

THE GRIT COUNTS

WOUNDS NEED NOT BE CONSIDERED HANDICAPS.

The shattered arm swathed in bandages and the leg which stops with a roll of the trouser leg at the knee joint need offer no hindrance to the heroes who smile as they patter along on crutches or who fence with their gay comrades with a cane held in the one firm hand.

The grit which took these fellows over the top and which caused them to fall with their faces to the foe, will pull them ahead in the battle of life, writes Major Rupert Hughes of the U. S. A. His treatise on the subject of "Handicaps" follows:

Did you ever know a race to be won by the man who had no handicap at all? The betting odds are always on the man who starts at scratch or thereabouts. He gradually overtakes and passes the string ahead of him and goes through to the goal.

Success in life is only a Marathon. People make fun of the hare who let the tortoise beat him, but a bookmaker who knew his business would have favored the tortoise in the betting every time.

The rich man's son with what people call "every advantage" has really all the disadvantage. He has next to nothing to fight for. He has nothing to strengthen his muscle and his determination and his envy on. He gets everything but his clothes ready made.

He is like an elevator boy with no stairs to climb; he only uses his legs for props. A little pull on a rope or a shift of a lever and the car shoots up or down; so his arms stay flabby.

Nobody ever made success with a cinch. The greatest helps a man can have are his handicaps. Among all great orators who would be called the greatest? Demosthenes, of course. He stuttered as a boy and had a voice that hardly carried past his Grecian nose; so he filled his mouth with pebbles and went out on the beach to shout down the breakers. It was good practice for conquering audiences.

Among all the great composers, who would be called the greatest. Beethoven, undoubtedly. He was deaf during a great part of his life.

The master poet of Greece was Homer and he was blind. And so was

the epic poet of England, Milton. A man does not have to hear to make music, nor see to write.

Pilgrim's Progress was composed in jail, and so was the masterpiece of Spanish literature, Don Quixote.

Speaking of Spanish literature, W. H. Prescott, one of America's greatest historians, who wrote classic histories of the Spanish monarchs and conquerors, made wonderful research among ancient manuscripts in spite of the fact that he could hardly see. When he was in college a boy threw a piece of bread at him. It hit him in the eye, and he became all but blind. Yet he managed to devise means for reading almost endlessly in dim old libraries.

Another famous American historian was Francis Parkman who was such an invalid that he fainted at the least effort. He could hardly work an hour a day; it was torture for him to travel. Yet he filled many volumes with the results of his explorations in rough countries, seeking the truth about Indian wars and customs.

There was a young Count named Geza Zichy, who had an ambition to be a pianist. At seventeen he lost his right arm. But he went right on with his career. He rearranged the brilliant concert pieces that were beyond the ability of most pianists so that he could play them with his left hand. He composed works of his own and made himself famous as a pianist. He composed two successful operas.

One of the greatest of all illustrators was the Spaniard Vierge. In the very height of his career his right hand failed him. He learned to draw as well with his left. The American cartoonist, T. S. Sullivan, who has drawn so much laughter from the readers of Life, lost the use of his right hand, too. He learned to draw with his left hand and his followers never knew the difference.

It would be easy to go on all day mentioning names ancient and modern of those whom fate seemed to surround with wire entanglements, but who scrambled up out of the ditch, and went over the top, crawled through the barbs and charged on to victory.

With some of them, the handicaps were poverty or parental opposition; ill-health, poor education, hostility, disgrace, wounds, physical, mental or spiritual obstacles to overcome. But

they were not stopped.

To my thinking, we ought not to say that a man succeeds "in spite of" handicaps but "because of" handicaps. The man to feel sorry for is the poor fellow who is rich in everything but defects. He is the one whose case is almost nearly hopeless. What has the wretch got to exercise his will power on? or to set his teeth in? or to brace himself against? A man can't get strong by lifting cream puffs or sticking pansies in his buttonhole.

When he wakes up in the morning he has no pet demon sitting on the foot of his bed defying him and bringing him out of the nest of sloth with a roar. People are so cantankerous that they never get over the childhood longing to do what they are warned against. When destiny says "You can't," a man of real stuff replies, "I'll show you."

The things people do best are the impossible things. The novel that had most effect on American history was written by the timid little wife of a clergyman, and the noblest war poem ever written by an American was written by a woman. The Spartans who put their weaklings to death never accomplished anything but a little fairly good fighting. The race is not to the swift, but to the lame, the halt and the blind. It's the grit that counts.

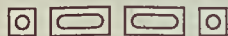
Perhaps the stoutest hearted poem in any language was written by a poor bedridden invalid who spent a good part of his time in hospitals under the surgeons' knives. He wrote that marvelous defiance:

Out of the night that covers me,
Black as the pit from pole to pole,
I thank whatever gods there be
For my unconquerable soul.

In the fell clutch of circumstance
I have not winced nor cried aloud.
Beneath the bludgeonings of chance
My head is bloody but unbowed.

SUPPLY OFFICE MOVES.

With the inauguration of a new clothing exchange system it was found necessary to secure another office for the supply sergeant and accordingly one was located at the upper end of the building used by the Y. M. C. A. Hereafter no exchanges will be made by the Q. M. department direct but must first be transacted through the supply sergeant.



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