

The Young Man and His Problem

By JAMES L. GORDON

AN EARLY START

James G. Blaine in his "Twenty Years of Congress" says that no man ever became "speaker of the house" who did not enter congress before he was forty years of age. This would seem to emphasize the fact that the foundations for solid work and splendid achievement must be laid early in life. The truth is that life in its sum total may be divided into two parts:—Character and achievement. In the first thirty years of life we carve a character for ourselves; in the second part—from thirty to sixty—we build on the foundation already laid. The years from twenty to forty should be packed with labor, for there comes a time when the hand is not so firm and the eye not so keen. Oliver Wendell Holmes says: "At fifty, your vessel is staunch and you are on deck, with the rest, in all weathers. At sixty, the vessel still floats and you are in the cabin. At seventy, you, with a few fellow passengers, are on a raft. At eighty, you are on a spar, to which, possibly, one, or two, or three friends of about your own age are still clinging. After that you must expect soon to find yourself alone, if you are still floating, with only a life preserver to keep your old, white-bearded chin above the water." Joseph Cook had the same thought in his mind when he wrote the words:—

Life means,
Tender teens,
Teachable twenties
Tireless thirties,
Fiery Forties,
Forcible fifties,
Serious sixties,
Sacred seventies,
Aching eighties,
Shortening breath,
Receding Earth,
The sod—God.

LOVE THE SPOT WHERE YOU ARE

Emerson says: "Love the spot where you are." Thoreau, the naturalist, affirmed that he knew no reason why men should travel abroad, for, so far as he was concerned, he was able to find many of the beauties of nature within a few rods of his own home. "Concord," said he, "is the exact centre of the universe." He found the soil touching his own porch rich with the wonders of the kingdom of nature. "I am surrounded by miracles," he said. Men of a more practical turn of mind have sometimes discovered treasures near home, and learned to appreciate anew their own particular neighborhood. Young men who are in the Real Estate business will appreciate the case of the wealthy merchant who became dissatisfied with his own home, (a country residence), and decided to sell it, so he called upon a successful Real Estate agent, and giving him a description of the property, asked him to dispose of it as soon as possible. In a few days the merchant happened to see an advertisement of a country residence which pleased him very much: "See here," said he to his wife, "this is just the place we are looking for, an ideal spot, and, by the way, it is in the hands of our own agent." That very morning he called upon the Real Estate agent and informed him that if it were possible to dispose of his own house and secure for him the residence advertised in the morning paper, nothing would please him better. The Real Estate agent burst into a hearty laugh, and informed him that the residence described in the advertisement was his own property—the very house in which he was living. He went home, read the agent's description of his own home for the second time, thought of the "grassy slopes," beautiful vistas, "smooth lawn" and "fine situation," and exclaimed: "Is it possible?" He paid the bill for advertising and remained just where he was. He is a wise man who knows the advantages of his own situation. "Love the spot where you are."

THE GOLDEN MIEN

The man who is "level headed" must be the man whose mental characteristics are well balanced. That splendid thing which we speak of as "common sense" is the result of a rare combination of all the senses. Mental balance is a great thing. How can it be secured? I have a friend of Scotch-Irish extraction. When he is cool, calm, and deliberate in his dealings he affirms that it is because the Scotch ingredients in his nature are in control of his mind and will, but when wrath burns in his bosom and fire flashes in his eye, he asserts that the Irish elements in his nature are certainly

on top. Our friend's analysis may be correct. Success in life would seem to depend very largely upon keeping the Irishman and the Scotchman properly related; for, in life's conflict "Irish fire" is just as necessary as Scotch logic. Try and strike the golden mien. Remember the inscription on the gates of Busyrane, "Be bold," and on the second gate, "Be Bold, Be Bold And Evermore Be Bold," and then again on the third gate, "BE NOT TOO BOLD."

FRIENDSHIP

A man is known by the company he keeps. The supreme relationship in life is, of course, the marriage relationship. But next to home associations nothing is so influential as the friendships which a man forms. It was said of Abraham Lincoln that: "he never lost a friend." He had a genius for friendship. Link yourself with the noble and the true and be guided by the high ideals of those whose friendship you crave and whose character you admire. Robert G. Ingersoll was passing through one of the main avenues of New York city, one day, with his favorite daughter Maude walking by his side. It was on the eve of a famous prize fight, billed to take place near the great metropolis. A friend met him and asked the question: "Mr. Ingersoll, are you going to see the fight?" "No," replied the great agnostic, "I would not go to see anything which Maude couldn't see."

STUDY THE BEAUTIFUL

The bee seeks for honey and finds it. The asp seeks for poison and distills it. The critic may look for errors so persistently that he will be unable to recognize the truth when he meets it. Says Bishop Sanford: "The great satirist Hogarth was once drawing in a room where many of his friends were assembled and among them my mother. As she stood by and watched Hogarth, she expressed a wish to learn to draw caricature. 'Alas! Young lady,' said Hogarth, 'it is not a faculty to be envied! Take my advice and never draw caricature. By the long practice of it I have lost the enjoyment of beauty. I never see a face but it is distorted. I never have the satisfaction to behold the human face divine.'"

BRAINS AND BRAIN

I am a friend of labor and I believe that the workingman, in spite of the mistakes of certain labor leaders and social reformers, is gradually rising to a higher and more influential position in the world. There is one thing, however, which our friends of labor movement ought always to keep in view, namely, the relationship of brain to brawn. Skill is more than force and brain is more than blood. "Pig iron is worth about \$20 a ton; made into horse shoes it is worth \$90 a ton; into knife blades \$200 a ton; and into watch springs \$1000 a ton." The higher the grade, the more skillful the workman and the larger the compensation. Brains and skill will always demand recognition. Dr. Hillis adds a splendid illustration along this line.—"Millet bought a yard of canvas for one franc, paid two francs for a hair brush and some colors; upon this canvas he spread his genius, giving us 'The Angelus.' The original investment in raw material was sixty cents; his intelligence gave that sixty cents worth of raw material a value of \$105,000."

KNOW YOU ARE RIGHT

Dr. O. P. Gifford says that when Henry Ward Beecher was in College he was sent to the board to solve and demonstrate a mathematical problem. He finished and arrived at an answer. The professor asked a question or two and sent Beecher to his seat in disgrace, asking another student to work out the problem. The latter did so and reached the same result by the same process. "Well, that's just the same as Beecher got," protested the professor.—"I know that," replied the young man, "but I know it's right." "The problem has been correctly solved," said the instructor. Beecher was now thoroughly aroused: "He did it the same way I did and got the same result," he shouted, "why did you send me to my seat?" "Because you did not know you were right." To be right and then to know that you are right—that's a powerful factor in life.

PRAYER AND PRACTICE

The best recommendation of vital Christianity to the world is in the personality of a successful business man. The man who is successful and at the same time clean, honest and consistent in the practical application of his religious principles—such a man is a power in the world. I care not what his church or denomination may be. Phillips Brooks had a strange experience in his college days. He had just begun his course as a student in a Southern college, and of course he dropped in at one of the religious meetings organized by the students for their own spiritual benefit and improvement. "Never," says he, "shall I lose the impression of the devoutness with which these men prayed and exhorted each other. Their whole souls seemed on fire and their natures exalted. On the next day I met some of these men at a Greek recitation. It would be little to say of some of the devoutest of them, that they had not learned their lessons. Their whole way showed that they never learned their lessons. They had not got hold of the first principles of hard conscientious study." Among students, as among business men, a man's mental habits and manner of life ought to be the best endorsement of the religion which he professes.

CHARACTER COLORS

These are great days. The miracles revealed by science are even more startling in their character than the traditional miracles of the first centuries. Everything is being subjected to investigation. Man himself is being dissected and placed under the microscope. Dr. Stenson Hooker, a specialist in the electrical treatment of patients has startled the world by his theory of "Color emanations from individuals." Every man carries about with him an atmosphere of his own, and the quality of the atmosphere may be detected by the color of the emanation proceeding from his body. For instance. The rays emanating from a very passionate man are a deep red. The man of noble ambition and true purpose casts off a pink ray. The man of selfish purpose, whose thoughts are centered in himself may be known by an orange ray. The deep and profound thinker is surrounded by an atmosphere of dark olive. The man of culture and refinement is honored with a ray of golden yellow. The man who is sad and depressed is wrapped in an atmospherical mantle of grey. The ray escaping from the body of the confirmed sensualist is that of a muddy brown hue; while the man of sweet and mellow disposition is enveloped in an atmosphere of light and tender blue. We are not yet prepared to affirm our belief in this last reported discovery in the realm of science, but of one thing we are sure: Every flower in the field has an atmosphere of its own. Every star in the heavens sheds its own quality of light. Every man on this planet exerts a subtle and unconscious influence.

UNKNOWN BENEFACTORS

It must be a source of great satisfaction to those who are laboring on faithfully in small fields and obscure places to know that some of the greatest blessings and grandest gifts enjoyed by the world to-day have reached us through unknown sources and unremembered agents. Heaven's records are better kept and preserved than those of earth, and in the end every man shall have ample reward for every hour of toil and care. Here are a few questions by Dr. John Lord, the famous historian. "Who invented the mariner's compass? Who gave the lyre to the primeval ages? Who invented the blacksmith's forge? Who first thought of the letters of the alphabet as symbols of articulations? Who conceived the thought of the arch in architecture? Who invented glass for windows? Who solved the first problem in geometry? Who first sang the odes which Homer incorporated in the Iliad? Who first turned up the earth with a plow? Who first used the weaver's shuttle? Who devised the cathedrals of the middle ages? Who gave the keel to ships? Who first raised the bread by the use of yeast? Who invented chimneys?" There is a list of questions sufficient to set any man thinking.

CONDITIONS have changed in the big colleges. Much of the rowdiness which once was a necessary attendant upon the four years' course has gone. Dissipation, too, has disappeared before organized sport. Scholarship is of a higher order than it used to be. The most difficult thing to regulate now is athletics. An article in McClure's Magazine shows how hard it is to keep professionalism out of college sports, and to prevent the likely players in the preparatory schools from hiring themselves out directly or indirectly, to work in the athletic department of this or that university. So it seems that it is the commercial temptation that is now most mischievous in the colleges as it is outside of them.