

he was articled, his performances did not in any way exceed those of far less gifted pupils. With regard to his paintings it may be said that as a rule his beginnings were generally more hopeful than his finishings. There was a certain stodginess about his foliage, and his foregrounds were laboured and ineffective. It was at about this period that he heard of a man who had sold an invention of his for a large sum to a manufacturing firm. Now Tom had always had a sort of instinct for machinery, and considerable inventive faculty. Moreover an uncle of his was in the electrical business. It was not long before young Handicap, in the intervals of law, poetry and painting, had constructed an electrical contrivance which his uncle, who was given to flamboyant utterances, said was destined to revolutionize a certain branch of electro-mechanics. But I have not mentioned Tom's talent for music. Everybody knew of that. Why, to hear him, who had never learned a note, play the piano, was to realize what a star performer he might have been if he had begun earlier and devoted proper attention to the study of it. He could "vamp" an accompaniment for anybody, and being good-natured he was frequently called upon to exercise his gift. There was nobody whose company was more valued than Tom's at social gatherings. His amateur conjuring, and tricks with cards were of themselves always sufficient to assure him a hearty welcome.

All these varied accomplishments served to pass the time very pleasantly. If his work at the law office was not enthusiastic, it was at least regular. And there were times when he seemed to see in a flash the best solution of a knotty legal problem. Nevertheless, when the time for his examinations came, although he and a friend worked almost day and night for a week reading up for them by the aid of strong coffee, poor Tom failed to pass. And now, as a middle-aged man, he is the managing clerk of the office in which he was articled, instead of being a member of the firm. As the father of six or seven children he has sometimes found a difficulty in making both ends meet.

Nevertheless, in spite of this cogent example, there is something to be said on behalf of versatility. For example, it cannot be denied that man is a versatile animal. He is not as the horse or the mule, whose capacities are only to eat, to pull, and to carry. He is evidently intended to do a great number of things. Most well-bred members of the human species, and when I say well-bred I intend no reference to aristocratic lineage, have in them the roots of all the arts and sciences. The reason that these remain in most people rudimentary, is that there is a tendency on the part of the system under which we live to dwarf and repress most of them from birth. A perfectly well-developed and well-educated man should be able to do almost anything. He should be able to run, jump, row, cut trees down, make a chair, a table or a watch, write verses, speak in several languages,