

* The Willing Boy. *

All experience proves that there are two factors in the success of every boy and every man. These are capacity and opportunity.

There are thousands of capable men today filling lower positions than those for which they are well qualified, because the opportunity to go higher has never come within their reach. It has been so since the world began; it will continue to be the case until the end of time. But it is also true that opportunity has knocked at many a man's door, and the man who was called for was not ready. It is rare, indeed, that fortune makes the second visit.

The power that keeps the world moving is the hopefulness of youth. Almost every boy is determined to better his condition, and starts out in life with the ambition to belong to the successful few rather than stay in the ranks of the common workers. But not more than one in a hundred of these says to himself: 'I will not permit pride, or laziness, or carelessness, or work, or demands of any kind, no matter how unpleasant they may be, to stand between me and success.'

With this spirit the hundredth boy goes into a shop to learn his trade or into a store as clerk, and, although he may never reach the summit of his desires, he will surely ascend as the sun is certain to shine on the morrow.

The very first quality that he must make the foundation stone of his character is a cheerful willingness to do any and everything that he is called upon to do. The boy who is willing to drop one task upon which he is engaged and pleasantly turn to something else, when requested by someone who is over him, is so different from the vast majority of his companions that this gift will quickly be noted, and then one rung upon the ladder of success will have been mounted.

One of my friends, a dry-goods merchant during a very dull day noticed that the windows were not so bright as they might be, while several of the younger clerks were doing nothing. He said to the first one he met: 'Jim, as there's nothing doing indoors, don't you want to rub up the windows a bit?' Jim flushed and stammer-

ed, and finally got up courage to say: 'I'd rather not, Mr. A.; I didn't come here to wash windows.' 'That is true,' said my friend, 'but I thought you might be willing to do it as trade is dull.' Another clerk overheard the conversation, and when Mr. A. was near his counter, said: 'I'd just as soon clean the windows as be inside,' and he was put at the work, doing it in a pleasant and cheery way.

When Saturday night came around Jim was dropped from the force because of the dullness of trade, while the other was commended for the way he had kept himself busy, and when trade was better he was advanced.

In a wholesale house in a thrifty western city it was no uncommon thing for country merchants, in their desire to carry home all their purchases that they could, to have more bundles than they could very well manage to handle, and if the porter was busy one of the boys was called upon to help the customer to the railroad station. In a store that I knew about one boy was just as willing to go as the other, but always wanted time to brush himself up a bit and arrange his toilet to his liking. The other was ready the moment he was spoken to, and would start off in his shirt sleeves if the time was so short as to make it seem necessary. This apparently trifling difference in the two was the cause of one being advanced ahead of the other at the first opening, and, though both were about equal in ability, one became a salesman with a good salary, while the other is a stock clerk in the same store at one half the pay that his old companion receives.

I frequently meet a successful merchant who was taken out of a very ordinary position in a factory and given a place in the office because he was willing to do or go, and quick to perform his tasks. A part of his work was to run errands for the office men. These errands were of every imaginable kind, but it was a matter of pride with him to perform every task in the quickest possible time.

One day, toward the closing hour, he was asked if he would run on an errand that would take him five miles out into the country. (This was before the days of

telephones.) He was told that no one would blame him in the least if he felt that it was too long a walk. He knew that the matter was one where time was of importance, and he felt sure that his employer would be thankful to have him do the errand that day, so he answered as cheerfully as if the task were for his own pleasure: 'Why, yes, sir; of course I can do it, and will be glad to do it for you.'

The pleased look that came into his employer's face was ample payment for his long walk, and that errand and his way of doing it were important links in the chain of his success.

Just as the men in the office of a large factory were about putting their books into the safe for the night, a dispatch came to the manufacturer telling him that his best customer would call upon him early the next morning, to talk over the coming seasons, prices, etc. Much regret was expressed that the news had not come a day sooner, so that some figures that they were at work upon could have been completed, for they were of great importance in the coming interview.

The boy of the office—eighteen or nineteen years of age, perhaps—made no offer, but he did not lock the safe. He went back to the office after supper, putting in six or eight hours of intensely hard work in copying the figures off loose sheets and getting them into available use for the morning. When the manufacturer appeared, the customer was with him; these sheets of figures played an important part in the day's work, and enabled the two to come to specific terms on a large contract.

When the customer was gone the employer wanted to know the particulars regarding these papers, and not only paid the boy handsomely, then and there, for his thoughtfulness and diligence, but opened the way later to a step forward in his advancement.

One of my companions began his business education in a retail dry goods store in one of the smaller cities. After he had been there a year I asked him if he had made many acquaintances outside of those in the store. 'No; I know very few people,' he said, 'and I am not ready to make acquaintances just yet. The younger clerks frequently have to deliver goods, and the work would be very unpleasant for me if I had a large circle of acquaintances. I can make acquaintances hereafter when I am in a higher position.'

I knew him to be more fond of society

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than the average young man, but he was willing to get along without it so long as it might embarrass him in his work.

I have observed that the boy who is willing to do anything he is called upon to do soon learns to do things without waiting to be asked, and often steps forward to assist before his employer or associates have realized that help would be necessary. This gives him the reputation of being thoughtful and ready, and that is a second step on the ladder of promotion.

In every shop and store there are seasons when the work crowds all hands. When left to themselves the great mass of workmen and clerks watch the clock so as to quit work on the stroke. But here is one who keeps on working; his task is so nearly completed, he says, he guesses he will finish it before going home. Or he sees that a day will make quite a difference in sending off an order, so he determines to see that it goes that night rather than wait till the morrow. Or he finds new goods left lying on the floor, and knows that it would be better that they were put on the shelves before sweeping time, so he puts them away before he goes home.

These are excuses for working a little late, as if apologizing for breaking a rule of the house; but those over him say: 'That man is not afraid of work, and has an interest in this store.' They look upon him with increasing favor, and his progress is sure.

I know two clerks in a wholesale house; one, the stockman, was paid \$1500; the other an office man, was paid \$900. The stock clerk was an efficient one; he put away new goods in fine shape, kept his stock looking well, and got out orders accurately and expeditiously. His salary was for doing this work, and so long as he did it well he was content.

The office man was paid for his work on

the books, but it seemed to him that the man who sold a bill of goods was a more important factor in the house than the one who got out the order or who charged and billed it.

In those days retail dealers went to jobbing centres far more than they do to-day, and salesmen in one house would look in upon their acquaintances in other lines of trade, inquiring as to what country buyers were in town, and getting introduced to them as often as possible. They would then do a little 'drumming' for their own house, and secure a visit from the retailers if they could.

Our young bookkeeper made acquaintances in these other stores, and occasionally found a retailer who wanted goods in his line. This interfered with his regular work, but he went back evenings and kept his books in shape. He began to be looked upon as a fair salesman, and help was given him in the office that he might devote more of his time to selling goods. In four years he was a partner in the house, his interest for the first year paying him \$7000 while the stockman was still in his old position at \$1500.

I read of two workmen in one shop who spent their noon hour in the workroom. One man devoted his time, month after month, to teaching a dog to do many wonderful tricks. He was quite successful and sold the trained animal for a good price.

The other mechanic spent his hour in trying to perfect a machine for which there would be a large demand if one could but obviate difficulties which, however, most men said were insurmountable. He was not a brilliant workman, but he studied nights and worked noons at his models, never getting out of patience nor discouraged, until at last, quite by accident, he hit upon the solution of the whole

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