



EDITORIAL



CHOOSING A CALLING

WHAT shall I do when I grow up? This is the question that thousands of boys and girls ask themselves each year. Generally speaking no one helps them to arrive at their decisions, and they drift into various callings following the line of least resistance or grasping at those opportunities which promise the greatest immediate reward. Now, the choosing of a life work is a most serious business. As a person travels the road but once, it is surely important that he make the most of his adventure. Some people appear to make no mistake. They run along surely and swiftly to the goal of their desires without hindrance and without disappointment. Others enter blind alleys and are forced to retrace their steps, so that when they attain manhood or womanhood they have not advanced sensibly beyond the stage of childhood.

Even with all the counsel that parents and others may give, it is not easy for young people to decide. On merely financial grounds it is not easy. Farming in many districts no longer pays, because land values have increased and cost of machinery is so great. Manufacturing does not offer much hope because it is only the man or firm with great capital that can make things go, and anyway the attitude of labor has practically prevented men from opening new factories. The workman's lot is not what it once was because in these days the laborer is no longer free. He is so bound by rules of his own making that he has no power of initiative, and no opportunity to add to his wealth by working overtime. The professions are overcrowded, and to succeed one is almost compelled to become a vampire. If a man is ill he trusts to patent medicine rather than pay a physician, and should he have a quarrel with a rich neighbor he settles it at a disadvantage rather than seek the services of a lawyer. There is always, of course, the possibility of taking up the work of a salesman in a junk shop, for here one can add to selling prices without limitation, and become rich through plausible misrepresentation. This, of course, is merely how people talk when they are pessimistically inclined. The real truth is that any man can make a comfortable living in any field of work if he is only willing to pay the price in industry and goodwill. No doubt it is easier to make money in some callings than in others, and it is always safe and better to follow a legitimate business than a venture in which success depends upon luck or sharp practice.

There is, however, more than financial possibility to be considered in making a choice of occupation. The real question is not what money a man will make but what the man will make of himself. If he is worth anything at all, he is worth infinitely more than his income. That business is best which calls forth all the powers of the soul, which permits aspirations and ambitions to be realized in full hearted action. One reason, and the principal reason, why many young fellows do not wish to follow the calling of their fathers is that it does not satisfy their longings. For instance, there is nothing more attractive in many ways than life on the farm, yet some young people with strong social longings, or desire for competition in a big way, cannot endure what they call the tedium of farm routine. Similarly some sons of merchant princes yearn for the professions, and some sons of lawyers and doctors seek avenues that call for physical endurance or monetary risk. It is well that there should be departures of this kind. As a rule a young man should follow the line of his own choice.

Some time ago a young man came to his teacher and talked long and seriously over this problem. The teacher was a wise man and recommended the young fellow to visit a dozen different establishments just to see what was going on. At the end of the visit the young man returned and without hesitating a second pronounced in favor of one of the callings. He had found his work. Needless to say he has been in every way successful. He is already a leader, and promises to be in the very forefront in his own business.

There is nothing to be gained by permitting young people to drift into business, nor by demanding that they enter the same business as their parents. The greatest success follows the line of

inclination, and the duty of parents is to find out the real desires of their children so as to minister to them wisely. Sometimes, of course, it is impossible to let a young man follow the wish of his heart, sometimes, too, he will be unable to make a decision because he lacks experience and knowledge. Distant fields may look green to him, a clean collar may seem to be more honorable than a greasy jacket, work in an office may be preferred to labor in the fields. Here there is a fine field for education and no better thing can parents and teachers do than to talk to young people about occupations and life prospects. There are no talks so much appreciated by young folk as these, and they have often been productive of great good. A man has no more justification for choosing his son's business than the mother has for choosing her son's wife. Individual and national prosperity depend upon the best use of all talent available. As far as possible it is wise to have each man in the position nature and education have fitted him to fill. It strikes one at times that there are many misfits which are traceable to ignorance or imperfect guidance.

A boy in choosing a calling should look beyond the immediate present. To a lad of fifteen with no home responsibilities, fifteen dollars a week seems pretty good pay. Yet it will be small pay for a grown man, and a boy does well to educate himself as fully as possible before entering upon his work so that he can enter a calling which promises advancement with years of service. A boy of fifteen may cork bottles as well as a man who has been at the business for twenty years, and in such a business a boy can earn the maximum salary. It will never be a high salary, however, for it calls for neither initiative nor intelligence. Far better would it be to begin with less in an occupation that leads somewhere. It is a tragedy for a boy to condemn himself to a low grade of industry because he was tempted to enter it too early in life and rendered himself incapable of rising to anything better.

GOD GIVE US MEN

The following words were used recently by one of our public speakers:

"A well-known preacher in Winnipeg happens to be the owner of a much-used Ford car. This car has been his comfort and his aid for many seasons. One day this spring something went wrong with it. As he was not a mechanic he could not locate the trouble, but he knew the thing was not running smoothly, so he called in at one of the leading repair shops and asked the master-workman 'to give it a look over.' A brief investigation was enough to satisfy this chief mechanic that it would cost fifty dollars or perhaps sixty dollars to set it right, but that it would be impossible to 'take the work on' for over a fortnight. Now as the preacher could not have the repairs made at once and as he had not fifty dollars on hand after paying his grocery bills, he decided to get along with the disabled car or at least to take it back home.

"On the way he was passing a little obscure shop on one of the side streets. It struck him that he might possibly get something done at once in this little place. The owner in his broken English said, after looking at the car, 'Can you wait a few minutes, say half an hour? I think I can fix him quick. Not very bad break; yes, me fix him.' And so the preacher waited while the repair was made, and he wondered as he paid the three dollars charged, what percentage of profit was being made by the high class repair shop on all work done in it."

A month ago a citizen had to get a new cord for a vacuum sweeper. He ordered one from a prosperous store in the centre of the city. The price charged was four dollars. The cord was perfectly satisfactory. This morning walking down town same citizen saw some vacuum sweepers in a window and out of curiosity asked the dealer the price of a connecting cord. The answer was, "About one dollar and a quarter."

When the matter was brought to the attention of the first company, the manager said there must be some mistake. To this every one will agree. The mistake is in allowing firms of a certain type to do business in the country.

One does not so much mind paying fifty dollars instead of three dollars, or four dollars instead of one dollar and a [Contd. on page 72]

State Supervision

When the referendum declares in favor of non-importation of liquor from other provinces, there arises this question. What liquor can be manufactured and sold in Manitoba, and under what conditions will the sale be carried on? The only sensible course seems to be to put the manufacture and distribution directly under control of the government. The same is true of forms of entertainment that are run to excess. Those who operate moving picture theatres, dance-halls, bowling-alleys and the like, are in the business for profit, and are inclined to overlook the moral aspect of things. All education should be administered by the State. The moral welfare of the citizens generally is of much more importance than the commercial success of a few business firms. It were far better that a few self-seeking concerns should close their doors than that the moral standing of the community should be lowered.