

# BOYS AND GIRLS

## How High Shall I Aspire?

(Graham Hood, in the 'Globe and Commercial Advertiser.')

A correspondent who has high literary aspirations, and who, as she admits, is in the 'sloughs of despond' because her contributions to the magazines are invariably returned with a brief and formal note of rejection, has written to ask if she has any right to aspire to so lofty a goal as authorship. To this question there can be but one answer: We ourselves build the ladder upon which we must climb, and it is our own fault if it is too insecurely constructed to bear our weight; or, if having ascended, we find that it falls short of reaching to the particular star to which we have felt attracted.

Literary success, like success in every other field of labor, depends entirely upon the individual who is endeavoring to succeed. If the will to succeed is there—the determination to push forward and attain the desired goal despite all obstacles—success will follow, and the degree of such success will depend solely upon the force exerted by the individual. This may seem like a rather unsatisfactory crumb of comfort, and yet we have many illustrations in real life that go to prove that this is something more than mere theory.

Thus, for example, it might be reasonable to suppose that a person who had grown to young manhood without knowing how to read or write stood a pretty poor chance of being distinguished for either learning or authorship; yet, in contradiction to this supposition, we have such cases as those of Elihu Burritt, or, to come still nearer home, our own Rev. Robert Collyer. Both of these men were ignorant boys, and yet, through the sheer determination to succeed, they turned defeat into victory. We know what Dr. Collyer has done, and it is only necessary to refer to any good biographical dictionary to read about the achievements of Elihu Burritt. Though an ordinary blacksmith, a person who had no knowledge of even the basic principles of the English language, the alphabet, he succeeded in mastering so many languages that, before his death, he had attained world-wide fame as the 'learned blacksmith.'

While such illustrations are of great value to us as practical examples of the possibilities of human achievement, the results that these men have attained may be duplicated by any one of us provided we are made of the right kind of material. To accomplish such ends, however, it is necessary that we should be willing to work hard. Neither Robert Collyer nor Elihu Burritt would ever have made his name known to the world if he had been content to sit down quietly to wait for things to happen.

Fortunately, however, the desire to improve themselves mentally was sufficiently strong to give them a foundation upon which to build, and once the beginning had been made the fight for success progressed naturally, step by step. It must not be imagined, however, that it was an easy battle to win, for lack of training was not the only obstacle that stood in the way of success. In addition, there was lack of money—money to employ teachers and to purchase books—for books and teachers were not so easily acquired in those days as they are at the present time, and yet, through their own individual efforts, these barriers were overcome and success crowned their efforts, just as it will crown the efforts of any other human being who is willing to make the most of his opportunities.

In other words, in addition to the desire to succeed one must have the determination to try, and to keep on trying regardless of temporary setbacks until the bull's-eye has been struck. It means hard and persistent work. It means dauntless courage and limitless self-confidence. It means hours and days and weeks of patient practice, but if the success desired is really worth having it is worth while fighting for it.

Do you imagine that Elihu Burritt would ever have been heard from if he had accepted the first rebuff and had dropped back to mourn over his misfortunes? No, he would have been shoeing horses until the day of his death. He won his battle for success because he was willing to fight. We, too, can win, but we shall have to fight to do it. If you

think it is too much trouble—don't fight. That's all.

## Three Little Knights.

(S. E. Winfield, in the 'Child's Hour.')

'Say, Dannie, do you know what a knight is?' asked Ted, as the two boys were trailing their sleds up to the top of the hill for a coast.

'Sure I do, do you think I'm enough of a goose not to even know what a knight is! It's when it's dark, and you have to go to bed before you want to. Guess I know that all right; I've had to do it often enough.'

'Oh, I don't mean that kind of a night, I mean a knight; you spell it with a k first.'

'No, I never heard of that. What is it, anyway?'

'Well, Aunt Betty was reading about them to us last night, and it was great. A knight



was a sort of soldier, at least we should call him so, and he had to promise to do the right, and help anyone who was in trouble. My, but it was awfully interesting. There was a king called Arthur—'

'Arthur what?'

'Nothing, just King Arthur, and he had a table that they used to sit around, and they were called "The Round Table Knights," and if they didn't do the big things, and just have a great time. It made me wish that we could kill dragons now, and help rescue people in distress. Don't you wish we could, Dannie?'

Dannie looked doubtful for a moment, and then he said, 'Course I'd like to help people, but I guess I'd rather not tackle any dragons, 'cause you might get hurt.'

'Of course you might get hurt, the knights did get hurt often, and sometimes they were killed, but then think of what they did.'

'I don't believe they did anything worth getting killed for,' still insisted Dannie, whose one fear and worry was getting hurt.

'Pooh! you'd make an awful 'fraid cat knight,' said Ted, in utter contempt. 'There is Jimmie, now; I know that he'd like to be one; you see. Hello, Jimmie, going coasting? Say, Jimmie, don't you wish you could be a knight?'

'What, one of those old parties who wore brass things on their heads and stomachs, and were always in some sort of a row?'

'Yes, I guess that is the kind I mean, but that is not just the way that Aunt Betty told us about them. I thought it would be kind of fun to play that we were knights, and try and do as they did.'

'What, get into rows?' ask Jimmie, with a grin.

'No, of course not, unless we have to; I mean to help people.'

'All right; when will we begin?'

'Let's begin now. See that little girl over there, she looks like a damsel (they always called them damsels in the book, but I don't know why) in distress, because I am sure she wanted that boy to let her slide down the coast on his double runner, and he would not let her.'

The three boys looked where Ted said the girl was, and sure enough they saw a small girl in a hood and reefer, mopping her eyes,

and sniffing behind a pair of red mittens, while a hard hearted boy darted off down the hill on his swift sleds.

'Come on, fellers, I mean knights, feller knights, to the rescue.'

The small girl in the hood looked a bit scared to see the three boys bearing down in her direction, but when she saw their smiling faces, she smiled in return.

'Say, Sissie, want to go coasting?' asked Ted, as leader of the band of knights. He felt sure that 'Sissie' was not the proper way to address a damsel in distress, but it was the only way he knew, and it was most likely that she would understand that way better than she would the words of a real knight.

Sissie stuck her finger in her mouth, and said shyly, 'Y—yes, I'd like to, but—'

'Never mind the buts,' said Ted. 'We saw the way the other boy was mean to you, and we made up our minds that we would come and rescue you; we are knights, you know.'

Sissie didn't know what knights were, but she did know that there were three very kind hearted small boys looking at her with smiling faces, and asking her to do just what she was wild to do, but had not been allowed to.

'Come along and get onto my sled,' said Ted again, as he saw that the damsel he was so willing to rescue was quite uncertain as to whether she would allow herself to be rescued or not.

'I w—want t—to, but—'

'Oh, bother the buts, what good are they, they never did anything. You just drop onto that sled, and see how quickly you will be at the bottom of the hill.'

Thereupon Sissie did as she was told, and away went the sled with its load, flying down the coast.

Meanwhile the boy who had refused to take her down the hill had gone back up the hill, and on looking for her, was much frightened not to find her, because she was his sister, and moreover her mother had told her not to coast down the hill for fear of being hurt.

He was waiting for her as the three boys came up the hill dragging her on the sled.

'Oooh! Billy, I've had such a luvly slide,' she said with her eyes like stars.

'You just wait till I tell mother, and then you will have a different kind of a time,' he answered roughly.

'Please don't tell her, Billy, it was only once.'

'You just come along home, and see. I don't want to be bothered with you out here any longer, anyway.'

'He's a dragon,' said Ted in a whisper. 'Let's give it to him by drawing his sister home, and telling her mother how it happened. He is Billy Thorp, the meanest boy in the school, and she must be his sister.'

So off like a flash went the three boys, with Billy following in the rear, but as he was stout and heavy, and the others were light and quick on their feet, they soon left him far in the rear.

It was a breathless trio which brought up at the Thorp's side door, and Mrs. Thorp, not knowing why her small daughter should be brought home by three strange boys, ran to the door. Ted, as chief knight, spoke up, and said:

'It wasn't her fault, Mrs. Thorp, we made her coast, 'cause we didn't know that you had told her not to, we didn't let her tell why she wouldn't, we just flopped her on to the

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