

The Searing of Conscience.

"No man who takes the name of God profanely will ever forget the first time he did so. How perturbed his conscience was, how fearful was he of the dark, how alarmed lest sudden dangers should overtake him, how sleeplessly he tossed upon his bed that night: yet, grown accustomed to it, profanity ceases to move his conscience." -- Vice President Marshall, in the Baccalaureate Address at Notre Dame, June 14, 1910.

Disillusionment.

Every first sin in a new species is a disillusionment, a shattering of the ideal which a merciful God and devoted parents have built up in us. Every new knowledge of sin is a disillusionment, and weakens our faith in human nature.

Is Disillusionment Necessary?

A measure of it is necessary, if we are to guard against sin: but every step of disillusionment must be accompanied by a freshening of Christian ideals, by a remembrance of the heroic virtue of the Saints, living and dead, by an abundance of Sacramental grace to strengthen hope, and by meditation on the Sacred Passion of Christ, Who was willing to suffer every torture for an ungrateful humanity, and who prayed that His Blood might not be shed in vain.

The full measure of disillusionment which the sophisticates would force upon us, ends in pessimism and suicide.

The Cant of The Sophisticates.

"You must know life in order to avoid its pitfalls," sang the sex-reformers of fifteen years ago. They had their way: sex instruction in text-books and fiction became the order of the day, and the "civilized" world now wallows in the worst mire of obscenity and moral debauch it has known since the days of Rome's decline.

The Fruits of Sophistication

The age of girls in houses of refuge has dropped ten years, and now ranges from 14 to 18. Investigations in many of our co-ed high schools shows them to be little less than houses of prostitution. Lewdness and obscenity crowd upon the unwary from bill-board, stage and dance-floor; the moral stench of the book-stalls ascends to the throne of God. No one was ever made moral by reading a lascivious description of vice. It may be smart to discuss a nasty book, but it is not Christian. St. Paul warns that such uncleanness is not so much as to be named among Christians.

The jazzed existence of the sophisticates makes him blasé at sixteen, a roué at twenty, and a suicide when his teeth fall out at twenty-five. The orange of naturalism is squeezed out and thrown away.

The Wise Path of Disillusionment.

The wise boy, whose ideal of purity of soul and body, of mind and heart, is as real as it is ideal, takes his disillusionment as it comes, and does not go out in search of it. His knowledge of the world comes to him fast enough; he strengthens his purpose by reading Archbishop Ireland, the two Spaldings, Cardinal Gibbons, Bro. Azarias and other clear-headed prophets of the Church whose eyes rested upon God while their feet trod the earth. New problems he takes to his confessor, and he lets the weight of responsibility rest where it is intended to rest.