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THE NICE YOUNG MAN.

BY QUIS FACIT.

Speaking of "a nice young man," said my friend the Professor, one day, (will the reader please pardon the seeming familiarity, looking up from the last number of THE HIGH SCHOOL which he held in his hand, and taking a cigar from his mouth while a cloud of smoke encircled his genial face almost hiding from view those eyes which always seemed to possess the intuitive power of looking through the most intricate problems and finding a solution to the most unheard of and improbable propositions,—speaking of 'nice' young men, I think I have seen a few of them.)

Now I, who had not been speaking of "nice" young men at all, had only the vaguest idea of what was coming next, and supposed that the Professor was about to give a description of some model young man who had attracted his attention.

"Yes," he continued, "you will find the 'nice' young man almost everywhere you go. You never have any trouble to make him out even in a crowd. Everything about him bespeaks the most hairsplitting nicety. The ends of his neck-tie are as exactly equal in length as though he measured them each time he tied it and cut off the least bit of surplus which either one might happen to have, and all his clothes are adjusted with the same scrupulous care."

"But," said I, as the Professor knocked the ashes from his cigar and commenced smoking again, "it seems to me to avoid the implication of being what you term a 'nice' young man a fellow must pay no attention to dress at all."

"No," said he "by no means. A slovenly dressed young man is utterly inexcusable. He owes it to himself, his family, and his friends to appear just as well as possible."

"Well then," said I, "I confess I am entirely in the dark as to your meaning."

"Why it is simply this," said he.

"What I call the 'nice' young man is not one who merely dresses well, for that, as said, is the duty of every one, but the one who shows by his actions that he is conscious of being well dressed, and of presenting a fine appearance and who evidently makes his fine appearance an end instead of a means, and so gives more attention to dress and manners than anything else."

After smoking a few minutes in silence the Professor resumed: "The 'nice' young man is usually quite harmless. He stays at home and reads novels and scolds the servants, while his younger brother, the prodigal, goes off to the theatre, or gets on a spree and is put into the lock-up. He would not do such a thing for all the world. It would be so ungentle to spend a night at a police station and have your name printed in the morning paper—no not he."

"Now don't misunderstand me," said the Professor, as he noticed the puzzled look on my face. "I am not saying anything against morality nor in favor of vice, but the 'nice' young man hasn't pluck enough to do anything that would be censured, no matter how much he may desire it, and the reason of his good conduct is not his convictions of right but a fear of what people would say; for their opinion is the only motive he knows."

I was just beginning to understand the drift of the Professor's remarks, but not quite satisfied with the position he had taken I said, "I think I understand you, sir; but it seems to me that I have seen fellows who took the same

view of the matter which you do, and so, to avoid being considered "spoony" as they term it, they went to an extreme of wickedness that was actually repugnant to their own tastes.

"Very true, very true," he replied, "but that only betrays the wickedness of their convictions of right, which must be weak indeed to allow them to do what they know to be wrong, in order to avoid a fancied possibility that if they should do right it would be thought that they did so only to gain approbation. It is the very same spirit which shows in the other class of which we are speaking, only it comes to the surface in a different form."

"But," said I, "I always thought that morality was a good thing under any circumstances, and no matter what motive prompted it."

"Yes," said he that may all be true as far as outward acts are concerned; but if we look beneath the action to the motive that prompted it there is certainly very little credit to be attributed to the one who does right merely for fear of doing otherwise."

"Still, so far as society is concerned," I replied, "it seems to me that after all the 'nice' young man is better than his prodigal brother."

"Certainly; but don't misunderstand me. I don't say that every young man who sustains a good character has no higher motive than praise; for I believe there are those with no religious principles to guide them, who do what they believe to be right from an honest conviction that it is right; and I can respect such. It is only of that milk-and-water class who never attain to any higher merit than that negative kind of goodness which merely does nothing very bad that I was speaking."

The Professor's remarks about merely negative goodness, set me to thinking, and I could not help reflecting how true that a good deal of what the world calls goodness is simply the absence of evil, and how little positive and active goodness we see. But before I had time to proceed any further in my thoughts, the Professor began again:

"The height of the 'nice' young man's ambition is to be what is usually termed 'a ladies' man'; but in this he never succeeds very well."

"Why," I replied, "it always seemed to me that that class were great favorites with the ladies."

"That simply shows your lack of close observance," was the rather blunt reply. "Such fellows are always crowding themselves forward, and it is impossible for a lady, who has been so unfortunate as to become the object of such a fellow's admiration, to be free from his attentions unless she gives him a downright insult; and that no true lady will do if she can possibly avoid it. Then, too, her desire to be kind and charitable even toward the feelings of others make her more forbearing than she would otherwise be, a forbearance which he, and it seems you too, mistake for encouragement. But depend upon it, a woman very soon sees through his shallowness and hypocrisy and comes to despise him accordingly, even though treating him civilly when she meets him in society. There are little things which indicate character even more faithfully and truly than greater deeds; and a woman is sure to notice these and form her opinion accordingly."

"But I am sure, sir," I persisted, "that I have seen some fellows who, I know, hadn't a thimble full of sense, yet they were petted and praised by their lady friends."

"Yes, just as they fondle and pet their poodles," was the reply. "O, I

know," he continued, "all women are not sensible just as all young men are not fools, and some of them may enjoy hearing themselves praised even by a fellow who they secretly despise; but depend upon it, that class is much smaller than young men of your age and turn of mind are apt to suppose."

"Well," said I, "Professor, I don't think there are many who admire or respect sensible women more than I do, and I shall be glad to know that I have been mistaken in supposing that class smaller than it really is, and if what you have been saying is true, I confess have misjudged the ladies as much in this respect as any."

"You will find it true as I have said," the Professor replied. "The 'nice' young man has not sense enough to see that a true woman despises effeminacy in a man. So whenever he gets into the company of ladies he affects a wonderful love for flowers, goes off into ecstasies over a rainbow, or talks with a wonderful smattering of big words about the necessity of cultivating the aesthetic art. He becomes wonderfully tenderhearted too, at such times. Why he would not hurt a worm, and he pets and kisses all the babies, and seems to have a wonderful love for children. But wait till he is by himself and the finest flower is not noticed at all. At home he kicks the dog, and scolds and cuffs his own little brother for getting in the way. And these things will be found out by his lady friends a good deal sooner than he imagines."

I replied, "It always seemed to me that it was in such tricks and shams as these, that such fellows succeeded."

"And that, again, is where you are mistaken," said the Professor. "It is true that ladies of refinement like to see a genuine lover of the beautiful or a sincerely kind disposition in a young man; but their admiration for these, where they are genuine, is only excelled by their contempt for the shallow counterfeit."

"And now let me give you a word of advice," he continued after a few moments silence, "Always be yourself. Don't affect anything you are conscious of not possessing, and, above all don't be afraid of being and doing something positive and definite. Better be in the wrong sometimes than never do anything for fear of making a mistake."

"Well, I declare, I did not think we had been talking so long," said the Professor as he looked at his watch. "If I don't hurry home Mrs. P. will likely as not remind me of some nice young men she has seen." And putting his hat on sidewise and rolling the collar of his overcoat under as he hurried



View of the Omaha High School Building.

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ried into it, he wished me "good day" and hastened off, leaving me to ponder over what he had said.

THE EFFECTS OF A LITTLE LEARNING ON SOME MEN.

It would require the wit of Swift to invent terms, the graphic powers of a Macaulay to describe the traits, and the pencil of a Michael Angelo to draw the portrait of some men of little learning. If we associate with men of every state of life, let their condition be what it may, we almost always find some noble qualities and generous characteristics that please and gratify us, except when we meet a man who pampers himself with the vain idea that he possesses a little learning; then we find one who seems to have lost all the higher and nobler qualities which adorn the Christian soul.

The first vice to which it leads is pride, and the effects which are produced by it manifest themselves in every act which he performs. How contemptible and disgusting to a person of good moral culture and of pure and noble sensibilities is every word that falls from his lips. How soon are the intellectual acquirements of the gasconade unmasked to such a one. His grandiloquence, as he imagines it to be, manifests the presumption, affectation and gaseous illusions of a benighted intellect.

Behold the pride and vanity of the prig as he struts about, a walking mass of egotism, imagining himself to be the common centre to which all eyes are directed, as if he were the only one that possesses those noble gifts which are the essential requisites of the man of learning. He supposes that he excels all; that he is the beau ideal of dignity, and arrogates to himself mental endowments, of which he does not possess even the shadow. The supercilious creature vaunts over his meagre qualifications and intellectual acquirements; but if we consider what he says, and survey him well, we find the quintessence of pride, priggishness and pedantry to be the attainments of which he can truly boast, if any. How prim and sedate he tries to appear, but contradict him in anything, and then mark the horrible grimaces that flash like a meteor across his demoniacal physiognomy. How he writhes in vindictive agony, like one affected with hysterics, and stands amazed to think that anyone could be so presumptuous as to contradict him in anything. How the venomous reptile endeavors to retaliate in the most bitter

and rancorous sarcasm, uttered with a smile of irritated self-sufficiency, truculent jocularity and sardonic mirth. The pusillanimous monte-bank will revert to the most dastardly tergiversations, in order to extricate himself from the intricate positions into which he plunges himself by his fantastical, far-fetched and farraginous hallucinations.

How eager he is in company to affect refinement but egotism predominates; and forgetting, or else not knowing what christian etiquette is, and deluded by the phantasmagoria of his moon-struck imagination, he endeavors to monopolize the conversation, thinking that if he succeed in doing this, on the contrary, it is a breach of christian politeness. Behold the charlatan sitting enthroned on the pedestal of his own conceit, magisterially propounding and systematically elucidating, as he supposes, subjects which are far beyond the just conceptions of the fanfaronade's imagination, and not circumscribed within the circle of his limited knowledge. We grant this arrogated perspicacity is supported by a superabundance of persiflage, if by nothing more.

How prone he is to employ phrases not of very common usage, to attract the attention of others, and strive to have them believe, that he is learned. But the effect is quite the contrary; for his hearers must eventually be convinced, that such spurious knowledge is evolved from a putrid source, and that the volubility of ribald scurrility which grates upon their ears, could emanate from no other source than from one who is accustomed to itinerating, or from a vampire. With what pomposity he struts about, supposing that people are pleased when they see a person walk with a dignified pace. Perhaps they do, but he forgets that people are able to distinguish between the loud and the christian gentleman.

How he looks down with disdain upon those to whom he thinks he is superior. How manifest is the vice of pride. He allows no favorable opportunity to pass without vilifying the character of others; scorning their actions, and making the most unchristian remarks about their attire. But while he directs opprobrious and vituperative language against others, he is perhaps much inferior in character; in his actions about as graceful as a pig; and if he had not obtained those habiliments of which he prides himself from a charitable source, he would be compelled to clothe himself as did Adam in the garden of Paradise. But to be brief. This little knowledge makes him so disobedient, vain and domineering that he will be subservient to no one; admits no superior, no, not even an equal in the broad expanse of the universe.

But some will say the one who wrote this peevish tirade, should not have forgotten that he himself has departed from what is the true christian spirit, the purity of good composition, and plunged himself into the quagmire of his own morbid whimsicalities in giving expression to such egotistical ideas. To such the writer replies, that it has objective reality in the man who boasts of a little learning, and as a similarity should exist between things compared, compare them, and perhaps you will come to the conclusion that they correspond.

SALESIANUM.

If you purchase a friend with money, you must be sure that you have money enough to keep him, or some richer person will buy him from you.

GOOD READING.

Let the girls and boys read good books or none at all. Do you think a girl who passes her time in reading silly love-sick stories, or trashy novels, will ever grow up into anything but a silly, weak-minded, sentimental woman, with a brain as devoid of one solid thought as her life is of noble purpose? And the boy who, hour after hour, is found perusing a dime novel, a book of exciting highway robberies, or a sensational newspaper, do you think he will ever develop into a pure souled, high-toned, noble minded man, a man destined to make his mark in the world? No; for just as impure food will dwarf and injure your whole physical system, just so impure reading will taint and corrupt your whole mental organization. Then think of this, boys and girls, and be careful what you select to read, for, be it said with shame, hundreds of books and newspapers of the very lowest vilest kind, may be found all over the country.

THE PRESENT AGE.

We are living in a wonderful period. To keep pace with the times we must be diligent and discreet. It is a saying deeply woven into the framework of republican principles, that "eternal vigilance is the price of liberty." Not less is it true that eternal watchfulness is the price of success.

This is emphatically an age of criticism. No one reaches a position of universal respect till he has passed a trying ordeal. Motives are sounded, teachings dissected, ability weighed, and every tangible fault noted and exposed by the keen eye of competition. We can not, therefore, afford to be off our guard for a single moment, and still less to slight the smallest opportunities of preparing for the critical judgment of the world.

Moreover, this is an age of controversy. Every man's opinion is challenged. There is a constant warfare between ideas. Beliefs, creeds, isms, are mingled in endless antagonisms.

Again, this is an age of enlightenment. The sun that for centuries shone only through the rifts upon some favored height, to-day pours down his genial rays on all. There is no excuse for ignorance. 'Tis only to reach out and appropriate the treasures that lie on every hand, and one may fill his storehouse with exhaustless wealth. The present is richer than any age of the past because it contains the result of the effort and experience of all the past. And so it demands a wider range of thought, a purer refinement, and a loftier culture than any previous age. With due respect to the memory of the departed, no one should be satisfied with merely being what his father was before him. There's a nobler mission than to imitate. To originate and live an ideal life that sets no bounds to its attainment, is the grandest honor to a manly nature. They tell us that the Chinese never aspire to do more than has been done, and with them to be an innovator is impiety to the gods. So for ages their character and customs have remained unchanged, and to-day China walks over a road worn into deep ruts by the footsteps of forty centuries. But with us the war of progress has become divine, and it is almost a sin to fetter mind and thought. That generous gift of reason, the Promethean fire sent down from heaven, was not intended to grovel in the dust. 'Twas made to fly. The upper air is its appropriate home, and along the highway of the sky its fit comparisons move. To feed that power, to nourish and support it with the fairest fruits of culture, to bath it in the sparkling waters of noble aspiration, and at the shrine of holiest desire to dedicate it to the service of the good and true, be our constant aim. So shall there ripen in our lives an exalted manhood and womanhood, that shall disdain the sordid and the sensual, and reach out after the ideal and eternal.—University Beacon.

