

## TAKING THE TIDE AT THE FLOOD.

Not long ago four old friends sat down to a little dinner together in New York. One of them was a famous lawyer. They naturally fell to talking over old times, and, as men of fifty are rather apt to do, whether rightly or not, they agreed that young men now-a-days are not what they used to be.

"I have had a striking illustration of that fact to-day," said the lawyer, with a shrug of impatience. "A young fellow has had a desk in my office for perhaps six months. He seemed bright, and came to me with a recommendation from a man in whom I have confidence. He said that if I would only give him a chance, that was all he wanted. He was willing to 'do anything,' and all that sort of talk. Well, nothing but routine work has happened to come in to be thrown into that boy's way, until about a week ago, when I was short for time to look up some points about an important case which is taking up most of our attention at the office just now. 'Here,' thought I, 'is a chance for our young friend. Let's see if there is any stuff in him.' I sat down by him and explained that I should like him to hunt up all the evidence he could find bearing on this subject. After having made the thing as plain as the nose on a man's face, I added: Now if you want to know anything further about this matter, come right to me. There is no immediate hurry," I said, as I turned away; "but inside of a week we shall want everything connected with this point of the case put into perfect order." He said, "All right, sir," and I dropped the whole affair off my mind, for I have been completely absorbed in an entirely different part of the same case. To-day it occurred to me that I hadn't heard anything from him, and that by to-morrow or next day the papers ought to be in hand. I went around and asked him how he was getting on. He told me, with considerable hesitation, that he had been meaning to come and tell me that—he 'hadn't exactly understood,' and so forth. "Then why didn't you come to me, as I told you to do?" I asked him, pretty shortly. He stammered out a lot more about its being a big job for a little fellow of his inexperience; and then I fairly roared, "I was trying to give you some experience!" Then I got away as fast as I could. I was afraid that I should say something that I should be sorry for. But the young man is done for, as far as I am concerned. I shall get rid of him as soon as I possibly can. What a chance he had! Just such a chance as I had at his age—only I seized it. I knew it was a chance. This fellow acted as though he didn't know a chance when he saw it."

"How was it that you got your start?" asked one of the party. "I don't believe you ever told us."

"Oh, it isn't much of a story," said the great lawyer, modestly; "but it meant a good deal to me just the same. I was fixed something as this boy is—the one I have been telling you about—in the office of a law firm who were doing a big business. I had had a clerk's work for about six months, and was beginning to think that I never should get a chance to do anything else, though I had seized every opportunity that I could make or find to tell the head men of the firm that I was ready to try my hand at anything they had a mind to give me. Summer-time came around, and things were as dull as dull. The rest were all going off on their vacations, and at last my turn came. I packed my trunk early in the morning, and had written my friends to expect me by the first train that left that city after office hours that night. I felt pretty blue when I wrote, too. I knew they would all ask me how I was getting on, and I wasn't getting on at all. I had made up my mind that I had been a fool to think I ever should be able to do any law business anyway. I thought, with some show of reason, that if I really had any stuff in me some of these smart men at the office would have found it out by this time and would have given me something to do. Well, noon passed, and it ran along to three o'clock. It was a hot day, and I was beginning to think that it was time I was clearing my desk, when I saw the head of the firm coming toward my desk. My heart began to beat. I felt somehow as though something was going to happen. 'See here,'

he began, calling me by name. 'Here's something which ought to be done right away. The case itself isn't a hard one, but it is coming on in two or three weeks, and I can't see to it myself. You have mentioned that you would like any business which we could turn over to you. You can have this, if you like, and we'll see what sort of a brief you can get up.' He went on to explain matters a little, and then left me. My young friend down at the office would probably have said that he was very sorry, but he could not take the job, as his trunk was all packed, and he didn't wish to undertake any work till after the vacation. But such an idea never entered my mind. I rushed to the telegraph office, sent word to my friends that I was unexpectedly detained, worked at my case all that evening and was up bright and early in the morning to go at it again. It seemed to grow hotter and hotter, but I paid no attention to the weather. I had made a memorandum of the original statement so that I didn't need to go to him again. In ten days—and I never worked harder—my brief was ready. My legs shook when I went to the front office and laid it before my employer. All of that night I worried for fear I had forgotten something, but I couldn't think of anything to be done any better than I had done it. The next morning—I believe it was the happiest moment of my life—the old man came to me and told me my brief was all right; and I never had any lack of work from that time on."

Another of the group, whose name is as well known as perhaps any other in connection with the colossal commerce of New York, remarked at this point: "You are right about the importance of recognizing the chance when it comes. There is everything in it. It is a pity that boys can't understand it. Now, my own experience was something like yours. I was keeping books in the old store of —& —when I one day heard the head of the firm say to one of the partners that he wished he knew of somebody who could write some circulars and advertisements for them. 'It ought to be some one who knows our business well,' he said, 'and yet he ought to know how to express himself better than most business men have been trained to.' He went on more at length to explain what he wanted, but the others did not seem to know of anybody who could fill the bill. I went home that night thinking all the way about those advertisements. I had some knack at writing myself, but I was naturally pretty bashful, and I didn't care to say right out that I thought I could write anything so important as Mr. — seemed to think this new work to be. But the next morning I screwed my courage up, and told him that I had had a fair education and would like to try my hand at those advertisements which I had heard him asking about the day before. He was a little surprised at first, but he told me fully what he wanted, and I wrote the things—wrote them over and over and almost wore out a dictionary and a thesaurus over it—and they turned out to be just what were wanted. I believe that I might have been keeping books to-day in some little back office at fifty dollars a month if I hadn't caught at that chance. A man has got to be faithful and honest and ready in order to get taken into a firm on his merits—that goes without saying. But I don't believe that I should ever have become a partner in that house, as I did a year after that time (and that was the beginning of my success), if I hadn't seen my chance and had the courage, in the face of inexperience and a knowledge that I had no special ground for expecting favors, to snap at it."

These sentiments were warmly indorsed by every man who was present.—*Christian Union*.

## ALL WATCHES COMPASSES.

A few days ago I was standing by an American gentleman when I expressed a wish to know which point was the north. He at once pulled out his watch, looked at it and pointed to the north. I asked him whether he had a compass attached to his watch. "All watches," he replied "are compasses." Then he explained to me how this was. "Point the hour hand to the sun and the south is exactly half way between the hour and the figure XII. on the watch. For instance, suppose that it is

four o'clock; point the hand indicating four to the sun, and II. on the watch is exactly south. Suppose that it is eight o'clock; point the hand indicating eight to the sun, and the figure X. on the watch is due south." My American friend was quite surprised that I did not know this. Thinking that very possibly I was ignorant of a thing that every one else knew, and happening to meet Mr. Stanley, I asked that eminent traveller whether he was aware of the simple mode of discovering the points of the compass. He said that he had never heard of it. I presume, therefore, that the world is, in the same state of ignorance. Amalfi is proud of having been the home of the inventor of the compass. I do not know what town boasts of my American friend as a citizen.—*London Truth*.

## THE TEST.

## HOW A BRIGHT SCHOLAR WON A COLLEGIATE EDUCATION.

The principal of a school in which boys were prepared for college one day received a message from a lawyer living in the same town, requesting him to call at his office as he wished to have a talk with him.

Arrived at the office, the lawyer stated that he had in his gift a scholarship entitling one boy to a four years' course in a certain college, and that he wished to bestow it where it would be best used.

"Therefore," he continued, "I have concluded to let you decide which boy of your school most deserves it."

"That is a hard question to decide," replied the teacher thoughtfully. "Two of my pupils—Charles Hart and Henry Strong—will complete the course of study in my school this year. Both desire a collegiate education, and neither is able to obtain it without assistance. They are so nearly equal that I cannot tell which is the better scholar."

"How is it as to deportment?" asked the lawyer.

"One boy does not more scrupulously observe all the rules of the school than the other," was the answer.

"Well," said the lawyer, "if at the end of the year one boy has not gone ahead of the other, send them to me and I will decide between them."

As before, at the closing examinations the boys stood equal in attainments. They were directed to call at the lawyer's office, no information being given as to the object of the visit.

Two intelligent, well-bred boys they seemed, and the lawyer was beginning to wonder greatly how he should make a decision between them. Just then the door opened, and an elderly lady of peculiar appearance entered. She was well known as being of unsettled mind and possessed of the idea that she had been deprived of a large fortune which was justly hers. As a consequence, she was in the habit of visiting lawyer's offices, carrying in her hands a package of papers which she wished examined. She was a familiar visitor to this office, where she was always received with respect and dismissed with kindly promises of help.

This morning, seeing that the lawyer was already occupied with others, she seated herself to await his leisure. Unfortunately, the chair she selected was broken and had been set aside as useless.

The result was that she fell in a rather awkward manner, scattering her papers about the floor. The lawyer looked with a quick eye at the boys, before moving himself, to see what they would do.

Charles Hart, after an amused survey of the fall, turned aside to hide a laugh he could not control.

Henry Strong sprang to the woman's side and lifted her to her feet. Then, carefully gathering up her papers, he politely handed them to her. Her profuse and rambling thanks served only to increase Charles' amusement.

After the lady had told her customary story, to which the lawyer listened with every appearance of attention, he escorted her to the door and she departed.

Then he returned to the boys, and, after expressing pleasure at having formed their acquaintance, he dismissed them. The next day the teacher was informed of the occurrence, and told that the scholarship would be given to Henry Strong, with the remark: "No one so well deserves to be

fitted for a position of honor and influence as he who feels it his duty to help the humblest and the lowliest."—*M. E. Safford, in Christian Union*.

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