

The Young Man and His Problem

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WHAT IS A PROBLEM?

SOME day I hope to get the consent of the Editor to change the title of this page to "The Young Man and His Opportunities." To me it sounds a little more optimistic and surely the West is a land where optimism is justified daily. Just now, however, let us attempt to discover the exact nature and meaning of the word "problem." If we can do this, we shall be able to work more definitely to the reasonable solution of such problems as confront the young man as he undertakes to play the noble part of a Citizen of the West.

This is what one dictionary says: Problem (French, probleme; Latin, problema, from the Greek, problema—pro, before, and ballo, to throw). A question proposed for solution, decision, or determination; a knotty point requiring to be cleared up; in geometry, a proposition requiring some operation to be performed. The word "puzzle" is something akin to the word under discussion, and in Mid. English, puzzle was known as "opposaille," i.e., something put before one. From this last word we get expression "a poser."

A problem, then, may be said to be a poser, and with a poser a young man has the choice of attempting to solve it or of avoiding it. All of which is by way of saying that the purpose of this page will be to help the young man to face his problems and not to run away from them.

A List of Problems

What are some of the problems of the young man? Well, to begin with, there is the young man himself, and he is probably the biggest problem on the list—much too big for me to discuss just now—but here are some with which we are all familiar:

- The problem of the Golden Rule.
- The problem of maintaining good health.
- The problem of the choice of a career.
- The problem of saving money.
- The problem of spending money.
- The problem of the right outlook.
- The problem of leisure hours.
- The problem of right hobbies.
- The problem of education.
- The problem of character building.

Evidently there is no lack of material for discussion, and in due time we shall attempt our solutions.

ASK YOUR BANKER

Many people look upon banks as places into which money may be handed and from which it may occasionally be withdrawn, but there is another phase of the banking business which far too often is overlooked. The banker stands ready to advise you on financial matters as does the physician upon questions of health, or the barrister upon matters of law. There are those who say that it is much easier to save money than it is to spend it advantageously, and in this there is a good deal of truth. A young man, out of his monthly earnings, may put away a small sum occasionally and in time accumulate, say, \$500. Mysteriously enough, someone comes along about this time with a very attractive proposition and in ninety per cent of such cases one may bid farewell to the \$500. This is one of the problems that can be met by asking your banker first.

Just now in the West there are many young men fresh from honorable service overseas, who are in receipt of discharge and other allowances running up to several hundred dollars. This money has been hardily and honorably earned and should be put to good uses. Yet, there are those in the land who, with their attractive and confidential propositions, will have no compunction in appropriating this money if they can. The writer has heard that a gold mining boom is due in Manitoba. Some of the offerings may be perfectly legitimate, others may not be. Before acting, ask your banker.

THE COMMUNITY LIFE

A year or so ago, I heard a learned man say that people had need of learning the art of living together efficiently. I like that phrase—The art of living together efficiently. We may even leave out the last word, and talk of the art of living together. But, we cannot expect to live together happily unless we are prepared to think, to some extent at least, upon the many problems which daily face all sections of the community. Therefore by way of introduction, a few questions are attached, to which the young man, with profit to himself and to the community, may well devote a little attention.

Would it be wiser to centralize more power in the Dominion government?

What are some of the advantages of our present system of distribution of powers?

Does it make any difference to you personally how industry is carried on?

When does a monopoly exist?

Why is conservation of animal life important?

Rank the causes of crime in what you consider their relative seriousness.

To what degree of relationship does any obligation exist to support a sick or poor relative?

Why are country communities usually more favorable to prohibition than cities?

What reasons can you offer for the decline in population and prosperity of many rural districts?

ABOUT BOOKS

This is a time of many changes, actual and contemplated, but whatever changes time may bring, it is hard to conceive of an age where books will lose their place in society. I have heard strong condemnation of many sorts of books and reading, but I have also heard educators say that any kind of reading is better than none at all. Certain it is, however, that the young man who plans his reading may add substantially to the value and quality of his education. Here is a little chart that puts the matter clearly:

Facts should be	Dynamic.
	Frequent.
Understanding of principles should be	Broad
	Deep
Inspiration should be	Accurate.
	Important.
	Relevant.

Don't neglect this matter of reading. Read now what some of the world's really great men have to say upon the subject:

"Reading furnishes the mind only with materials of knowledge; it is thinking makes what we read ours."—Locke.

"For all books are divisible into two classes: the books of the hour, and the books of all time."—Ruskin.

"Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested."—Bacon.

"Within good books lie buried treasures."

"Books are blossoms in the garden of thoughts."

"Interest in some species of some department of knowledge is the foundation and condition for acquiring the study habit."—Sheldon.

"What is twice read is commonly better remembered than what is transcribed."—Johnson.

TACT AND DIPLOMACY

A student who was taking a two-year course in my department once came to me at the end of the first year and asked me to endorse his letter of application for a position with an important business firm in the city. "Are you leaving school?" I said. "No," replied the student. "I intend to work for them during the two months of the summer holidays and then I will come back to school." "But your letter makes it appear that you want to work for them permanently," I replied. "Do you think it fair to conceal the fact that you intend to work for them only two months?" "No," answered the boy, "but if I tell them that, perhaps they will not engage me." I could sympathize with the boy in his problem, but I could not endorse his application as written. He was trying a species of selfish diplomacy, whereas tact might have secured him a temporary position.

The young man may very well leave diplomacy to the diplomats. Tact will do the work, but that's another story.

WISE WORDS

In some old-fashioned books which are not usually to be found in the book stores of to-day, occur sometimes a few proverbs or sayings which, true as they may be, are entertaining for their abruptness. A few specimens follow:

Is a voter likely to act more wisely in voting on a law than in choosing a member of the legislature to do it for him?

Enjoy your little while the fool is seeking for more, for he will live poor to die rich.

A fool at forty is a fool for sure.

It is a bare moor where we see no cow.

What you leave at your death, let it be without controversy, else the lawyers will be your heirs.

There cannot be a greater rudeness than to interrupt another in the current of his discourse.

If you wish good advice consult an old man.

The anger is not warrantable that has seen two suns.

He who strives to do, does more than he who has the power.

It is a worthier thing to deserve honor than to possess it.

The sea refuses no river.

BE PUNCTUAL

For several years, on occasion, business men have been telephoning and writing to me for young men and women who wish to make a start in commercial life. I had long read and known that punctuality was a virtue, but I have been more than surprised at the frequency with which men of affairs have laid stress upon this. They rarely ask is he intelligent, or is he active, or was he an efficient student; but is he punctual? Perhaps they work on the theory that if a boy is punctual he is reasonably sure to possess other valuable qualities. Herbert Kaufman writes:

Tick, tick, man be quick
There, you lost a splendid minute—
What a superb chance was in it;
I am El Dorado—mine me,
Virgin hordes of fortune line me.
With my lavish hands I measure
Fame and strength and joy and treasure.
You are late—you've missed your date.
Fool, I'm Time—I never wait!

MONEY AND LACK OF IT

Mrs. B. C. Forbes, well known as an author of books on business affairs, presents in a recent work a table which concerns fifty business leaders in America, all of them millionaire, from which we learn that:

- 24 were born poor.
- 17 were born in moderate circumstances.
- 9 were born rich.
- 40 were born in the United States.
- 4 were born in Scotland.
- 4 were born in Germany.
- 1 was born in England.
- 1 was born in Canada.
- 14 began as store clerks.
- 5 as bank clerks.
- 4 as grocery boys.

Some people are more interested in millionaires than others, but the above statistics, if statistics are worth anything at all, appear to show that the poor boy has ample opportunities to become financially successful, if that be his aim. A gratifying fact, however, is that in most of the cases of these men, their accumulation of riches was incidental to the pursuit of a legitimate ideal.

PERSONALITY

Personality is less than character and more than character. It is less than character because a studied or assumed personality may conceal some weakness of character, and it is more than character because it is a valuable medium through which a man's characteristics ought to find expression. It is not, however, greater than character. Mr. William H. Rankin has prepared the following Key to Success. The initial letters spell Personality:

Be
Persistent
Enthusiastic
Respectful
Systematic
Original
Natural
Alert
Loyal
Imaginative
Truthful
Youthful

CONFIDENTIAL

Gentlemen who have preceded me in the writing of this page have set so high a standard as to cause me to enter upon my task—a pleasant one—with considerable diffidence. I hope, however, that errors or quality will be obscured to some extent by my enthusiasm and interest in the work.