

504 N. Monroe St. Peoria, Ill.  
Sat. night, Sept. 25, 1875.

Mr. Charles E. Edwards.  
Lake Forest.

My Dear Boy,

You have been told what a busy week I have had, and understand why I have not written to you. The business of Presbytery still presses me and my time will be well filled until synod is over. But amidst it all I must find or make opportunity for a word now and then with my sons - who carry so much of my heart about with them.

My theme in this effusion is Homesickness. This is a great ailment. It is worse than sea-sickness and is about as inevitable.

Now you are homesick - so you say. It does not make me particu-

larly unhappy to learn it, for I think I can help you analyse your case and so to master it. There's many an evil, my son, that gives way before analysis. It is the vague, the unknown, which gives us most of our trouble. Elimination and substitution will clear many an equation.

Now you have fallen into a vague unhappiness. Let me show you some of its elements, some of the things which occasion it.

One is that you are uncovered and exposed for a hardening process which is necessary for all. Sometimes a sore had better be left without further salve or wrapping. It will be painful perhaps, but nature soon covers and hardens it. So you are now commencing the great change from youth to manhood. You feel exposed, perplexed, lonesome. You want love and counsel - kisses and letters. (I am not laughing at you, dear boy.) You are aching for something that here-

tofore has been furnished you without your thought or asking? Once before you had a similar experience, but it was before your remembrance. It was when you were weaned - when you were taught to use solid food instead of liquid - to chew instead of sucking? This was a very sad though necessary change. There is much sorrow with weaning? And you are now commencing another necessary change, as I said, and many another is yet in store for you until you can say "My soul is as a weaned child." (Ps. 131:2.). The child has his food changed from the light to the substantial, from milk to meat. But still he has his food given him. After a time he has to learn to discriminate his food and to provide it for himself. And yet again he must provide food for others - be bread-winner for a household of his own. And for each of these stages he may be thankful, inasmuch as they add to the power and the perfectness of his na-

ture. But each of these changes costs more or less of pain.

Heretofore you have lived without carefulness. Your food, fellowships, books, thoughts and principles have all been furnished to you without your thought or asking. But now you are beginning to change all this. Make acquaintance and choose friends - think thoughts, discover and apply principles all for yourself. You shall be supported, but you must be educated. Your inner nature must be drawn out. You must exert yourself. You must call out your own resources - must learn to be busy on your own motion and to make the best of your surroundings. Remember you need only to make a diligent use of your opportunities.

1. Be employed. It is the gaps in your time that are filled with sighing?
2. Refer much to the Bible.
3. Continue instant in prayer. Count much on the love of God your Heavenly Father. Realize that He is near you and knows all about you. Talk freely to Him of each unhappy feeling and wait patiently for Him to strengthen you to cheerfulness.
4. Take physical exercise, not violently but regularly. Much that passes for deep feeling is only a sign of a torpid liver.
5. Count each lesson a step onward and upward, and be thorough in its mastery.
6. Do not neglect society, but mingle as occasion warrants with boys, girls, or grown people. You can both enjoy and profit by every companionship.

By such rules you may rise above a gloom which otherwise may give you trouble. Remember you are not your own. You belong to Christ. You must be a specimen of what religion makes of boy or man.

Good night, Your loving Father, J. G.

P.S. I see on looking over what I have written that I have not analysed but only generalised Homesickness. My generalization amounts to this - that you need not be surprised when overtaken by low spirits or vague dis-  
tress. It always comes, or is apt to come upon every great change in life or pursuits. After we get assimilated to our new circumstances it will wear off.

By way of analysis - Homesickness results from or includes either somewhat torpid - time not wholly occupied - persons around us with whom we are not yet familiar or are not satisfied - pursuits which are somewhat unusual.

The cure is to rise above it in the way I have indicated. Take it as a sign of a change to a higher, manlier life. Draw off your attention from it by business, exercise, society, study and prayer.

You will get home news from the others as they write. I send you the Weekly Transcript and the N. Y. Observer.

This letter is, of course, for both of you - even as my love and my daily prayers are for both.

God bless you - Good Bye J. G.