a private individual.

As a matter of fact, *you* do not amount to very much. You are only a cog in a wheel. It is not even the wheel that counts, but the machine; not even the machine but the product. For a machine to function well, every cog has to be doing its work honestly. Iron cogs usually do; human cogs do not. The trouble with human cogs is always the fact that they become so selfish that they put their own personal feeling in place of what should be the general feeling. The easiest way to be fair with subordinates is to realize that they too are part of the machine, and in their own way are just as necessary as the other part of it. Of course, no big institution can get along without a head; but it would be a sorry sort of a head that had no members beneath it. Some of the most brilliant men in this world died as the result of neglecting a little lump somewhere on their bodies that finally turned into a cancer. Some of the biggest movements and institutions in the world died, because the head had not honesty

enough, or brains enough, to consider the general good.

The easiest road a superior can take to success is the realization of the fact of his own service. The easiest way to realize that fact is by striving always to make one's own mind a part of the general mind. The easiest way to do that is by looking up to God. How admirably every part of His works functions, when its functioning is not interfered with by the only servant who has been given intelligence and free will. The seasons come and go; the leaves die and are reborn; the rain falls, and the sun shines; the earth stores its unused treasures away; the ground produces and rests until it regains its forces; the lower animals serve their turn; everything in nature, except man, runs like a clock. But man has free will and in that resembles God, and God gave Him the gift of intelligence. He has the power, therefore, to interfere if he wants to do so; but when he uses it wrongfully, he gets in the way of the harmony of creation. He would not if he kept looking up to God. We would not be *dreaming* of the millennium if all men acted as they know God wants them to act; if they could keep selfishness out of their conduct and were part and parcel of God's machine. We would not err if we tried to imitate the perfections that we know are in God; or at least we would not err

greatly enough to keep so much injustice in the world. Banish injustice and you banish sin. No man can be just and selfish at the same time. That is a supreme law which admits of no exceptions.





## IX

### OTHER PEOPLE

THE world is a great ocean beneath which there are innumerable fishing banks. Death is the shore at which we unload what we have taken, at the feet of God.

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MEN respect their fellow-men for their good qualities, not for their spendings.

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TAKE everybody's good intentions for granted—but watch your step.



## OTHER PEOPLE

*My dear Jack:*

It is generally supposed that a man's "family" consists only of very near relatives. I would, however, call these a man's *intimate* family. His real family consists of his relatives, his friends and his enemies; because all of these have more or less close relations with him, and are more or less responsible for influencing his career. Outside of this family stands the great mass of people with whom he is going to come into business and social relations. The Scriptures call this great body a man's "neighbors". It is a good name for them. I suppose that I should give them the same general name; but, for no particular reason, I have fallen into the habit of calling them the "Other People".

Although for the success of any man or woman a great deal depends upon the way he or she treats friends and enemies, nevertheless I think more depends upon the way the Other People are treated. There are more of the Other People, and all are indifferent to you until they need you. Because they are indifferent to you until

that time, and must then go to you, or then listen to you, they are somewhat like judges of your case, unprejudiced by affection or by hatred. They are the people likely to take you for what you are worth.

The Scripture says: "Cast thy bread upon the running waters: for after a long time thou shalt find it again." No one can very well improve the counsels of the Scriptures; yet everybody tries, if not to improve them, at least to adapt them. I am like the rest, and my adaptation of this text is: "Cast your cake upon the waters; it will attract the fishes and make fat those that come into your net." We are all of us out fishing with nets for something. This world is a great ocean beneath which there are innumerable fishing banks. Death is the shore at which we unload what we have taken, at the feet of God. Most of us are hoping to land "big fish", that is to say, to do big things. It is perfectly legitimate for us to have such hopes; provided we do not forget that what we catch must go to the shore for inspection. If we forget that, it is probable that we will not throw out the bad fish before landing, and thus keep the catch clean. Cast your cake upon the waters? Yes, for cake is sweeter than bread; but do not make it too sweet. In dealing with Other People it is best to treat them all as friends, but watch them as if they were enemies.

A school-master once said to me that the best way to manage boys is, "to think of them as little angels, but to watch them as little devils". An enlargement of this idea is a rather good rule in dealing with men. Kindness, courtesy, fairness, honesty, candor, all can be brought into play; but never forget that the Other People have nets out too; and their success does not depend upon giving you what they catch. The most you have a right to expect from them, in fairness and justice, is a chance to moor your boat where the fishing is good, provided it does not hurt their own chances.

Some people seem to imagine that they have a right to get presents of fish from their neighbors' catches. It is here that trouble begins. They haven't any such right. They only have a right to a fair chance. Such people are commonly called "grafters" and "pikers". There is nothing so contemptible and pitiful in life as to see an able-bodied and talented man trying to live off his neighbors, with his hand eternally out to beg and his mouth perpetually open to complain. The worst habit in the world to get into is the habit of taking for yourself what you do not earn, of always looking for gifts. It is a form of stealing that hasn't exactly been condemned by the Ten Commandments, but is reprehensible because it injures the soul. It certainly makes the

man who practices it an object of contempt to others. Amongst Other People you find this specimen everywhere. In the street car he never puts his hand into his pocket to pay a fare; or, if he is shamed into doing it, he never has the change. He always drops in to see you at lunch time, or trumps up the excuse of an important conference so that you may invite him. He never goes to the theatre except at someone else's expense. If you play a game with him, he will never bet unless with inferior players; and then he is a willing "sport", and wants everybody to know it. Avoid this man. Never give way to the temptation to be like him. "Pay as you go"; be as good as the next man, but do not let the next man take advantage of your goodness. Above all, make up your mind that, if you cannot do your share in any company, it is not the company for you. Never mind assurances that your companions understand the situation, or that they really do not expect you to do as they do. If you accept favors thus you are not a companion; you are an inferior; you do not "belong".

Avoid patronizing the Other People by getting into a crowd and paying for everything. Many will let you do it; but in their hearts they are calling you a fool. Nobody respects a spender, and the word "good fellow", as it is commonly used, does not really mean anything good. The

average "good fellow" is not a good fellow at all. He is a person so full of human respect that he is trying to buy the respect of humans, which cannot be bought. Men respect their fellow-men for their good qualities, not for their spendings. I read this bit of truth once, and it has stuck to me ever since: "When a man begins to neglect his family, people begin to call him a good fellow." Indeed, I would rather have a man call me a thief than a good fellow; because at least a thief may be physically and mentally a strong and courageous man, though weak spiritually. A "good fellow" is often a thief in a meaner way. He squanders what duty requires him to use for his family. The only sort of courage he has is too often the courage to beat his wife and abuse his children when they ask for what they are entitled to have. For heaven's sake, don't be a "good fellow". Be an honest man. Be self-respecting in your own kind of society. Let everybody know that you stand on your own feet; and that, when you give charity, you give it to those in need and not to encourage vice and laziness.

Avoid the man popularly known as a "climber". He has only one desire in seeking your society: to secure the social prestige he can get out of you or the people with whom you are connected. He is the easiest man in the world to

discover, because he is always telling you of the important people he has met and what they said to him. He looks cheap even though he wears the very best of clothes. In some way that you do not quite understand, he may consider your acquaintanceship an asset; and he will seek it for that reason only. This is the sort of a man who, while he does not rely upon himself at all, yet will often get into the society he desires to enter; only, however, to find out that it would have been much better for him had he stayed out. Society usually has a lot of parasites of this kind. They amuse society, and society wants to be amused. At every king's court in the olden days, there was a jester wearing cap and bells. Anybody who was deformed enough, or funny enough, could be a jester. He mixed freely with lords and ladies, and with royalty itself. But who would want to be a jester? We have no jesters with cap and bells in modern society; but there are those who take the jester's place splendidly. Never be tempted to "climb". If you succeed, it will be to your sorrow. Society seeks those who naturally belong to it; and the society you enter unsought, you enter either at the cost of your self-respect, or it is not worth your consideration. Water will find its level and so will people.

One of the most expressive words in the dictionary of slang is the word "fourflusher".



There are more than enough fourflushers in the world. He is a fourflusher who is trying to spend what he does not possess, to live where he has no right to live, to eat and drink what he has not the money to pay for, to be what he is not and could not be. The fourflusher thinks he succeeds. He never does with the "people who know", for his very extravagance exposes him; and, like the "climber", he turns into a jester,—only in his case he is an object of laughter and contempt for a wider range of people. The "climber" is often satisfied to be thought a fool in a limited circle, that he may be thought a wise man in general. A fourflusher has a harder row to hoe, because more people find him out, and therefore more people laugh at him. If you are only a clerk say that you are a clerk; and do not, in a grandiloquent way, mention that you are "connected with" such and such a house. Do not boast about your friendships or your attainments. It takes a genius to deceive with that; indeed, it takes a genius to be a successful fourflusher. Thank God you show no sign of being a genius along that line. If one insists on being a fourflusher, it is better for him to be found out and found out quickly.

In dealing with the Other People, one of the most important things to get rid of is prejudice; but in the case of a young Catholic, it ought to

be an easy thing to get rid of. Prejudice breeds hate, and hate is the destruction of peace. Your Church, it is true, teaches with certainty on matters of faith and morals; but the fact that you *know* does not give you a right to be prejudiced against others who do not believe as you do. It is not true that almost every horse has a blind side, but it is true that almost every man has. If men had no blind sides, they would all be perfect; and none of us is perfect. There are some things that Other People know well which I could not learn in a million years—trigonometry, for example; and there are some things that are clear to other men's vision that are not clear to mine. You have religious certainty partially because of the chances you had in your youth to learn the "truth that makes you free". The Other People may not have had the same chance; but they *think* they are right just as surely as you *know* you are. They are honest, and therefore you owe them respect; for you owe respect to honesty wherever you meet it. Prejudice is nothing more than pre-judging, as the word indicates. Now, you have no right to prejudge. God is the Judge, and you are to appear before His court in company with all the Other People. What are you to gain by judging those about you before their time? Prejudice is not going to put a dollar in your pocket, or give you one happy day, or one

moment of honest satisfaction. It is not going to help the Other People. It is not going to make the world any happier; on the contrary, it is going to make the world more miserable. It is going to hurt the Other People and it is going to hurt you. Avoid prejudice. If you are invited to join a society that boasts of the charity to its members, and the help it is going to give you in business, or in other activities, think twice before you join it. It may be built upon prejudice. It may be contrary to the *spirit* of Christ, to the charity that should exist amongst all the children of God.

A consideration of societies very naturally arises in referring to your relations with the Other People. Through societies you meet them in numbers, and you deal with them not only as individuals, but in the mass. There is a useful side to societies; but the moment they become selfish the usefulness has passed away. The moment societies cause a young man to depend upon anyone but himself and the grace of God, they become dangerous. If it will make you happier to be in a society, by all means, join it; provided it is not of the dangerous kind; but if in joining you have the idea that the society is going to help you climb, to give you a position that you will not have to work for, keep out of it. Above all else, do not wear badges. Avoid lodge watch

charms and buttons. Here, of course, you have the laugh on your old uncle who has a rosette on every coat; but let me say that, while the society button is a possible sign of the fourflusher, the rosette is at least supposed to be a badge of distinction. The button is merely a vulgar substitute for a decoration. Decorations are given by nations for distinguished services rendered. In our democratic country we have no decorations, except the Medal of Honor; but Congress has recognized certain marks of war service, so that in this country, as in other countries, the rosette means a decoration won by service to the nation. While the wearing of it may indicate some pride which perhaps a man should not have, nevertheless it comes close to being a legitimate pride. A button represents nothing. It is not an honor to belong to a fraternal society. It is often the opposite. It is not a mark of distinction, since anybody may win that sort of a badge by the payment of money; but, above all, it is not the mark of a strong man. You never saw a society button on the coat of a statesman. You never saw one on the coat of a great painter, or a great sculptor, or a great writer. Society buttons are so common that distinction goes to the man who does not wear one. But over and above all this stands the fact that a society button, or badge, is a sign that the man who wears it is depending upon

something outside of himself. It is therefore a mark of weakness, a hand stretched forth to beg. As any part of your body which is exercised becomes strong through use, so your own personality will become strong from within by using it. A man who lies in bed when he is not sick, finds himself weak when he gets out; and therefore in a way he has become sicker. A man who habitually uses a crutch that he does not need will ultimately need it. A man who uses the crutch of a society in business or social life, weakens himself just that much. One sign of a strong character is found in buttonless lapels and plain watch chains.

In dealing with Other People take everybody's good intention for granted—but watch your step, for good intentions may be like the Birnim wood in Macbeth, only severed trees carried to deceive. Be slow to believe that any man is wrong, and never give in to the idea that he is until you have certainty. Even when you are certain do not talk about it to others. Do not, in fact, as I already told you, talk about anybody, except to speak good of them. Hunt for the good thing to say. Look upon every person you meet as a man or woman with trials and troubles like your own, trying hard to make his or her way, to do the right thing, and in the end to get to the right place. Reverence their reputations as you reverence

your own. Be kind and smiling to everybody, but slap nobody on the back. If you find anyone you particularly like be chary about prying into his life or you may get a shock. Trust everybody but do not put temptation in anyone's way unless you have to. And do not flatter people; but remember that, while it is true "honey catches more flies than vinegar"—and also more bears—neither flies nor bears can live on an exclusive honey diet.

## X

### THE WORLD

It was a mark of divine wisdom in Christ that he foresaw that the world was going to do to His followers what it had done to Him.

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DON'T worry if you find that the world is against you. If the world were for you, you would have cause for worry.

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KNOWLEDGE alone does not give us discipline; but the getting of knowledge does.





## THE WORLD

*My dear Jack:*

Yesterday I was glancing over the editorial pages of a New York weekly paper whose chief reason for existence seems to be enmity to "the things that are". Naturally, the Catholic Church is included. A rather vicious editorial was headed, "The Catholic Church against the World". I smiled when I read that title. It was intended as a "knock", but like most "knocks", it succeeded in being a "boost". As a matter of fact, to any reader of the life of Christ it must be apparent that Christianity of necessity is arrayed against the world; and it naturally follows that the world will always be arrayed against Christianity. The Church of the poor is the Church of Christ; for to the wedding feast came the blind and the lame. The "big men" of the world were quick to refuse their own invitations. The Church the world hates must be the true Church; for Christ constantly warned against the world, and even went so far as to say to His followers: "Fear not if the world hates you." It was a mark of divine wisdom in Christ that He

foresaw that the world was going to do to His followers what it had done to Him.

All the above was preliminary to telling you, Jack, that the world has a silken cord around every human being, one especially around youth, and it is constantly pulling us away from the things that are good. The pull was never stronger perhaps than it is today. As the world becomes richer, worldlings become more insistent in demanding the comforts that riches alone can buy. As democracy advances beyond the zone of safety, the world demands more and more that all restraint be thrown aside. As the world becomes more "civilized", in the poorest sense of the word, it demands more and more that men take their pleasures here, and pay less attention to hopes of the hereafter. The pull of the world is away from pain, from discomfort, from labor, from effort; in other words, from the very things that have been responsible for the comforts and the achievements in which this same world rejoices. The world is against the discipline which gave it all its great achievements. The big demand today is for a freedom of its own construction. Everybody asks "to live his or her own life", which is another way of saying that everybody is becoming selfish. We are in an age of "isms" that are mostly aimed at giving us a "good time", and end in giving us the "blues."

A few days ago, while driving outside the city, I noticed two very large fields. One had evidently been lying fallow for a great many years; but the other was full of waving corn. Instantly the process that worked on both was pictured to my mind. It was evident that the fallow field had once been used for raising hay. There were still some patches of hay in it, or rather there was some tall grass, mixed up with shrubs of all kinds, saplings, wild flowers, weeds. When the owner began to neglect that land, blowing time had come for the dandelions; and a wonderful number of the little white balloons, with seeds in the baskets, burst over the field. Each basket dropped on a blade of grass; then the rain came and washed the seeds into the moist earth. Between the blades the dandelions sprang up, but always at the expense of the useful grass. Later came the rag-weed, the golden rod and the poisoned sumac; and then countless other seeds, each looking for a foothold. It took years to do it, but when the years had passed the field was a picture of the world without Christ, of a "free world", of a world without restraints. The weeds are, of course, a survival of the strongest, but the strongest in the worldly sense is not always the desirable. Every plant in the field was free to do its best. Each one of them did its best; and so even to look at the result, causes pain.

The other field had nothing in it but corn—beautiful corn, grown high and with cobs well covered with nourishment. There was not a thing about that corn that could not be put to use, even down to its roots. It occupied the field to the exclusion of everything else. What process produced this splendid result? The farmer had gone into that field with a plow, scored it a foot deep and broke it into sods. Then he went in again and harrowed out all the weeds. After that he went over the field with a pulverizer. He smashed the remaining sods to pieces, so that there was nothing left but the soft yielding soil. Only then did he plant. When the corn came up, he again went to cutting and slashing at the earth. He pulverized it over again with the hoe. He took out every noxious plant that could hurt; and he went back to the same task again and again. So the useful thing was done.

The Christian Church is the mystical body of Christ; and Christians are the useful things that grow in the field. How was the field first prepared? It was prepared by the breaking of the flesh of Christ Himself. Like the field He was scored and plowed with pain. There wasn't an inch of His body left without a wound, and not a spot, no matter how small, without the red but glorious stain of His blood. Then from His own lips fell the seed of the Word, out of which

spring the Christian lives that are to be “gathered into His barns”. Again and again the mystical body of Christ is cut and scored for the cultivation of souls. All the while the rain of God’s grace falls on the field and on the plants to give them strength and nourishment. Thus are souls grown for God.

The great lesson that comes out of all this is that of the utility of pain. Christianity is built upon pain. We are growing constantly upon pain. Love is pain. We were given human life in the pain of our mothers. We go into Eternal Life through the pain of death. We are kept in God’s ways by pain. I might even say that we cannot grow to full Christian stature without pain.

But since the world is against pain, since it is looking only for comforts, it follows that Christianity, born in pain and living in pain and to die to the earth in pain, is against the world. But this is not actually so hard as it seems, for Christianity alone understands what is beyond the gates of the Great Pain; and knows that the plowing and the harrowing and the hoeing must be done to produce the result.

If you would be a success even in the world, by which I mean the kind of a success that begins in this world but grows into the next, do not shrink from discipline; therefore, do not fear pain over-

much. Nothing you can do will take either one out of your life; but you may do very much to get good out of both. Discipline in reality epitomizes the whole idea of education. Sidney Smith, referring to knowledge, says: "It is worth while in the days of our youth to strive hard for *this great discipline.*" But knowledge alone does not give us any discipline, while the getting of knowledge does. A truly educated man is not the one who speaks many languages and knows all branches of science. He is rather the one who has profited by his efforts to learn these things, as well as the higher things of God, to the extent that he is disciplined. The truly educated man is the man who has mastered himself. A river without banks would not be a river at all. Steam unconfined is worthless as a power. Thoughts without reason are useless. Love without respect is base. But the banks are the discipline of the river, the cylinder of the steam, reason of thought and respect of love. The big thing that religion does for a man or a woman is in the soul discipline that it gives. There is no education without that. There is only one step between knowledge and barbarism. The French revolutionists rejecting discipline, took barbarism, and drenched their country with blood.

Do not try the easy path if you would make a success in life and a greater success in death. No

one ever succeeded who picked the easy path. Some people are placed upon it and like it so well that they will not seek another. These are mostly the unfortunate sons of foolish millionaires. The biggest curse a boy could have is the fortune that puts him on the easy path and holds him there. The greatest gift he can get is the chance to suffer. It is an unfortunate thing that so many who get that chance, do not take the fruit out of suffering, or have not the grace to do it, and so drift and drift until they end disgruntled failures.

Don't worry if you find, therefore, that the world is against you. If the world were for you, you would have cause for worry; but when it is against you, then you may know that you are on the right track. The best of it is that, even though the world is against you, it cannot prevent your succeeding; for all men who win out in the battle of life succeed in spite of the world. The world hates to confess that you are right; but it is forced to make the confession, because it does not trust its own. When, even for the protection of its own pleasures it demands honesty, it knows that it must go outside of itself to find it. When it wants greatness, it knows that true greatness is not found in its cabarets. When it demands genius, it knows that its own kind of genius is like a poppy, brilliant enough in color, but full

of a deadly soporific. All the world's blossoms are poison-flowers. Blossoms of the God who is against the world are less brilliant in color, perhaps, to the eye of the world; but their perfume is the sweetest and it lasts through eternity.

Perhaps to the minds of many it may sound strange that I should counsel you to love pain; but when I say "pain" I mean all the things that make for discipline; the unpleasant things that prepare you, the hard work that wearies you, the good thoughts that shut the ears of your soul from what men think are the sweetest melodies. This is the pain I mean. But even out of physical pain you may get many things for your good. You may rise triumphantly above it. You may make it a small thing in your life instead of letting it fill your life. Above all you may make it count for fertility, and, because of its plowing and harrowing and pulverizing and hoeing of your soul, you may, out of it, grow into vigor and strength.



## XI CITIZENSHIP

ALREADY we are beginning to talk of a "wider democracy" than was planned by our fathers, not realizing that the "wider democracy" of tomorrow may be only a swinging back of the pendulum to absolute monarchy.

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IT is important to realize that when monarchies fail it is because of the *monarch*; but when democracies fail it is because of the *people*.

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POVERTY is a cement for democracy which riches corrode.



## CITIZENSHIP

*My dear Jack:*

The proper time for talking to a young man about citizenship is when he has reached the age of twenty—one year before he assumes citizen's duties, when his mind has already matured sufficiently to make his thinking intelligent; but with twelve months ahead to leisurely consider advice.

The fatal errors of the age arise chiefly from the shallowness of the modern mind, which is too ready to accept ideas merely because they are new and interesting. The world today is eternally hungry for novelty, which unfortunately it takes for discovery. We exalt the age in which we live with very good reason, for it has produced many really good things; but we forget that we purchased at a high price what good we have. We seldom think of the multitude of ruins that surround our modern skyscraper. Fearing to go too slow, we have raced. Our own nation trembles at every blast. We are not ready to admit, even to ourselves, that our democracy is going to endure. We *say* that it is, but inwardly we doubt our own optimism. Already we are beginning

to talk of a "wider democracy" than that which was planned by our fathers, not realizing that the "wider democracy" of tomorrow may be only a swinging back of the pendulum to absolute monarchy. Our government upheld the recent Mexican revolution, but did not discover until it was too late that it intended to supplant democracy by socialism. Socialism was actually established in Yucatan, and upheld by one-man power. The Church knew all along that the trend toward socialism meant a trend toward absolute monarchy. It makes very little difference practically, whether you call the ruler a monarch or a president. It makes very little difference whether you call a government by the name of kingdom or republic. It is not title that counts; it is the power. I very much fear that the "wider democracy" our day looks for will, when it arrives, be the end of democracy of any kind.

It is perfectly true that our democracy has not worked out ideally, but that should not be taken as proving it a failure. Monarchies have not worked out ideally, and they have the advantage of a sounder philosophy behind them. But it is important to realize that, when monarchies fail it is because of the *monarch*; but when democracies fail, it is because of the *people*. So the failure of a democracy is something to be regretted

far more than the failure of a monarchy. It is bad enough for a king to sell the liberties of his people; but it is worse for a people to sell the liberties they had bought so dearly for themselves.

We have a clear field for democracy in North America, for we have two, at least, that are working out well. I refer, of course, to the United States, and Canada. The United States is a democracy under its proper name. Canada is a democracy masquerading under the name of a royal colony. Both have been successful. Their continued success depends on all their people rather than on an individual ruler. We have the opportunity to prove the very attractive theory of democracy quite sound; and, in proving it, we work for the happiness of millions.

The greatest obstacle to the success of a democracy is that it depends in a too impersonal sort of way on a very large body of citizens. The responsibility, therefore, does not weigh heavily enough upon each individual. It is much easier to have a successful Republic of San Marino, with its handful of citizens, none wealthy but each taking a real and personal interest in it, than to have a successful Republic of the United States of America, depending upon the rather vague affection of many chiefly anxious to pile

up fortunes for themselves. Wealth inevitably makes for careless citizenship. A significant fact is, that the well-to-do cannot be brought out to vote on a rainy day. Poverty is a cement for democracy which riches corrode. A small population keeps loyalty concentrated and effective, while millions spread the responsibility out too thin. Millions are not an asset to a democracy, but rather a very great and a very dangerous liability. When, as in the United States, we have wealth and a hundred million citizens, it becomes all the more necessary for individuals to consider their duties well and often, trying to make up for the inevitable delinquency of their fellows.

The importance of thinking deeply over the obligations of responsible citizenship is great. It is no light thing to take on one the burden of the ballot; and the fact that so many share the burden is an added, not a lessened weight. There are too many who hold their duties lightly, to permit the serious to shirk. There are too many who depend for their well-being on the action of individual citizens to permit those who know, to act as if they did not know. I counsel you to approach the coming responsibilities carefully and to assume them very thoughtfully.

Neither can I too much urge upon you to distrust theories until they have been tried, but

never to dismiss them untouched. Outside of revealed truth and the truths of natural religion, all progress has come from theorizing. Theories have a way of rejecting themselves, or proving themselves, if you give them a chance. When they prove themselves, they become accepted principles and facts. The common mind, if you let it work its way, does not go far wrong, since it is always at least open to conviction. Selfishness, however, often swerves it from the proper path. Sloth and sin have the same effect upon it. Right does not always win in an election, any more than in a battle; but when right loses, it is because honest thinking was not done, responsibilities were slurred over. God has a way of letting the common mind, when deceived, run to disaster, so that out of it a fresh start can be made. Once the common mind goes wrong, it needs disaster to set it right, for the down-grade always stops with a bump at the bottom of the hill.

You will hear it said that every citizen should vote. Some governments interfere with individual liberty to the extent of *forcing* citizens to vote. It is true and it is not true that every citizen should vote. Every great obligation is reached only by piling minor obligations on top of one another. The obligation of voting presupposes the obligation of honest voting. The

obligation of honest voting presupposes the obligation of conscientious consideration. The citizen who has not fulfilled his minor obligations should refrain from thrusting his ignorance into the solution of a great question. No one has a right to vote until he has made himself capable of judging. Those who have not made themselves capable of judging should leave voting to better men. When we utter the commonplace that "every citizen should go to the polls", we are merely saying that every citizen should be an honest and thoughtful citizen.

The citizens of a democracy are judges, sitting in the court of public opinion on questions that concern even the very existence, as well as the prosperity of their country, and the happiness of its people. Judges may err, but should never err willfully. A citizen, therefore, cannot let a political party do his thinking for him and remain an upright judge. He cannot shift his responsibility over on anybody else. Political parties are necessary, just as lawyers are necessary in the courts; but they are not judges, they are pleaders. The judge has no right to go down, mingle with the lawyers, and take sides in a case that he is trying. The really honest citizen is never a partisan. It is not a disgrace to be "on the fence", for "on the fence" means to be on the bench. My counsel to you is to stay on the



bench when you arrive on it, and be free in fact as well as in name. Never vote for any party unless it has made good its case. Bring your conscience along with you to every election. It was Henry Clay who said: "I had rather be right *than* be President." We can improve that saying by adding; "Still better is it to be right *and* President." So I had rather be right *than* victorious, but it is better to be right *and* victorious.



## XII

### CLEANLINESS

It is quite useless to tell a young man not to narrate filthy stories or to blaspheme, if he has the filth in his mind and the thoughts of blasphemy in his soul.

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TRACE out all the failures in the world and you will find that impurity has the largest toll of victims.

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HE who guards his thoughts also guards his tongue.



## CLEANLINESS

*My dear Jack:*

This letter is not about bathing, in spite of its title. Neither you nor your fellow modern young men need to be informed on that subject. Our day has exalted the bath, but I do not think we are going quite so far as the old Romans. We are too busy for one thing. The worst of us have to take our pleasures in a hurry; so the old Romans must still remain in a bathing class by themselves.

The unfortunate thing about the old Romans was the fact that, though clean without, they were foul within; and so they succeeded in attaching to the idea of a clean skin the idea of a filthy mind. When Christianity arrived there was a revolt which drove some good men to the opposite extreme, not because the saintly people loved dirt, but because they loved mortification. Had paganism not made cleanliness an excuse for luxury and vice, certain Christians would never have been affrighted at the bath. Now it is known that there is a "golden mean". If "cleanliness" is not really "next to godliness", it is at least not opposed to godliness. I rather admire

some of the saints for the sacrifices they made to combat an evil that was much worse than dirt. Had Rome been dirty, I question if she would have fallen so soon. The bath had more to do with her fall than the Goths. The legacy of the luxury bath to the Vandals who slept out their strength in their villas around Carthage was the appropriate revenge of the conquered.

Luxury breeds uncleanness of heart and soul; but there is an uncleanness of heart and soul that precedes luxury. This is the uncleanness that kills all that is good in a man, the surest road to absolute failure. Ponder often on the Beatitude: "Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God."

It is good to have the blessing put on the clean of *heart*; for that implies interior cleanliness, and gets us to the root of the virtue of purity at once. Purity is within, though the manifestation of it is without. It is quite useless to tell a young man not to narrate filthy stories, or to blaspheme, if he has the filth in his mind and the thoughts of blasphemy in his soul. Doctors to-day are getting away from drugs so as to attack the root rather than the manifestations of disease. The doctors of the soul did that from the beginning. As "the wish is father to the thought," they sought to change the unworthy desires of men by substituting the desire for

God. To cure impurity it is necessary to work on the heart. The heart will take care of the mind, and the mind will, by God's grace which strengthens the will, take care of the actions.

There is one kind of flight that is not cowardice. It is flight from the occasions of sin, from evil and impure thoughts. This flight is bravery, the bravery that wins. Impurity cannot be trifled with. It is too insidious an enemy of God and man. Flee the very thought of it. Avoid the occasions of it. Put a guard on every sense through which it may enter the soul. It is like a raging flood when you fail to stop the first break in your defences. The smallest trickle through the dyke is dangerous. The flood itself kills every good thought and aspiration. It overflows from one soul to another. It ruins races and peoples and nations. Trace out all the failures of the world and you will find that impurity has the largest toll of victims. Would you swallow a tiny germ of cholera just because it is so small? Then, do not entertain a bad thought because it is so weak. The cholera germ is not small in its *power*; and the evil thought is *anything* but weak.

He who guards his thoughts also guards his tongue. Blasphemy is, like all sins, the depth of folly. No one ever profited by it to the value of a penny. It gets you nowhere. It gives you nothing. It stamps you a boor, a fool or a knave

to clean-spoken people. There is no reason in it. There is no consolation. It leaves only bitterness after it to the one who is its slave, and only hurt for those who hear it. When the Jews stoned blasphemers they inflicted a just penalty on them; for a blasphemer is a rotten apple in the barrel and should be thrown out to save the rest.

Be clean for God's sake. Be clean for your own sake. Be clean for your neighbor's sake. Be clean for your country's sake. Be clean of body, clean of heart, clean of lips, clean of thought, clean of mind. You need very little more than that to be a success, even in a worldly way. When a man is thus clean, it shows that he has an intellect. I would take my chances for other things a thousand times more readily with the clean man than with the filthy one. If the latter had the genius of Cicero I would yet not want a shameless man around me. He cannot do enough for me in a worldly way to offset the harm his very presence causes. One of the worst terrors in the idea of Hell is its associations; for by losing the Supreme Cleanliness, we drop to an eternal contact with all that is supremely unclean.



XIII  
LOVE

THERE isn't anything funnier, and yet there isn't anything more appealing, than a boy or a girl suffering and happy in "love"; and yet there isn't anything quite so fearful as that same love when it has discovered itself to itself.

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A BABY is attracted by a shining ornament, and a youth is attracted by bright eyes. Both may be fools in their own way.



## LOVE

*My dear Jack:*

I can almost see you smile when you open this letter and almost hear the whispered question: "How can forty-six years of inexperience teach modern twenty anything about the great lesson of loving?" Yes, I know. Love, you think, was cut out of my life; while to you it is not only permissible, but much to be desired. But how do you know that it was cut out of my life? Mortal eyes have not searched hearts; and the great bulk of the love that has been in the world, and is still in the world, has been, and is, love unconfessed. Indeed, I think the strongest loves are those that never, by the touch of speech, were released from the heart. It may be that I know a great deal more about it than you do; though in another way. One thing I am willing to confess: of what the world calls "love", I have known nothing by experience.

But if I have not in manhood had any experience, at least stern duty has always forced observation. A pastor very soon gets to fear the thing that seems so often to be stronger than God Himself. He knows what sends many of the

young people, who owe much to his careful teachings, straight on the downward path to perdition. Every pastor has remembrances of long argumentations, in which he had the right side, with reason, logic, self-interest and a great many other things supporting him; and on the other side nothing but "love"—but it was love that won. He remembers very well that he entered into the fight hopeless, knowing in advance that he was beaten, but fighting on for the sake of duty. "Love", as the world knows it, has been a will-o'-the-wisp that beckoned many lost ones into the everglades.

But, after all, is that thing really love? It is not. Some people cannot understand how reason and love could ever go together; yet I cannot understand love without reason.

To show you what I mean I am going to ask you to consider the two kinds of love, both of which inevitably push themselves on the attention: that of husband and wife, and that of parent and child. Which is the stronger and the more enduring? My observation tells me that it is the latter. The love of husband and wife changes, with fading beauty, into a wonderful companionship, that has a charm all its own. It lasts less as *love* than as *understanding*. It steadies into something reasonable, having a definite end in view; and dies only when the reason

is quarreled out of it. I have no hesitation in saying that the emotion immediately preceding this understanding is not love. It is passion, chastened and made somewhat beautiful by respect. I think that the boy or girl stage of love is very beautiful, because it is a love that is full of fear to touch and spoil. There isn't anything funnier, and yet there isn't anything more appealing, than a boy or a girl suffering, and happy, in "love"; and yet there isn't anything quite so fearful as that same love when it has discovered itself to itself. It is then that passion steps in. I have come to the melancholy conclusion that too many mistake passion for something better. The love that begins pure, that passes through the second stage when it is not so pure, and then mellows into understanding, is the love that, while it peoples the earth, nevertheless cares for the earth, and gives birth to the great things. To my mind this love is never as strong as the love of parent for child, which will dare all and do all; which is constantly reasonable and thoughtful, and in which there is never a selfish thought. The wife may "love" her husband because he is good to her; because he makes it easy for her; because he is considerate of her; because he is generous with her; because he is an ideal to her. The husband may love the wife for reasons that are akin to her reasons for loving him. But the love of a

mother for her child is not because of the child's strength or power to help her, but rather because of its very weakness and its very helplessness and its very powerlessness. Therefore, to me the thought has often come that love is a growth passing, after a stage of preparation, through three epochs: the epoch of preparation, the epoch of passion, the epoch of understanding, and then, at its best, spending itself, and becoming therefore real, on what it produces.

I do not know if I have made myself clear to you. I fear I have not, because I am not sure that I have made myself clear to myself; for the hardest thing that one can do is to express, even to oneself, the things that are of the spirit and the soul, and true love is of the spirit and the soul.

Feeling as I do about this supremely important matter, I would warn you to mistrust yourself; for youth is impressionable. It is youth that hurries through the woods to gather wild flowers, while age only walks thoughtfully through the gardens. A baby is attracted by a shining ornament and a youth is attracted by bright eyes. Both may be fools in their own way. To abandon oneself to love without any thought of the course that it inevitably must take, is an act of folly. But you say, "Perhaps it cannot be helped?" It *can* be helped, for even love is no excuse to lay aside reason and religion. Religion

says that love is placed upon earth for a good purpose, to replenish the earth. When it is understood that this is the purpose, reason steps in and then love will go to the great goal which is its best and purest, to the foot of the Throne.





## XIV

### THE PLAIN MAN

SOME people have been born to the purple; but they never wore it as if it fitted them.

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THE dress of a man or woman is ugly in proportion as it gets away from the natural.

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SAINTS are not exactly *different*; they are only right and normal.



## THE PLAIN MAN

*My dear Jack:*

For common sense, I commend you to get acquainted with the sayings of Abraham Lincoln. Most of them are delightful; some of them I keep with me always. Lincoln divides the human race very truly, and very quaintly, into two sections, one of which, the larger, comprises the "plain" people. It is not necessary for him to label the rest. "God," he said, "must have loved the plain people; He made so many of them." It is not necessary to be poor to be enrolled in the ranks of the plain people. There are many rich men who never had the desire to move out of the class of plain men. Some people have been born to the purple, but they never wore it as if it fitted them. The best of kings have remained "plain" men. Saint Louis, King of France, was the simplest of men. The most highly educated of the world have had "plain" men in plenty amongst them. This letter is to counsel you not even to attempt to be anything but a "plain man".

It is time we stopped using the word "plain"

as a reproach. It is true that to be plain means to be common; but it is not true that to be common means to be ugly. More often the opposite is true; for that which is plain is usually well ordered, and beauty is essentially an attribute of what is well ordered—a result of things existing, or being placed, so as to conform with fixed and proper standards. The plain things are usually the very beautiful things.

Contrary to the ideas of many, it is true that one must be a plain man or woman to be beautiful. No rouge can equal the tint of ordinary red blood showing through healthy skin. No trimming of the hair was ever half so beautiful as unbound tresses, flowing and free. Physical beauty in man does not concern itself with his gaudy clothes. What ugliness there is in his form is accounted for by what is abnormal in it.

The dress of a man or woman is ugly in proportion as it gets away from the natural. It is natural for women who usually stay in the home to throw over them garments made with little cutting, falling in graceful folds about them, such as the dresses and cloaks that were worn by the ancient Celtic and British women. The female form lends itself to this graceful draping, and women do not ordinarily live where the cold winds buffet and chill them. As the fashion in women's dress moves away from this simplicity

and plainness, it becomes ugly, because it offers the abnormal for admiration. Too much decoration succeeds only in concealing beauty. On a feast day the artistic Italian may tolerate bunting and drapery on the walls of St. Peter's; but he would not like St. Peter's were the draping and bunting to be left there permanently.

The plain man or woman thinks plain, normal thoughts. The cultivated orchard produces large, ruddy and beautiful apples, but such apples are only normal. They were produced by getting back to the rule and away from the exception. Wormy apples are the exception. Farmers who habitually have been neglecting their orchards have become accustomed to exceptions. But the normal apple, the plain apple, is always the beautiful one.

To live a plain life fits the plain man and woman, and keeps them plain. To live otherwise spoils the lines of the figure, and makes them abnormal and ugly. Obesity is a sign of overeating or disease. To eat when hungry, to drink when thirsty, to rest when tired, these are plain actions that produce results in physical beauty. To feed the soul as honestly with plain spiritual food as the body is fed with what it needs, is to produce the normal goodness, the soul's natural and beautiful state. Saints are not exactly *different*; they are only right and normal

It is not remarkable that he who lives in a palace and eats nightingales' tongues should be forced sometimes to fly to a hut in the woods or on the shore, and eat only what he can fish or shoot. His action is the natural protest of the plain man which the palace is killing in him, against the ugliness of his condition. It is a temporary assumption of control by the normal, and a temporary defeat for the ugly.

It is not to be wondered at that the plain man is loved. We shiver and frown at his opposite, when we shiver and frown at the dandy or the ragamuffin. We like the middle because it is the normal. We honor it even without noticing that we do so. The things we notice are often the things which disgust us; and sometimes the disgust is at ourselves, because we have noticed, or were enticed by them. The plain man is the world's man; so he always has been; but he also and always has been God's man; for what God hates in the world is what the world has done against His Will with itself and with His children. What God made was and is good. He loves the good. Yes! He loves the plain man as Lincoln said He did; for thus He made him, and thus He wills he should remain.

## XV

### THE ENTHUSIAST

By the Enthusiast have nations been born and by his hand have tyrants died. He has deluged the world with blood; but he has planted and watered the peace that gives life and plenty. He has done evil; but, too, he has loved justice. His name is a curse; but it has also been honored as a blessing. . . . He has crushed out the name of God, yet he has paused again to invoke it.





## THE ENTHUSIAST

*My dear Jack:*

Last night you said something about "Enthusiasm for one's work", and being an "Enthusiast". It set me thinking. I have heard so many things of the kind that I really must tell you today what I think of the Enthusiast; for I am his friend and admirer, but not the defender of his faults. You can only copy him if you are a genius. If you are not that, you are, however, in the happy position of being able to work up to the good and leave the bad alone.

Who is the Enthusiast? He is the conqueror and the king, the leader in every movement, whether good or bad, the blazer of every trail, the pathfinder into every jungle. His keel has furrowed the unknown seas, his alpenstock has marked the sides of every mountain and glacier, his spade has dug deepest into the earth, his mind has tried to encompass every problem, his zeal has converted millions to truth or perverted millions to error. Today he soars on wings into the air, seeking new outlets to his unquenchable fury of action. He has done all of the world's things

yet done that were worth doing. He is Progress personified.

Yet, over the desert his bones have whitened. The kindly moss has covered his dead body in the great forests, to hide the ugliness of its decay. The sea gives up neither its treasures nor its dead—so he is sleeping forever in the peaceful depths. He has encrimsoned the world's battlefields, and has found graves deep down where men take gold and silver from the bowels of the earth. Yet he lives and never learns. It is well it should be so. Progress would cease were he to think too deeply and learn too much from what he has suffered.

By the Enthusiast have nations been born and by his hand have tyrants died. He has deluged the world with blood; but has planted and watered the peace that gives life and plenty. He has done evil; but, too, he has loved justice. His name is a curse; but it has also been honored as a blessing. They have hanged him in chains to the gallows; and they have wept and would not be consoled, because they had led him forth to die. Yet he has often won more in dying thus than life could have given him. His eye has dropped tears for misery and has shot fires of joy for destruction. He burned the precious books of Alexandria, but gathered the Vatican's treasures of literature and art. He has swept whole tribes from a continent, but behold that continent be-

comes a new world to beckon the old onward and upward to the heights of achievement. He has crushed out the name of God, yet has he paused again to invoke it.

Of all men he is the most loved and the most hated; but he is hated oftener than he is loved, for the world must forget much about him to love him at all; must forget especially that he trampled on some of its cherished ideals. While he lives the Enthusiast must be disliked, because he is, of necessity, both thoughtless and selfish. He thinks too deeply of his work to realize his own lack of thought for others. He is too bound up with the problems that fill his own brain, to worry about either the problems or the cares of his neighbors. Therefore does the world think him selfish. But he is ultimately neither thoughtless nor selfish. He has the record of his world benefactions for centuries, to prove his love for his kind; and his record of unceasing suffering and pain, extending just as far back into history, to prove his disinterestedness.

It has been charged that the Enthusiast has been loyal only to his own dreams. But one cannot have a dream at all, without the substantial upon which to base it. The baby's dreams are of the smiles it has seen on mother's face, which is his entire universe; but these it has actually seen. The Enthusiast has seen his world, has had

his impressions, has shaped his thoughts. It is on these his dreams are founded and his ends directed. He is loyal to the great things.

The Enthusiast is not alone a dreamer. He is the world worker, who labors not for pay, but for the very love of it. Money could never have made a Columbus, and only a Columbus could have discovered a continent. Civilization would be without masterpieces and mastermen if the Enthusiast were bound by the laws of labor unions. His work sets itself no time limit and permits none to be set for it. His strength comes and goes. It is fed by fires from the soul that burn only fitfully. He works while they burn and then he produces. He stops when the fires smoulder. His dreams are the fires which give him strength for action.

The real Enthusiast belongs to no nation, but to all nations, since his work is for all. The good he does, the discoveries he makes, the evil he causes, all belong to the world at large, which cannot avoid the consequence of having produced him, whether good or bad. The disgrace of a Robespierre belongs to France, but the Revolution he fostered shed the world's blood and is still the world's problem. Voltaire went farther than Sans Souci and Frederick the Great with his cynical friendship. The circles shot out by his fall into the waters of doubt have long ago touched

even the Arctic. Michelangelo's genius is not only the adornment of Italy, but the inspiration of all nations. O'Connell liberated two peoples: his own from injustice; and the enemies of his own from the slavery of being tyrants.

The Enthusiast cannot die while the earth lives; since every generation must have him to depend upon for the step in advance which God seems to destine each generation to take.

To have "Enthusiasm for one's work" is good: but it is not pleasant to be a real Enthusiast. It is a pain.



XVI

THE CONSERVATIVE

THE Conservative is not usually the one who produces great results; but he is nevertheless the one who enables others to produce them.



THE Conservative knows men better than they know themselves, and loves them more wisely.





## THE CONSERVATIVE

*My dear Jack:*

I had to smile when Billy said he was a “libertine”. Billy does not know what “libertine” means. If he had known he would have hesitated about claiming such a title. Billy meant to say that he was a “liberal”,—in things political. He is; but Billy is a “liberal” in other things as well. So far as the “other things”, at least, are concerned, so much the worse for Billy. Don’t mistake my meaning: I am not opposed to all liberalism; only to the dangerous kind that makes liberalism an engine of destruction. There is a true and a false liberalism. That which takes no heed of eternal principles is the false kind.

Liberalism is busy today flinging bricks at the Conservative. He deserves a few of them, but not all. As a matter of fact, he deserves more bouquets than bricks. He has done his work better than men realize. The Conservative is not usually the one who produces great results, but he is nevertheless the one who enables others to produce them. He is the watchman who guards

the foundation of the building; the treasurer of all the real riches gathered in bygone ages, and which, wisely used, give new riches to the present, and will give them also to the future. He is the keeper of the granary wherein lie stored the seeds from which the world's next crop of ideas, inventions and facts will spring. He is the unappreciated Joseph to thousands of spendthrift Pharaohs; but he wears no outward crown in proof of it, and holds no scepter of public honor. He is the power behind every throne that is firm upon its base. He is the port of refuge for every storm-driven ship. Without him there could be no progress; because there would be no tools preserved with which to labor, no principles upon which to rest, no weapons with which to fight truth's battles. The armories and magazines of intellectual warfare are in his care; the fact that he hesitates and considers long before he lends the keys, is rather a proof of his sagacity than a reproach to his slowness. It is well for the world that the Conservative is thus hard to convince and thus slow to act. He has been, and is, largely responsible for a diminishing in the world's stock of regrets. He scarcely knows the meaning of "it might have been"; and for him there is no Past Conditional tense. He alone can say, "it was"; but he alone never says, except of God, "it will be".

It is the Conservative who comes upon the battlefield when the fight is done, and the bodies of the rash lie with glassy eyes uplifted to the unrelenting heavens. He it is who gathers up all that is useful for another fight, and stores it away until it is needed. It is he who goes to the council tent, and there takes the fruits of victory or defeat. It is he who treasures the lessons, whether they be in the form of tests of new explosives, the folly of entering into a war unprepared, or the crime of entering into it at all. When others think that all is lost, he quietly has laid away some spoils at least; and knows that even out of a rout something always can be gained. Though he did not face battle, yet he alone faces its consequences—more deadly oft-times than the fight itself.

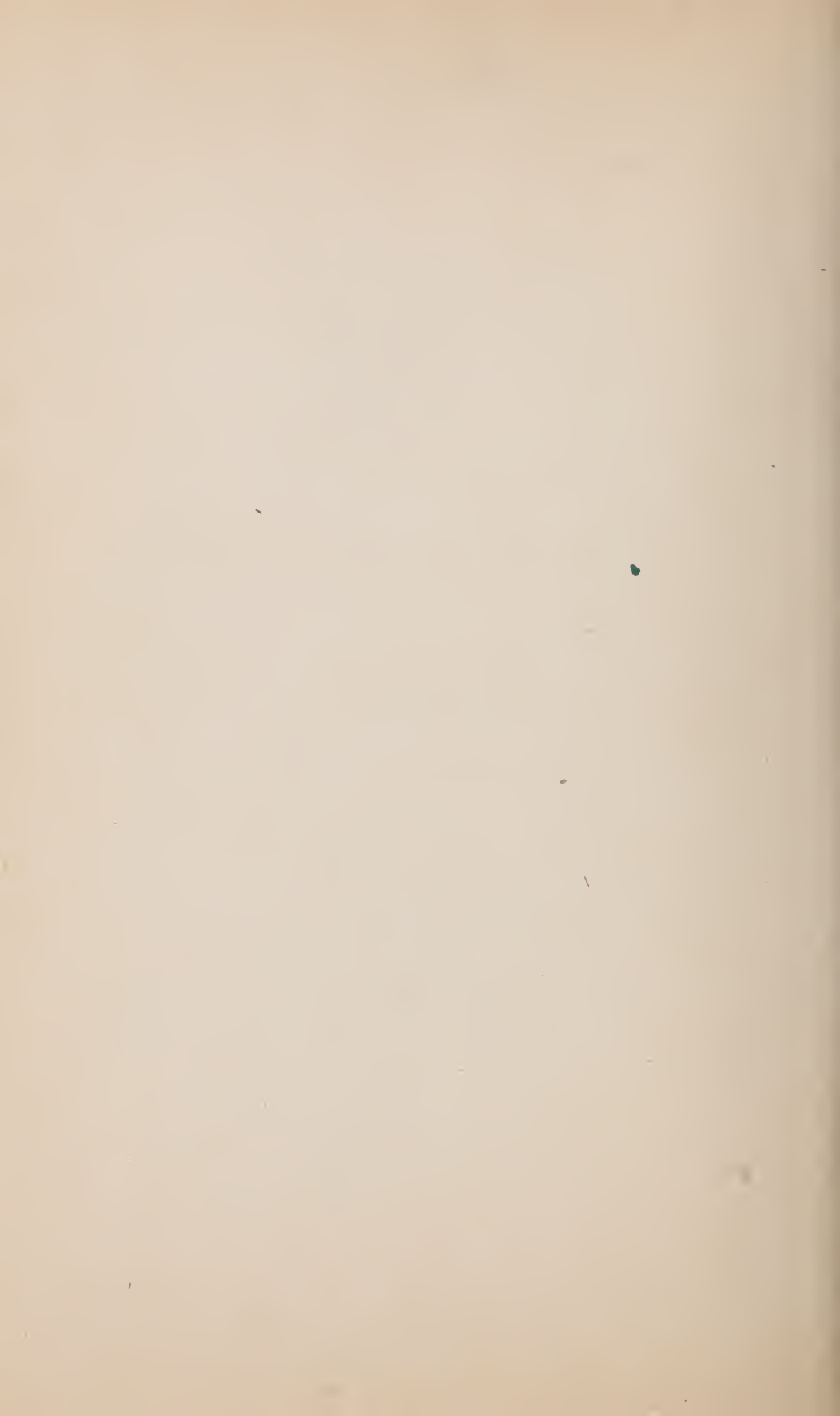
The Conservative is thought to be the smallest and narrowest of men. It is partially true, but in his seeming defects are his uses and his victories. He is small, but one sees better from the small end of a telescope. He is narrow, but the path of Horatius to glory was a bridge only a few feet wide. He does look backward, but behind are the things that justify looking ahead. His foresight is not great, but it is the careful start that makes a glorious finish possible.

It is not a reproach to the Church that in her fold the Conservative reigns supreme. Cen-

turies have tried to oust him from this stronghold, but he has beaten the centuries. So the Present and Future do not refuse an admiring salute with the sword, before they join the Past in thrusting at him. But they will thrust in vain, for he knows his ground. He has lived to see and study men, and he has not learned to scorn but to love them. He knows them better than they know themselves, and loves them more wisely. He watches their weaknesses, while noting their enthusiasms; and from both he draws the good, and thus wisely saves the future of the race. He has seen centuries which worshipped many gods and all of them shameless; but he has managed to keep the fire alight on the altar of the One who alone is Truth. He has witnessed past centuries drop their books—sacred and profane—to grasp the sword and couch the lance. But he gathered up and kept the books—Bible and classics. We owe their preservation to him. He saw Art fall into the dust to die, but he quietly supplied the materials for its revival. He heard a world cease to sing, but saved melodies that the world might sing again. These and all else that he has saved may be arrayed against him, but he understands and hugs his treasures closer, while watching for what he can add to them from the new and more splen-

did mistakes of this new and more splendid present.

The century is learning fast while the treasures of the Conservative grow apace. What shall the future say of him? It will speak of him in terms of praise, but it will speak as of one dead. It will enshrine his memory, but enshrine it only as a memory. It will build a mighty mausoleum to him, really believing that he lies beneath it. It will sing of him, imagining that the song is a threnody. It will say that, under God, Religion owes to him its purity, Science its discoveries, Music its inspiration, Art its models, and Oratory its ancient fire; all the while thinking of him as one of the great departed. But he will not be dead even when the world thinks that the millennium has come. The millennium will yet be far away—as far as Heaven, which is where the Gate of Death ends the Long Road. Yes, the Conservative shall always be living, and the very praise the Future will unite to give him, shall be but a new form of the old battle he has always fought, and which he must fight to the end; while the world shall always remain his servant, and all ages his debtor.



XVII  
CRITICISM

MILD and pleasant criticisms might accomplish something; but not enough to justify their existence.

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THE gossiping neighbors of a country village have a great deal more to do with keeping the village highly moral, and filling the churches on Sunday, than they get credit for.

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THE less criticism you get the harder will be your road to success.





## CRITICISM

*My dear Jack:*

The most irritating thing in the world is a toothache; but I saved nearly all my teeth by heeding the first twinging warning of that kind. The only tooth I lost forever went because I too long neglected such a warning, using palliatives for the pain rather than a prompt remedy for the disorder that caused it. Criticisms are like toothaches—unpleasant, even painful; irritating, even maddening; but they help us and they help us very materially. If there possibly could be such a thing as a pleasant toothache, I think that the object of the infliction could not be attained. It is only natural that we should ask why a warning of decay might not be given without the pain; but would we heed such a warning? It usually takes a hard-gripping toothache to drive us to the dentist's chair, where we should have gone months before. It is the same way with criticisms. There are no pleasant ones, and I am glad of it, though I have suffered my share of the pain of them. Mild and pleasant criticisms might accomplish something, but not enough to justify their existence.

There are, however, toothaches of all degrees of painfulness; and there are critics of the same kind. Some critics are vicious; some are gentle. Both have their uses. They all make us stop and think. If there were no critics in the world, there would be little, if any, progress; and very much sin. The gossiping neighbors of a country village have a great deal more to do with keeping the village highly moral, and filling the churches on Sunday, than they really get credit for; and, while gossiping hurts the gossip, it is one of those evils which God confounds by drawing good out of them. More than once the fear of criticism has kept young people from rushing into danger. It is wise always to be on the alert to catch every breath of criticism directed your way, because it is always well to see yourself as other people see you.

The right way to receive criticism is as you receive a toothache—suffer it, but do not suffer it any longer than you have to. Remove the cause, if you can, and remove it quickly; thus will you draw your good out of the evil. As a man rarely thinks of a toothache after it ends, in the joy of having gotten rid of it, so hasten yourself to forget criticism and the critic, that you may not lose the good both have done you.

I counseled you to be sensitive to criticism; but what I meant, was to make only your ears

sensitive to it. I did not mean that you should make your heart so. Steel yourself against criticism. Be prepared to turn it into an advantage, but never let it make you bitter; and, above all, never let it make you revengeful. Critics are not always enemies; but much that I said of the critic applies to the enemy. A mean critic is not worth being revenged upon. The critic who is not mean is usually quite honest and worth attention. One of the differences between criticisms and toothaches lies in the fact that we ought, within reason, to go out looking for criticisms. No man can be successful without his critics; and therefore even the saints had them. No one profited more by criticisms than did these saints. Your school days were made up of hour after hour of criticism. Your business career will be the same. You will be criticised until the day you die. The less criticism you get, the harder will be your road to success.

But fear much to criticise others. You may get *yourself* into the position of being hardened to criticism, and even of welcoming it; but do not presume that *others* will have been successful in like manner. The average man does not take kindly to criticism; therefore, for your own personal comfort, if for no other reason, give your opinion when it is asked and not before.

I am afraid that the most sensitive people to

criticism are Catholics. The reasons for this are many, but one in particular: Catholics know the perfection of the divine side of the Church, and instinctively conclude that all criticism of her is unfounded. They forget that there is a human side to the Church as well as a divine side, and that the human side needs criticism. This, our peculiar sensitiveness, extends to everything that is Catholic. Taught by bitter experience, we are always looking for insults; and we consequently often imagine them where there are none. We too frequently fail to allow for inherited prejudices, and above all for a very natural frailty in ourselves—the frailty that comes out of our very strength. A man who has outstanding ability above all other men in some branch of endeavor, is likely to think that he cannot be very weak in anything. For example, an extremely wealthy man is a miracle if he recognizes his own follies. He is flattered and fawned upon until he thinks he is a demigod. It is easy then for the astute time-server to catch him on the weak side; to the time-server's gain. The trouble is that the rich man has been ignoring criticisms, or has bought off his critics. Catholics are very much like that. The very perfection of the divine side of the Church is their weakness in the face of criticisms of the human side. It is no attack against our faith, for example,

to have the flaws in our educational system pointed out. There is really no reason why we should be sensitive if we are told of lapses in the conduct of some individuals, or body of them. It does not really hurt us if we are truthfully told that our social works are too much neglected. We ought to listen to and profit by these things. A professor of Sociology told me a few days ago, that it is refreshing to meet a lot of non-Catholic social workers at gatherings where all are brought together for discussion. "They go at each other hammer and tongs," he said. "They attack, defend and attack again. I never enjoy myself so much as at one of these meetings. Why can't we do it? It would benefit us." The reason we can't do it is because we are too sensitive to criticism. We have gotten into the habit of defending the Church at all risks, and doing it at prices we cannot afford to pay. Let us not be too sensitive to such criticisms. After all, we must see our faults in order to correct them.

Though I know that, in the majority of cases, personal criticisms injure the one who makes them, and benefit the one who receives them, nevertheless I say: God bless the critics. They stimulate enough to keep us moving onward and upward. They impede just enough to prevent our speeding too fast. They irritate just enough to make us careful. They sting just enough to

make us watchful. They are a constant invitation to the practise of humility, and a consequent antidote to pride. Cherish your critics—and to the same degree that I advised you to cherish your enemies.

XVIII  
HATRED

WHAT the confusion of tongues did in scattering humanity, the gospel of hatred would have done later; but in blood and tears, and with the sacrifice of thousands.

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No reputation is fortified against hatred, and no personal worth can save entirely from its venom.

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IF you *must* hate, then hate hatred.





## HATRED

*My dear Jack:*

The chum you brought to dinner last Sunday said that he "just hated" an old friend of his because he thought he had done him a wrong. If you love your chum show him this letter; and if you love yourself read it carefully and take its counsels to heart.

The Gospel of Christ is a gospel of love. It is an outspoken gospel, since it has been preached everywhere. But there is another gospel. It is the gospel of evil, that I call the gospel of *hatred*. It is a gospel of silence, for it is guarded in the heart rather than spoken with the lips,—a gospel which too many accept, knowing what it is; yet which many accept, too, without knowing. Those who accept it most freely are those most anxious to tell themselves that they repudiate it.

The gospel of hatred has its place in the history of mankind. It was born in the first generation of the race, but with Cain, not with Adam. Fallen as was the first man, he could not fall so far as that, since he could not so completely forget the direct Divine handiwork in him. But the world needed only two additions to its population to

bring the gospel of hatred to the earth: one to excel, and one to realize that he had been excelled. It is a testimony to the power of the gospel of hatred that its first fruit on earth was murder, in one of murder's vilest forms,—fratricide.

Once born, the gospel of hatred lived on the rivalries of men who battled for gain, and the vanities of women who battled to please the winner. It spread like a pestilence over the earth, so that not even a deluge could drown it. It entered the Ark with Noah's sons, and came out of it, like the other beasts, on Ararat. What the confusion of tongues did in scattering humanity, the gospel of hatred would have done later, but in blood and tears, and the sacrifice of thousands. It was the gospel that swept Troy to ruin; but fastened itself firmly on the necks of her conquerors to their own ruin later on. It marched with Sesostris out of Egypt and Alexander out of Macedonia. It mixed for Socrates his cup of poison, and stuck a needle through the once eloquent tongue of the dead Cicero. It stabbed Caesar in irony before Pompey's Statue; burned Rome, under its devotee, Nero; and then extinguished the Empire in the fury of northern revenge.

The gospel of hatred has filled the army of martyrs. It gathered the stones that killed Stephen, beheaded Paul at the Three Fountains, and

crucified Peter on the Capitolian Hill. It dragged Joan of Arc, innocent, pure and sweet as a lily, to the fire lighted in Rouen's market place, and sounded the depths of injustice in the execution of More on Tower Hill. Why not, when it had spit upon Christ in the Court of Caiphias, loaded Him with stripes and buffets and a Cross, and let Calvary stand in history as a never-to-be-forgotten name for all that human malignity could do?

The gospel of hatred, once accepted, degrades man to the level of the brute. One by one, it quenches in him every generous thought and impulse and renders barren that spot in his soul whereon they grew. It hardens hearts against the appeal of affliction and steels them against the ecstasy of pure love. It blinds the eyes to virtue and goodness, but opens them wide to all that is ugly and full of sin. It closes the ears to the call of mercy, but makes them keen for the cry of revenge. It shuts the hand tight over the coin of charity, but stretches it out to pay for acts of plunder and murder. In the poor, it makes poverty sordid and miserable. In the rich, it cultivates flaunting show, as naked before God as it is lavish before men.

In the wake of the gospel of hatred follows blind injustice, against which there is neither appeal nor hope in this world. No reputation is

fortified against it, and no personal worth can save entirely from its venom. The king has been dragged from the throne to the headsman's block at its order. The legislator has felt the assassin's steel in his breast, and knew that the gospel of hatred had inspired his killing. But the peasant, also, has been driven from his cabin, to be lashed to death before his own children; while babies have been carried on the points of bayonets, because men having power had accepted this gospel of horror. It was the gospel of hatred that Madame Roland should have blamed on the scaffold, even though the crime was done "in liberty's name".

To civil and religious liberty no enemy has been so strong, because no enemy is so insidious. The gospel of hatred creeps almost at once into the heart of the conqueror toward the conquered, whispering that he himself is of superior clay, and the subdued but the dust beneath his feet. Thus does it add venom to the sting of the lash and weight to the shackles.

In a nation the gospel of hatred divides citizens so that, when Power falls to one side it sends hatred to the other; but always double hatred from those who rule to those who are ruled. Self interest is then its spouse and tyranny its offspring.

But greatest of all is the evil which follows the

acceptance of the gospel of hatred amongst friends, for it kills all friendship. It is most malignant toward those who have shown the greatest generosity. By preference, it strikes those who should be loved most, and pursues most relentlessly those who have been kindest.

The gospel of hatred has covered the world with destruction and has buried millions, innocent and guilty, in the ruins. It stands as the most convincing of all arguments for an Eternal Justice; because wrongs cannot always go unrighted; and the sods of the grave, alas! cover millions of wrongs that call for a righting beyond the power of men.

For God's dear sake, never say that you *hate* anybody. Fear lest every little dislike is the beginning of a hatred. If you *must* hate, then hate hatred. It and sin are the only things you may hate with safety.



XIX  
SILENCE

AN appearance of gravity and wisdom easily deceives and easily fastens incompetence to high places.

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THE Oracles of Apollo were wisest in their silence; and their race has not yet passed from the earth.

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MOST of the really wise silent men have been taken for fools; and most of the silent fools have been taken for wise men.





## SILENCE

*My dear Jack:*

You remember that a few evenings ago you met three gentlemen in my company. On the way home you remarked about one of them: "He must be a smart man, because he knows how to keep his mouth shut." The remark was rather commonplace, for nine out of every ten would have made it, since the gentleman in question looked wise and said nothing for the greater part of the evening. You must have noticed, however, that, at one period of the conversation, he broke loose and talked on a subject that had very little to do with the general trend of interest. Perhaps you did not also notice that he was the one who dragged that subject in, literally by the heels. He was very brilliant while he held us to that topic, but when it was exhausted, he again relapsed into silence and resumed his appearance of deep thought.

I quite agree with your idea regarding some silent men, but I do not believe that silence *always* indicates learning or ability. If I had any right to judge the gentleman whom you admired, merely by what I saw and heard of him a few

evenings ago, I would be inclined to say that he is one of a class smart enough to know the value of silence, and to assume it for effect or a lack of knowledge. An appearance of gravity and wisdom easily deceives and easily fastens incompetence to high places. There are today, as there have been in the past, many silent fools who govern wise men, but the wise men were not quite wise enough to hold their tongues. The cheapest and easiest way to unearned advancement and undeserved power is the way of silence, especially if it is made impressive by a show of sternness. In every country village you will find a physician whom the people think is the "greatest doctor of them all if he would only let rum alone". I used to make it my business to get acquainted with these wonderful geniuses, and I always found that those who did not know enough "to let rum alone", were excellent at leaving the *materia medica* alone. So, in every village I have found men who never speak until they can direct the conversation and monopolize it, and who never do that until they can get it into a channel familiar to them through a judicious selection of reading from an encyclopedia the day before. There was one wise-looking and silent old chap whom I knew very well, in a town in which I was pastor. He used to meet me daily on the street outside the Post Office; and he had a new subject

for conversation at every meeting. He introduced it and talked on it. It was a topic nobody else would ever dream of taking up. I confess that I used to be impressed at the old man's information about strange and outlandish things; until one day, in order to verify a statement he had made, I consulted the International Encyclopedia, and behold, I found my wise friend's discourse almost word for word. After that I reduced him to silence by diplomatically refusing to discuss any subject he introduced. He dropped my acquaintance. An advantage this sort of silent man has is that, when obliged to retreat behind the barriers of his taciturnity, he looks wiser in his dignified silence than during his illuminating flashes of borrowed knowledge. Men do not always understand that such a person is like one of these little pocket electric-lights run on a small storage battery, with a tiny lamp set in a strong reflector. He gives out every ray that is in him for the instant that he dares to shine, but there is little current back of the light bulb.

It is true, nevertheless, that such a silent man is often unusually successful, probably because the rest of mankind is not in his class. The reason is, that most men are suspicious of themselves and mistrust their own judgment, though they do not like to own to the fact. Deep down in their

hearts they wonder at their own success and their own progress. They are painfully aware of their shortcomings, and full of surprise that these shortcomings have not been noticed by their fellows. Consequently they are always ready to be impressed by others who are different—and the different man is the silent man. But he is admired too often for what he is not, for what his occasional flashes lead men to think him to be. These occasional flashes favor him as an unexpected sound intensifies the stillness of the desert. The higher the place such a man holds, the more other men think he is fitted for it, since he does not need to talk to show his wisdom or to conceal his ignorance. The Oracles of Apollo spoke rarely and then but few words. They were thought to possess divine wisdom, but the Oracles of Apollo were wisest in their silence, and their race has not yet passed from the earth.

I have come to mistrust the silent man. He is dangerous. It is in silence that plots are hatched and evil concocted. It is in silence that hates are nurtured and grudges wax fat. He who speaks little to his kind speaks a great deal to himself, and soon begins to admire the company he keeps. As admiration for himself ripens, disgust for others grows; and the result is a harmful selfishness. The distance between selfishness and hatred is only a difference of time—the time between

the ripening of the seed and its taking root in the soil.

But a minority of silent men are truly great. They are those who enter into silence as the High Priest entered into the Holy of Holies, as Moses entered on the sacred ground about the Burning Bush. It is out of their silence that great messages come, that noble inspirations to high and holy thoughts proceed. In the desert the cenobites lived in silence with all the hosts of heaven for company. In the silence some men dwell with a world of their own about them, happy in it, and never wanting to leave it; but snatching out of it every now and then some great or beautiful thing, to fling it into that other world in which the rest live, as a treasure from a land so many may never enter.

Not everybody can know the real beauty and meaning of that Song of the Mystic I already quoted; but, reading it, everybody can feel vaguely that it would be a desirable thing to be able to sing it oneself. There is a poetry that never measures a verse and never needs to; but it is all written in the Valley of Silence, on sheets that are stained with the tears of disappointment, because words can tell so little of the feelings that are in the heart. There are orations whose force comes not from their beauty and depth of thought and wonder of diction, but from the

wealth they cannot express, yet always imply. There is a music that the old notes cannot render, but which seems to have back of it strange harmonies, which some hear and to which others are deaf; which are clear today but tomorrow we shall not be able to understand. The thinkers of the world have been silent men; but men who could not *always* keep silence, because the necessity of expression came to them. Such men never have to push themselves upon anyone's attention. They get the ear of the world without trying. They never speak because they want others to hear. They speak because they *must*. There is something akin to inspiration in what they do or say. These are the silent men who are worth standing guard over, so as to catch every utterance that is forced from their lips.

In dealing with silent men it is well to be on your guard, for, as I said, the majority are silent for a purpose. But the minority of the silent ones are worth attention. How shall you know them? It is hard to say. Perhaps the best test is this: do they profit or do they lose by their silence? Most of the really wise silent men have been taken for fools; and most of the silent fools have been taken for wise men.

## XX

### DREAMERS

WE do not need to "scratch a Russian" to "find a Tartar." We might scratch ourselves and find the same sort of a wild rover any time.

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So far as the eye can see, the stars were not placed in the heavens by rule of thumb; but they are there by rule nevertheless.





## DREAMERS

*My dear Jack:*

When I praised the Enthusiast it might have seemed to you that I was pleading for dreamers, and, in a way, I was. But I was rather apologizing than pleading. I was like the judge whom stern duty bid sentence a miserable wretch to prison; but who yet knew the extenuating circumstances that, outside the law, made this man less guilty than many of his accusers. Dreamers have usually been themselves failures; or unsuccessful till success meant nothing to them. If John Boyle O'Reilly was right in saying that "the dreamer lives forever but the toiler dies in a day," his immortality has been a good thing for the dreamer; for only after he has passed from bodily life does he actually begin to live. In the life of this world a salesman must have something to sell, something that men can see and touch and enjoy. So it is the hard, cold, matter-of-fact fellow who counts for the day. The dreamer, the "rainbow-chaser," the lovable wanderer, is one of Bob Service's "men that don't fit in." How well he describes these men we all know:

*“If they just went straight they might go far;  
 They are strong and brave and true;  
 But they’re always tired of things that are,  
 And they want the strange and new.  
 They say: ‘Could I find my proper groove,  
 What a deep mark I would make!’  
 So they chop and change, and each fresh move  
 Is only a fresh mistake.”*

I am sorry, deeply sorry, for these men—and so are you. Why? Because they are our kin, as they are kin to all the world. There is some of the same spirit and failing in all of us. If there were not we wouldn’t ourselves be worth anything. But the rest of us have the spirit under control, or think we have. As a matter of fact, we sometimes discover that we have not the control we so fondly credited to our strength of character. We do not need to “scratch a Russian” to “find a Tartar.” We might scratch ourselves and find the same sort of a wild rover any time. The difference between ourselves and the other is, while he

*“ . . . forgets that his youth has fled,  
 Forgets that his prime is past,  
 Till he stands one day, with a hope that’s dead,  
 In the glare of the truth at last,”*

we had that searching glare on us early. The real difference is only in the time of the revelation. Why not love the dreamers? We were once of the tribe, and there are always memories.

But, Jack, it would be an awful calamity had we left that tribe and also the memories that bind us to it. It is the dreamer in most men that makes them fit for human companionship. For the scientific mind, I have use only in my argumentative moods; and from the mathematician, "Good Lord, deliver me." I would walk miles to spend an evening with a dreamer, the less he "fits in" the greater my pleasure in his company; while I would run the same distance from the fifteen minute visit of the "pure intellect." There never was anything but monotony in the squared and the concreted. God laid out no blocks in His universe; may He be thanked for that. So far as the eye can see, the stars were not placed in the heavens by rule of thumb; but they are there by rule nevertheless.

There is enough worldly wisdom in avoiding the danger of being a dreamer, to justify one's trying hard to keep from drifting entirely that way. There is enough spiritual wisdom in law and order to justify suspecting one's tendency to dreaming. But there is also enough pure joy in dreaming, to assure one that dreams have a right to be, and dreamers a place in God's uni-

verse. Our greatest fights with ourselves are not fights to keep from going to extremes. They are fights to keep in the middle; and, at that, most of us have had rather indifferent success. History records that General Wolfe murmured lines from Gray's *Elegy* on his way to the plains of Abraham, and said that he would rather have written them than take Quebec. Scratched was the Wolfe, and a lamb of Arcadia was found—a dreamer who “fitted in,” and yet was gloriously unsatisfied. If I look at the whole world's population as it now is, I cannot see a place for the dreamer; but I cannot think of the world and its people that way. I must look at it as it was, as it is, and as it will be. Those who live in it now are but a handful of those who, at the end, will be written down as its citizens. The time will come when there shall be no dead, but a thronging multitude of the living, made up of all who once dwelt here on earth. Then we shall have the true perspective and find that, perhaps, Wolfe was right.

Of one thing I feel sure: for the *here and now* it is better to “fit in,” to be no dreamer, and to forget the rainbows. But to live in the future, to court the immortality of fame, to be a great citizen of the world in a day that stretches from Adam to—whom? it will prove best to have been one who loved rather than hated, who

dreamed rather than schemed; who prayed rather than preyed; who smiled in joy rather than frowned in anger; who looked up at the stars rather than fixed eyes on the earth; and such a one is the true dreamer.



## XXI

### OLD THINGS

I SYMPATHIZE with the man who is only the servant of a machine. . . . I think there is a deeper reason than the question of pay for the modern strike.

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I LIKE to see progress; but I do not like to pay for it with the old ideals that first made it possible.

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EVIL may be shouting in our souls constantly; but it is for us to say whether or not we are to hear its voice.





## OLD THINGS

*My dear Jack:*

Some of my friends show a sort of mild and superior tolerance of what they call my "junk." I have to acknowledge that I am very fond of the things that are old—old pictures, old books, old prints, old china. It is not, however, because things are old that I like them; nor yet because they help me get the atmosphere in which history may best be read; but rather because the old things, nearly all of them, speak to me of devotion and an ideal in work that we have not in this age of machinery. Now, I have nothing against the age of machinery; in fact, I rather like living in these times. I never had, for example, any prejudices against automobiles. When I travel, I take advantages of modern comforts; and this is the most comfortable age of the world for travel. Still, I constantly feel like lamenting the fact that machinery has driven out the personal interest and devotion men used to take in producing things. There isn't much inspiration to be gotten out of a modern factory. I visited one a few weeks ago, and the composite

picture I took away was distressing. It seemed as if one big machine, and the men around it, made a picture for me of the whole factory. Two men were engaged in mechanically picking up long steel bars, placing them singly in a certain groove, leaving each one there until a hammer banged holes in them, and then throwing them on the pile of "finished" work. The men were too much like the machine they attended. The head of the factory told me that they do nothing else from morning until night. The bar forms part of a bed; but the other parts are made in the same way. No individual workman in the factory makes an entire bed. It takes two hundred employes, starting from the designer and winding up with the finisher, to do that. The only inspiration there is in the whole factory is that of the designer. It seemed to me that he was the only man who had a chance to actually enjoy his work.

You can readily see why I am sorry that the machine has, almost entirely, eliminated the workingman who could start producing something, and finish it all by himself. Machinery has taken the inspiration, and therefore the pleasure, out of work. It is no wonder to me that the age of machinery is the age of labor troubles. I sympathize with the man who is only the servant of a machine. I cannot find the

heart to blame him for being dissatisfied. So I think there is a deeper reason than the question of pay for the modern strike. Without knowing it, the men have gotten into the state of working for pay alone. In the olden days there was more pleasure in a man's craftsmanship than in the money he received for it. The old workman was often an artist; for even when he did not have the skill, he had the feeling; and he did not take his pleasure out of his skill, but out of his feeling. I dropped into a little shoe-shop one day to have a lift put upon a heel. It was quite late in the evening, but the shoemaker was pegging away. "You don't keep union hours," I remarked. The old man looked up at me with a smile. "No," he said, "but my boy does. You see, Father, he works in a shoe factory, and when the whistle blows he stops. A man cannot take very much interest in stamping out soles, and that's what he does. I often work until ten o'clock because I cannot lay my work aside. You wouldn't think, would you, that I could take interest enough in a pair of shoes to keep me from my evening paper? But I do. Now here," he continued, picking up a pair of shoes, "is something I am very proud of. I made these shoes myself. They will last three years. The shoes that are turned out by the factory my son works in look prettier, but they will not last six months.

These are honest shoes and there is honest labor in them." I thoroughly understood the old man, and I liked his point of view. I know, of course, that we must have factories. I would not turn back the hand on the clock if I could; but at the same time I rejoice that there still is, and always will be, a demand for the things that are made in the old way; not that we need these things so very badly, but that we need the sort of men who persist in making them. I suppose these are only the William Morris views I picked up from an occasional glance over the now defunct "Philistine." I certainly know that they are not original; but I am aiming at the giving of advice rather than at originality.

This love for the old things that I have, concerns more than the things that I can see and touch. For example, I love the old spirit that, alas! now seems to be passing away. Last week, as I was going into my office, I saw a regiment of soldiers marching from the railway station to their armory. They were returning from the Mexican border. The band was playing a patriotic air as I walked to the curb to watch the regiment go by. The flags passed a minute later. My hat was the only one that was doffed; and I could not help the fact that my eyes became a little dim. What astonished me was that nobody else seemed to get any sentiment out of the

marching men, the flags and the music. I thought at first that perhaps it was because I was a little different, since I had served with the colors in a very mild sort of a war. But later on, while going up in the elevator to my office, I knew that I was wrong. The people have changed. The curse of riches is on us and the evils of prosperity are our own. I was fifteen minutes at my desk before I could get down to work. I sat thinking of twenty years ago when, in the little town where I was pastor, I made my first patriotic address, before a mound erected in the cemetery, "To the Unknown Dead." That day there were addresses by four or five Protestant ministers as well as myself. Some of these ministers were bigoted men, and they usually disliked me because I was a priest; but they did not dislike me that day. There was a sort of "Truce of God" on Memorial Day; and I never can forget the heartiness with which the ministers, the old soldiers and the crowd received what they thought were most unusual sentiments from the mouth of a "Romanist." Bless their poor blind hearts! I think the "Romanist" felt the occasion more deeply than any of them; for even prosperity does not stampede him; and prosperity has stampeded more than one of the men who stood with moist eyes about the mound that day. I like to see progress, but I do not like to pay for it with

the old ideals that first made it possible. Progress does not rush. It moves with dignity and safety. Its effect is to make good things better; but it does not destroy that which is good. If a machine only succeeds in producing great quantities of inferior things, without even the excuse of giving more leisure for self-development to the workman, I am inclined to look doubtfully at the ultimate value of the machine.

Truth is, my dear Jack, that the love for the old things is a response to one of those mysterious voices that speak to us constantly from within and without. "Two voices there are, one of the Earth and one of the Sea; each a mighty voice," said some poet. The poet was conservative. There is a mighty voice also from the heavens; Bob Service is a new sort of poet, but he has the idea:

*"Here by the camp fire's flicker,  
Deep in my blanket curled,  
I long for the peace of the pine-gloom,  
When the scroll of the Lord is unfurled,  
And the wind and the wave are silent,  
And world is singing to world."*

There are a myriad of lesser voices from earth, sea and sky, wordless whispers in our ears, speaking everywhere and always. What we call "inspiration" is the message of these voices. The

highest inspiration is the Voice of God. The lesser inspirations are His in a way also, since from Him comes all good. But His Voice in the minor things sound through His works. Byron was no saint, but when he heard the ocean's voice, and was inspired to address to it his immortal eulogy: "Roll on, thou deep and dark blue ocean, roll," he could not help confessing God's power. The same thing happened when he heard the voice of St. Peter's at Rome, and his praise reached the heights of sublimity in the words: "Worthiest of God, the Holy and the True." Shakespeare heard the voices and confessed it, for to him there were "sermons in stones." It was fitting that the architecture of the Middle Ages inspired the idea of its being called "frozen music."

Life is full of eloquence raised to the sublimity that moves the soul. Even life's smallest things have great messages, if you will only stop to hear them. There is nothing prosaic in life, if you will but attune your ear to catch the voices that arise out of all its movements. Even what men think are only "disorders," like sickness and death, even these speak, with a voice that can be understood, and their message is one of consolation.

It is only when the fallen nature of mankind gets the upper hand that the voices from within

are evil; and it is only when these interior voices are evil that the voices from without are misunderstood or ignored. I could almost say that *all* the voices from without are good. We merely fail sometimes, because of what speaks within us, to hear them aright. If you have a perfectly adjusted receiver on your phonograph, the record will be perfect. If the receiver is wrong, you will get only a jumble of sounds. The phonograph will give out, not what is spoken into it, but what the recorder engraves on the cylinder. The trouble is all with the phonograph. So it is with us. We hear the perfect message, but, if we are ourselves defective, we do not record it as it was spoken; and, therefore, cannot reproduce it in our lives. Man's evil instincts are from within. The bad voices speak only out of a depraved nature. The whispers of unclean, of unworthy, desires, become louder on man's spiritual ear as he neglects more and more the gentle warnings of what is good in him; till, at last, the voice of evil is so loud that it seems to drown out the voice of good. But the latter is *never* drowned. If you try you may always hear it. There are wireless telegraph stations of such great electrical power that their messages of world wars and intrigues reach half around the globe. Yet, with the waves of the air filled with the power behind these messages, a little instru-



ment in a cottage by the sea, tuned to catch a lighter but more important note, answers not at all to the mighty currents, but flashes words of peace and love to its own kin. Evil may be shouting in our souls constantly; but it is for us to say whether or not we are to hear its voice.

But I have been digressing—and I am not sorry for it.



XXII  
HUMILITY

WE haven't any more right to steal God's honor from God than to steal their money from our neighbors.

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IF you give an advice you make a present of it to someone else. It no more belongs to you; then why should you seek glory from it?

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TRUE humility is true dignity.



## HUMILITY.

*My dear Jack:*

The book that I love and admire next to the Bible is the Imitation of Christ. There is a whole sermon in its title, for Christ is the Exemplar of mankind. To attempt even a feeble imitation of Him is to have one's feet set on the road to true success.

One of the most insistent of Christ's good examples was His humility before His Father; yet He was one with the Father. "The Father and I," He said, "are one". "I have glorified Thee on earth; I have finished the work Thou gavest me to do, and now glorify Thou Me, O Father, with Thyself, with the glory which I had before the world was, with Thee." Christ knew perfectly well what glory was His own, but it was only at the end of His earthly mission that He made any claim to it. It was Christ's constant habit to fight off glory for Himself. His humility was the deepest of all humility. By example He taught that lesson, and established the usefulness and need of this all-conquering virtue. You see, Jack, I have started this letter in a sermonizing sort of way. I am afraid that all my letters have,

in spite of myself, become half sermons. They have just drifted that way; and I could not help it. These letters unconsciously found out for themselves that they needed a solid basis; hence the religious tone that they have adopted.

The fact of the existence of God and our dependence upon Him is the basis of the virtue of humility; for we have nothing that is of our own making, nothing belonging to us that we can be proud of, save our divine ancestry. Our divine ancestry even is an invitation for us to be humble. Pride is a sort of apostasy, for it is the setting-up of oneself in a place that belongs to God. The Commandment, "Thou shalt not have strange gods before Me", not only hits ordinary idolators but also the proud and selfish people who enthrone themselves in God's place. All saints were very humble, and no proud man can be a saint. True success calls for humility. We haven't any more right to steal God's honor from God than to steal their money from our neighbors. To be vainglorious, proud and boastful is not only to make yourself a nuisance to all who know you, but it is to steal from God what belongs to Him.

The perversities of pride show a man a weakling to his fellows and lead to his ruin. I have known some men, for example, who are in the habit of constantly volunteering advice—a very

despicable habit, by the way. It may be that the advice was entirely unnecessary, and that the victim of it receives no information whatever from it; but if his action is in line with that advice, even though it had been previously determined on, long before he met the officious meddler, nevertheless the meddler proceeds to take all the credit to himself. When you hear men say: "I did that", "I made such and such a man", "I pulled this thing out of the mud", etc., etc., you may conclude safely that some one is trying to ride, through his pride and vainglory, on the shoulders of another. It is only a manifestation of foolish conceit.

If you give an advice you make a present of it to someone else. It no more belongs to you; then why should you seek glory from it? When you give advice and then demand the credit for any good that follows, your offering is merely what boys call an "Injun's gift",—a gift that you want back. If you give advice keep quiet about it. It is best anyhow not to give it unless you are asked. You haven't any right to be an embarrassment to other people; and ninety-nine per cent of volunteered advice is a tax upon the patience and charity of those who receive it. I confess to a cordial dislike for the man who constantly thrusts his advice upon me. I may be wrong, but the conviction forces itself upon me that such a man is

selfish, mean and vainglorious. He wants to exalt himself at my expense in most cases. If I take his advice, he will boast about it and act toward me as if I were under a perpetual obligation. If I do not take it, he thinks me a fool. Volunteering advice is a sure way to begin to cultivate a new enemy. Even when you are asked to give advice, do not rattle it off as if you were master of the subject. Hesitate about giving it, at least until you know it is really wanted. Then offer it in a very humble way. Most people who ask for advice really do not want it. They are seeking confirmation of their own opinions and approval of their own plans.

It is true that no one should cultivate the “ ‘umbleness” of Uriah Heep, though there are plenty of people who like it in *others*, because they cannot see the falseness at the bottom of it. To be humble you have to feel humble, and to feel humble you must be to a great extent a spiritual person. The humbleness that comes from a sense of our dependence upon God is never the “ ‘umbleness” of Uriah Heep. True humility does not cringe. True humility is true dignity. The humblest men I ever knew were the greatest men I ever knew. I never saw a more beautiful humility than that of Pope Pius X. This sort of humility is very attractive, especially in youth, because there never is any boasting connected



with it. Deeds have a habit of speaking for themselves. Boastings are only the gilt wash on base metal. Once a friend gave me a match-case of silver. It was very beautiful. The engraving upon it was especially fine. I was not satisfied, so I had it plated with gold; and I spoiled it, because the plating smoothed over the fine marks of the engraving. The beauty of my match-safe was gone forever. Do not go about gilding yourself and your deeds. People often know you better than you know yourself. The marks of your own handiwork on your own soul are the marks of character.

Modesty is a ticket of admission to the heart of all the men who are worth knowing. When you gain entrance to such a man's heart, the way is short to his intelligence. Modesty is the outward expression of honesty and well-founded humility. Humility does not destroy the confidence you should have in yourself. It only gives it a good foundation because it puts God into it; and confidence is based on self-knowledge. A man who knows himself knows that his strength is greater than anything it would be possible for him to have made alone. It is God in us that strengthens us.

I said that true humility is spiritual. It is more—it is spiritualizing. When one is truly humble, one possesses a virtue that God loves

and rewards. If I had a choice of virtues I would select humility, because I know that it includes most of the others; but it is a hard virtue to acquire. It takes patience and prayer to force its development in the soul. The best way to secure what is needed of it for daily life is through that form of prayer which is called "mental", which is meditation. Meditation turns the light on yourself, and shows you up to yourself. To acquire the virtue of humility it is only necessary to be honest with yourself when you see yourself, and carry that honesty out into your dealings with your fellows.

XXIII  
INSPIRATION

To arrive at understanding something of God's love for His children one must begin by understanding the depths of a mother's love.

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THE pleasure of doing anything for a mother is half in the smallness of the thing that pleases her.

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WHEN you stop thinking of your mother, you usually stop thinking of what is good.



## INSPIRATION

*My dear Jack:*

In one way there is not so much difference between us as our ages indicate, for in one way we are both just boys: I with my forty-six years and you with your twenty. We are both boys to our mothers. Yours has still some justification for thinking of you as a boy, because you have not yet arrived at the age of manhood. Mine has not that justification; but what are years to a mother? I know my mother is always thinking of the old days when she looks at me. She always will; and that is just what I want her to do. I want to remain a boy as long as she lives. It keeps her young and it makes *me* feel young.

Mothers are wonderful, and become more wonderful to boys as the boys grow older and older. I never appreciated my mother as much as I do now; and it is a comfort for me to feel that I shall grow in appreciation of her. I can never be sufficiently grateful that God has let her stay so long where I can go sometimes to see her, and be a boy again. I know that where she is there is a haven of rest for me. Just to enter it for an hour is a relief; for nothing enters there with me

but my forty-six years of continued boyhood. Mother has the magic wand that touches grey locks and makes them turn black again.

But the great thing about mothers for boys, old and young, is the inspiration they seem to have, in infinite reserve, for all good efforts. When I was only a student, wavering and fearful about the future, and away from home, somehow my mother stayed with me, and kept me looking straight ahead. Once my wavering became very serious, and almost I had decided to give up the hard struggle of college days—and go back; but I thought of my mother. I could hear her unspoken regrets for my lack of courage—and the wavering was at an end. Always does the thought come, when I am in danger of making a false step: “What will mother think?” I feared her displeasure once; but now I fear her pain. I simply could not inflict it knowingly. I had rather die: yes, Jack—I had rather die. Do you yet realize what a wealth of inspiration comes from the one you cherish enough to die rather than hurt?

I am no exception amongst sons. I am the rule. The exceptions are not entirely human. They are incapable of the highest and best. They are men to be avoided. I had rather counsel a girl to give up her dreams of a home and children, than counsel her to marry a bad son. He

who does not love his mother will never love his wife.

To arrive at understanding something of God's love for his children one must begin by understanding the depths of a mother's love. To make a beginning of understanding God's mercy, we need only study mothers. The one thing about God that a mother cannot teach you is an idea of His justice. Mothers are all essentially unjust in what concerns the relations of their children to others. They love too much to be just. The scales are always tipped on the side of their devotion. Even their harshness is only assumed. It is love in another form than the conventional.

If I stood in danger of a worldly dignity, the shallowness of which I had sounded, and consequently was far from wanting, I think it would be hard to refuse, because my mother might like it for me. She might only see her son's apparent advancement. Then would I need an overpouring of the grace of God. I am always fearing that I am too selfish to be worthy of my mother; always asking if I am doing enough to show my gratitude and love for her. But the blessing of doing anything for a mother is half in the smallness of the thing that pleases her. But she,—she is always thinking that you do too much; while you are worried over the fact that your best

is too little. Who else is there in the world with a love like that?

Do you think that I am going to all this trouble of writing these letters for your sake alone? Be undeceived, then. I am thinking more of the pleasure they will give my mother than the possible good they may do to you. Indeed, your chief claim on my affection is not that you are my sister's son; but that you are my mother's grandson.

Catholics have something in their religion that others sadly lack. It is the idea of a Divine Motherhood. In the litany of the Blessed Virgin there are many beautiful titles: "Mystical Rose," "Tower of David," "Tower of Ivory," "Queen of Martyrs," "Virgin Most Faithful;" but it is when we come to the Mother titles that our hearts expand: "Mother Most Pure," "Mother undefiled," "Mother Most Amiable," and then the all-embracing title of love; "Mother of our Creator." That title gives me a near glimpse of God because I seem to almost touch His throne. Before my eyes it changes into a cradle; then into a seat on a Mother's lap; then into a cross that has wide-stretched arms. On Calvary the title changes again and I whisper: "Mother of my Redeemer." If I became unfaithful, the hardest thing to forget in my religion would be the touch of that sorrow-



ful Mother leading me to the foot of the Redeeming Cross. It was my own mother who first introduced me to the Mother of Jesus Christ.

Jack, be a man; but to your mother never cease to be a boy. She is following you with the prayers that have no distractions because her whole soul is in them. A mother's prayers for her children are the most fervent prayers in the world. Do not think that she ever leaves you alone. She would be with you in a desert. She has a soul in every child, and it constantly comes and goes between them. She always keeps her influence when the other influences count for nothing. She has an instinctive sense of what is right for you. I would trust that instinct very far. When you stop thinking of your mother, you usually stop thinking of what is good.

Mothers have faults, but not to you. Mothers err, but yours does not. Mothers become old and faded, but yours remains always as you knew her when you played and prayed at her knee. I know I could be happy in Heaven without my mother, because I know what Heaven is: but I do not yet quite understand how. My father was a good man. I honored, revered and loved him, as I honor, revere and love his memory; but when I think of the best in him, it is always

that he knew the kind of a mother I had, and left me chiefly to her care. I had a feeling that when my father died I lost him; living or dead, I know I cannot lose my mother.

XXIV

OPPORTUNITIES

NATURE alone is wonderful, but man often spoils her wonders.

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WHEN the pleasure we get through our gifts is made the only thing desirable, we prostitute the gifts.

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RIGHT living, doing and thinking lower down the net into the sea.



## OPPORTUNITIES

*My dear Jack:*

There is a play by Maurice Maeterlinck called "The Blue Bird," which brought forth storms of criticism as well as zephyrs of praise. It is quite materialistic, reflecting much of its author's false philosophy; but at the same time it is a beautiful production with more than one grain of truth in it. Mr. Maeterlinck senses the idea of "vocation" for each individual human being; but, unfortunately, he mixes in enough fatalism to destroy pretty nearly every vestige of free will. One of the strongest scenes of the play is laid in that vague "shadow-land" out of which come the souls of humans. When the curtain rises on this scene, the stage is shown full of unborn babies, all playing together, all wishful for the day of birth; and all of them with *something* to bring to the earth with them. One has an invention, another a disease; one has a war, another a treaty of peace; one has a virtue, another a vice; and so on. Father Time arrives with his boat headed earthward, and the children rush to enter it; but Time selects only those whom

Fate has destined to be born that day. Each baby who tries to enter the boat without his contribution of good or evil to the world, is sent back to get it.

It is not hard to see that Maeterlinck has Shakespeare's idea about Opportunities. The great English poet believes that there is but one for the whole lifetime of each individual. You remember from your school days the famous passage: "There is a tide in the affairs of men, which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune," etc. Shakespeare would have every one of us eternally watchful of his days, his hours and his minutes, in fear lest fortune's knock come and find him asleep. So each of us, according to the poet's views, brings something into the world; but, unlike Maeterlinck, Shakespeare believes that the *something* is always good. Bishop Spalding holds that Opportunities are spread out before every man in his daily life. He does not believe in fate but he does believe in alertness. He would have shown no patience with Maeterlinck had he read his play, and commented upon it before his lamented death.

I believe with Shakespeare that each and every human being has been given a certain *something to do* in this world; and that the *certain something* is good, and for the benefit of the human race. I believe that, in the eyes of God, the *cer-*

*tain something* which is given each one of us to do is a very great thing, even though it may appear very small to the eyes of men. I believe that, if this *something* be well done, the reward for the small will be as great as the reward for the big. Human beings judge only from what they see; and they see only what is material. God alone sees the hidden things. It is only the man who studies ants who realizes what wonderful little creatures they are, and how extraordinary are their works. When we carefully study an ant-hill, we have a sort of dim realization of how God sees men. Every little ant has its own work to do and he does it. Every little man and woman has his or her own work to do, and sometimes does not do it. When we do that work, we contribute to the harmony of life. When we do not, we lose our great Opportunity.

Shakespeare's idea is pretty near to the truth. The Great Opportunity for each and every human being is the opportunity to reach his or her last end—union with God. That Great Opportunity is the same for everybody. There is, however, so I think, a special means given each of us, not only to attain that end, but also, in working for it, to help others attain it as well. I would call this latter the *accidental* Opportunity. It is not entirely necessary, but we do best when we have taken it. It is in grasping

it that we secure the largest amount of happiness in life and labor.

No one is born into this world to spread disease, to steal, to commit murder—to sin in any way. But we have always our free will, and therefore the power to reject our opportunities. I believe that the evils of the world, beginning with the first, are all the result of rejected opportunities—sins of some kind. It is inconceivable that God laid out the world as men have made it. It is too plain that what men had no chance to interfere with is good and well ordered. No evils spring from nature, but all spring from men. In the Arctic regions one never gets a cold—until others come in; and behold the disorder starts at once. Nature alone is wonderful, but man often spoils her wonders. I do not think this would be, were men to grasp the knowledge of their Great Opportunity.

You will hear men offer remedies by the thousand for every ill from which society suffers. You will, possibly, be impressed with the cleverness of many of them. But, if you keep your spiritual eyes and ears open, you will note that shallowness is their all-embracing fault. The shallowness comes from the fact that most worldly men never think of the real end of their existence; never know anything of their Great Opportunity, or ignore it. Consequently, they



place the "accidental" Opportunity, which is but the means to an end, as the goal of their desires. Money isn't given the rich for their own pleasure. It is given to them only as stewards. You may say the same of force, logic, business ability, statesmanship, imagination, lucidity, fluency, etc., etc. When the pleasure we get through our gifts becomes the only thing we deem desirable, we prostitute the gifts. We miss our Great Opportunity.

Then what happens? Well, much the same as would happen if you insisted on damming up a river, because you wanted a lake for your own enjoyment. You send the water off into streams where none existed before. Things may readjust themselves to the change; but the readjustment has to take into account a flooded country that once was fertile; a barren river-bed that once was beautiful; the loss of pure water to a country that once was blessed with it; as well as some greater things that all have not vision enough to see. God's streams in men's hearts and souls are properly located. We cannot interfere with them for the sake of our own pleasures without doing harm. Sins are dams on the channels of God's grace. The dams shut it off and send it another way, that is not God's way. What we keep of it changes because it is not flowing and free. We make it ours, not God's. Stag-

nant, its life is withdrawn from it. No sparkle of the sunshine on its bosom can make up for the loss of the riches in its depths. Happily, some freshness is constantly coming in, which is called "Sufficient Grace," so there is always the Opportunity to get our riches back again. To do that we have only to destroy the dam.

There is only one "great" accidental Opportunity given us. That is implied in the idea of "vocation." But there are countless minor opportunities which, if grasped, may still suffice to bring us to our legitimate end. How does the one great, or the many minor opportunities come to us? Through the medium of our daily duties. We may not know *when*, but we surely know *how*. He who honestly tries to live right, to do right, to think right, is not going to miss his "vocation" and therefore is not going to miss his opportunities. Many of them, the minor ones, he has not even dreamed of. Right living, doing, and thinking lower down the net into the sea. Many fish may come into it; some we never thought to catch, some we never knew existed.

XXV

LOYALTY

GOD tolerates the worst of us; but men are merciless. We cannot live with a stone in the breast that beats like a heart, but that feels none of the higher emotions.

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WHEN Loyalty leaves this earth there will be nothing worth while remaining; for the joy will have gone out of life.



## LOYALTY

*My dear Jack:*

Perhaps this letter should have been written long ago, instead of being left till near the end. But I had it in mind all the time; and only today it seemed to take shape and call for its place with the others. I am not sorry that I waited, because the waiting gives the lesson a better chance to be remembered; asking your attention, as it does, when there is little to follow that might make you forget. If you did forget all the rest, and only remembered the lesson of Loyalty, I think my task would still have been successfully accomplished.

The most touching short story I ever read was about a beggar and his dog. I found it when I was a little boy, cried over it, and never quite forgot it. I think the story did a great deal for every dog I owned; because it made me like dogs. The story itself was a very simple one: only a bit of pathos about a beggar-man and his lonely, hard life, and the loyalty of a little mongrel, who loved him so much that he refused every chance for dog comfort, in order to be with him. The beggar lost his dog only when the loyal brute

gave up his life for his master; and, in his dog way, seemed to die happy in doing it. The story taught me my first lesson in Loyalty. I am glad it taught me the lesson young. Had I waited for men to teach it to me, I fear I would never have learned it. Is it not odd that from so lowly a source should come so noble a lesson? Yet not very odd after all. There was a neighbor of mine in Michigan—a lady—who knew where beautiful orchids grew wild; but she would never tell the secret. Often she was kind enough to share her treasures with the Rector, but never the knowledge of where the Rector could find them for himself. “It is the natural place for such precious things to grow,” was all she would say, “in a black swamp.” It was like that with my first lesson in Loyalty. I found it in the story of a dog—and a mongrel at that.

The pitiful part of the story lay in the fact that the beggar had nothing except the dog that remained true to him, and therefore had nothing to offer the dog in return for loyalty except his love; but the dog had all of that. And with it he was happy and contented, albeit often hungry. I wonder how many human loyalties would stand the test of hunger?

It is a sad thing to say, my dear Jack—but there are many sad truths—that Loyalty is not as popular a virtue today as it once was. The

days of Chivalry were the days of Loyalty. The dawn of commercialism brought about its decay. There is a great picture in Sir Walter Scott's "Marmion." It is the picture of Douglas looking into the eyes of his departing guest, Marmion himself, whom he despised, but had nevertheless entertained because he had been sent by the King. Douglas refused Marmion's hand, and gave his reasons without hesitation:

*“My manors, halls and towers have still  
Been open at my Sovereign's will,  
To each one whom he lists.  
My castles are my King's alone  
From turret to foundation stone.  
The hand of Douglas is his own;  
And never shall, in friendly grasp,  
The hand of such as Marmion clasp.”*

It took a pretty fine grade of Loyalty in that stern old warrior, to entertain a man he so despised; but he was loyal to the slightest wish of his King. Such as Douglas were most of the knights of old.

“Business is business”, as a motto, has driven out of many modern men all idea of Loyalty. Business says that it has to be cold-blooded. Perhaps it has. I do not know. And yet I think there might be found in a business man's heart some room for a warmer feeling than that of

measured selfishness. I think that business men pay dearly for their adherence to their motto, by the loss of Loyalty that results amongst their helpers. I can understand why bees kill the drones as soon as they may safely get rid of them; but humans are never beyond redemption. God tolerates the worst of us; but men are merciless. We are surely like the servant whose story Christ so effectively narrated to a crowd of listeners,—the servant who was forgiven an enormous debt by his master, but would not forgive his fellow-servant a few pennies. “Business is business”? Yes, but perhaps we do not realize that “business” does not yet really know its own best interests. I think it would be “good business” to be human, for we should be paid for it in Loyalty.

When Loyalty leaves this earth, my dear Jack, there will be nothing worth while remaining; for the joy will have gone out of life. The reason we are so unhappy today, in the midst of prosperity and comfort, is because we are losing Loyalty. We are getting so that we do not understand it. We are becoming all selfish. The beggar-man of my story loved his dog, and so the dog loved the beggar-man. If a master has no love for those who serve him, how can he expect them to be loyal to him? Love is the foundation of Loyalty. Alas! Love is leaving us—“Business is business”. One may, of course,



not love his master, yet be loyal to him ; but such a man loves God, and his Loyalty is securely founded.

It seems to me that Loyalty is the thing that should be most appreciated in business. I think it is, in spite of mottoes to the contrary. Everyone with a heart is touched and made better by Loyalty. We cannot live with a stone in the breast that beats like a heart, but that feels none of the higher emotions. I knew a bishop, God rest his kind soul, who used to preach "regularity" to his students who always smiled at His Lordship's discourse. The smile never escaped the Bishop. "I know what you are thinking of," he would say, "but you are wrong. You only *imagine* that I do not practice what I preach. But I am at least regularly irregular." I would rather be "regularly irregular," as he was, than so regular that every problem had to be solved with the unbendingness of the multiplication table. Even where regularity is made the foundation of a life, as in a monastery, there must be days when it is partially forgotten. But then the exception fits admirably into the rule; and irregularity becomes, in a way, regular. Christ would have condemned St. Peter because of his denial, if He had followed the rule; but He did not. He knew St. Peter's heart, and saw Loyalty in it. So He made him Prince of the Apostles.

Would you have me sum up all that I have written in all these letters, into one single counsel? Then hear it: be loyal—loyal to your God, loyal to your country, loyal to your ideals, loyal to your work, loyal to your superiors, loyal to yourself.

XXVI

BURDEN BEARERS

COLD marble repays nothing, when the body beneath it is only a lump of clay. Surely those who received nothing from time for bearing a world's burdens are entitled to justice from the Eternity that shall replace time.



## THE BURDEN BEARERS

*My dear Jack:*

Last night, anew, I picked up a copy of Seumas McManus' "Ballads of a Country Boy," and started to dip here and there into it. My wandering eye lit on a poem that had escaped my first reading of these fine ballads. It was called "The Silly Truen." I did not know what a "Truen" was supposed to be; but a foot-note told me that it is a bird called "Corn-craik," which in Irish is known as a "Truen," meaning "strength." But the bird belies its name; for it is a thin, ungainly bird, with weak, spindly legs. Its peculiarity is to lie on its back on the grass, with its legs toward the sky, and keep crying out something that sounds, in Irish, like "strength with strength." The people have a saying that the Truen means to say: "What wonderful strength for two little feet of one poor bird to hold up all the skies!" Mr. McManus, in his ballad, rebukes the "Silly Truen" for his foolishness, frightens him to his feet and to the wing. "*And lo! the skies moved not one bit when his heels were drawn away.*" But this fact made no change in

the "Silly Truen's" ideas as to his strength, for . . . . "from the distance, floating easy, came his creaking cries—  
*Oh, wonderful! one poor bird's feet to hold up all the skies!"*

Well, Jack, I sympathize with the Truen. I like the bird in spite of his mistaken idea about his strength. I wish men might get the same idea, though in a somewhat different form. Barring out the absurd, I wish more people would act as if, on each and every one of them rested the burdens of all. That would make for a greater feeling of responsibility in the human race; and, with responsibility, would surely come greater men and women—and more real character. It is the feeling of responsibility that forces men and women to the front. Responsibility produces the great poets, the great essayists, the great statesmen, the great generals. It is the feeling of responsibility in people, the idea that *they are born* to be the Burden Bearers, that is to be thanked, under God, for all the morality and goodness and learning in the world. Some of the best and greatest of men were probably as silly as the Truen about their "strength"; but, like the Truen, you could demonstrate nothing to them; and they went on acting as Burden Bearers. So they did things, and

they do things, and they will go on doing things, till the trump of Gabriel sounds. And God speed them, if the things they do are good and beneficial!

It does not hurt others a bit, but it helps them much, if some people insist on being Burden Bearers. But it does hurt the Burden Bearers themselves. It hurts them very much, and always in proportion to the greatness of the burden they think they must carry. Then, many of the Burden Bearers are not far wrong about the fact of their vocation. God, without doubt, inspires still. He has selected many Burden Bearers—and they know it, and live up to it. These are the people who are happy in bearing the burdens, and could not be happy without them. They feel the weight: their backs are sore: their limbs are tired; but take off the burdens and they die. Friends tell them to retire, that they have done their work, that they needs must rest in their old age; but friends waste their breath, for these Burden Bearers cannot retire, cannot rest, and do not see that they grow old. The Burden is life to them; and a body free from the weight is only a body looking, with wistful, tired eyes, toward the grave.

In the ranks of the human Truens are Popes, Emperors, Kings, Priests, Patriots, Pleaders, Enthusiasts, Statesmen, Discoverers, Charity

Workers, Missionaries, Writers, Teachers and—oh, the wonder of the numbers of them!—Fathers and Mothers. These are the Burden Bearers, some of them called “Fools for their pains”; some of them fools in reality; but the majority of them God’s servants who die in His harness, glad to wear it to the end.

Mr. McManus could frighten off his “Silly Truen,” but he could not change its sad and rasping cry. The world may often frighten its Burden Bearers, but it cannot keep them silent nor take away the consciousness of their tasks. They are themselves as sad as the cry of the Truen, and sometimes speak unpleasantly enough, too; but they are in a sad business, and in sad business the voice takes on no note of music. The persistency of the Burden Bearers is a marvel; but neither rack nor rope nor axe can ever reach an inspired idea.

Of course, the Burden Bearers have been nuisances to a great many people; and this is another strange thing about them—that the heavier the burden they insist on bearing, the greater nuisances they are to those who should be bearing part of it themselves, and the harder some people try to get rid of them. The whole might of the Roman Empire was invoked to rid the world of the Apostles, and it succeeded; but their burdens were shifted to other backs, and



these remained in spite of the Roman Empire. But the Roman Empire does *not remain*. It is dangerous to meddle with the Burden Bearers.

Another strange thing about the Burden Bearers is often found in their seeming inconsistency. That is because they are human, and because humanity has the bad habit of not recognizing its own limitations. It illogically demands perfection where perfection is not possible. In almost every case the Burden is finer and better than the one who carries it; but he carries it in spite of that. The Abbé Roux puts the case well for the religious Burden Bearer: "This man has his defects; yet he cherishes truth and defends justice. And petty souls exclaim: 'Oh, the inconsistency! Oh, the scandal!' But pious hearts say: 'Oh, the native nobility of the man! Oh, the happy contradiction of the Christian!'"

Do I counsel you to be a Burden Bearer? I do, if you have a burden that you feel you should bear. I do, if you feel that you have none. Get a burden and bear it. By which I mean: take unto yourself a responsibility for the sake of others. Good men and women should bear burdens not their own; for there are so many who will not bear even their own. The Burden Bearers serve to equalize things. Since equality is not a possibility, the Burden Bearer becomes a

necessity; or the world goes fast to ruin. He who does "just enough" falls short of doing what is required of him. The "just enough" man is the man who is only tolerable. It takes more than that to be acceptable, even in ordinary society.

It is their souls that enable the Burden Bearers to carry their loads. The fact of the existence of Burden Bearers is a proof of the existence of the soul. The fact of their carrying burdens is a proof of the soul's immortality, or "what's the use?" There is no recompense in time that could ever repay them. But even if time *could* repay, where and when has it done so? Columbus died in prison. Peter was crucified and Paul beheaded. Socrates drank of the hemlock. Milton was blind and Shakespeare to the end only a strolling actor. A Pope who "loved justice and hated iniquity" found it quite within the ordinary that he should "die in exile." Andreas Hofer was shot. Joan of Arc was burnt at the stake. Abraham Lincoln and Garcia Moreno fell before the assassin's pistol. Since when was it that time repaid while yet there was time to repay? Cold marble repays nothing, when the body beneath it is only a lump of clay. Surely those who received nothing from time for bearing a world's burdens, are entitled to justice from the Eternity that shall replace time.

Do I counsel you to be a Burden Bearer? I do, because I counsel you to be good, and wise, and noble, and patriotic. I counsel you to have a heart; and I know that you have a soul. If I did not counsel you to be a Burden Bearer, I should be thus counselling you to let the world have its way with you,—which God forbid! “Our soul” (again I quote the Abbé Roux), “which the world pretends to divert with its vanities, resembles the child which is consoled by the offer of a rattle instead of a star.” To have the star, Jack, you must in some degree be a Burden Bearer.



XXVII  
VISION

How good God is to let us regret; for by regrets we keep humble and loving; by regrets we try to do the new tasks better.



## VISION

*My dear Jack:*

I find it inexpressibly hard to write this last letter and I do not know the reason why. Somehow, the others came easy enough and I never once lost my interest in them or forgot that they were the sweetest kind of labor—a labor of love. While writing them I was always seeing a thousand Jacks, young, aspiring, full of life, vigor and happy curiosity about the future that is fast opening to their vision. It seemed so well worth while to give these thousands all the time I dared snatch from a multitude of duties, that I was full of regret because I could not give them also the thought that they deserved. It was a droll experience to see my own head on these thousands of shoulders, my own head as it was at twenty. I tried to speak to them as I would have liked someone to have spoken to me when I needed advice and counsel. Twenty? Ah me, I have more than doubled that today, my forty-sixth birthday; and I find myself sad enough to think of the things I might have done better, the missed opportunities. I sadly feel the hope-

less urging to try the tasks of twenty all over again.

How good God is to let us regret: for by regrets we keep humble and loving; by regrets we try to do the new tasks better. It is only those who have made a complete failure of life who are without regrets, since only the complete failures are fools enough to think that they did all things well. I dare to believe that, next best to hope for the future, is regret for the past. Without regrets would there ever have been an Augustine? Is it wrong to think that Peter's impetuous mistakes were allowed by his Master in order to form a part preparation for his long and fruitful apostleship? I always find a solace, as well as pain, in my regrets; a strange strength in thinking how I might have avoided them; withal, a strong desire (which I delight to think is holy) to warn and counsel others, that their regrets may be fewer than my own—but never a wish that they should live to forty and be entirely without regrets. I suppose that it is this mixed feeling that makes it hard for me to write the last letter. I know it is the last and should be the last, but it will always seem a premature ending to me who, at more than forty, love the thousands of Jacks at twenty.

Youth is the age of visions, for it is in youth that we stand on the mountain top and look out



over the plain of our future journey—and youth never looks behind. Age loves retrospection; and, quite naturally, youth abhors it. Success depends on vision more than we know. The temptation of youth is to limit that vision to the smiling valley at his feet, which is the cause of most of youth's failures. Youth sees only the pleasures of the immediate future. He takes no account of the other valleys that lie behind the high and rocky hills and stretch so far, far away. Youth sees nothing of the distance when song comes up from the valley. Its birds are calling and its zephyrs blow sweet on his face, but Youth looks out not at all, but runs to his joy, and—to his regrets. Had he only lifted his eyes to the hills; had he only counted the cost of the climbing; had he only anticipated the deserts, but, above all, had he only seen the gray line on the horizon and marked the valley of death, with the hopeful blue of the sky above it, he would have understood. Then for him the smiling valley would have been what God intended it should be—a place of preparation for the journey, where the trees grow fruit that, once gathered, lasts until the end; where the streams offer living waters that take out of the desert half its terrors.

Oh, thousands of Jacks, men in the making, children of that loving Father who calls from

the blue sky above the gray desert line, lift up your eyes and hearts above the valley and see. At twenty Life spreads out before you. Take an account of it, and know that it is not play but work, and yet not work but play; for work well done is pleasure, and pleasure well ordered is part of life's labor. Vision you need at twenty—the wide vision, the long vision, the sweeping vision, the vision splendid.

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*By the Rt. Reverend Francis Clement Kelley, D.D.,  
President of the Catholic Church Extension Society*

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