

FOUNDATION STONES OF ACHIEVEMENT.

Prize Oration Delivered at Kenly Academy Commencement, June, 1901.

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Human accomplishment has been the inspiration of many a literary production. It is the proud boast of the present generation that more progress has been made than in any equal era of the world's history. We refer with pleasure and gratification to our Lincoln, Grants, Lees, Longfellow, Poes, Vances, and other national statesmen. But in our ecstatic joy and bigoted pride we neglect the millions of those who simply count one in the census reports. The sparseness of human results compared with the abundance of human possibilities makes a frightfully unequal proportion.

When we come to analyze the character of those whom we meet day by day in our journey through life we at once conclude that for the most part men are neither mentally nor morally what they should be or what they might be with the proper exertion.

When we contrast the real condition of men who are content with a dwarfed intellectual and spiritual growth with the great and glorious possibilities of a noble manhood which is within their easy reach what a vast difference!

If we question the experience of those whom we have a chance to study, will we not at once be convinced of the sad fact that men are prone to sink to what is below them rather than inclined by sheer force of will to use what is above them?

Men find it much easier to degrade than to elevate themselves. It requires very little effort to go down a mountain declivity; but it means steady application to ascend to the summit. It must then be a conceded fact that it would be well for every young man when he launches himself out on the broad ocean of life to take for an example to be guided by the pathways of the greatest men who have attained eminence among their fellowmen and to find, if possible, the very methods by which they succeeded and then to imitate these and not be found gazing in discouragement upon the many who are pursuing the downward course to failure or who have already reached their Waterloo.

However humble our station in life we are under the very greatest moral obligation to do what is best under any and all circumstances. Should a man, and especially a young man, be content until he has used every effort to reach the top round of fame's ladder? If our life-work is worth any effort at all, does it not demand the noblest and best part of life itself? And is not any man who for the sake of his or personal comfort would neglect the most important part of life and economize his effort more than a trifle? Far too many are content to lounge and loiter upon the dead level of mediocrity with the great multitudes and far too few, with noble purpose and strong effort, will rush in front of their comrades and from loftier eminences point to grander triumphs beyond, ever bearing in mind the unswerving fact that there is still a vacant place at the top.

There can be nothing better for a young man than self-exertion and self-reliance, taking for his guide those who have succeeded and though he may never obtain the full height of his ambition he will surely get farther on, than he who is content with the lot of those who have gone to utter failure or those who aim at a lower standard.

If there are difficulties in the way must we yield to them? No! he who rises by his own effort is himself master of the situation and to him success is assured. Although discouragements may gather around him he will realize that they were made only to be overcome and are of great benefit to him in developing strength.

Are there huge stumbling blocks in the way? If so they should be transformed into stepping stones upon which the resolute young man may hasten onward in his upward course. Should the hills of difficulty rise rugged and steep before him he will change them by the magic touch of his perseverance to mountains of delight from whose loftiest peaks he may overlook all intervening difficulties to the celestial city of glorious success!

He who by strength of purpose would accomplish the beautiful task must ever bear in mind that

success is a prize which can only be achieved by persistent untiring exertion and that beyond the great Alps of difficulty lies the beautiful Italy of success.

The only standard of value by which true greatness may be insured is permanent and continual success and there must be a normal and steady growth of the powers in order to attain this. An achievement which would be a most signal failure for a mature man might be called a brilliant victory for a youth.

It is not the intrinsic merit of the performance of the lad that gives rise to the hope of future greatness, but the sign of future brilliancy which may be plainly seen in the effort.

The loggard in the graduating class at college may by steady effort be even more successful than the valedictorian who carries off the honors of his class and is content with the one achievement and fails to continue to attempt further advancement. History plainly teaches that the world's greatest men have not reached great achievement in early life, but like building a stone wall they have started at the bottom and by continual effort have reared the superstructure.

Let us look at the lives of some of our great men. It is said that John Quincy Adams when only seven years old astonished his friends by delivering in the presence of the family a speech worthy of a youth of twice his age. This might be called precocity, but it was attained by a steady development which never ceased; for in after years he became president of the United States, and afterwards represented his district in Congress for 17 years, and is to this day known as old man eloquent. Bryant, the remarkable poet of nature, won the admiration of the literary world at the age of 16 by writing his poem on Immortality and after scattering effusive gems for three score and ten years suddenly pours forth his "Flood of Years," which for purity of diction has never been surpassed.

But in spite of the few examples in which youthful genius succeeded in after years we are still forced to admit that a very large per cent. of the most brilliant achievements in the earlier part of life are followed by utter failure.

There is certainly some reason for this in the philosophy of things. Let us look for a moment and see if we can find a way to clear up this great mystery.

There is always something in the very character of success that tends to paralyze their power and defeat their great ambition. Does not the beginner who gains his first success find in the praise of the throng a kind of self-confidence that dissipates his mind with fearful delusion that he is a lucky number and therefore the gods will protect him? Even while he boasts of our individuality and claim to discard utterly the doctrine of fatalism, yet in the secret depths of the bosoms of most Americans there lurks a misty but powerful impression that it is better to be born lucky than rich. Never was there more foolish sophistry than this. Luck is for him who has the perseverance and ambition to surmount all difficulties and conquer despite his surroundings.

To succeed one must not depend on luck, birth, fortune or talent. How often a noble example is blasted by a graceless son! Riches take wings when placed in the hands of some reckless boy.

Every young man should have some aim in life and use great effort to fit himself for the work of that station. Persistency will always outstrip mere brilliancy. This is proven by the best of names in the archives of history. The progress of mental development is more gradual in some cases than in others, just as it is in physical development, and early success is not always the forerunner of early failure; but ever bear in mind that tardiness of development and delay of success is not always unfortunate.

If the youthful genius lies dormant at first, it is the better beginning, for when at last it unfolds and grapples with the intricate problems of state it will erect a monument in the hearts of men that will never die. Benjamin Disraeli, that great English statesman who became Earl of Beaconsfield, found that the path that led to his eminence was not a royal road of flowers. His life and success furnishes an illustration of what great toil and humiliating failures one must endure to achieve permanent success. His maiden efforts in oratory, literature and statecraft were most signal failures. Every sentence of his first speech in the House of

Commons brought forth peals of derision, laughter and ridicule. It was pronounced a great farce. But smarting under the jeers heaped upon him, he shook his fist in the faces of the laughing throng and said, "The time will come when you will hear me." The pages of modern history prove that assertion to be true; for with great effort he prepared himself to meet the great emergency of life, and when he again attempted to speak he took the house by storm, and great applause rang through the crowded galleries, and his manuscripts commanded untold prices among the eager publishers.

To come nearer home, let us recall that the present Governor of our own State, the great headed, big hearted Aycock, the brightest star in the political diadem of this great and grand old commonwealth, was born within a few miles of this very place and that, too, on a farm, where he could breathe the pure country air.

Let us not lose sight of the great and important fact that every man should have a fixed purpose in life and direct his energies, time and talent to a given object. There should be no divided aim. He should gather in from all the rich stores about him whatever he can to bless his bodily existence and to enrich his mind with all that may have a tendency to foster him in his temporal circumstances and win for him the honor of the wise. All this selecting should be done with a simple and worthy aim in view. With these conditions he may reap the golden harvest of commerce, secure the gems of enterprise and art, or cult the fairest flowers of literature. He may lay heaven and earth, mind and nature, society and solitude, nature and art under contribution to aid him. He may live as lives the tree by drawing its nourishment from every clod of earth at its roots, from every particle of atmosphere around its trunk, from every drop of dew that glistens upon its leaves, and from every sunbeam that plays amid its foliage, and by gaining strength from every passing blast of gentle zephyr that sweeps over it.

But if he be wanting in these three essentials, self exertion, self denial and self consecration, he has made an utterable and miserable failure already.

White Man Turned Yellow.

Great consternation was felt by the friends of M. A. Hogarty of Lexington, Ky., when they saw he was turning yellow. His skin slowly changed color, also his eyes, and he suffered terribly. His malady was yellow jaundice. He was treated by the best doctors, but without benefit. Then he was advised to try Electric Bitters, the wonderful Stomach and Liver remedy, and he writes: "After taking two bottles I was wholly cured." A trial proves its matchless merit for all Stomach, Liver and Kidney troubles. Only 25c. Sold by Hood Bros., Druggists.

Ape-Like Men in Congo.

In speaking of his various journeys, says the Westminster Gazette, Sir Harry Johnston has been telling a Reuter's correspondent that he had the good fortune to meet with the extraordinary race of ape-like men first discovered by Messrs. Grogan and Sharp on the verge of the Congo Forest. His photographs and measurements confirm the opinion as to the very simian character of these people, who must not be confounded with the Congo dwarfs, who are quite distinct in appearance. While the dwarfs are from four to five feet in height, the ape people appear to be of normal stature. Sir Henry Johnston and Mr. W. G. Doggett have taken and recorded measurements, on the lines laid down by the Anthropological Institute, of two hundred different specimens of men and women of the various tribes.

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A Pig With Three Tails.

Mr. George Barker, who lives at the rectory, has a pig with three distinct tails. One occupies the place where tails usually grow, and the other two are ornaments to the two hams, or hips. These tails are the usual length, and the strangest thing about them is they can all wiggle.—Leaksville Gazette.

Still Slandering the South.

In considering what it calls "The Secession of Senator McLaurin," World's Work, a New York magazine edited by a former resident of North Carolina, says that "war, poverty, illiteracy, epidemics and tornadoes have all done less hurt to the South than (be it said with respect to all men of breadth and tolerance) the politicians and preachers. For these have been the conservators of outworn opinions and creeds, and they have suppressed intellectual independence. It is they who are to blame for the loss to the nation of the old time Southern forces and character since the war. They have suppressed thought and prevented growth—these unscarred colonels who wear long hair and white ties and frock coats, and these doctors of divinity who herd good women by the most stagnant waters of theology."

Could those words have been written by Walter H. Page? If so he shows an astounding lack of good taste in thus slurring at his native section. How any one who knows Southern conditions can speak in such a slighting manner of the clergy and charge ministers of the Gospel with responsibility for the South's alleged political narrowness is inconceivable, even if the sense of propriety and reverence did not prevent one from making a contemptuous allusion to a class of men that is universally honored and respected. As a matter of fact, the preachers in the South have bothered less with politics than is customary in any other section of the country. They have gone on preaching the Gospel and have not interfered in political matters. Nothing could be further from truth, more unjust nor in worse taste than the words used by World's Work.

And as far as the "unscarred colonels, who wear long hair and white ties and frock coats," these are creatures of imagination. It is admitted that colonels have been rather more numerous in this section than the records justify, but these colonels, justly or unjustly so entitled, have not been unscarred. At least those who have been particularly prominent in public life have generally been men who did faithful service, as officers or privates, in time of war. Here and there a spurious hero may have obtained office but to do this has been nothing like as easy in the South as in the North. The Southern people have been slow to tolerate the men who refused to fight when war was raging and have been ever ready to honor those whose bravery and daring were undoubted.

If Northern Republicans and their Southern sympathizers really wish to break up the "Solid South," to foster a "secession" such as McLaurin leads they will do well not to speak contemptuously of the South's past. Such references as we have quoted will only recall the time when the chief capital of the Republican party was slander of the South, when the "Confederate brigadier" was held up to Northern constituencies as the great bogey that must be kept down, and when never a chance was lost to humiliate the veterans whom the South will always honor. To continue such tactics will be to perpetuate the "Solid South" and to keep the "Confederate brigadier" in the saddle as long as he has the life to sit there.

Nothing could be more foolish from a political standpoint than for these apostles of the "New Democracy" to cast slurs at the Southern soldiers or the Southern preachers. Their doing so will convince the Southern voters more quickly than anything else could that the "New Democracy" is the "Old Radicalism" in disguise—a conviction that would not be far wrong.—Columbia, S. C. State.

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Two hours after having been released from the county jail at Greenwood, Ia., an expert sneak thief broke into the prison again and stole his photograph from the rogues' gallery.

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