

The Young Man and His Problem

By JAMES L. GORDON

Life is a blending of ups and downs. **GRIT.** Defeats and victories make up the story of every man's life. The most successful general has had his setbacks. It seems to be necessary for a man to be whipped two or three times in order to know how to conquer. The important thing is to win out. He laughs best who laughs last. My friend, be sure that you remain on the battlefield long enough to learn the science of war. Your enemies can teach you how to fight. Hold your ground. Lash yourself to the mast. They tell me that in Edinburgh there exists a monument erected to the memory of a young fellow who being buried beneath the rubbish of a falling building encouraged his friends who were trying to dig him out of the heaps of rubbish by shouting repeatedly in a clear, strong voice, "Hoive awee, chaps! I'm nae did yit." Where there is life there is hope. Write the words of the young Scotchman on your banner, "Heave away, chaps. I am not dead yet."

USING OTHER MEN'S BRAINS.

Few men have been strictly original. It was said of Charles Stewart Parnell that he never originated an idea. Even Shakespeare dug much of his best material out of other men's quarries. It requires a high order of talent, if not genius, to use the mental products of your neighbors—that is, to take hold of everything within your reach and placing upon it the stamp of your own personality, use it for the development of your own plans and purposes. Andrew Carnegie boasts that he made his fortune by the use of other men's brains; that is, he had the faculty of discovering men who could be of service to him in the development of his commercial schemes. You may profit by their failures and mistakes of men as well as by their successes and achievements. We are apt to study the strong points of successful men. Let us also give some attention to the weak points and mistakes of men who have failed. Robert Louis Stevenson says that success in literature depends very much on knowing what to omit. Use other men's brains. Profit by their mistakes.

DO YOUR BEST.

"My novels, whether good or bad, have been as good as I could make them," says Anthony Trollope in his autobiography. The words which ought to be underlined are these: "As good as I could make them." This is all we can ask of any mortal. For each one of us there is nothing better than our best. Are we living up to our highest possibilities? "Why are you angry with me, I am doing the best I can," said a backward scholar to Arnold of Rugby.

"That man is best
Who does his best."

THE SIGN OF A GREAT NATURE.

That man has a big heart and a great soul who has the grace to acknowledge his own mistakes in judgment and blunders in conduct. It is the sign of a little mind and a small soul when a man is unwilling to consider his own decision and acknowledge the possibility of a mistake in his own mental operations. The grandest day in the career of Robert Peel was when he arose in the House of Commons and in the presence of his own party and the whole country calmly remarked, "I have been wrong. I now ask Parliament to repeal the law for which I myself have stood." His own party was intransigent. The whole country was astonished. As he passed out of the House of Commons he uttered such epithets as "traitor," "scoundrel," and "recreant leader." And yet Peel affirmed that the day of his political defeat was one of the grandest days of his life. O. W. Smith says that the greatest day in

the life of Frederick the Great was the day on which he sent a messenger to the senate saying, "I have lost a battle. It was my own fault." The hardest words for most men to utter are these: "I was mistaken."

SHAM POPULARITY.

It is pleasant to be popular, but the man who persistently bids for popularity at the expense of health and character is a fool. The man who stands behind a bar and swallows drink after drink for the sake of sociability is paying a high price for a miserable product. Social popularity purchased in such a way and at such a price is not good enough for an honest man to wipe his feet upon. True popularity must be built on solid qualities. Robert Burns, the brightest genius Scotland ever produced, was physically ruined by yielding to the social demands and urgent requests of men who professed to be his friends. It is more important that we should command the respect of men than that we should be crowned with their love and affection. Only the solid qualities secure lasting respect and permanent affection. The man of solid worth can snap his finger in the faces of men and women who have no higher standard than the passing pleasure of the present moment. True independence is always better than social popularity. Pope Julius II kept Michael Angelo, (poet, painter and sculpture), waiting in his anteroom for hours studying his own pleasure and convenience. Michael Angelo turned on his heel, exclaiming, "Tell His Holiness that when he wants me again he will find me at home in the city of Florence." The Pope could not get along without Michael Angelo and Michael Angelo knew it. Have a high purpose and stand by it. Have a noble ideal and live in the light of it. Have a splendid goal and ever press toward it. Be indifferent to men of indifferent character. Seek to be popular with your own conscience.

THERE WERE TWO LORD BYRONS.

Princess Charlotte wrote when sending an invitation to Lord Byron, "There are two Lord Byrons, and when I address an invitation to Lord Byron it is intended for the agreeable lord and not for the disagreeable lord." Beecher affirmed that all the theology which he ever preached in Plymouth pulpit might be expressed in one brief paragraph—"There are two natures in every man, the higher and the lower, the physical and the spiritual, and religion consists in bringing the lower into subjection to the higher." The greatest battle of life is fought out within the silent chambers of the soul. A victory on the inside of a man's heart is worth one hundred conquests on the battlefields of life. To be master of yourself is the best guarantee that you will be master of the situation. Know yourself. Master yourself. Be the captain of your own soul. A few hours before the battle of Waterloo, Wellington quietly shaved himself with a steady hand, as calmly as though preparing for a banquet. The crown of character is self-control.

COMMON PEOPLE.

When somebody spoke to Father Taylor, the sailor preacher, concerning the ignorance of sailors, the old preacher looked up with an expression of indignation upon his face, exclaiming, "Sailors ignorant! Why sailors know everything; they grasp the world in their hand like an orange." The fact is that every man of average experience has his own special sources of knowledge and information. Labor educates. Commerce educates. The world is a university, and we are part of all we have seen and heard. Every man is a specialist on some particular subject. Henry

Ward Beecher said that he could get valuable information from the ferry-boat men as he crossed the river from Brooklyn to New York, which would be of service to him as he stood before an audience of three thousand on the following Sunday. Study men as well as books. Find out the thoughts of the common people. They coin the proverbs in which is congested the wisdom of the ages.

THE VALUE OF AN IDEA.

When Guttenberg, the inventor of the printing press, told Faust, the capitalist, the value of an idea, he had passed to perfect his machine, Faust, amazed at his exercise of will power, exclaimed, "You must have had a world of perseverance!" To which Guttenberg replied, "When one gets on the track of an idea it is hard to give up." It is a splendid thing to get on the track of an idea. An idea is a great instrument for the man who knows how to handle it skilfully. It is well for a man to test his own mental power and forces. It is a fine thing, for instance, for a man to know the power of his own will. Self control is the supreme test of will power, and will power is the most substantial expression of character. Jean Jacques Rousseau one evening on entering his apartment, found a letter awaiting him, which he knew to contain information concerning the settlement of an estate in which he was to have a share and a portion. He immediately reached for the letter with a trembling impatience, and then suddenly withdrew his hand. Was his interest in the epistle to master him completely? It was clearly a matter of will power and self control. Could he leave such a letter untouched and unopened until the next morning. He says: "I immediately laid the letter again on the chimney-piece. I undressed myself, went to bed with great composure, and slept better than ordinary, and rose in the morning at a late hour, without thinking more of my letter. As I dressed myself, it caught my eye; I broke the seal very leisurely, and found in the envelope a bill of exchange. I felt a variety of pleasing sensations at the same time, but I can assert, upon my honor, that the most lively of them all was that proceeding from having known how to be master of myself."

NATURALNESS.

"Dare to be a Daniel" sings the poet. Dare to be yourself, says common sense. It takes a good deal more courage to be yourself that it does to be a Daniel. To be yourself. To be the man whom God intended you to be. That is the highest achievement in the evolution of the human soul. You can be yourself. You never can be anybody else. If you are not yourself then you are a failure. "De Witt," said a friend to T. De Witt Talmage when he was a young man about thirty years of age, and preparing for the ministry, "De Witt, if you don't change your style of thought and expression, you will never get a call to any church in Christendom." "Well," replied young Talmage, "if I cannot preach the Gospel in America, I will go to heathen lands and preach it." He did not find it necessary, however, to go to heathen lands in order to preach the Gospel. Whether in the pulpit or out of it, the man who mixes brains with his work and places the seal of his own personality on all he does is constantly in demand.

NUMBER ONE.

It is remarkable that the numerical character which signifies one, and the ninth letter of the alphabet, which stands for the individual, should be almost one and the same character, and that both should stand forth slender and alone but upright and audacious. Fate is folded up in No. 1. Destiny is determined by No. 1. Man is the victim of circumstances, but man is the biggest Circumstance in the realm of the circumstantial. Number One is the corner stone, the keystone in the arch of individuality. Number one is the only lucky number. Matter reduced to its smallest division is only an atom. Man reduced to the lowest number is only one lonely man. Time reduced to its finest measure—a moment. The whole realm mathematical exists for the first numeral.