

star in his voyage through life, he is continually tossed about on the dark sea of uncertainty, forever struggling against the storms of this world, and without a ray of hope that he will ever succeed in steering his bark to a haven of rest.

Such a fate has fallen to the lot of many and even to some who were men of undoubted ability and genius. Goldsmith of whom Johnson wrote "*Nihil quod telegit, non ornavit*" was always in trouble and anxiety, from the fact of his having no fixed object in life. He seemed to have no idea of what calling he should follow. He began the study of five or six different professions, and when, after great loss of time and money he had one almost mastered, he would throw it aside, and try something else. Nature seems to have intended him for an author; but it was just by chance that he took to writing at all, as he would have done anything else at the same time that would keep him from starving. He was indeed a striking example of mis-directed ability.

But even after one has chosen a calling and has turned his thoughts towards the attainment of some object, he will surely fail, unless he possess that most necessary quality—determination—which may be regarded as the *sine qua non* of success in life. Good intentions are highly commendable, but it has been well said that hell is paved with such. Anyone may say within himself that he will try to reach such a height in the world; but it is not everyone who has the resolution to follow up that intention in the face of difficulties which place years of patient toil between him and the object he seeks to attain. Yet, without this quality, it is useless for us to attempt anything of importance, even though we are possessed of great ability. If we glance at the pages of history, we will find that nearly all those illustrious men, whose names have been handed down to posterity, have attained greatness by constancy and perseverance, rather than by their genius, however great it may have been.

Peter the Great, who transformed some hordes of semi-barbarians into a mighty and, comparatively speaking, educated people, and who rendered formidable on sea and land a nation which at his accession was scarcely deserving the name of such, succeeded merely by his untiring zeal in the pursuit of the object of his ambition.

Though ignominiously defeated several times by his formidable rival, Charles XII., he never faltered, but went to work again with renewed vigour, until he succeeded in dealing a fatal blow to the power of that mighty conqueror on the memorable field of Pultowa. The object which he always kept in view was to establish a fleet and fortified ports; and though he had to contend with innumerable difficulties, he had at length the pleasure of seeing his country in a flourishing condition and his ships sailing securely over the Black Sea as well as the Baltic.

In the case of authors and orators, we find the same general rule holds true; that those who met with the greatest success were the men who looked forward to the attainment of some high degree of excellence, and then set to work, and never ceased until they had reached the goal of perfection which they sought. Such was Dean Swift, who in order to enable himself to become a successful writer, studied eight hours a day for the space of seven years. Such was Demosthenes, who by the lonely sea-shore, before an assemblage of angry, howling billows, acquired that sublime power of language which has moved the hearts of all the civilized nations of the earth. These men never gave up in despair at the sight of the toil and hardships which lay before them; but nobly overlooking all difficulties, were buoyed up by the hope of the glory which they saw awaiting them beyond.

No one, then, who possesses a fair share of ability, should despair of one day occupying an honourable position among his fellow-men. Our aim should be directed as high as possible, so that in case we fail in attaining the object which we desire, we may be sure of something equally good, or nearly so. Let us not be satisfied with some easily-gained, unimportant position in which we will have to plod all our days without hope of rising. Better to toil half one's life-time, and then spend the remaining half in honour and comfort.

"Let us then be up and doing
With a heart for any fate;
Still achieving, still pursuing,
Learn to labour and to wait."

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