

No Man Can Earn More than \$10,000 a Year.

By John A. Johnson.



THE most vicious standard of success in the world is that which sets up dollars and cents as the height of human ambition, for the simple reason that no matter how much money a man may acquire there never comes a time when he can rest and be content that he has enough if he has been a devotee to the money god. There is a man in New York who has set his ambition at one billion dollars, and if he ever lives to acquire that he will be sorry that it is not two billion. The man who makes money the be-all and end-all of his career is the most miserable in the world. I do not believe that any man should have more than \$10,000 a year, for if he lives right he does not need any more.

Organized society as it exists today might fairly be divided into general classes—those who have more appetite than dinners and those who have more dinners than appetite. I feel certain that the greater amount of misery exists among the people of the latter class. We ought to be careful not to let ourselves get too deeply engrossed with the affairs of this world in the matter of money getting. It cramps and narrows the soul, weakens the character in its power to resist temptation, and blinds the perceptive faculties to many of the higher and greater virtues to be found in art, literature, charity to our fellow men, and all that goes to the upbuilding of a character that will command respect after the man is through with the things of this world.

As a life work I would rather be able to provide for the needs of my family, enjoy the fellowship of good books and good friends, and write one book that would be read a hundred years from now than be able to amass all the money of this world.

It often is said that the opportunities for the young man are as good today as ever they were in the history of the world, and I heartily agree with that idea. All young men may not see the matter in that light. When I was a young man I used to think that if I had come to Minnesota in 1854 I would have had better opportunities than I did have, but it was a mistaken idea of youth, and I am glad now that I did not, for the simple reason that I would have been dead now and there is no hope in this world for the dead man even though he be not buried. I wish to impress this upon all—that as long as you have the breath of life you should aim to be achieving something. Do not allow yourself to go like bits of dead bark that have been chipped from a log and go floating listlessly down the stream of life toward the great ocean of eternity, with not character enough to breast the tide.

What, then, is the most desirable thing in the world and the foundation for all true success? It is character, that quality that makes a man the same being when he is alone in the privacy of his own room as he is in public under the scrutiny of the world. All the money in the world cannot buy an honest man, despite the famous taunts of skeptics which we often hear quoted that every man has his price. Being a good poker player may sometimes put a man into the legislature of this country, or at least not debar him, but it is honesty that makes men railway managers and bank presidents, and there was never such a demand for honest men in the world as there is today.

Young men, I wish to impress upon you the truth—that for every night you spend in what may appear to you an innocent debauch, when you come to be 40 years of age you will regret it if there is enough of manhood left about you to be capable of that feeling. If you could come into the room where the board of pardons holds its sessions and see, as I have seen, the broken hearted fathers and mothers, sisters and wives, pleading for the redemption of those whose iniquities had brought dis-

grace to their families and despair to the hearts of friends, you would value a blameless character as the most priceless thing in the world, and you would learn that the moment a man departs from that path of rectitude and takes a dollar that does not belong to him, that moment he has lost something that he never can recover though he may live to be a better man in after life, for it is never too late to reform, but he never can win back what he once held—a spotless character.

To the young men I want to say that it is one of their highest duties to take an intelligent interest in politics and to become as well informed as possible on the political history of the past, and the quotations which now hold the platform before the American people. It is a duty that you owe to the land of your birth or of your adoption. The future of this nation depends upon the character of the young men who are entering now upon the duties of life. I do not mean to say that you should have political positions as one of the aims of your ambition unless you feel yourself specially qualified, but it is only as the young men of the nation take an interest in honest politics and

demand honest men for public trust prove.

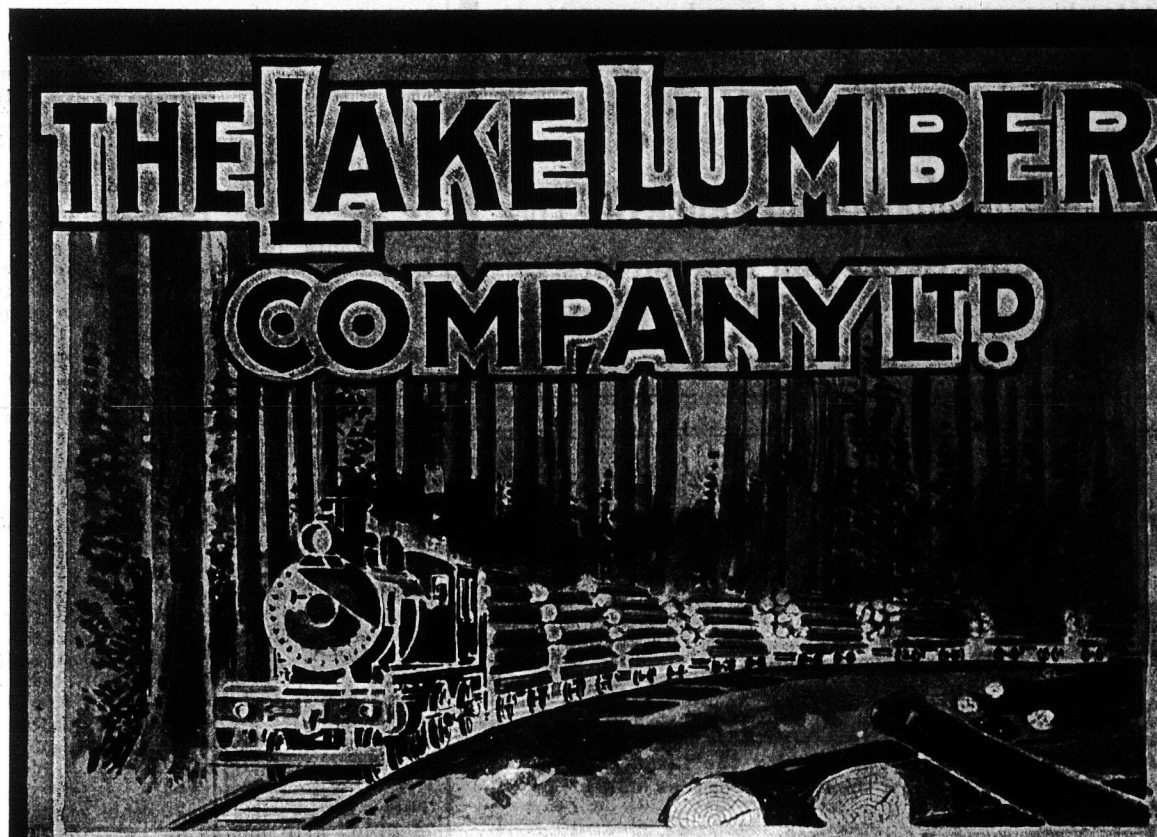
Make a resolve never to sell your conscience for the sake of making a friend, for the man who would ask you to do something contrary to what is right is not worth having for a friend. Remember this, that Abraham Lincoln stands and always will stand as a bright star in the political firmament of America not because he was right, or brilliant, or witty, but with all his other fine qualities he was above all things a good man and left behind him a character absolutely spotless. Had he done one dishonest act for the purpose of gain it would have been like a blot on a sheet of white paper.

Good character is like the mountain tops which one sees towering above the mists and fogs which may obscure the sun from those at the base, but the mighty columns eternally rear their heads above the clouds and bask serene in the full glory of the heavenly sunshine. So in the storms and trials which are bound to beset every life the only sure and safe pillars are honesty and truth, upon which all success in life is based.

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