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Fizzle-itis.

"So-and-so's a great egg, isn't he? He's really going places. Lots on the ball. Swell character. Fine personality.."

"Oh, I don't know," grumbles Pete, chronic sufferer from fizzle-itis. "Guys that look the best often pan out the worst. So-and-so may live well, get high marks, have plenty of friends, work hard. But look at him closely. He seems superficial. Often I wonder if he can be trusted by his friends."

Pete rarely lifts his voice to give anyone a break, often throttles it down to a murmur when he picks flaws in characters, nurses suspicions, throws cold water on the wholesome enthusiasms of other men.

Pete's always gloomy, because envy, first symptom of fizzle-itis, is ever present in Pete.

Second symptom: Pete's half-hearted. "Do you like Notre Dame, Pete?" "Aw nuts," Pete snarls, "these enthusiasts slay me. If only they'd grow up and know a thing or two. I just got a letter yesterday from a guy down in Sambamippi. He says they go and come as they please. They're not expected to be studying all the time. At that school they treat 'em like men."

Old Pete simply finds no green pastures in the field in which he roams. Hence he is wholeheartedly in favor of no one or nothing but Pete. Second serious symptom of fizzle-itis: half-heartedness.

Pete is perfunctory, slave-minded. Does his work because he's forced to do it. No spark. No up-take. Little originality or spontaneity to him. Always agin' the government. Always afraid that in a burst of generosity he'll go and overdo.

Pete never gets into offices on the votes of his "friends." They're "down" on him. Vote-getters, anyway, are mere cheap hand-shakers and back-slappers.

Some day Pete will look for a job. This one and that he will give as his references. What can they say on behalf of Pete? "Fault-finding, envious, disloyal fizzle-itic." And one fizzle-itic can take the heart out of half a hundred men.

Antidotes for fizzle-itis: Habitual cheerfulness--don't be afraid to smile and make others smile; smiling is a job that calls for cooperation. Habitual charity of mind and speech and action--dwell on the good points of your neighbor's character; arbitrarily overlook his imperfections and weaknesses; only one Character was perfect, and He died on a cross; at the expense of your own ease and indulgence, see to the comforts of those about you; that's the soul of courtesy.

Warm up to institutions--to your own family, to your school, to your country, to your Church--that have first call on your loyalty. If you aren't loyal to the death to these institutions, there's something radically wrong with you. They have faults but only one cause never had faults--and that was the cause of Michael the Archangel who drove the devils from Heaven into Hell. It isn't a sign of extraordinary talent to be able to pick flaws in persons or in things.

Get pleasure out of your work by putting your heart and soul into it. Don't be half-hearted about anything you do. Keep straight with God by living hourly in the state of grace. That's the radical hope of the dismal fizzle-itic.

PRAYERS: (deceased) Sister Mary Edwin S.C.N.; friend of John J. Gilrane; mother of Paul McGannon ('07); godfather and uncle of Ed Huff (Morrissey); Mother Philomene; Rev. Alban Leyes (Hamilton, Ont.). One special intention.