

Conditions of Success in Life

Some Practical Advice for Young People

BY JOHN CHARLTON, ESQ.

THE first condition of success, I would say, is industry. Of course, it is necessary to combine with this the fear of God, which implies and includes honesty, sobriety and morality. It is an old adage that "Honesty is the best policy," the adage may fairly be considered an axiom. Duplicitous and fraud may possibly win momentary successes, but in the end the result of their adoption and use will always be a disastrous one.

Sobriety is one of the chief requirements of success. Intemperance is a vice which renders hope of success futile; and the blandishments and seductive influences of society which leads in this direction are more treacherous than the song of the siren. Never imagine, young man, that you can tamper with this evil, and cast off its thralldom at pleasure, for this is a deadly delusion. It is easier to refuse the intoxicating cup, and to remain in ignorance of what it is, than to cease the use of the dangerous beverage after its use becomes habitual. "Look not upon the wine when it is red, when it moveth itself aright." At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder." Beware of this serpent.

Morality is necessary to success. The vicious and licentious young man has entered upon the path that leads down to death. The hopes of his friends, unless he reforms, will be blasted. His success in life is, in the higher sense at least, unobtainable, if he is the victim of the vices which come under the general classification of immorality.

NO ROYAL ROAD.

When a young man enters upon his career his friends wish him God-speed, and all must look upon him with interest. His ambition will have free play. The results achieved will be in fair proportion to the nature of his efforts and the quality of his work. At this juncture it is well for him to be aware of miscalculations, and never to under-estimate not only the primary importance, but the absolute necessity of industry. "There is no royal road to learning," is an old and true adage. There are very few royal avenues to position or fame. The king may be born to a throne, the lord may be born to a title, the heir may be born to a fortune; but none of these even will grace his position or secure the respect of his fellow-men without attention to the ordinary condition of success. These exceptional advantages, however, matter little to the vast majority, who have their own way to make. They have been born to a condition where their own efforts and their own merits will decide the extent of their success.

DO NOT CONTRACT DEBTS.

History has numberless instances of those who have entered life poor, and apparently handicapped with great disadvantages, who have neither inherited wealth, nor influential friends to aid them in their careers. Daniel Webster, who worked upon a rocky, unproductive New Hampshire farm with his father, who entered college and fought his own way by teaching school in the winter to earn the means to pay his tuition in the summer, entered upon the study of law and was obliged to practice economy both as to food and raiment, and rose to great eminence and intellectual power.

When you start in life don't contract debts. Pay as you go, and only buy to the extent that you have the means to pay. Do not become surety for others. It may be done as an act of friendship, but it will pretty surely lead to estrangement. If you are tempted to do it, refer to Prov. xxii. 26, "Be not thou one of them that strike hands, or of them that are sureties for debts," and take Solomon's sound advice. If you become surety and ultimately have the debt to pay, you will be bad friends with the one whose note you signed. Decline to indorse. Keep your money and be bad friends at the commencement if it is necessary.

BE TRUE TO THE CHURCH.

When the young man or woman passes beyond the sphere of home influences, the importance of conformity to religious usages and requirements should never be lost sight of. To each, I would say, identify yourself with some church, con-

tinue your attendance at Sabbath School, and interest yourself in its work, and avail yourself of the great advantages that flow from religious associations and from companionship with religious, church-going people. This course will secure respectability, it will shield you from temptation, and it will confer temporal benefits as well as spiritual blessings.

Read the Bible. It is a wonderful book given by the inspiration of God, as an infallible rule of conduct for all. An ordinary book you read once, an extraordinary book perhaps two or three times. You cannot read the Bible often enough to deprive it of its freshness and its power. Do not be content with reading a chapter or two each Sabbath, but read it habitually, day by day. It is the inimitable portrait gallery of great warriors and lawgivers, statesmen and sages, prophets and saints. It hides no faults. It presents its characters in their true light.

CHOICE OF A CALLING.

The choice of a calling is, of course, a matter of great importance. Do not be particular about having it specially genteel. If you feel disposed enter upon the gospel ministry. This is the noblest of all professions, but success, or even justification for entering this calling, requires devotion and spiritual attainments and gifts that come from a deep and sincere conviction of the over-mastering importance of the work. It is not necessary to be a doctor or a lawyer, in order to occupy a good position in society, and it is very questionable whether the choice of either of these professions, as matters now are, will bring a very large degree of emolument and worldly success. The average mechanic in these days probably earns as much money as the average lawyer or doctor. There are no particular reasons, as far as I can see, why his calling should not be considered just as respectable. There is a tendency for young men to leave the farm on which they have been reared. The farm is a good school for a successful career in life. There the young man learns to work. He develops strength and self-reliance, and his work on the farm is not a bad preparatory course for any of the pursuits not connected with the profession of agriculture. But too many of our young men leave the farm. The true aristocrat is the man who owns the acres which he tills, and is out of debt and surrounded with the comforts which industry and intelligence will naturally procure for him. His position is one of absolute independence. Great gains will not be suddenly acquired, but steady accumulations will result from the industrious pursuit of his business, and he will be spared anxieties and uncertainties which render the lives of many business men anything but desirable. A very small proportion of farmers fail in the business, if they attend to their pursuits with due diligence and care, while not less than fifty per cent of merchants fail, at one time or another, in the course of their business careers. I would say, boys, stick to the farm, if there is any reasonable prospect of your owning enough land to insure a good livelihood. The true aristocracy of the future in America will be the possessors of the soil.

ALL RESPECTABLE WORK GENTEEL.

Perhaps here I should say a few words about the choice of a calling in the case of the female. I have never been able to draw the line between what constitutes genteel occupation and its reverse in the case of females, so long as all are honest and honorable. I consider any kind of respectable work genteel, in the true, higher sense. Many avenues are now open to young ladies, of which they were not formerly able to avail themselves. In fact there are few of the callings in life, except those requiring the exercise of strength and involving exposure and hardship, to which women are not eligible. They can become clerks in stores and other business houses, stenographers, operators, dressmakers, and last, but not least, housekeepers. With regard to this latter class of female employees some strange notions exist, and these notions are the parents of prejudices of a most absurd and unfounded nature. If I had the power I would abolish the expression, "servant girl," and give to these workers the