

The Young Man and His Problem

By JAMES L. GORDON

Tongues and Ears. Solid business men are usually quiet. Captains of industry are very often "slow of speech." Great generals, as a rule, have not much to say. Deep thinkers are not always over eloquent. Great thoughts are hatched out in solitude. Deep cogitations are often born in the night. Mental secrecy is very often a condition of success. Frederick The Great once said to a friend:—"If I thought that my night-cap got hold of my slightest secret thought, I would burn it up."

Self-Conceit. Conceit is a youthful characteristic. The young man of sixteen knows more than his father, can see farther than his mother, can see deeper than his elder sister and in his own estimation is altogether more brilliant, from a mental standpoint, than his uncles and aunts. He seems to stand forth as a compendium of universal knowledge. How provoking. How infinitely disgusting! And yet self conceit is self reliance in the rough. The young man will need all the self reliance he possesses before he gets through the solution of life's problems. Great men are great in their self reliance. The writer of Edison's biography says: An American journalist of some note was interviewing Pasteur when the discoverer of the cure for hydrophobia remarked: "Your Edison is a great man. When the history of our generation comes to be written two names that will stand out most prominently in science will be his and—mine!"

Your Own Biography. Hall Caine is writing his own biography. He gives his reason for doing so in the following words: "I know that the time must come when the story of my life will be taken and dissected and analyzed by some one who will not know so much about it as I know myself, so I am going to write about myself in my own way." That is just what you are doing—writing your own biography in your own way. Every day a page; every hour a paragraph; every minute a sentence; every moment the record of an act. The great book of life is the "day book." Each day is a divine gift. The history of life is the history of a day. The machinery of the universe, in its ceaseless evolutions, stops long enough to give a golden emphasis to the dawning day. Twenty-four hours properly divided, and carefully utilized means solid success and a growing character.

Inner Resources. Any man under certain circumstances may be homesick but the man of strong mental resources will not be lonely for a prolonged period. He will make the splendid discovery of hidden riches in the realm of mental wealth. The power of thought will dominate him. The beauties of memory will fascinate him. The glories of the imagination, held in hand by a strong purpose, will inspire him. The empire of his own personality will open before him as a vast domain capable of well-nigh universal development. The real secret of happiness is the discovery of that realm of inner consciousness where the soul lives. The man who penned the biography of Robert L. Stevenson said: "Stevenson could lie in a sick-room for weeks without speaking, and yet declare truly as he asserted to Mr. Archer, 'I never was bored in my life.'"

I Hate That Man. The most deceptive thing is a face in repose. No man looks like himself when he is asleep and most men succeed in hiding themselves behind an inexpressive countenance. How beautiful certain women seem to be—until they open their lips—and then what a disappointment to the beholder. How severe certain men seem to be as you gaze upon them from a distance and yet how kind, gentle, and approachable when you study them at closer range. Most men are agreeable, and most women are charming and even the "peculiar" ones may blossom into loveliness under proper conditions. It is never safe to trust your judgment concerning any man until you have heard his voice, and felt the pressure of his hand. "I hate that man," said the impulsive Charles Lamb. "Do you know him?" asked a friend. "Of course not. If I did, I could not hate him," was the stammering reply of the tender heart.

How To Be Eloquent. The secret of eloquence is earnestness. Earnestness in almost every form results in eloquence. Eloquent words—eloquent looks—eloquent gestures. That famous preacher, Rev. Smith

Baker, an American divine of the Congregational Church, has been writing a number of articles on the subject of pulpit eloquence. He affirms that even "wrath," and "indignation" are manifestations of the possibility of eloquence in the human soul. He says:—"In our boyhood we had for a pastor a most excellent old minister, a graduate of Harvard and who studied under Dr. Emmons. The good old man was learned and wrote excellent sermons, but he was tame as tame could be. In the little village there was a Baptist church, and our church and the Baptist had no sympathy. One Sunday the Baptist minister immersed half a dozen converts by cutting a hole in the ice. Our good old father Davis could not stand that, and the next Sunday he preached upon the impropriety of such an act. He woke up, he quite shook the pulpit. No eye failed to watch him or ear to hear him. When we returned home mother said to father: 'If Parson Davis loved sinners as much as he hated the Baptists what a powerful preacher he would be.' The old divine had found something, at last, which had stirred him up. That which stirs you will arouse your neighbor. The secret of eloquence is earnestness. As Carlyle once said 'Eloquence is logic set on fire.'"

Insulted. I imagine that a commercial traveller ought to make a good preacher. He is a student of human nature. He meets and talks with all classes and conditions of men. He aims at results and usually gets them. He is cheerful, hopeful, persistent and dogged. What he does not accomplish today, he will attempt tomorrow. How hopefully he smiles in the hour of defeat. He always has a supply of good stories. Here is one—a story by a commercial traveller concerning one of his own class. "A traveling man came to his employer one day and said: 'I am done. I cannot sell your goods any more.' 'Why, what's the matter? Aren't they all right?' 'Yes, I guess so, but I have no heart to handle them any more. I was insulted yesterday!' 'Insulted!' said the employer, who had spent many a year on the road. 'Insulted! Young man, I know all about that. I have been cursed and sworn at, and called a liar and a thief and everything else. I was kicked out of a second-story window once; but I was never insulted in my life!'"

Beveridge on Bismark. Here is another page out of Senator Beveridge's book "The Young Man and the World."

"Many years ago I heard this story of Bismark. If it is not true, it ought to be. And if it is not true specifically, it is true abstractly. He had just returned from one of his notable diplomatic victories at the beginning of his career; great crowds had assembled for a speech. Bismark heard it all, but smoked and drank his beer and gave no sign. His secretary rushed in with excitement, and said: 'You must go out and acknowledge the applause of the people, and make a speech.' 'And why,' said Bismark; 'why do they want me to speak; why are they applauding me?' 'Because of your great success in these negotiations,' said the secretary. 'Humph!' said Bismark, 'suppose I had failed!' and turned back to his smoking and his beer. Bismark, you see, was too great for applause."

Gambetta the Bachelor. I went into a second hand book store the other day and found a volume entitled "Certain Men of Mark." The volume cost me half a dollar. I tore out half a dozen pages containing inspiring information; arranged these by subjects in my card catalogue and threw the rest into the waste paper basket. As a result I have the following nugget for the readers of the Western Home Monthly:—

Gambetta is a bachelor; but he has not lived so long without having at least contemplated marriage. The story of his engagement to an heiress in western France, and its sudden breaking-off, give us a fresh glimpse of his character. From the time of his leaving his humble home at Cahors, till his rise to the highest rank of public personages, Gambetta lived with a faithful, loving, devoted aunt, who had followed him to Paris, and who made, everywhere he went, a pleasant home for him. She was at once his maid-of-all-work and his congenial companion; and he was as deeply attached to her as she to him. His engagement to a handsome and accomplished girl, with a dowry of seven millions, was a shock to the good aunt; but she yielded gracefully to the inevitable. When the arrangements for the marriage were being discussed, however, the young lady took

it into her head to make it a condition of their union that the aunt should be excluded from the new establishment. She was scarcely elegant enough to adorn gilded salons. Gambetta explained how much his aunt had been to him; the rich beauty was only the more obdurate. Gambetta took up his hat, and with a profound bow, "Adieu," said he; "we were not made to understand each other." And the marriage was put off forever.

Corks and Leads. A young man needs two things. First something to hold him up—an inspiration. Second, something to hold him down—responsibility. Every planet in the material universe is held in its place by the joint operation of two laws. First, gravitation toward its own centre; and, second, gravitation toward the centre of some neighboring planet or constellation. A recent writer illustrates the same principle in the following manner.

"Did you ever see them fishing for mackerel or porgies on the New England coast? They have nets with corks on top, and leads at the bottom—corks and leads. If there were only corks, the net would float on the surface of the water and drift away; if there were only leads, it would drop to the bottom and be useless. But with corks and leads properly balanced, it stands in its place and encloses the fish. We have duties, disciplines, weights,—these are the heavy things to hold us down and make us useful; and He sends hope into our lives to make us men and keep us buoyant."

Men vs. Money. Men of Genius—Napoleons of Finance—Railroad Kings—Oil Kings—Steel Kings—Millionaires—Billionaires. These are the names which appear on almost every page of every newspaper. When our eyes grow weary we finally drop the paper upon the desk and wonder if our last and best civilization has not something better to offer the world than the money crowned heroes of the commercial world. Dr. S. Weir Mitchel was recently a guest of honor at a banquet given by the National Board of Trade in the United States. After he had listened to two of the speeches he slipped out of the room. Later to a friend who inquired the cause of his sudden disappearance he said, "I grew weary of hearing men talk of millions and billions and not a word about education, or moral progress, or literature, or poetry. Has the nation become so imbued with commercialism that men can talk about nothing but dollars and cents? Let me tell you, sir, that this country could well afford to pay one billion dollars for another Shakespeare." And he might have added that all the billions of American wealth could not buy one Milton or one Dante, or one Shakespeare. Saints and singers grow in an atmosphere of moral worth.

Sporty Bank Clerks. Righteousness tends toward prosperity. Carelessness tends toward poverty. No young man can draw a line between his hours of business and his hours of recreation and affirm that no relationship exists between the one and the other. We often speak of a man as living "a double life"—but men do not live a double life—they live one single and complete life—and life is so closely related that the dissipations of the evening project themselves into the business transactions of the following morning:—

Stephen M. Griswold says: "No banker will trust a clerk whom he suspects of being sporty, no matter how well he may perform the work assigned him." He further says: "Under no circumstances form the habit of gambling or betting. It does not matter in what form a man gambles; the habit is equally pernicious whether practiced on exchange or the race-track."

Sugar in the Cup. Do something to sweeten life. Do not be satisfied that the scales weigh and register an even pound—throw in an extra ounce. Men do not pay for paper and string—the merchant prince is supposed to add these to the bargain. The perfume manufacturer advertised that he could not improve the perfume so he improved the box which held the bottle. A little extra is a good advertisement, and little acts of kindness never stand in the way of commercial success or social progress. Here is a story by Dr. Talmage:—

A good many years ago there lay in the streets a man dead drunk, his face exposed to the blistering noonday sun. A Christian woman passed along, looked at him, and said: "Poor fellow." She took her handkerchief and spread it over his face and passed on. The man roused himself up from his debauch, and began to look at the handkerchief, and lo! on it was the name of a highly respected Christian woman of the city. He went to her; he thanked her for her kindness; and that one little deed saved him for this life, and saved him for the life that is to come. He was afterward Attorney-General of the United States; but, higher than all, he became the consecrated disciple of Jesus Christ.