

THE YOUNG MAN AND HIS PROBLEM

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BE SOBER

"Be sober"—that is a scriptural injunction which means "Be serious." But our civilization demands a new type of soberness. Our age is becoming complex. A man must needs have eyes in the back of his head. He who runs an automobile must look four ways at once. What the age demands is nerve—a steady nerve. Wine, whiskey, beer and tobacco hardly lead a man to the highest peak of self control. To have yourself well in hand you must have nerves of steel and muscles of iron. So, be sober. "It is a long while since we have seen such convincing words about the effect of alcohol as these from the lips of the famous Labrador missionary and physician, Wilfred T. Grenfell. They are quoted from the 'Banner of Good': 'Why don't I want to see liquor used at sea? Because, when I go down for watch below, I want to feel that the man at the wheel sees only one light when there is only one light to see; that, when the safety of the ship and all it carries depends on the cool head, the instant resolve, and the steady hand of the helmsman, there is not standing there in place of the man, the poor, debased creature that all the world has seen alcohol create—even out of such gifted men as Burns and Coleridge and hosts of others. I have seen ships lost through collision because the captain has been taking a little alcohol.'"

FORE-ORDAINED FAILURE

There are young men who seem to be determined to fail. They squander time as though they did not know that it takes an eternity to produce it. They smoke cheap tobacco and suck innumerable cigarettes as though throat and lungs were copper lined and poison proof. They spend money as though they had the backing of a perfect banking system and scatter their currency as though gold were a thing to get rid of. They invite failure, woo ruin, and welcome defeat. And then, when it is all too late, they seem surprised and crest-fallen. Which reminds us of Caesar's remark: "Caesar surveyed the field of battle after the victory of Pharsalia, not with the feelings of exultation which might have been expected in a victorious general, but with compassion and sorrow for the fallen soldiers whose dead bodies covered the ground. After gazing upon the scene sadly and in silence for a time, he said: 'They would have it so,' and thus dismissed from his mind all sense of his own responsibility for the consequences which had ensued."

ONE MAN POWER

All the guarantees necessary for a reconstructed universe are wrapped up in the personality of one man. One man can revive the church. One man can regenerate a community. One man can split a party—and sometimes a party needs to be split. One man can smite a great evil. One man can enthrone a great deal. A man is so constructed that he can become the channel of all spiritual forces and the instrument of all the unseen elements of power. An American writer says: "Since the time when a saloon-keeper in Maine thrust out Neal Dow, who had entered his saloon to remonstrate with him for selling liquor to an incorrigible toper, with the exclamation, 'This is my business! Mind your own business! Get out!' and Dow replied, 'I will get out, but I will make it my business to put you out of business!' the organized temperance movement has made steady progress in America, and every day sees many saloons closed up."

YOUR WORKSHOP

A woman needs a sewing basket and a man needs a workshop. You will do more work at home than you will ever do elsewhere because at home the conditions are right. Even if a man is to write a successful article he must have a pen which suits his hand, a paper which is not too rough or too soft, a light which shines on his desk in the right way, a chair which fits his body and an inkwell fairly within reach. Have your "den" my boy. Get things in the right place—that is in the right place for you. It was said concerning Henry Ward Beecher that "He tossed books, papers, memoranda, boots, and articles of clothing in one corner of his room, and when in search of anything he got down on his knees and pawed over the mass. He had a circular table made, with a hole large enough in the centre to admit his body. He sat on a low stool with a turning top, with his head and half of his body through the hole in the table, and when he changed from one work to another he would spin around on the stool and thus bring himself to another part of the table. He was a poor student in mathematics, and finished this part of his course with difficulty."

YOUR BEST FRIEND

Unless you are one of the most unfortunate creatures who ever lived—your best friend is your mother. She has already suffered more for you than any other person is likely to suffer and her advice, while not always infallible, is without personal bias, prejudice or personal selfishness. When your mother speaks—listen! Listen to Mrs. James G. Blaine as she writes a personal letter to one of her boys: "Good-by my dear boy, and the best of heaven's blessings, a pure heart and good conscience, be yours," or "I must say good-night to my dear boy. I long to see you—no words can express how much. I have every confidence that you will not abuse your father's indulgence. If you make any mistake, be sure to write me or him all about it. Do not be afraid under any circumstances of giving up your fullest confidence. Good-night, be a good boy, and heaven bless and keep you."

DIVINE DISCONTENT

There is a divine discontent. It is well not to be satisfied with "your best." You can surpass yourself if you only believe it. The greatest thing in life is growth. The biggest room is the "room for improvement." When you are complimented for the song which you sang, say to yourself "I will do that one better." Ever press onward. Believe that all things are possible in the development of your own personality. Never rest. Ever be engaged in the work of self-reconstruction. "Plutarch said of the Roman consul Coriolanus: 'He was always trying to excel himself.' The same secret of excellence is possessed by the sculptor, St. Gaudens: A Chicago reporter said to him, when a piece of his work was unveiled in that city, 'I suppose, Mr. St. Gaudens, you consider this statue your masterpiece?' 'Indeed, I do not,' was the quick reply, my next statue will be better than this."

QUALITY IN WORK

Nothing so marks out a man for success in life as quality in the character of his work. Everybody is looking for quality—the purchaser and the seller alike. Quality means wear, endurance and lasting merit. The man who puts quality into his work is a marked man. Marked because his work can be depended upon to reduce and finally eliminate worry, anxiety and concern. Oh youth! Put quality into your work! "Wedgewood, though risen from a workman, was never satisfied till he had done his best. He would tolerate no inferior work. If it did not come up to his idea of what it should be he would break the vessel and throw it away, saying: 'That won't do for Josiah Wedgewood.' Character makes reputation, and Wedgewood pottery, with Wedgewood's character behind it, won world-wide celebrity. There was no evasive secrecy; his art was his holy bride, and he espoused her with open glory."

BE PRACTICAL

Even a man of genius should be practical. The most practical question is always expressed in three words: "Will it work?" An inventor should ask himself the question: "Will this thing work and if it will work has it any financial value?" There is no use in inventing things which cause wonder but produce no compensation for the worker. We live in a world where the price of real estate is fixed for every square foot of ground which has on it the element of prospective gain and where the price of food is still high. So be practical. "There come regularly to the patent office at Washington men who wish to take out patents for perpetual motion machines. Such a man is never argued with. He is told, 'You must bring a working model,' and he goes away and does not come back."

GET SOMETHING DONE

Move! Make a start! Get something done! You will be fifty before you know it. How kind destiny is to youth. Health and no responsibilities but ambition and effort. Start early my boy. An early start gives you a chance to correct your own mistakes and, if necessary, to begin all over again. Have a program. Say to yourself that "before I am twenty-five years old I will have a college education and before I am thirty-five years of age I will be worth \$10,000." Why not? You can do it! Try, friend, live while you live. Do something. "Where will you find a more caustic satire than in the words of Douglas Jerrold: 'I know a man who is master of twenty-four languages, but has nothing to say?' Or, where will you find a sadder epitaph than on the tomb of Joseph II, at Vienna: 'Here lies a King, who, with the best intentions, never succeeded in carrying out a single plan?'"

FIND A WAY

There is always a way to do a thing which must be done. That there is a difficulty in the way of doing a thing simply emphasises the necessity of having the thing done. Duty, difficulty and diadem spell out the charter of a noble achievement. There are always seven ways of doing a thing and if we fail in one way there are still six possible ways of solving the problem before the day is over. There are other ways of getting upstairs besides climbing the staircase. Ask the man in charge of the fire engine. The author of "Getting One's Bearing" says: "M. Huc, the missionary in China, one day asked a boy whether it was noon. The boy looked up to the sky, but the sun was obscured by clouds; then he took up a cat, and pushing back the eyelids, said, 'It is not noon yet.' Then he let the cat go."

PERSONALITY

"Personality" is a word full of meaning. It is success, power, influence and magnetism to those who avail themselves of its secret forces. Personality gets a hearing, personality commands attention, personality wins an audience, personality creates a favorable disposition on the part of every social circle toward the one who possesses it. Personality does not depend on form, figure, beauty or social standing. Personality is another word for brains, thought-power and strong mentality. It was said of Madame de Staël, who was the reverse of a beauty, that she could bring any man to her feet in a quarter of an hour by the charm of her manner and of her converse.

RIGHT IS MIGHT

Get on the right side of things. Get on the right side of your conscience. In every discussion, debate, division, struggle and conflict there is a right side. Get on that side. Seek it ever and it will find you always. Have a noble ambition to be right. Ask for the right, seek for the right. A hundred times a day ask the question: "Is it right?" Where there is doubt there is danger. Right is not a narrow road hard to find. Right is a road which is narrow at its beginning, but which grows broader with every added mile. Seek for the right. Keep before your mind the inscription on Gordon's statue in Trafalgar Square—"Right is Might." The best use we can make of life is to live it out thoroughly.

SALVATION IN WORK

Emerson affirms that a man's task is his life preserver. What you do makes you what you are. It is well for a young man to be interested in an automobile, a steam launch, a motor cycle or a musical instrument. Occupation is the enemy of temptation. The young man who is occupied, wisely, is shielded from a score of threatening evils. Let it also be said that when a youth finds his life's work and the profession for which he is fitted by nature and education he has opened a new chapter in his experience. Phillips Brooks used to say that the day of his conversion was the day of his ordination.

ROCK BOTTOM

The universe is founded on truth and constructed according to the laws of righteousness. There is no strength in a lie and no permanency in a "fib." Everything favors a fact and all things are in opposition to a deceit inspired fiction. A misrepresentation may help for an hour, but it will bring weakness in a day and crush you if you lean wholly upon it in a year. "In a speech which Thucydides reports, Demosthenes endeavors to make this plain to the Athenian people. Says he: 'It is impossible, Athenians, to found a lasting power on injustice, perjury and trickery. For as in structures of every kind the lower parts should have the greater stability, so the grounds and principles of great enterprises should be justice and truth.'"

NOT YOUR FORTE

There are a lot of people in the world who can tell you what "you can't do." They seem to be afraid, possibly, that you will out-do them. They are bent on killing genius in its infancy. They are on the lookout for mortals who are aspiring. To chill a young and enthusiastic soul seems to give them peculiar pleasure and joy. They are determined to stall the heart of aspiration. To pour cold water on a hot skin is to them an exquisite pleasure. So they persist in affirming that: "You can't." "Hohenlinden," the immortal poem of Thomas Campbell, was first rejected by a newspaper editor, and in the notes to correspondents appeared the words: "To T. C.—The lines commencing, 'On Linden when the sun was low,' are not up to our standard. Poetry is not T.C.'s forte."