

**FRIENDLY CHATS
WITH YOUNG MEN
AND MAIDENS**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649442256

Friendly Chats with Young Men and Maidens by H. O. Mackey

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By H. O. MACKEY.

(SOUTHAMPTON.)



London:
SUNDAY SCHOOL UNION,
56, OLD BAILEY, E.C.
1881.

260. 9. 434



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FRIENDLY CHATS.

I.

INTRODUCTORY.

IT is related that a certain Greek orator being once asked, "What is the first qualification for an eloquent speaker?" replied, "Manner." "What is the second?" "Manner." "What the third?" "Manner." Although we cannot entirely accept such a maxim as this, for we believe that the first qualification for a speaker or a writer is to have something to say; yet, having something to say, we admit that the orator meant rightly when he affirmed that the manner of saying it was all-important. The more important and valuable the saying, the greater carefulness should be paid to the manner of saying it. "Apples of Gold" deserve to be set in "pictures of Silver." Now, we are anxious that what we have to say in the papers that make up this little

book, should be so said that they may not merely be beneficial but interesting. We have a strong conviction that if to our sincerity of thought we can only add attractiveness of manner, the circle of our usefulness will be enlarged. The school of Dryasdusts is already too well represented in literature, and having no belief in the holiness of dullness we shall try to be as crisp and racy as our subjects will allow. In order to do this we say at the beginning, "So far as we can help it we shall not *preach*."

Amongst our acquaintances—for too transcendent is he to be called a friend—there is a dear ministerial brother who is so intensely clerical, who has become so—what shall we call it?—pulpit fossilized and stereotyped that if his life depended on it he could not do anything except after a right reverend and theologic fashion. If he asks for a ticket at a railway station, the clerk immediately recognises the theologic twang, and is unusually civil and gracious; and even in his inquiry for his morning shaving-water, there is such a parsonic ring as to awe the servant-maid into a becoming reverence. His every sentence is a short homily; he lives in the atmosphere of sermon and psalm. Now we hope in our short talks with our readers to keep as far from such pulpit stateliness and dignity as possible, and to speak right out as a young man to young men and women. If we wore a gown and bands, and white tie—which we do not—we would lay them entirely aside.

Neither do we intend to *lecture*. If there be one thing for which, more than another, this busy, bustling, driving nineteenth century is distinguished, it is for lecturing. Not lecturing after the formal sort, "Chair to be taken at seven o'clock. Admission sixpence, reserved seats a shilling;" but lecturing after the more subtle sort, which covers itself with all manner of disguises. These latter days of ours have developed an infinite capacity for scolding. Newspapers and periodicals would sometimes be half blank if all the scold were taken out of them. In one Review a writer scolds the atheists for their conceit and assumption; when straightway an atheist, who feels the sting of truth in the scolding, scolds in another Review the dogmatic impudence of writer number one; then writer number three rushes on to the literary stage, and scolds both combatants and everybody else in general but himself, and then the Editor announces that "the last word has been said, the controversy must cease." Nor are the Mrs. Caudles confined to these noisy circles, where the clash of arms is expected. We fancy we have heard the scold even in the Church. At Church and Sunday School anniversary meetings we have heard speakers scold the people who were present because others were away: scold the teachers who did their work with a sense of their weakness, because others who had greater powers were too lazy or too selfish to use them in the service of Christ. And we half believe, we have a faint