

ready to unite us again when it came time for us to be reunited. That is the whole story of what he did for me. Of course, it goes without saying that what he did for me he did for each one of the three hundred men who took dinner at the hotel that day.

How did he do this? That is what I wondered about, too, and that is what I'm going to tell about, as well as I can.

When the rush of dinner was over, I went and stood beside the young negro, and began talking to him in a quiet way. I told him that I was greatly interested in what he was doing, and asked him if he could explain to me how he did it. He said he had never thought about trying to tell how he did it, and that he didn't think he could tell very much about it. However, we chatted on for a while, and gradually I got from him what follows:

"You see," he said, "in the first place, when I made up my mind to follow this business, *I knew just what I wanted to do, and I began to study on the best way to get to do it.*"

Now I would like to call your attention, my dear reader, to those italicized words, and have you pause and reflect on them for a minute or two. It seems to me they contain the very essence of the secret of learning and mastery. If we can, in any way, get our pupils to "know just what they want to do," and to studying on "how they can get to do it," we shall have solved the bulk of the educational problem for every pupil that we can get into this condition.

"I understand, then," I said, "that you couldn't always do the act, but that you had to learn it, just as other folks learn things?"

And he replied, "Oh, yes! I had to learn it, and it took me about three years to get it down fine, so that I wouldn't make any mistakes. But I've got it now. I don't want to brag,

but I would be willing to bet money that I can take a thousand hats from a thousand men, as they pass by me, put the hats aside, and give them back to the men without a mistake."

"Well, can't you give me some idea of how you went to work to learn to do this?" I asked.

He scratched his head for a minute, and then said, "Well, I never told any one about it before, but, if you care to know, I can tell you just how I began, anyhow. I got some little slips of stiff white paper about as long and as wide as your finger, and I took a pencil and marked numbers on the ends of these slips, the same number on each end. Then, when a man gave me his hat, I'd tear one of these slips in two in the middle, give one-half to the man, and stick the other half in the hat-band. So you see I had checks on every hat, and when the men presented their checks all I had to do was to hunt up the hat to match, and there you were. This made a sure thing, every time, *and gave me a chance to hold down my job until I could learn what I wanted to.*"

It is marvellous what genuine wisdom there is just running to waste in this world! I commend a careful re-reading of these italicized words also.

And then he went on, "I did this, and didn't take any chances for a good while, till I got to doing it just naturally, as you might say, and then I began to branch out a little on what I was after. You see, a fellow can't make breaks, in a house like this, or he'll get fired, too quick. So I went slow, but I got there."

"The first I tried, without checks, was this way. *I began a little at a time.* I'd see, almost every day, some peculiar-looking man with a peculiar-looking hat. I'd take a good look at the combination, and put such a man's hat aside without any check. That's the way I began to do what I do now