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Archie and His Friend!

"I haven't the nerve. It's been too long. I can't stand the torture of finding out the number and kind of my sins!" Archie, a sophomore, recently met these objections by thrusting a catechism into the hand of his friend with this admonition: "Take it to the priest. Open it up at the ten commandments. Tell him simply to think "many" after every sin in the catalogue." Archie's friend did something similar. He lived through it and will rest a much happier head on the pillow tonight.

Strengthen That Will!

You know from experience how often we have to choose, decide, between right and wrong; between good and evil; and how often evil seems to be the easier choice, more attractive than the good. Could there be upright men on earth if in such cases people had no will-power to choose the harder, the less attractive of the two, the good? No, there could not! All men would be just playthings of their desires, slaves of their instincts, men of straw, easy-going and easily perishing.

The best way to strengthen your will is by exercising it in little tests of self-imposed privations, abnegations, self-restraint. Try now and then to deny yourself things which please your senses, and which may not even be forbidden you. For instance, try not to drink for a quarter of an hour sometimes when you are dying of thirst. When your favorite cake is served, leave a piece of it on the table. When the taste of a dish leaves something to be wished for, do not make faces, but swallow it in silence; calamities are likely to happen in the kitchen too. When the soup is served, do not fall to it voraciously; give your stomach a lesson in discipline.

When the April sun is shining, can you stay with your books and study? In the mornings when it is time to get up and go to Mass and Communion, can you get out of your bed immediately without prolonged yawning and stretching under the blankets? When you have put something away and are looking for it, can you search without throwing things into confusion? Can you deny your curiosity by turning away from the dangerous conversation or picture or book? Can you show kindness to people who are "very unsympathetic" to you?

When a story you are reading is intensely interesting, can you bring yourself to close the book and attend to some less interesting task? Can you sit and listen attentively at class? Can you concentrate at study in your room? Can you pull yourself together when depressed, walk erect when tired? Can you hold back on the news that you are itching to retail to your friends?

You may say that these are trifles, small matters. They are, but do you know that all great things consist of small parts, that skyscrapers too are built of bricks and stones? Those little victories daily will raise your self-confidence so that you will not readily back away from difficulties which you may encounter in life. He that has victoriously won in the hardest struggle--in self-conquest--can win out in other struggles too. Such a person is "the man of firm character"; he possesses both strength to resist and strength for action.

The smallest effort at self-denial, by which you train your body to obey higher nature, is part of an invaluable amassing of energies, stored up for the time of temptation when unyielding resoluteness will be in demand, just as enormous electric power is stored up from tiny sparks. (After "Youth and Chastity" by Dr. Tihoner Tath)

Two weeks more are left of Lent. Each day is precious. Start up again where you have broken resolutions. This is the time to strengthen your will power. This is the time for doing penance. Your disposition of these days of Lent is being written in the Book of Life.