

Morning Star and Catholic Messenger.

NEW ORLEANS, SUNDAY, AUGUST 19, 1877.

JUVENILE COLUMN.

NETTIE EMITH AND ROSIE WHITE. (Guardian Angel)

Do you wish Sister Gertrude would let me see her mother?

"Why, Nettie, what is the matter?" said Sister Gertrude, fretfully, as she came home from school and threw her books on a chair.

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First, she had been very self-willed and stubborn at school, and no one was willing to tell her of her faults, because her parents had petted her and flattered her too much.

On the day we are speaking of, it happened that a neighbor's child, a fine little boy about seven years old, had done something to make her angry and she struck him in the face with a stick she held in her hand, and it was feared had put out one of his eyes.

"Do you remember, Nettie," said her mother, who wished to draw a lesson from what had happened, "do you remember about five years ago when you came home from school one evening with a complaint against Sister Gertrude for calling you aside and telling you of a fault you had committed?"

"Yes, I remember it quite well and was just thinking of it. I have often thought of it before. But how I pity poor Jennie! What will become of her?"

"I do not know, my child, but we must pray for the poor girl. I tremble when I think that it might have been you, if no one had corrected your faults in time. Never forget the lesson which this should teach you, and learn to feel thankful to any one who will tell you of your faults."

The child struck by Jennie had not been so badly hurt as it was at first believed, still Jennie's fault did not go unpunished. Many days she lay in prison awaiting her trial, and when it came her sentence was severe enough. Several months were given her in the prison, and within its dark walls she shed many tears over the fault she had committed.

I hope the little boys and girls who read the Guardian Angel are all good children and anxious to be still better; but still the Scripture says that in many things we all offend. Our duty, then, is to correct these faults while they are little, for when they are big they will be much stronger.

Let me beg of you, then, dear children, to make it a rule to listen kindly, and look pleasant, and feel thankful when people tell you of your faults. It is the shortest way to perfection.

In the space of twenty-five years we have heard twenty-five men, more or less, make successful dinner-table speeches. Of these, ten were sensible men who entertained their companions by trying to talk like fools; ten were fools who were equally entertaining in their endeavor to talk like sensible men; and five—the only persons of the number who enjoyed the eminence and the exercise—were drunk, and neither knew nor cared whether they talked sense or nonsense.

As a rule, the successful dinner-table orator is a shallow man—one whose thoughts are on the surface, whose vocabulary is small and of quick command, and whose lack of any earnest purpose in life leaves him free to talk on trifles. We all remember what earnest, strong, logical speeches Abraham Lincoln used to make, when he stood before the people in the advocacy of great principles and a great cause; and we remember, too, with pain, how tame, and childish, and awkward he was when he appeared before them to acknowledge a compliment, or to say something which should be nothing. Inspired by a great purpose he could do anything; with nothing to say, he could say nothing. It is thus with the great majority of our best men. There is nothing in which they succeed so poorly as in a dinner-table speech, and there is nothing which they dread so much.

The anticipation of it is a torture to them; the performance is usually a failure. At last they learn to shun dinner-tables, and to tell weak lies in apology for their non attendance.

There is something absurd in the submission of so many men to this custom of speech making. There is never a public dinner, or a dinner which may possibly merge into formality of toast and talk, without its overlapping cloud of dread. There is probably not one man present, from him who expects to be called upon for a speech to him who is afraid that the demand will at last reach him, who would not pay a handsome price to be out of the room and its dangers. To multitudes of men, the winds of a feast are gall and bitterness, though this haunting dread of the moment when, with bellies full and brains empty, they shall find themselves on their feet, making a frantic endeavor to say something that shall bring down the fork handles, and give them leave to subside.

Why a dinner table should be chosen as an oratorical theatre, we cannot imagine. There could not be selected a moment more inauspicious for happy speech than that in which all the nervous energy centers itself upon digestion. A man cannot have even a happy dream under such circumstances. Lacing the sailors' horriple with dumb bells in one's pocket is not advisable under any circumstances. It is very rare that a dinner party prefers to sit and listen to interminable speeches, for it is almost as hard to listen as to talk when the stomach is full of the heavy food of a feast. Nothing but stimulating drink loosens the tongue under such circumstances, or puts a company into that sensitively appreciative mood which responds to unbecome and paths. The drinking which is resorted to for making these occasions endurable, is often shameful and always demoralizing. Not a good thing ever comes of it, nobody enjoys it, speakers and hearers dislike it, and still the custom is continued. It is like the grand dress parties, which nobody likes, yet which all attend and give, to the infinite boring of themselves and their friends.

The discourtesies often visited upon gentlemen at public dinner parties, deserves an earnest protest. Men are called to their feet not only against their known wishes, but against pledges, and compelled to speech that is absolute torture to them. The boobies who thus distress modest and sensitive men ought to be kicked out of society. No man has a right to give an innocent person pain by compelling him to make of himself a public spectacle, or summoning him to a task that is unpeppably distasteful to him. No man ought ever to be called upon at such a place, except with his full consent previously obtained, and he who forces a modest man to a task like this in the presence of society, fails in the courtesy of a gentleman. The truth is that no dinner is pleasant unless it be entirely informal. The moment it takes on a formal character its life as a social occasion is departed; and those who foster the custom of speech making drive from their society multitudes of men who would be glad to meet them—whose presence would give them pleasure and do them good. Let us have done with this foolishness—Northern Exchange.

A man was pushing an iron lawn roller around a yard on Woodward avenue, when an old lady came along, leaned up against the fence and watched him for a while, and then called out: "Say, mister, what are you pushing that around for?" "To roll the lawn," he answered. "What do you want to roll the lawn for?" she continued. "To make it level." "What do you want to make it level for?" she continued. "That's what I was ordered to do," he answered, as he wiped away the perspiration. "But what did they order you to do it for?" "Why they think a smooth lawn looks the best, I suppose." "Why do they think a smooth lawn looks the best?" she persisted. "I haven't time to talk," he said, as he started up again. "Why haven't you time to talk?" she shouted. "Go 'n' ask the boss," he yelled. "What shall I go 'n' ask the boss for?" she screamed. He disappeared behind the house to get rid of her, and after waiting five minutes for him to reappear, she slowly sauntered off, muttering, "some folks are so smart and stuck up that you can't get within a mile of 'em unless you blaze all over with diamonds."

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