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CHATS WITH YOUNG MEN

SELF-RELIANCE

Every normal person is capable of independence and self-reliance, yet comparatively few people ever develop this ability to stand alone. It is so much easier to lean, to trail, to follow somebody else, to let others do the thinking and the planning and the work. Almost everybody you see is leaning on something or somebody. Some lean on their money, some on friends; some depend upon their clothes, their pedigree, their social standing; but how seldom we see a man who stands fair and square on his own merits, who goes through life on his own merits, and is self-reliant and resourceful.

How few people stand for anything in particular! The majority of mankind are merely so many individuals in the crowd; but how few men stand above or beyond their fellows and are self-sufficient.

In later life we never quite forgive those who have allowed us to lean upon them, for we know that it has deprived us of our birthright.

A child is not satisfied when his father shows him how to do a certain thing. But watch the exultant expression on his face when by actually doing it he has conquered the thing himself.

This new sense of conquest is an added power which increases self-confidence and self-reliance.

Henry Ward Beecher used to tell the following story of how he was taught, when a boy, to depend on himself:

"I was sent to the blackboard, and went uncertain, full of whimpering.

"That lesson must be learned," said my teacher, in a quivering voice, but with a terrible intensity. All explanations and excuses he trod under foot with utter scornfulness. "I want that problem; I don't want any reason why you haven't it," he would say.

"I did study two hours."

"That's nothing to me; I want the lesson. You need not study it at all, or you may study it ten hours, just to wait yourself. I want the lesson."

"It was tough for a green boy, but it seemed easy. In less than a month, I had the most intense sense of intellectual independence and courage to defend my recitations.

"One day his cold, calm voice fell upon me in the midst of a demonstration, 'No!'"

"I hesitated, and then went back to the beginning; and, on reaching the same point again; 'No!' uttered in a tone of conviction, barred my progress.

"The next 'I' I said down in red confusion.

"He, too, was stopped with 'No!' but went right on, and finished; and, as he sat down, was rewarded with 'Very well!'"

"Why," whimpered I, "I recited it just as he did, and you said 'No!'"

"Why didn't you say 'Yes,' and stick to it? It is not enough to know your lesson; you must know that you know it. You have learned nothing until you are sure. If all the world says 'No,' your business is to say 'Yes,' and prove it."

One of the greatest delusions that a human being could ever have is that he is permanently benefited by continued assistance from others.

It is self-help, not pulls, self-reliance, not leaning upon others, that develops stamina and strength.

I have never known a young man in any occupation or profession to amount to much who was always waiting around for a "pull"; for somebody to help him or give him a boost.

Or who sits on the cushion of advantage goes to sleep," said Emerson.

What is there so paralyzing to a strenuous endeavor, so fatal to self-exertion, to self-help, as to be helped, as to feel that there is no necessity for it because somebody else has done everything for us?

One of the most disgusting sights in the world is that of a young man with healthy blood, broad shoulders, a presentable pair of calves, and one hundred and fifty pounds more or less of bone and muscle, banding with his hands in his pockets longing for help," some one has truly said.

Did you every think how many of the people you know are just waiting for something? Many of them do not know just what it is, but they are waiting for something. They have an indefinite idea that something is coming to them, that there will be some fortunate conjunction or circumstance, or something will happen which will make an opening for them, or some one will help them, so that without very great education or preparation or capital, they can get a start for themselves, or get ahead.

Some are waiting for money which may come from a father's fortune, from a rich uncle, or some distant relative. Others are waiting for that mysterious something called "luck," a "pull" or a "boost" to help them.

I have never known a person who had this habit of waiting for help, or for somebody to give him a boost, waiting for somebody's money, or waiting for

assistance of any kind, or for luck to come to him, that ever amounted to much.

It is the man who strips himself of every prop, who throws behind him, and depends upon himself, that wins. Self-reliance is the key which opens the door to achievement. Self-reliance is the unfisher of power.

It is astonishing how many people there are in the world looking for help, for a pull, waiting for somebody to come to them without payment of the legitimate price.

There is nothing which will so undermine self-confidence, which is the very foundation of all achievement, as the habit of expecting help from others. A man at the head of a large business recently said that he was trying to place his son in another business house, where he would get hard knocks. He did not want him to start with him because he was afraid he might lean on him or expect favors.

Boys who are pampered by their fathers, allowed to come to business at all sorts of hours, to leave when they please, and to remain away when they feel like it, rarely amount to much. It is the development of self-reliance that gives strength and confidence. Depend on oneself in what develops the power of achievement, the ability to do things.

This is why boys who never amount to much at home, when they are for some time away from their fathers, often develop marvelous ability in a very short time when they are thrown upon their own resources, when they are obliged to do, or bear the disgrace of failure.

The moment you give up trying to get help from others, and become independent and self-reliant, you will start on the road to success.

Outside help may seem to you a blessing in times; but it is usually a curse because of its crippling power. It is the man who gives you money are not your best friends. Your friends are those who use you, who force you to depend upon yourself, to help yourself.

There are plenty of people older than you are, with only one leg or one arm, who manage to earn a living, while you who are healthy and physically able to work are looking to others for assistance.

No able-bodied person can feel that he is quite a man while he is dependent. When one has a trade, a profession, or some kind of occupation which makes him absolutely independent, he feels a sense of added power, resourcefulness, completeness, which nothing else can give. Responsibility discovers ability. Many a youth discovers himself for the first time when he goes into business for himself. He might have worked for years for somebody else without ever finding himself.

It is not possible to develop one's utmost possibilities while working for somebody else. There is not the same motive, the same reach of ambition or enthusiasm. No matter how conscientious or diligent, there is not the same stimulus or incentive to bring out the possible man in his independence, his self-reliance, his originality, and these will never reach their highest expression under service to somebody else while human nature remains where it is now.

It is only when the brain is tested to its utmost, when every bit of ingenuity and sagacity the young man possesses must come to the rescue of a possible failure that he will develop his greatest strength. It takes months and years of effort to stretch capital over a larger business without danger. It is the perpetual struggle to keep up appearances, to get and to hold customers, that will call out the reserve in a young man. It is when money is scarce and business is dull, and living high, that the real man is making his greatest progress.

Where there is no struggle, there is no growth, no character.

What are the chances of the youth's developing his own innate resources who knows he has money enough to buy his "education" and need not work for it, and who pays a tutor to help him out for examinations? What are the chances of his buckling down to hard study, writing nights and parts of holidays, of seizing every spare minute for self-betterment, self-improvement, in the same way as the boy who knows he will not have a dollar which he does not earn, who knows there is no rich father or uncle backing him?

How can a boy develop any self-reliance or independent manliness by having somebody else do practically everything for him? It is the exercise of a faculty that makes it strong. It is the struggle to attain that brings out the stamina—Success.

If you are teaching a piece of work, if you are laboring at the same employment with others, never ridicule one who is awkward. Correct his awkwardness kindly, show him how he should do his work; and God, who sees you and is pleased with your patience, will tell one of His angels to aid you in your moments of difficulty.

OUR BOYS AND GIRLS

What a Boy Can Do

"What can a boy do any way? You ask. 'What grand or great?'"

Li-ten a moment, lad, I pray,
And I'll three things will state.

A boy can make the world more bright
By kindly word and deed;
As blossoms rest for nature's light,
So hearts love's sunshine need.

A boy can make the world more pure
By lips kept ever clean;
Science can influence men as sure
As speech—of more doth mean.

A boy can make the world more true
By an exalted aim;
Let us give no promise,
Others will seek the same.

Put simple things, indeed, these three
Thus stated in my rhyme;
Ye wait, dear lad, did greater be?
Waist-grace, more sublime?"

—Francis Bacon.

SAINTE FRANCIS AND THE BIRDS

The Blessed Francis of Assisi called all the saints of God in the power which he exercised over the creatures of earth and air. He loved the birds most of all, and they knew it and loved him and obeyed him in return. Once when he was going through a wood, he passed through a woods where the birds were hopping about in the branches of the trees and chirping and twittering as only birds can. Saint Francis, said to his two companions: "Wait! I must preach to my brothers the birds."

At the call of his voice all the birds flocked around him, some upon the ground and some in the branches of the trees, and Francis addressed them thus: "Dear birds, my little brothers, the Creator has showered benefits upon you and you ought to bless Him for them at every hour and in every place. It was He Who preserved you in Noah's Ark and gave you the air to fly a vast land. He taught you how to sing and how to build your nests in the woods, in the fields, in the mountains, and in the valleys for your refuge, and the trees to build your nests in, and He watches over your little family. Ah, my little brothers, since your Creator loves you so much, take care not to ungratefully. On the contrary, fill the sky with your praises to God."

While he was talking a horse was unharnessed from a carriage, prepared to be taken to his stall, and the faithful watchman was jumping around, emitting short, quick barks. When the horse was ready he ran in front of him, leading the way to the right stall, then dodged around behind the horse's heels and, by a few more significant barks, convinced the latter that he'd better walk into his stall, and stand far enough forward to allow the butler to put up behind him.

Sport, as this clever fellow is called, is a large colt, with big intelligent eyes and a brain that would discount any man's. He sleeps in the day, but never winks at night. The human watchman only gives a quick nip, knowing full well that he will be awakened if anything requires his attention. Sport doesn't bother him if the horses get in, because he can attend to them himself. A quick nip at the horse's head to turn him in the right direction, and then another at his heels to accelerate his pace, and nine times out of ten the horse is back in his stall in a jiffy.

If he is fractious and disinclined to obey orders he will feel Sport's heels, for his hind legs give a quick nip. Let him kick as hard as he pleases, he'll never reach Sport. No sooner has the latter nipped his legs than he falls flat with his head down, and the horse's heels fly over him without so much as grazing him. When they strike the floor again, Sport gives them another nip by way of punishment, and that almost invariably brings the horse to terms. Sport never responds immediately. He waits until after midnight, when only the other watchman and he are left. Then he lies down on the floor between the two rows of stalls, and the horse's heels fly over him without so much as grazing him. When they strike the floor again, Sport gives them another nip by way of punishment, and that almost invariably brings the horse to terms. Sport never responds immediately. He waits until after midnight, when only the other watchman and he are left. 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