

LIFE'S SNAGS AND HOW TO MEET THEM

Talks to Young Men

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Foreword

“Life today is not going to be an easy one for those entering upon it, or about to enter manhood.”

Such is the conclusion of more than one authority as voiced recently by Mr. Stanley Baldwin.

It seems only too reasonable a warning. The future for our nation, indeed for the world, is full of perplexity, full of dangers—but therefore full of opportunity, of glorious opportunity, for young men who have the power to visualise and to grasp it.

Yet the trend of education—apart from the scholastic training which is apt to be classed under that name—is to teach the young man to obsess himself with his own interests, to seek the most cushioned seat, and to guide his course where difficulties are least, instead of boldly seeing the right and facing the risks and sacrifices to secure it.

My previous book, *Rovering to Success*, was designed to help young men with suggestions. Its result has exceeded expectations by bringing me letters in shoals from its appreciative readers, both young men and parents, generally asking for further tips.

I have accordingly offered additional ideas from time to time in the Daily Express and other papers. In response to many requests I now put forward a collection of these in the sincere hope that some of them may be found useful.

The picture on the cover has a meaning. It is to emphasise the fact that my one desire is to “rope in young ‘uns “ (for I believe in the on coming generation), to form a national team of reliable citizens.

The start in this direction already made by the Rover Scouts gives one ample reason for hoping for a successful development, far-fetched though the idea may seem.

I want to urge upon you young men to realise that the country badly needs your help; it wants public-spirited men today in place of mere selfish pleasure-seekers or money-grubbers. To you there lies open a glorious opportunity for bringing about peace and prosperity through the practice of goodwill and co-operation.

You have it in your power, if you have the right spirit, to help in promoting these blessings not only in our own country but also in the world at large in place of the existing unrest and unhappiness due to jealousies and fears.

R.B.-P.
Capetown, Sept., 1926.

LIFE'S SNAGS

Why

Silver Linings

“If England to Herself be True.”

Silver lining to the cloud? Do I see one? Most certainly I do.

I see great promise and hope for the future of the country IF ONLY “ENGLAND TO HERSELF BE TRUE.” That is, if only the mass of our men can look beyond their own noses and see where success lies. Great Britain has been more heavily handicapped than any other nation by the War, because we have given away treasure that can never be redeemed—not merely in money, but in the flower of our manhood.

With the lion maimed, the jackals are trying to get the pickings. Agitators, out for their own ends, are trying to capture our manhood, composed as it is largely of second-best men and youngsters whose education has been handicapped by the War.

But the British character still exists among these, and if it can stand the wiles of those tempters, the nation will pull through to prosperity and success. The good old type of pipe-sucking, calm-thinking British workman still survives, solid in his work as in his sense.

There are good signs that the workers are no longer the dupes, but are beginning to see for themselves that by “ca’canny” and strikes brought about by these enemies of our country trade is being lost and unemployment, in consequence is becoming permanent. Whereas, by producing AT A MODERATE COST, we could command the markets of the world.

I have just been in America, where they are suffering from over-prosperity, which means they have run to such high wages that their goods are becoming too expensive to command a sale outside their own country. That is where we can come in as soon as our manufacturers, employes as well as employers, recognise their opening.

It means a broad, unselfish outlook for the good of their mates, their women and children; in other words, for their country; it means their thinking things out for themselves and not being led astray by the first claptrap orator they hear.

There are hopeful signs in most places now that that is what our men are doing.

Silver lining! I have lately, as well as for many years back, been popping about in the different States that form our Empire. Some of our politicians talk of it as “banishment” for our workers to go there. They cannot have been there themselves. Lands of promise wanting men, as compared with this overcrowded little island with its million and a half of unemployed and its unchecked influx of foreigners to add to the congestion. And those Oversea States all wanting goods that the Old Country can supply in return for the raw materials and foodstuffs which they can furnish! There is plenty of silver lining that presages sunshine the moment good-will and co-operation between all classes come into play.

Bit I.

Your Real Motives In Life

“He who with strong body and serving mind
Gives up his mortal powers to wrthy work
Not seeking gain, Arjuna! Such one
Is honourable He that abstains
To help the rolling wheels of this great world,
Slutting his idle sense, lives a lost life
Shameful and vain.”

The Bhagavad-Gita.

When I was among the Zulus, some years ago, it was the custom for every boy who was growing into manhood to be sent out into the jungle to live alone and fend for himself for about a month.

The ordeal was in many respects comparable to that of the Spartans, or to the medieval rite of investing an esquire as a knight. In this ceremony the young candidate went through physical tests in skill at arms, followed by more the important spiritual self-examination and religious dedication to the service of God and his neighbour.

The Bath signified his determination to cast off former sins and weaknesses, his Fasting in the presence of a good feed meant sacrifice of carnal temptations, and before taking the final Oath to give his life if need be in the service of God he spent the whole night in The Vigil, or self-examination and prayer, thinking over his future relations to life and to religion. It was a momentous and impressive occasion at the turning point of his life, and one which, as a rule, carried the influence on in his character and conduct thereafter.



An ancient remedy for nil-doers

It seems a great pity that our education today does not include in it some such practice of reflection for a lad before he is passed as qualified to go out into the world, some form of vigil wherein, with a few leading points suggested to him, he could think out for himself what he is

going to do with his life, instead of drifting off with no particular aim in view. It is not an impossible nor is it a profitless idea.

The man who makes no plans makes no progress in life. Life lasts but a comparatively short time, and is soon over. That being so, what are you going to do to make the best of it? What is the real motive that is going to energise your actions?

When the average young man starts planning he generally thinks out how he can make money and have a good time. If he is a bit more serious-minded he looks ahead and considers which kind of employment offers, not, perhaps, the best pay to start with, but the better prospects later on; or he studies for a career that may put him eventually in a position of power and authority. In some rare cases he may even think which career he is suited for instead of which suits him. Thus, in nine cases out of ten, he looks forward to what he personally is going to get out of life rather than what he personally is going to put into it. When he does that it shows that he has not as yet got things in their right perspective.

Earning money is, within limits, a proper pursuit; it is a duty to others so that one may be independent and not a burden. In order to get perspective it is well to change his view point at the beginning of life to what it will be at the end, and to picture to himself which things count when you look back on the procession of years through which you have been living and on what you have done with them; whether you have frittered them away on things that do not matter or have done your best with them. Plenty are the instances, in our own experience and in history, of those who with their last breath have whispered, in great content: "At any rate I've done my best; I've tried to do my duty."

As old Captain John Smith, of Virginia, said: "We were born into this world not for ourselves but to do good unto others." And therein lies much. We came here to give, not to get.

So it comes to this. Two courses lie open to every man—self or service. He has to choose for himself which is to be his real motive. Self is the more comfortable; service involves sacrifice. But, if you analyse it, self means being a slave to an employer or to one's ambition, whence come envy and discontent; whereas in service you are free, not working for a reward nor in competition with others. You are free to express, that is, to give out, your love and the odd thing about it is that the more you give it out the more abundantly it comes back to you.

But service involves sacrifice. For this the young man must be prepared; ready to sacrifice dreams of avarice, to appreciate pleasures at their true value and to throw them by the board if they are light in weight or hindbersome. If a fellow is not capable of sacrifice he should not call himself a man; if he cannot practise it willingly he must not count himself a worthy son of those who fought and fell in the War. But where he practises it the better to express his love, let him be assured that life will be to him a very real and happy possession.

Such are some points among others which can with advantage be suggested to the young man in thinking out for himself what are his real motives.

Then there is a further view. Selfishness never made a nation. On the other hand, sense of service in its individuals has been the making of many a nation. It certainly has in our own nation, decried ourselves as we will. The sense of service for each other, for our country and our kind, is to a considerable extent ingrained in our national character. The War showed it. Let us ensure its being there in the oncoming generation, and let us remember that the best way of teaching it is through example.

A cousin of mine relates how he heard in Siam a much-travelled rajah discussing with his Buddhist priest the qualities of us British.

He said: "What has made them the nation they are is their doctrine of service. What is the keynote? As I see it, it is just this—do good. Be helpful to your fellow-men. Be of use. Anyway, do something I like that doctrine. The only thing worth counting in a man's life is:

What has he done? Has he been of use?

If not, he were better with his head cut off with the executioner's dah."

I say Amen to that.

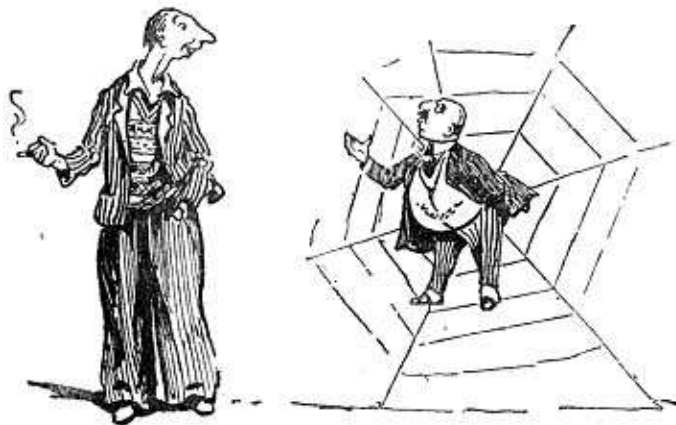
Bit II.

The Profiteers Of Youth

“Come, walk into my parlour,’ said the spider to the fly.”

It is wonderful how nice and polite people can be when they want something out of you. I had today one of the politest letters it has ever been my lot to receive. It was from a fashionable quarter in London and addressed in a non-commercial hand. It expressed the heart-felt desire of the writer, although we were as yet strangers, to be of assistance to me at any time when I might be short of cash. He had apparently more money than he knew what to do with, and he would look on it as a real privilege to serve me with any sum from ten pounds to ten thousand.

Well, that fellow has written to me for years in a similar strain. Fortunately I have not so far had to avail myself of his help—though goodness knows I have badly wanted it. One laughs at his sawder as one throws it into the waste paper basket.



“Won't you walk into my parlour”

But when you come to think it over, he would not have carried on this business all these years if no one was taken in by his humbug. There must be a lot of young innocents abroad to come into his net. It would be a comedy if it were not also a tragedy to see the rapidly altered tone of his letters as the period of his loan began to run out, and to see them at the ulterior end of the transaction, when he has got his fly well into his web and is demanding his money back with interest, mercilessly holding as it were a pistol to his victim's head. Too often it results in the poor dupe holding a pistol to his own head in actual fact.

Yes, young fellows coming out into life are, as I have said in *Rovering to Success*, “full of go, but empty of gumption.” In every grade of life they are looked on as lawful prey by profiteers of every kind, and they fall all too easily into traps laid out to catch them in every direction. In my

early days one had but to avoid running against the ordinary snags that lay in one's course. But today the lads have a more difficult time since camouflaged traps are intentionally laid about their path to catch them.

During the past few years, notably since the War, there has grown up a world of profiteers whose prey is the youth. Education does little to prepare him against this or indeed against anything he is likely to meet with in life. Such warning does not occur among the Three R's of the school curriculum. Fathers and elder brothers who would have been advisers have been killed in the War, or in other cases having never been trained to it, fail to bring up their boys aright.

In the absence of warning the profiteers have a clear field and a glorious time. They boost up their prize fights, their football matches and their race meetings by cunning advertisement in the Press, to draw the crowds, while the bookies in their turn play upon the inexperience of the young sportsman. Night clubs, political adventurers, also grab them and the moneylenders follow with the necessary oof to keep them going. Against this there is no specific training in manliness or character. The young men are largely left to gain wisdom through their own experiences and to sink or swim accordingly — a hard school and one in which a large percentage must go down. The wonder is that so fair a proportion of them ever rise to the standard they hold. The fact that they do get there speaks to an inherent national character that holds out enormous promise of what is possible when a true educational system is brought in to help them.

But the Nation needs these youngsters. Time is pressing. With the loss of the flower of our manhood in the War and with the country nearly on the rocks as regards trade and commerce, the need is great of really good balanced young Britons as citizens, both for our homeland and for our great Commonwealth overseas. We cannot as a Nation now afford to waste a single individual by allowing him to drift into uselessness. Even if we did not try to save these fellows for our country, at least it is up to us to do something for our young brother men. The good material is there all right as the product of Nature, but it is made into waste material through human blunder, through inadequate organisation and wrong education.

These faults are remediable and will be remedied when education takes for its aim the development of character, as at least of equal importance with scholastic attainments, when it develops personal responsibility for health and strength and reverence for the body lent by the Creator for great purpose in the scheme of nature, when it encourages handcraft, technical skill and inventiveness in every lad; when it harnesses these individual qualities in the practical expression of goodwill and service for others in the community.

But there are yet further snags that a young man has to meet, and the remedy is not all a matter of school training. There are the wiles of extremists political, sectarian and artistic; there are boon companions, there are women; indeed there are still plenty of rocks before him.

But there is practically one main antidote, one that will meet them all. *Character* all the time is the essential quality that tells against them in the long run. But this character is a difficult thing to develop in the boy within the school walls, however good the system, since it cannot be taught in class, but must be formed through the self-expression of the individual. That's where the playground comes in. The playing fields of Eton which Wellington is alleged to have said won the Battle of Waterloo are typical of many other playing fields which were the training ground of great careers.

It is the tenor and teachings of the environment outside the classroom that count.

But in my own case I found something better than the playground.

My reader, I don't know what your experience may have been, but so far as I personally am concerned I was taught little of the practical things for life inside the school compared with what I picked up for myself on the playing fields. There, one got corners knocked off, one found one's place and gained something of character. And though the games themselves would not last one for middle age, they had their value in the stage of preparation and their lessons held good.

It was in the woodland which surrounded school and playground that I learnt the most. What I picked up in the copse was both a preparation and a pursuit that has stood by me till today. That copse lore appealed and was selftaught, and for that reason it stuck. Moreover, it went beyond the development of health of body and of mind, it helped me as a youngster to find my soul. It was an elemental way, but that solitary creeping and "freezing" in observation of the birds and the beasts and the butterflies made one a comrade instead of an interloper in the family of Nature, it brought some realisation of the wonders that surround us, and it revealed too, through opening eyes, the beauties of the woods and the sunsets. Then hikes on the open road brought Nature lore and human side into proper mutual relations, both through historical relics at the wayside and through the intercourse with men of the road.

Then sea cruises and rock climbing widened and confirmed the lessons of the copse, and later on led one to appreciate across the oceans and among the eternal snows the good things the Creator has set for our enjoyment on a wider scale in the wilder parts.

But though all such things as these can, in combination, give a sense of efficiency and capability for higher enjoyment of life, conscience will give voice to the knowledge that there is yet something needed to make the whole complete. That something is to be found in the use of that efficiency for the service of one's fellows and for imparting some of one's own joy to become the joy of others.

So education should not be content merely to show a young man how to avoid falling into traps or how to make a living, but what is of far greater import how to live. How to appreciate the wonders of the world in which we live; how, by carrying the precept of goodwill and co-operation, he can help to develop prosperity and happiness for the country, and peace and understanding in the world; and how he will then find himself a partaker of the happiness which beyond all riches or power or position is success.

Bit III.

The Will's The Thing

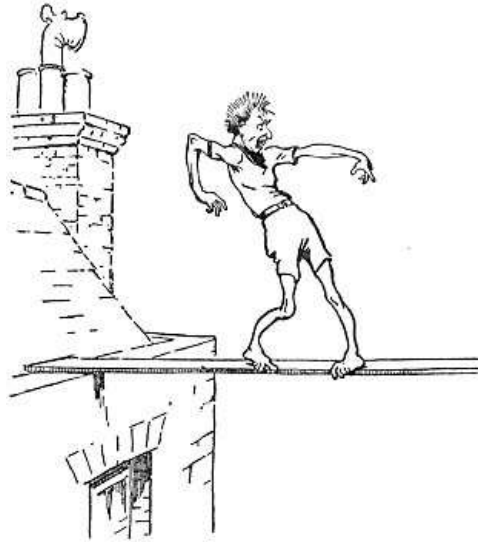
"To do anything in life you must have will-power—or you won't get there."

Put a plank down and walk along it.

Quite simple and easy. Put the same plank across a street from the roof of one house to another and walk across it. "Oh, I can't. I should fall." That is Imagination coming to the fore and taking charge of you. Will says:

"I will walk across." Imagination says: "You can't; you'll topple over and a nice mess you'll make on the pavement below!"

Is it not rather a matter of temperament and self-training? A steeplejack, a mountaineer, or a Blondin will walk across all right, because by practice his will has got the better of his imagination. A soldier going under fire, if he allowed his imagination full play, would see himself riddled with bullets, and his legs would quickly remove him from the scene. But his will comes to the front, treads down his imagination, and sends him forward.



Where there's a will There's a way

If a man finds his imagination stronger than his will it is time he took a pill or, better still, developed his will power so that he becomes a man in fact and not merely in name.

But imagination is not the only foe to will-power: there is ill health, there is laziness, there is pessimism and indecision, and fear of taking risks, and the attractions of taking the line of least resistance. All these do their best to undermine decision. They have to be guarded against and antidoted by the exercise of judgment, of enthusiasm, of courage, of the power to stick to it, of fortitude, determination, and backbone.

Elihu Root said to me in May, 1926: "The greatest need as I see it today is of men of decision."

You have to assert your *ego*, your *self*, against those enemies, and not give in to them or, as too many do, to what is called ill luck. Ill luck is a cowardly fellow. He will get you if you show fear or believe in him. If you turn on him, kick him and tread him down, he will dissolve away into nothing.

And there is yet another enemy to will power, an insidious fellow, because he is a sort of bad imitation which sometimes deceives the eye. You and I have met him in many people who pride themselves on their strength of will, when all the time they are only possessed of a narrow obstinacy, which is not at all the same thing.

Thus the will is not the simple quality that it would seem at first sight, for even when it has been strengthened with the various attributes I have indicated it must yet be carefully balanced to do what is right, what is best for the man, what is just to others.

Otherwise the will is like a horse; if you let him take the bit in his teeth he may carry you to destruction and to the destruction of others. He must be amenable to your good sense and your good guidance. Then you are safe.

“Nothing is difficult to a well-willed man.”

If you have the will to get there you will get there, no matter what stands in your way. Next time you see a statue of St. George and the Dragon mark it well. Think it over, and keep it in your mind as an inspiration, as a reminder that where there's a will there's a way.

What carried Drake through his marvellous voyage round the world? It was not merely his courage and his enthusiasm in facing the dangers and hardships of the unknown, but also, when his men mutinied, it was his own personal, determined, bulldog will which carried him, and them with him, forward to his great adventure and success.

History and experience can show you heaps of like examples. What kept Nelson hanging on with his ships through month after month in vile weather in that vilest of seas, the Gulf of Lyons, in order that the French Fleet should not give him the slip at Toulon.

He was physically a poor frail creature, perpetually seasick and ill, but he had that in him which rose superior to all weakness. He had the hard, unyielding will.

What stopped the German advance before Amiens and turned our retreat into victory in the Great War? It was the response to Lord Haig's "back to the wall" call, the will that said: "Thus far and no further will we retire. Here we turn."

Little can be done without making up your mind to it. To make up your mind you must have a mind to make up. To be a man among men you must have a will.

Professor Conklin has said in *Heredity and Environment*: "One of the most serious indictments against modern systems of education is that they devote so much attention to training memory and intellect and so little to the training of the WILL."

So it comes to this: Will is an essential quality in the make-up of a successful man. You can get it if you mean to; it is largely a matter of self-education.

Marshal Foch, the greatest of the commanders in the Great War, has given us the secret of his success, which, if marked, learned and inwardly digested, and then carried into practice, should serve to bring any man to success, also in the lesser lines of life.

He says: "When you have a task to perform, consider it carefully.

See that you understand exactly what is wanted of you, or what it is that you want to effect.

Then make your plans for bringing it off.

Have some good reasons for the plans.

Make their execution fit in with the material you have.

Above all, have the *will*, the stubborn will, the determination to carry them through to a successful issue.”

“The will is the man.”

Bit IV

Play The Man

*"If you can keep your head when all about you
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you,
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,
But make allowance for their doubting too,*

*Yours is the earth and everything that's in it,
And which is more you'll be a MAN, my son."*

KIPLING.

Before the Great War Lord Kitchener inspected one of the Troops of Boy Scouts, and brought with him the two Japanese heroes, General Nogi and Admiral Togo.

Nogi, in addressing the Scouts, told them how, as a boy, he had been a feeble and backward little creature, and had feared to do many things which his comrades dared, till one day the notion struck him that, for his country's good, he should force himself to do them. Consequently, whenever he found an adventure which he funked or disliked, he made himself face it until it became easy or habitual to him. Thus he gave the inspiring and practical lesson that manliness is a matter of self-education



Safety first

Admiral Togo, when called on to speak, remarked: "What General Nogi say, I also." But that was good enough.

We need more instruction of this kind today. There is too much exploitation of the "Safety First" principle. We are being taught to fear dangers and to save ourselves.

It reminds me of a criticism of our Army once given me by the Kaiser, at manoeuvres, when he pointed to his troops marching into action in dense formation, scorning to take cover. He said: "I teach my men to go forward boldly, regardless of bullets, in the spirit of victory, whereas in your Army in England you teach the men to take cover so as to save casualties. In a word, you teach them to be afraid of bullets before they ever come under fire. If you inculcate physical fear it is apt to develop moral fear."

And certainly the training of young men in looking out for their own interests and safety may easily be overdone. Too much of it, and the spirit of bold venture, initiative, and of helpfulness to others will be obliterated. Men will shirk lines of life which do not promise immediate certainty of good pay or promotion for themselves. They will hesitate to go overseas, fearing to face possible hardships. They will avoid taking risks of any kind.

This would not be a healthy upbringing for the young man; it would not be a healthy outlook for the country. The Prime Minister has recently urged a better sense of service among our young men, while Mr. Ramsay MacDonald has advocated the better development of manliness in our education. Both are needed.

The true type of manliness was defined for us long ago by the knights of old in their Code of Chivalry. There they laid it down that the true man was he who was strong in body and brave in spirit, whose honour was beyond reproach, who was ready at all times to help the weak, the women and children, whose devotion to his religion was such that he was willing to fight and give his life for it.

The difficulty of today is to keep such ideals before our lads where their environment is so often sordid, and where education is a scramble to give them even a surface scholastic knowledge in the few years allowed by law. Character which is essential to the make-up of a manly citizen is too often left to be picked up, or not, by the individual, as chance may decree. There is little practical instruction in playing the man.

Anyone can head a charge in battle if he has the average amount of courage and joy in the adventure, but it needs a man with character to hold on and stem a panic when others are fleeing in retreat. Nerve to keep his head, to see quickly the right line that is best for the whole, and to act on the emergency regardless of self that is a test of playing the man. Yet it is a quality more than ever needed in our nation when over civilisation is tending to soften us and to make us lean on other people's direction.

As Mr. MacDonald has said, the three elements — body, mind and soul — are needed in combination to complete the make-up of a man. The actions of the first two must be guided by the third, on a higher spiritual plane. Here we face the disturbing fact that men are reported as becoming less of churchgoers. But are they, therefore, less of Christians? That is the point which matters. There are evidently many of them who possess the spirit, but to whom, as they put it themselves, "the form and dogma that was devised by divines to meet the needs of the times three hundred years ago," has not its appeal today.

In sum, he who directs his daily activities in the spirit of his religion and who cultivates a sound mind in a sound body, is one who is best fitted to be a good citizen and to play the man.

Bit V.

Taking Risks

"He that nought assayeth nought achieveth."

Chaucer.

In the Town Hall at Copenhagen there is an automatic non-stop lift. It goes slowly past each landing, and passengers step in or out while it is in motion. In order to board it successfully to go sailing up to the floor you want, you have to "watch your step" and time it nicely.

If you fail to do this you are liable to bump heavily downwards, or to get your head bashed against the top of the gateway.

I saw an old lady approach the thing and pause and watch its working. She let one lift go by. As the next came up she made a step forward, but then hesitated to make the necessary move to get in. For the next one she advanced too soon, and then for the following one she was too late.

For twenty good minutes she hung about trying yet not daring, and finally she gave it up as a bad job and went away. She preferred simple safety to running risks, though these might bring her to success on the top story.

Well, that little incident has its moral for many of us. When this story first appeared in print I was asked by a critic why, if a Scout, I did not help the lady. The reply behind which I sheltered myself was to the effect that a Scout when he does a good turn does not talk about his share in it, even if his attempt prove ineffectual.



She who hesitates is lost

Caution is necessary on taking any step in life, because a very little step may lead to very big results in a man's career, whether for good or for bad.

"From little acorns do great oaks grow." The young man is prone to take bold steps from sheer ignorance or from absence of nerves where an older man would hesitate. He will dash in where angels fear to tread.

There are, however, certain definite moral snags which are bound to come in front of every young man starting out on the path of life, and definite warning can be given to him, therefore, by old 'uns who have passed that way.

If he choose to neglect such warning he is likely at least to stub his toe, if he doesn't trip and come a worse cropper. These snags I have gone into in a book, the chapters of which deal successively with Horses, Wine, Women and Humbugs. In addition to these there are many material snags in life which will come on the individual, but which will vary with circumstances.

So no direct warning can be given how they should be taken beyond the general one of caution in commencing any step. Besides what about warnings?

“Safety first” is a slogan lately imported into our country from America, and it sounds a very useful one to implant in the minds of even the old as well as the young if we want to save them from being knocked down by motor omnibuses.

But is it applicable, or even desirable, among Britons, who have it in their character to be able to take risks and to look after themselves?

We certainly have the habit of stepping off the kerb without looking round, but this is not so much from blank foolishness as from the feeling that the road belongs to us foot sloggers as much as to any motorist; and if, as a consequence, we get it in the back we merely die asserting our right. That's British.

Was it the habit of our forbears to watch their step and jump for safety? I don't think that our Drakes and our Hawkins and our Captain John Smiths were brought up to look out for safety in the first place, any more than our Newfoundland fishermen or those colonists of our race who first explored vast spaces and dared against savage foes to make their homes and build up our Empire in the four corners of the world.

A poor little place would England be if timidity had been our heritage. It would indeed mean disaster in our nation if our young men of today lost the spirit of hardihood and adventure, if they yielded to being spoon fed and coddled and merely looked for soft jobs and no risk.

For one thing they would indeed lose the salt of life for themselves, and also they would quickly let our country down to zero.

“Safety first” is too readily adopted as a fetish and as a screen by the more timid and lazily inclined. Let us rather hark back to Chaucer, who inspired our fathers when he gave them the mightier slogan, “He that nought assayeth nought achieveth.”

But plans for life should not be too rigidly fixed. When you are looking intently up one path and preparing to follow it, a friendly hand may clap you on the back, and you may be told: No, not that way, this other path is yours.”

Such at least has been my experience. If ever I were to write a history of the chief events that have occurred to me in my time I should be inclined to call it “Bombshells in my life.”

Almost every step has been unexpected, unsought, and in an unlooked for direction.

The South African Constabulary had adopted as their motto, on the selection of the men themselves, the words, “ Be Prepared.”

“Be prepared for what?”

“For any old thing,” was the reply.

And certainly it applied with them, for a South African constable was called upon at any time alternately to train a horse, vaccinate a baby, to build his own barrack, expound the law for a Boer farmer and his tenant, exterminate locusts, settle native disputes, peg out mining claims, act as fireman, soldier, or first aid doctor, etc.

And whichever it was he did it well; but it was simply through carrying out the principle of “being prepared.”

And so it is in life. To be prepared for any eventuality means possession of character, health and competence. These are only to be acquired by personal self-development, so it rests with a man himself to prepare himself.

“See the worst, but look on the best.”

He who aims only for safety first is going to suffer the fate defined in the phrase, “Nothing venture, nothing win.”

Bit VI.

Watch Your Habits

“Habit begins as a cobweb and ends as a cable.”

Our maid, Matilda, has gone. She had contracted a habit. I love to hear people singing at their work, but the line had to be drawn when it came to “Abide with Me,” day after day and hour after hour, with a knowledge of the words limited to: “Chinge and deecai in all areound I see. Chinge and deecai in all areound I see. Chinge and deecai, etc.” But as she couldn’t “ching” her habit she didn’t “abide” with us.

A habit, though seemingly harmless, may be fatal to the possessor. I knew a real good-hearted fellow who for fun used to puff and blow when talking. It became a habit, and he is now as obnoxious to his neighbour as the man who has the habit of loudly sucking in his soup.



Chinge and deecai in all areound I see

I have a sketch by me which I drew in a tramcar, in Belfast, of a sweet, clean little blue eyed maiden sitting, with all incongruity, below a notice about expectoration. The antithesis gave one to think that human beings can be delightful or they can be beastly according to their habits.

So it is of big importance in life to watch one’s habits.

Habit is often a matter of fashion, adopted without reason beyond that it is custom. God has given us two hands, yet I suppose nine out of ten people cannot clean their teeth or write a note with their left hand. They can only use the one, owing to habit. We don’t use half the talents that we possess, being slaves of habit.

Habits grow on us. It is their effects that count, the effects on the owner, the effects on his neighbours. Thus, the habit of eating more than is necessary for sustenance is a prevalent one: it only affects the eater himself, makes him obese, and gives him fatty degeneration of the heart and he passes on.

On the other hand, the habit of smoking is equally comforting to the owner, but often it makes him a nuisance to others and sometimes a cad. Oh, yes, he is the last to suspect it. Yet every day you may see a man filling a non-smoking carriage with fumes that are going to hang about that carriage to sicken women and travellers after him.

Talking of smoking and unwitting offence, I remember a woman asking a man if he was old fashioned enough to object to women having the habit of smoking. "Oh, no," he replied, "not at all. But I do hate the smell of stale tobacco that hangs about afterwards in their hair, their clothes, and their breath." When next I met her she had given up smoking.

After all, like most others, she had originally only taken to the habit out of bravado and show off !

The very young man gains great merit for cleverness, in his own estimation, when he finds that he can be cynical. If nobody smacks him, this grows into a habit, and he becomes that hateful thing, a cynic, and that dangerous thing, a pessimist.

There is an old fashioned toast, old fashioned not because it used to be drunk in bygone days but because its meaning is getting out of date today: "Horses, Wine and Women."

Under the heading of horses naturally comes the habit of betting on them, and thence on betting on any kind of competition. Two hundred millions of pounds are estimated to be the annual turnover as the result of this habit in Great Britain. One man I knew never could acquire the habit because he never got over the first barrier, that is, the objection to taking money from another, not for work done but for getting the better of him either by luck or astuteness. There were other barriers besides this also to be got over, such as the consciousness of greed, and waste of time and talents. But consciousness, like conscience, is dulled by habit.

Wine. Nice stuff. I like it just as much as you do, but, once begun, watch it that it doesn't lead to the second and third glass, and then to the habit which, without fail, brings misery and ruin.

Women. The biggest blessing given to man in this world. Yet, my goodness, what wrecks, what havoc of human lives have been wrought in this world through mishandling of the right relationship! The habit of philandering, playing with affections lightly entered upon, has sunk men lower and lower into beastliness and tragedy.

Money. Directly you get a little money you want to spend it and you do so. Spending your spare cash becomes a habit. Just when you get to the age of discretion and want to set up a house and settle for life you find that your money earning capacity has waned. You wish that you had been thrifty when you could. It is now too late.

A bad habit is like a bad tooth. Have it out. But the gap must be filled in, not merely for appearances sake, but for use. As a people we are selfish; we are brought up that way. At school we are encouraged to be top of our class, to win prizes, to gain scholarships, in competition and rivalry with others. Thus we acquire the habit of looking out for what we can get for ourselves.

It's time to have that bad tooth out, and to substitute for it the habit of seeing what we can give to others.

Bit VII.

Sloppiness

"Honour thy father and thy mother."

I went to a dance club not long ago with another man to see the fun. To say I was disappointed does not express it. I never saw such a feeble looking lot of the male kind—not a man amongst them.

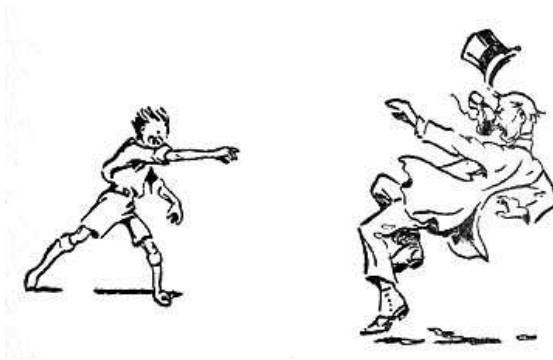
And the girls were half naked, all skin and bone and powder puff.

But I suppose they thought they were having a rollicking time. Rollicking —I don't think! For all the life and jollity in the place they might have been playing chess.

Now I am not speaking as one who is entirely a bad judge of these things, for I do not believe anybody ever enjoyed a good rag or a jolly dance so much as I in my time. But I could never, in my balmiest days, have faced a sloppy show of this kind.

My friend after a few minutes of it ejaculated, "Poor devils, and this is what they call seeing life. I can't stand seeing a nice girl like that one over there being pawed about by that little bounder with her."

He went straight across to her and said boldly, "This is our dance, I think." The lady promptly accepted the situation and they slid off into the dance together, leaving the poor youth fuming but powerless.



Parental control

I am no kill joy, goodness knows, but these rotten night shows, dancing clubs, cabarets, and night clubs, foreign importations as they are, have come into vogue on a large scale since the War, and are likely to do real harm to our lads and lasses.

The cause of this may be attributed largely to the War, which taught our boys the doctrine of a short life and a merry one, and also killed off the fathers and elder brothers whose manly influence should be correcting these defects today.

The better endowed boys, who ought to be the types of manliness for their poorer brothers to follow, in many cases only give them a very sordid lead.

The next grade lower in the social scale, with a snobbishness that they would be the first to deny, follow the doings of "Society" people with alacrity. They spend their money, time and energy in doing so to the detriment of their prospects of getting on in their business or professions, or of ultimately making happy homes for themselves.

Too many of them fail to realise what the best authorities have shown to be the case, viz, that the most favourable time for earning and laying by money is in the twenties in fact, statistics tell us that the best period is actually before twenty five.

At this age the young men are too often busy betting on races or football matches, and it is the bookies, not the punters, who rake in the money.

People are too fond of blaming the schoolmasters for not giving the boys more character training and a better knowledge of life while they are yet at school; but the schoolmaster has a mighty difficult problem in trying, with large classes and an extensive curriculum, to impart his teaching in the very limited period allowed.

At best he can give the boy only ambition to learn and the power of gaining knowledge, together with the admonition that when he leaves school his real education begins, that is, self-education.

I was asked recently in New York whether our young people in Great Britain were indulging to excess in drink and crime as a result of the War. I could only reply that I had not noticed it though my opportunities for doing so were particularly good. There might perhaps be a little less of discipline and respect for parental control than had existed before the War, but this I thought was traceable to the absence or loss of fathers, elder brothers, and schoolmasters at that time, and was therefore but a temporary matter and not vitally serious. It is, however, none the less urgent that education should include the qualities summed up in Kipling's lines:

"No easy hopes or lies
Shall bring us to our goal,
But iron sacrifice
Of body, will, and soul."

The only discipline which is going to tell in the young man is the self-discipline which comes from his own good sense.

The public schoolboy gets more of this training than his brother in the elementary school, and can, if he will, teach by example. Therefore he has a big responsibility on him, and it is important that he should realise it.

For this reason the Boy Scouts Association invited the leading men of the universities and training colleges to meet them in conference and discuss the question. The authorities responded with unexpected goodwill and sympathy.

They were asked to realise the possibilities which, according to no less an authority than the President of the Board of Education, lie before the Scout movement in the direction of taking the mass of the boys of the country in hand and helping them to complete their education after leaving school.

In numbers the movement is steadily growing. But membership could be practically doubled if only men of the right sort came forward to take the boys in hand.

Bit VIII.

The Monday Spirit

“When you find an unwillingness to rise early in the morning make this short speech to yourself: ‘I am getting up now to do the business of a man; and am I out of humour for going about that for the sake of which I was sent into the world? Was I designed for nothing but to keep warm beneath the counterpane?’ ”

MARCUS AURELIUS

It's like getting up in the morning. One's thoughts run to: “What is my programme for today? The same old routine!”

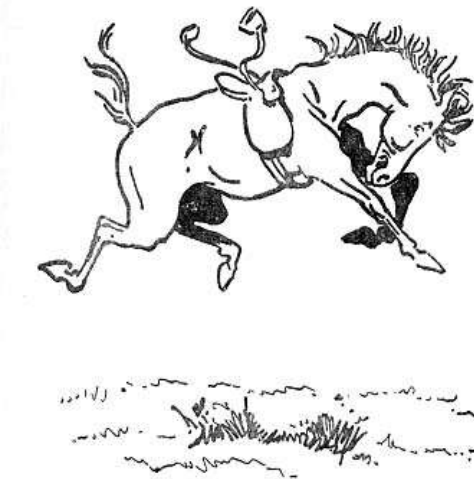
“The common round, the trivial task!
What more depressing job? I ask.”

“Yow! Let's have another wink of sleep.”

On the other hand, it may be that waking thoughts remind one that today is the day for that job to which we have been looking forward.

With a bound worthy of Appius Claudius we spring from the downy couch, and get busy in eager haste to dress for the adventure.

Monday morning, after a day off in restful recreation far from the atmosphere of work, dumps us back on our regular daily treadmill, to grind away till next Saturday comes round to give relief. And so we plod along, counting our steps.



The Monday morning spirit

On the other hand, with some of us, it means eager plunging in with renewed vigour and cheery hopes to breast the oncoming waves of our work.

“Sunrise should mean for us, as for the Greeks, daily restoration to the sense of passionate gladness and of perfect life, the thrilling of new strength through every nerve, the shedding over us of a better peace than the peace of night, in the power of dawn.”
— RUSKIN

My little daughter was bucked once off her horse. Her steed had been for two days in the stable, snowed up, without exercise and well fed with oats.

I explained his behaviour as being due to what is known as “Monday morning disease,” which occurs when a horse has had two days’ rest, and comes out into the open, full of beans and joyfulness, to take up his work again.

The horse teaches us what the Monday morning spirit ought to be.

Our work comes light when we look on it as a game, where we are players in a team, each playing in his place, all playing together for the good of the side; and when we catch the spirit of it we soon find it is not merely a game, but a great game.

And what is it that makes our work a game instead of an infliction?

Why, just this. If we take on our job for what we can get out of it, and do it because we have to do it, we are going to keep our eye on the clock and count the steps of our treadmill—oppressed all the time with the sense of our slavery.

The moment we take the other view, and see what we can put into our work, we become keen over it, and instead of having to do it we want to do it.

We tackle it cheerily with a grin. And when you tackle a job with a grin it’s all up with the difficulties: they melt away. Then work becomes a pleasure—just a game.

For success in a business career, a junior is told that he is bound to succeed if he only makes himself indispensable.

That’s the word; and that’s his aim—if he is clever; to be ready to take on any job at short notice if the present incumbent goes sick or fails. He takes his career seriously; he means to get what he can out of it for himself.

But this does not make his work a pleasure or a game. He does not win through to real success. Lie is still a slave if only to his own ambition.

Freedom to express oneself is the better road to success. Look beyond the work on your desk or on your bench and see what its results will be to other people. Do it well for their sakes. Service, with its greater field, brings the greater reward. Satisfaction is success. Dean Inge has said: “It is not the work, or the kind of work, but the spirit in which it is done that makes it free or servile, honourable or degrading.”

The skilled craftsman takes a proper pride in the way in which he turns out his work, whether his craft be that of head or of hand. The humblest clerk or typist has it in his power, by introducing skill or originality into what may seem but routine work, to distinguish himself in comparison with his fellows and to win credit for his firm.

I remember a young engineer saying, when a call came from his union to “down tools”: “How can I go and leave a job like that half finished?” He was in that enviable—and attainable—stage of being in love with his work.

In my own line—namely, soldiering—I have known the dreariness of trying, hour after hour, day after day, to drill a squad of stupid young recruits in the barrack square to become automata, to be all as nearly as possible of one pattern.

It was a deadly dull, unsatisfying routine until that blessed day when I discovered that these louts were potential men, that if one took each of them separately and studied him one found at least five per cent of good in him somewhere, and that this good, if seized and developed, could be used to drive out the bad, and that instead of making a cog in the machine, it was in one's power to make an individual, a man, a soldier, and, what is more, a citizen for his country.

The dullness of routine was gone, and in its place was the adventure and sport of discovering the five per cent of good, of taming a human mind, and of developing the individual character on to a new standard, all bringing with it the satisfaction of a useful work accomplished under one's hand, useful for the man himself and useful for the country.

A grand game, and worth while.

In like fashion, it is open to you to hunt for and find that five per cent of sport in your work; drive routine from your office, your shop, your farm, or your school by making this workplace your playground, by loving your work and putting into your profession all you can for others, instead of trying to get out of it what you can for yourself.

What is it that gives the horse his Monday morning buck? It is not merely the rest that he has had on Sunday, but also the corn. Think of that: it is not merely the rest to body and brain which you gain on your Sunday that will reinvigorate you for work on Monday, but the moral stimulant that you will have imbibed with your spiritual refreshment on that day. This will be yours if you have sought for it, and it will carry you through the week's work on a higher plane and with the widened outlook, which will make it a joyous game of self-expression instead of a dreary task imposed upon a self-pitying slave.

So play up and play the game! Play in your place, not for yourself, but for your side, for your country, for your kind. Then will you look forward to your Monday morning, not with distaste, but with eager zest for the fresh adventure that it brings.

Bit IX.

Command Your Mind

"A Scout smiles — and whistles when in difficulty or danger."

The Scout Law.

In America the story was told me of an Englishman who was having his breakfast in a saloon out West when a fracas took place. It was on the good old lines; "guns" were used, blood and hair flew; but the visitor went on calmly with his breakfast, watching the row with interest, but in no way disturbed.

At the subsequent inquiry he was called as a witness to give his version of the affair, and the presiding sheriff, in congratulating him on his lucid evidence, expressed admiration at his being able to sit through it all and take in the details. "Oh, that's all right," replied the Englishman, "I had read all about the wild and woolly West before I came out. I supposed that this was the regular thing, and that therefore it would not do for me to get excited about it."

That is the sort of character with which Britons are credited by our neighbours overseas; and as a matter of fact there is a good deal of that *sang-froid* in our make-up.



Shan't play any more

There has been some talk lately whether or not fellows learn much at public schools. Well, there is one thing which, at any rate, I think they learn, and that is to hide their feelings, to show outwardly only a modified amount of the natural boyish enthusiasm that may be surging within them. The mask thus adopted in boyhood is carried through life, giving to outsiders the impression of a bored and unsympathetic personality in the average Englishman. And though this impression may often be a false one, it can at times undoubtedly be of value.

Command of mind as an item of character is an asset of national as well as of personal importance.

And, mind you, it can be got by trying for it. A young man cannot hope to win success in life if he does not possess the power to clear his mind of general side issues and to concentrate it on the particular point in hand, and who cannot substitute patience for hasty temper.

Such command is made up of will-power coupled with physical self-control and ability to switch on the particular mind cell needed for the occasion. This sounds a bit of a job; still, the beauty of it is that it can be secured by conscious cultivation. But it means practice—and no end of a lot of it! The Scout Law says: “A Scout smiles and whistles in a difficulty.” This means a physical regaining of control of your mind or nerve in an emergency.

More than once it has been realised in a tight place, when, out of the tail of your eye, you feel, rather than see, that your men are getting a little—well, say, anxious. You start whistling with your mouth, even if your heart happens to be in your boots. Instantly you sense a change of atmosphere, a wave of relief among them; confidence returns, and all goes well.

Perfect control of the mind ensures calmness and balance. Temper has to be overcome, and this again is possible through physical means. I knew a man whose temper was so vile that on occasion it sent him down on all fours to bite the carpet! But there was an unfailing antidote. If you handed him a block of paper and a paint-box he would start to draw like a little child and forget his fury.

A certain West African potentate with whom I had dealings at one time had the sense to recognise that his habit of incontinently ordering a man's head off or blurting out an equally capital pronouncement without previous reflection might land him in difficulties when dealing with white diplomatists, so he adopted the plan of carrying a huge Brazil nut in his mouth. This had to be extracted before he could utter any remarks, and the pause necessitated by the operation just gave him time to think twice about what he was going to say.

Personally I have found that the best antidote to anger is to start whistling. On one occasion, indeed, I was reported to the General by an insubordinate soldier whom I had to admonish on the ground that instead of listening to his defence I had started whistling. The General quite appreciated my explanation when I said that that whistling had saved the man from a heavier punishment.

Giving rein to your temper is not only a nuisance to others, but it is also generally damaging to your own cause. If in an argument you are right, there is no need to lose your temper; if you are in the wrong, you cannot afford to lose it. In a word, then, ability to switch your mind, or to clear your brain of side issues, to keep it calm and cheerful, or to concentrate it on the points you want is all a matter of control. Nor must that concentration become a narrowing of outlook; rather it should be the focusing on an objective with a view that is clearer and more far-reaching.

Although mind control is thus a quality of highest value in our life it is not so far included directly in school curriculum, but is ever a matter of conscious self-education and practice for each one of us.

Bit X.

Great Hearts And Snobs

“Good will is God’s will.”

In looking down from an airplane over the vast grey expanse of ocean the pilot saw a single little dot which he knew to be a liner making its way to the Cape, with its freight of human souls on board. There they were, cabined and confined in that one little hull, subject together to all the dangers of the deep. Yet he knew that in that little microcosm differences of class and caste were being rigidly maintained. From the fireman in the stokehold to the millionaire in the state-room de luxe there were different little grades and coteries and cliques with all their petty envies, bickerings, and snobberies.

Ridiculous, wasn't it? And yet if one looks a little nearer home, how about our own neighbourhood? Ourselves in our own club, or college, or office? We seem to have the same cliques and sets, scandal talk and snobbery in our own circle.



*Yet there's 5 per cent of good
even in that—somewhere*

We may say that it is only human nature, but that makes it none the less harmful; on the other hand, it makes it all the more capable of remedy.

If we dissect the offenders morally we find that they are suffering either from proud stomach, short sight, swollen head, acidity of tongue or want of thought—all contributing to attenuation of heart.

But do not let us be content with dissecting others; let us begin nearer home and dissect ourselves, and see whether we also do not need an operation to clear our system of some of those same moral ills. Let us also realise that if we eradicate them our hearts automatically expand; and we can carve away hopefully because, however deep the infection, we may be sure that there is at least five per cent of good to be found in us somewhere, and, similarly, there is that five per cent of good in our neighbour.

“I never heard him say an unkind word of anybody.” That is what we sometimes hear of a man, and at once we are drawn to him in admiration; we recognise him as a Great Heart. Can we not follow his lead and check ourselves when inclined to be cynical about others? That accomplished, can we not go one better? To refrain is, after all, merely negative; can we not do the positive and, like the Boy Scouts, perform good turns here and there from day to day. Not as a matter of form, but entirely as the outcome of the spirit of love? This would be only a small move and an easy one for each of us. But it would make a vast difference in the amenities of life.

Great-heartedness is like the quality of mercy, it “blesseth him that gives” as well as “him that takes.” Indeed, there is no blessing among the many which the world holds for us that brings greater happiness than the harmonious life brought about by good will.

It is a fortunate thing for the nation that we are credited with having in our British character more natural good will than most peoples. An American woman, writing of her experiences in England,

said that she was surprised at the genuine good nature and kindness which she encountered in this country. She said the men were not outwardly polite, like American men, but under the surface they were far more helpful and ready to do good turns in the best possible way.

She drove her motor-car, for instance, on the wrong side of the road, forgetting that the rule was different over here, and she nearly had a bad collision. The driver of the other motor-car, instead of shouting and swearing, only wagged his finger at her and said: "Naughty, naughty!"

One of our statesmen said lately that the reason why Communism can never really flourish in Britain is because it is founded on hate, and Britons as a race have too much natural good humour and kindness to be able to hate effectively. So, in addition to the happiness it brings into our domestic life, there is a national value attaching to the development of our good nature. Let us for this reason then make a conscious effort to ensure its maintenance in the next generation. We can do it by educating our youngsters, through example on our part, in living the harmonious life with our fellows.

Every man who aspires to consideration among his fellows has the responsibility—and at the same time the opportunity—of contributing his share towards making the world a better place to live in. This we can do by living the harmonious life, "with ever a kindly word or deed, and never an offence."

We can begin today. When "that awful Mrs. Smith" comes down the street we can greet her cheerily, and, disregarding the bad, let us note that five per cent of good that is in her. Let us do our "good turn" today, tomorrow, and then every day, of courtesy, charity, or cheer, nor flaunt our better luck.

(N.B.-And should we fail at first, a self-inflicted fine for every lapse is a good corrective, and will soon start a fund to spend in charity.)

Bit XI.

Teach Beauty

*"I loved the beauty of the Downs—
Blue sea and sky-scapes—hated towns,
And thought of them as ugly things
Where souls could never soar on wings;
Where poets' minds would always clog,
And verses would be smirched by fog.*

*"Now I have seen the dawn break fair
And glorify Trafalgar Square;
And watched the shades of darkness stalk
Across the sky from Cheyne Walk;
These sights have proved that Beauty dwells
In towns as well as rustic dells."*

"E. R. L. B.," in Morning Post.

I write this lolling on a bank of yesteryear's dry bracken on an early April day. The grey-brown river is sliding below me with its rhythmic splash and gurgle. On the opposite bank the winter-bleached grass is dabbed with darker patches where the docks and bluebells are putting forth their leaves. The bank is topped with wild daffodils in upright groups nodding in a friendly way to the breeze.

Back of these the hill rises steeply with its trees—ash, oak and birch—standing bare against the dark and serried ranks of spruce. And over all there hangs the grey cloak of floating cloud and mist.



Appreciation of beauty

A prosaic mind would say, "In other words, you are sitting on a bank by a river on a dull day. Why not say so?" Why not? Because one senses more than this if one has the eyes to see. It is just that ability to appreciate the loveliness of Nature which makes the fisherman so monumental, and to some so asinine, an example of patience: in addition to his sport he is revelling in the beauties around him. Moreover, there's a moral to this yarn.

Let us glance once more at our view. A change comes over the scene; shadows and strong contrast lights begin to appear where all was sombre uniformity. A robin on a near-by briar trills his shy, confiding little song. Suddenly a kingfisher streaks by on his course along the river, a brilliant flash of glistening blue. He is harlequin. A moment later and the transformation scene is

on. The clouds have parted, and the sunlight pouring down gives startling new values of light and shadow, form and colour. It sheds a glory over the scene. Where there stood a larch there is now a pillar of feathery wings of tenderest green lace, brilliant against the deep purple-brown shade of the wood behind. And the birches stand stark in their silvery whiteness, powdered over with a speckly shower of gold.

The warm sunglow brings with it the scent of the primroses and of the gorse which blazes forth against the blue of the sky above.

“Where all was wintry now ‘tis spring.”

And so it is with life. *Life without an appreciation of beauty is a dull day without sunshine.* The sense of beauty changes a man's grey outlook on life, it gives a new and brighter perspective, a fresh joy in living. If education is intended to prepare children for the best use and enjoyment of life and not merely to make them scholars or clerks, it ought, it must include as a subject the sense of beauty.

It has been said that women lack the sense of beauty, though of Nature's products they are themselves the most beautiful; and they would have some difficulty in countering this charge when the evidences are brought up against them of the crinoline, the bustle, the chignon and the “Eton crop,” the slipped waist line, and the lip-stick.

Ruskin spoke truly when he said that only Nature is beautiful; that “all most lovely forms and thoughts are directly taken from natural objects.” At the same time beauty can be man-made, where man expresses the sense of beauty that is in him, and leads others to appreciate it, through his pictures and sculpture, his poetry and music, his literature and drama—provided always that he does not rush to eccentric and self-advertising travesties of art, which give expression to the ugly in place of the beautiful.

Therefore it is that in the education of the future citizen the appreciation of beauty can through these media be instilled and made his possession. But in training the adolescent mind practice is invariably more telling than precept, and consequently the expression of his sense of beauty and rhythm—for these go in harmony together—should be encouraged in every way, in drawing, in singing, in poetry, in dancing, in drama, and so on.

Moreover, his eyes can be opened to the beauty that lies in his work, so that he gains a joy and pride whether in moulding his pottery or weaving a fabric, in the accurate fitting of delicate machinery, in craftsmanship of any kind; in a word, so that he comes to look on his work as a bit of artistry, as a labour of love rather than as a piece of drudgery.

Then, too, there is beauty that can be developed in our own character. I have known it in a woman whom everybody admired, not for any loveliness of face or form, for she did not possess it, but for the wonderful beauty of her character, which gave out love and happiness to all around her in whatever company she might be. She was simply an angel on earth, but no word described her character other than the term beautiful.

By urging beauty as an essential need in the child's education, I do not mean to infer that anyone is without the germ of beauty-appreciation, however poor his circumstances. One remembers the soldier in the ranks of the Coldstream Guards, who when he came suddenly upon the vast-spread panorama that lay below the Devil's Kantor in the Transvaal, exclaimed:

“Blimey—and there's some blokes as sez there ain't no God!”

But as a rule men's eyes are only half open, and they do not recognise the beauties that are about them. The glory of the sunset on Westminster Bridge, the mellow tint of the old brick wall, the

colours and the hazes of smoke, steam and cloud in a big industrial centre, these convey no sense of satisfaction to unseeing eyes.

A tarred high road would not at first sight suggest a thing of beauty, but even there we can see lilac-blue colours reflected in their glossy sheen and dissolving into lighter shades at the sides, like the marvel of Nature which we see in the glistening back of a black snake.

The general lack of appreciation of beauty is more fully shown in the filthy surroundings in which so many of our fellow-men are content to live. In any slum you will find here and there a clean and tidily kept home, bright with its window flowers and so on, showing that the appreciation and its expression do exist, and are possible even under most unpromising conditions. The taste is there, but needs developing and expanding on a more general scale.

One Bank Holiday people went in their thousands to enjoy the gardens in their spring garb at the Zoo. Quite rightly. But how did they express their enjoyment? By leaving paper bags, cigarette packets, matchboxes, newspapers, and scraps of food to the extent of thirteen tons of defilement to be cleared away after them.

So we see backyards and cottage gardens which might be trim and bright with flowers turned into insanitary and unsightly receptacles for old tins, lumber, and rubbish of every description. Squalor is cultivated in the place of cleanliness or beauty. Let us beware and take note. Ugly environment builds ugly dispositions, while a fuller perception of beauty and its expression means a sunnier, happier life for all. More than this, it raises thoughts to higher ideals, above the sordid cares of little everyday worries, and brings a man nearer to God.

The impressiveness conveyed by the imposing proportions and artistic detail of the noblest cathedral is derived, as Ruskin points out, from what are after all but imitations of Nature.

It is in God's own temple not made with hands, in the aisles of the forest with its windows of interlaced branches through which the heavens are seen, or on His steeples, the mountain peaks, with their vast and calm expanse of outlook, that the understanding man can best get in touch with the Almighty, best gain his true perspective of life.

Bit XII.

Tips

*"Don't degrade your fellow-man by offering him a tip:
tipping is a form of bribery."*

Notice in a Moscow Restaurant.

I once read with great interest in a news-paper a series of letters from correspondents giving their ideas of "Today's Worst Evil," and I could not help being fully in agreement with each of them in turn. But when I had gone through them all I felt that one of today's worst evils-if not the worst -- had not been mentioned.

Tipping, whichever way you look at it, is bad. I am always quoting the quality of mercy. Well, tipping is just the opposite. It is bad for him that gives as well as for him that receives the tip. (N.B.-I am not talking of racing "tips," but of money given for minor services for which the recipient already receives payment from his employer.)

There is generally an air of secrecy about the transaction, an underhand procedure of which berth parties are a little ashamed, since they are surreptitiously going behind the employer.



Which ought to feel the smaller?

But worse than this, by giving the tip he is deliberately lowering the morale and self-respect of the other man. The man who accepts the tip makes himself at once no longer an equal but an inferior to the tipper, becoming servile for the sake of reward and turning from a man into a sycophant and parasite. That is where tipping does harm.

I went out shooting once with an Arab, and he brought with him a number of his retainers to act as beaters. After a long and arduous day they collected together and approached me. I felt anxious to know what amount of tip would be the right thing and how far it would be within my means.

Tip? Not a bit of it. They only wanted to shake hands and thank me for the jolly day's sport we had had! We parted as comrades and equals.

It is different, alas! in our country. I have met a few keepers of the kind with whom I can shake hands as a friend after the day's shoot. But of late years tipping has become almost universal with this class. The Highland gillie whom one used to admire as the proud, self-respecting—and therefore respected—descendant of freeborn clansmen, is now becoming generally but an obsequious servant. That's where it hurts-me.

Could not some one issue for our use a kind of tip-card which we could hand to those whom we should otherwise tip? It might be a postcard with our address on one side and some such statement as this on the other:

“I am greatly obliged for what you have done for me. I do not like to offer you money because a good many men object to being tipped, feeling that it lowers their manliness to accept favours. So, as man to man, I offer you my thanks. But if you really want money you can write your name and address below and post this card to me and I will do what I can to help you.

Herbert Fane in writing on this subject has recently shown how tipping is a form of snobbery, and one to which men are more addicted than women:

“Whereas a man will expend his last shilling to preserve his dignity, a woman would prefer to lose her dignity and keep the shilling.”

Is it that men are more open-fisted, or is it that they have not the same moral courage and are afraid lest they should be considered mean?

Where dishonesty is connived at in small things the sense of honesty is blunted and leads the way to corruption in big things. The danger of this in municipal official life has been exposed on more than one occasion, and it is a danger. From “perks,” it is but a short step to bribery and corruption—that is, to “graft”—in our political life, in the government of our country. This if it once gained a footing would spell ruin to the nation.

I do not know whether women are more honest than men, but I notice that a woman has been elected mayor of a city (not in Great Britain) where, when I was last there, the local newspaper came out with this heading: “It is always good to know where your public men are and what they are doing.” It then proceeded to announce that the last of their town councillors was now in jail and was “doing time” in company with the mayor, the chief of police, and the rest of the town council, who were already “in” for bribery and corruption.

You and I are merely ordinary men in the street. But it is just the ordinary men in the street who can do much for their country—if they will. If we have a bit of moral backbone in us those of us who are in the way of receiving tips or “perks” would do well to pause and think whether we may not be lowering ourselves by doing so. Even if it be at some cash sacrifice, let us assert our manliness and, while grateful for the offer, decline to accept favours.

In ancient days the important item in the ceremony of the investiture of a knight (and one which today is included in the investiture of a Rover Scout) was the “Buffet.” This was a blow on the head administered by the King to remind the young knight that he had one tender spot, any attack on which would arouse his hot resentment, and that was—his Honour.

One has heard from time to time with satisfaction of violent assaults by such people as Indian Civil Servants on men who had approached them with a bribe. It was not because the amount was too small, but because its offer was a direct insult to their honour. Poobah, on the other hand, had a big throat, and the bigger the “insult” the easier it was to swallow!

Those of us, on the other hand, who are given to tipping, can take our stand against this blackmail, not for the sake of our pockets, but for the maintenance of manliness and honesty among our fellow subjects, and in this way check the insidious growth of bribery and "graft." Otherwise we deserve to be included in the same category as those well-meaning women who manufacture beggars by giving pennies to every mendicant they see.

Moreover, we can bring up the rising generation to realise that acceptance of tips means surrendering their independence and lowering their standard of manliness and honour.

Where we are employers we should see to it that our workmen have an adequate living wage, and are not driven by us to cadging for tips where they can get them. Our combined ultimate aim should be, by abolishing tips, to promote the spirit of unswerving honour and integrity among all sections of the community, and to put all men on a level of mutual trust, independence, and respect, in place of servility on the one part and of self-conceit and condescension on the other.

Bit XIII.

Happy Staffs

What is it that makes a man change his whole character and outlook directly he is promoted? Do you not see it in the office when a secretary becomes manager? I have heard it is true in the Navy when a lieutenant-commander becomes captain of his ship, and I know it only too well in the Army when a major is promoted to colonel in command.

The beggars at once seem to forget that they were ever boys or in the junior ranks, and they put on an armour of aloofness with the visor down which prevents them having width of outlook.

That, at any rate, is what it used to be in my day. Once I came across a colonel who was an exception; he remained a youthful subaltern in spirit and a human soul to boot. The result was a first-class regiment through and through. Each officer was given his job with full responsibility for running it, and full credit for success, or, in default, a pal's advice for shortcomings. Discipline and efficiency came from within—the only true way. This form of rule has become more general in the service now, thank goodness, and with the best results.



A big proposition only feasible to a happy staff

The same principle of staff control is applicable on a large scale in business, in spite of what people say about the human touch being no longer possible when dealing with large numbers.

Take the Panama Canal, for instance. I saw the Panama Canal at perhaps the most interesting stage of its construction, when it was nearing the point of completion and the water was about to be admitted. The work, formerly given up as hopeless by the French under de Lesseps, was brought to a successful issue by the Americans, mainly because they employed three factors where the French had used only one.

Engineering was, of course, the chief measure, but the Americans had perfected two more, without which it could only have followed the French failure. These were the abolition of yellow fever and the supply of healthy food.

The head and centre of the whole was the chief engineer, Colonel Goethals. Under his guidance I soon realised that it was not merely good organisation and farseeing staff work, but that the successful issue of the whole was due as much to his personality as to his capacity.

Wherever we went in that hive of busy work the men would pause for a moment to grin and wave a greeting. An engine driver steaming along leaned out of his cab and shouted a long rigmarole, waving gaily until he was lost in the distance. I asked what he meant. The colonel replied: "Oh, he has the idea that the whole success of the work depends on him, and he was just assuring me that I needn't worry; he will put the job across all right, and on time. Each of these fellows thinks that the result depends on him."

Among other things the colonel explained to me that he had black, white, and yellow men in his army of workers, but in respecting their susceptibilities he had them classified, not according to the colour of their skin, but according to the coin in which they drew their pay, silver, paper, or gold groups. Tact!

I innocently asked the colonel what would happen supposing the men went on strike. He looked at me for a moment quizzically and said: "Well, now—I never thought of that!" And I realised then that a strike was unthinkable among this happy family.

Frank H. Chaley wrote of the canal: "The country was hot, unhealthful, and isolated. The size of the job was staggering. The disappointment and unforeseen obstacles were enough to have defeated any enterprise, but a great leader who understood the power of enthusiasm among men took hold and engineered men as well as machinery. It was a song that built the Panama Canal, an enthusiastic song that workmen sang everywhere with vim and punch, and the chorus of it was something like this:

'Got any rivers they say are uncrossable?
Got any mountains you can't tunnel through?
We make a specialty of the impossible,
Got any job that you want us to do?'

A group of men saturated with that spirit of enthusiasm could do anything—so can an individual."

So, although organisation, efficient and far-seeing, was responsible for the complete machine, the spirit that made it work was the human and personal touch which the leader put into it.

And there was exemplified the difference between a leader and a commander. Almost any fool can command, can make people obey orders, if he has adequate power of punishment at his back to support him in case of refusal. It is another thing to lead, to carry men with you in a big job.

During the Great War a call was made to Scoutmasters to carry out the flax harvest for the manufacture of airplanes. This was a huge job since each plant had to be pulled separately. The sight of a vast plain of waving flax might well have disheartened many a harvester in attempting such a task. But to the Scoutmaster it did not appear impossible where he had a happy, willing staff of workers to back him up. Realising that they were out to do a big job for a great end the Scouts tackled it cheerily—and successfully.

Would it not seem then that the secret of controlling your staff, however big or however small it may be, lies in getting your staff to control itself? I mean, through its expression of the right spirit

from within, through contentment from just treatment, through having individual responsibility and pride in its work with an outlook reaching far beyond its bench to what that work is going to do for the world.

This implies a special gift in the make-up of the man at the helm in carrying out the organisation, for in addition to a business head he must have the human heart, though not necessarily a soft one.

Once more it is the giving, not the getting, that pays. In return for what he expects to get from his staff he must be prepared to give of kindness, of justice, of appreciation, of interest, and of sacrifices on his part where necessary. If he would have his men loyal he must be loyal to them; if he would trust them he must be trusted by them. The first step towards making them see with his eyes is himself to see with their eyes.

Bit XIV

Tracking

"Little straws show which way the wind blows."

The following is not a fable but is what actually happened not long ago.

A scientific expedition went to explore the wilds of Central Australia and after many adventures the members found themselves in a waterless country in danger of dying of thirst.

At the critical moment there came upon the scene a little native girl who, on seeing their dilemma, led the party along till she came near a large tree, where she gleefully pointed to a string of ants crawling along the ground and up the trunk and entering a small hole in the bark.

She plucked a hollow reed, inserted it into the hole, and through this they were enabled to suck water from the rain reservoir formed in the hollow trunk.

The moral of the story is that a highly civilised country with as good an education as any may still have something to learn from one of even the least civilised peoples.



LITTLE THINGS HAVE THEIR IMPORTANCE

"Come down into ike trench this minute!"

"Not me, Sergeant, there's a blithering wasp down there!"

The education of the Australian black com-mences at the hands of his mother with lessons which prepare him for life and not merely for examinations.

The greatest delicacy in the menu of the young aboriginal is a lizard, and just as the civilised mother gives a chocolate to Mary for playing her piano exercises well, the Australian mother

shows her child how to earn its own gastronomic reward by tracking a lizard to its lair beneath a stone. Thus from infancy the native develops the keenest observation down to tracking even a spider's footprints in the sand, and also from the "sign" observed he learns to read a meaning as did the girl from the thirsty ants.

No doubt those scientific explorers had in their time learned to read and write, were capable mathematicians and classical scholars, were students and possibly masters of botany, geology, physiography and other sciences, but they hadn't the power of observation and its application equal to that of a young low type savage.

Like these savants, I too learned a lesson in observation and deduction from a native when scouting the enemy in Matabeleland many years ago.

Early in the morning, riding across an open grass plain, we came on the footmarks of several women proceeding towards some hills about five miles distant, where we believed the enemy to be hiding. A leaf was lying about ten yards off the track. There were no trees near us, but we knew that some of this kind existed in a village fifteen miles distant, in the direction from which the tracks led.

The "sign" pointed to these women having come from that village, bringing the leaf with them, and having gone on towards the hills. The leaf was damp and smelt of native beer, so we inferred they had been carrying pots of native beer, the mouths of these pots being as usual stopped with bunches of leaves. This leaf had fallen out and had blown ten yards off the track, but no wind had been blowing since five a.m. and it was now seven.

Thus we read the news that a party of women had brought beer during the night from the village for the enemy in the hills, where they would have arrived about six o'clock. The men would probably start drinking at once, as the beer goes sour if kept for long, and they would, by the time we could get there, be getting sleepy from its effect, so we should have a favourable opportunity of reconnoitring their position. We acted on our information accordingly and with complete success.

This is merely an everyday incident in warfare, but I just quote it to illustrate my meaning of the relation of deduction to observation.

I have mentioned separately the different clues by which we reached our conclusions, but the ordinary Scout would instantaneously give them their meaning precisely as he would read the meaning of printed words on the page of a book.

By practice natives develop a power of noticing marks which to the unpractised beginner is little short of marvellous, and though he is good at reading sign which comes within the sphere of his ordinary experience, the white man is superior to him in this direction, especially when he strikes on a new line outside his province. This perhaps is natural seeing that he has a wider general knowledge and reasoning ability.

A party had started out tiger shooting in the jungle in the early morning led by a tracker and accompanied by a few beaters. Presently tracks of a tiger were seen, but the tracker apparently took no notice of them. The beaters, however, saw their opportunity of taking him down a peg, and one bolder than the rest suggested the Shikari should keep his eyes open; that he was not yet awake; here were fresh pugs of the tiger.

The Shikari merely said: "Fool! At what hour do the mice go about?"

Then they looked closely at the tiger's footmarks and saw that these had been crossed by the tracks of mice. Mice only came out in the dusk of the evening, and retired when night came on, so that the pugs were yesterday afternoon's and not so fresh as they thought them.

It doesn't seem right somehow that this science of observation and deduction which forms a most valuable asset in a man's character is not as yet included in the school curriculum except in such schools as have adopted the Boy Scout training.

To begin with, it has a great educational value for the boy or girl.

OBSERVATION develops to a remarkable degree the alertness and efficacy of the senses; by continual practice the eyesight becomes quickened and strengthened, so also the hearing and sense of smell and touch.

DEDUCTION promotes in a still more wonderful way the alertness of the mind through development of reasoning power, imagination, patient research, common sense and memory.

It is a science which has the further benefit of being full of attraction and interest for the youngster, so that once he has been introduced to it he takes it up with increasing keenness and practises it for himself.

The practical value of such education in supplying a new quality in the character of a man is incalculable, no matter what line of life he may elect, whether he takes up law or medicine, exploration or research, business or soldiering, or what you will.

It is essential, too, to him if he would gain knowledge of material facts or if he would read the character or feelings of other men; if he would enjoy the many little pleasures that Nature can give him; and indeed if he would make full use of the talents which God has given him.

Bit XV

Climbing As Education

*"Climbing gives, besides exaltation of the body,
exaltation of the spirit."* General Smuts.

It is natural to the young human being to climb. With its ape heredity, the baby at its earliest can hang on by hands and feet. For youngsters of three and upwards climbing is invaluable as an education. I mean by education the preparation of the child in health and character to be valuable as a citizen. Climbing undoubtedly develops the health and strength in a better way than any physical drill can effect, because it is a natural, not an artificial, exercise. But more than this, it develops at the same time such qualities as selfreliance, courage, caution, endurance, ambition, patience and other elements of character which do not come in at all in physical drill or "jerks."

Moreover, climbing supplies interesting adventure which leads the youngster on to practise it for himself, whether alone or in company. It opens up a health giving hobby which can carry him on, in progressive stages, up to, and far into, manhood.



*Let not your ambition to climb
high lead you to mount the
"high horse" or he may give
you the chuck*

At three years of age, for instance, a climbing or obstacle track can be made of furniture, chairs, tables, books (to represent stepping stones), chests of half open drawers, etc., arranged round the room, or better still in the open air, with wheel barrows, hurdles, stepping stones, plank bridges, garden seats, fallen trees, ditches, gates, etc. The zest with which children take this on, hour after hour, and the skill which they develop in tackling their obstacles have been an eyeopener to me. You see the tender muscles, thew and sinew, doing their work under a direction that becomes cool headed and calculating after a few educative tumbles.

Later comes the adventure that is dear to every boy, that of climbing trees. Ladders, masts, and rope climbing are all valuable to this end and give practice in towns or playgrounds where space and opportunities are limited. Tree climbing can be amplified to a sport with the intelligent use of the climbing rope, and thus almost any tree comes within the scope of the boy's climbing power. This affords tremendous interest. Success then gives the sense of achievement and conquest of difficulty through sheer endeavour, which produces a valuable self-confidence for tackling a difficult job.

For Scouts, tree climbing is useful, since incidentally it involves some elementary knowledge of botany, in order that the climber can distinguish the different species in view of their respective climbable properties. Thus the oak supplies a sure stance for man or rope, but, like the elm, occasionally lets you down with an outwardly sound but inwardly rotten branch. The beech, with its huge smooth bole, looks unpromising to the climber were it not that he knows he can trust himself to the small twigs of its down-hanging branches,

while if he pursues the same tactics with the fir or pine they would break at the first strain.

Team climbing adds a fresh interest to the sport when three or four work in combination with a rope. This also gives additional education in the moral qualities of leadership, discipline, good temper, unselfish cooperation and emulation.

Tree climbing with a rope leads on to rock climbing, a difficult and more dangerous sport, but when the climbers have been gradually and progressively trained for it from childhood it loses something of its danger. Cliff climbing at any part of the coastline gives the opportunity for another special art by itself. Among some adventurous spirits the sport of house climbing is an attraction. Witness the celebrated "Human Fly" who undertook to make his way up the face of any skyscraper in Chicago, down to the boy at Oundle who scaled the church spire, or the one at Eton who surmounted the clock tower, or my own secretary who could boast that he had entered most of the colleges in Cambridge without using the gateway.

But best of all is mountain climbing. It makes true men—men of sinew, energy and daring, lovers of Nature, beauty and religion. There are few countries where it cannot be learnt by practice. The mountains need not necessarily be lofty for the purpose. You can get just as much excitement out of climbing on a comparatively small mountain as on a big one; it needs just the same nerve, endurance and skill, and the same good comradeship on the rope. You can get just as bad a smash by falling 200 feet as by falling 20,000. General Bruce, the leader of an expedition to Mount Everest, told me, "It isn't the height of the mountains that counts so much as the difficult bits to be overcome."

His Majesty the King of the Belgians began climbing as a boy of eleven and is still an ardent mountaineer. He told me how much he preferred it to any form of physical training for boys, since it not only gave health and strength but also the moral qualities—pluck, endurance, self-reliance, and unselfishness, in a way that nothing else could. His Holiness the Pope has been a mountaineer, and has quite recently published a book describing his experiences and commending that noble form of sport.

Lastly, there is your soul. A curious thing to find in mountain climbing, but there it is! General Smuts, the Premier of South Africa, when unveiling a war memorial on Table Mountain, said: "The mountain is not merely something externally sublime. It has a great historical and spiritual meaning for us. It stands for us as the ladder of life, nay, more, as the ladder of the soul, and, in a curious way, the source of religion. From it came the Law; from it came the Sermon on the Mount. We may truly say that the highest religion is the religion of the mountain. What is that religion? When we reach the mountain summits we leave behind us all the things that weigh heavily down below on our body and spirit. We leave behind all sense of weakness and depression. We feel a new freedom, a great exhilaration, an exaltation of the body no less than of the spirit. We feel a great joy. The religion of the mountain is, in reality, the religion of joy and of the release of the soul from things that weigh it down with a sense of weariness, sorrow and defeat."

So when you climb, climb your mountain in company with others, but when you reach the glorious summit with its vast outlook, sit down apart and think. And as you think, drink in the wonderful inspiration of it all. When you come down to earth again you will find yourself another man in body and mind and, what is more, in spirit, the spirit of broadminded outlook.

Bit XVI.

Success

“A stick and a smile will carry you through most of the difficulties in this life — especially the smile!”

I know, and I suppose you know equally, the habits that a young man is advised to pretend to, even if he does not actually possess them, in order to make his way in the world. We have them dinned into us by all sorts of “big pots” who have reached the top as habits that pay.

Be thorough. Be punctual. Do it now. Keep your nails clean. Work. Don't trifle. Be civil. Get initiative and use it. Be reliable. Don't depend on others, but rely on yourself. Keep out of the bars. Be accurate. Don't pretend to be what you are not, but be genuine. Be patient. (My experience is that more men fail from lack of patience than from drink or any other infirmity.)

Most of the habits that I have mentioned undoubtedly help to bring improved salaries or advancement to a fellow. But if he is out for something that is better than these — that is, *success* — then there is a habit which, so far as my experience goes, beats them all.

What is success? Top of the tree? Riches? Position? Power? Not a bit of it. These and many other ideas naturally occur to your mind because they are often preached as success. But generally they mean over-reaching; you gain at the expense of others.



Stand up to your difficulties: a stick and a smile will settle it

That is a meagre kind of triumph — not my idea of success. My belief is that we are put into this world of wonders and beauty and interests with a special intelligence to appreciate them in comradeship with an equally comprehending number of fellow-men, and thus to enjoy our life and *to be happy*. That is what I count as success—the ability to be happy.

By happiness I do not mean the common acceptance of the term—pleasure. This you can get by running down to Margate for the day, or going to a night club, but it only brings the regret of an empty purse or a headache next day. Pleasure is only temporary.

Happiness is another thing altogether: it sticks by you and fills your life. You find that heaven is not a vague something to be hoped for somewhere up in the sky, but is right here in this world, in your own heart and surroundings. Happiness does not come from money or position or power. That's the beauty of it. It can be had by anybody.

Several years ago one of the richest and most powerful men in our country died, Sir Ernest Cassel, a man whom anybody would have pointed to as a "successful" man. This is the message that he left to the world, which is a text on which to pause and ponder: "Most people put too much belief in the theory that wealth brings happiness. Perhaps I, being well-to-do, may be entitled to say that it is not so. The things that are most worth having are things that money cannot buy — I am a lonely man." This bears out the Cingalese proverb, which says: "He who is happy is rich, but it does not follow that he who is rich is happy."

One of the richest men I know has no more money than you or I, but he is rich because he is one of the happiest of men. Sir Henry Newbolt has said, "The test of success is whether life has been a happy one and a happy-giving one."

Happiness does not come by sitting down and waiting for it. You get it through activities in the right direction. The first step is to get the right vision, a cheery good-natured outlook on life, and the second is to make the best of what you've got. Then for activity; exercise all the goodwill and kindness that are in you, and lend a hand to others to the fullest extent of your limitations. Thus you will find happiness; and it will make you smile.

Like other servitudes, happiness has its badge — the badge is a smile. When I was a bachelor all my married women friends insisted on trying to find me a suitable wife. Disappointed at my persistent callousness in the presence of the various samples they produced, they asked me in despair what special points I looked for in a wife. I replied that "I was not very particular so long as she had a bulge under the eye." They wondered; but to a physiognomist this means that she smiles, has a sense of humour, is good natured. It is *almost* as difficult to choose a wife as to choose a horse, but if you go by the eye in either choice it is a good guide.

Anger, pain, anxiety, sorrow, all the demons that afflict you fall back before the smile if you will only force yourself to put it on. Try it today, the next time that you miss your train or some one treads on your best corn. Then, too, it puts you in good relation with other people. Try it on the wearied teashop waitress when you give your order, or the harried railway guard. To your employer it signifies that priceless aid, a cheery, willing worker. Long ago I found by experience how true it was that "a stick and a smile will carry you through any difficulty in this world"; and further experience has told me that you can generally leave the stick at home.

Bit XVII.

Stick-To-It-Iveness

"I don't say positively that it is so, but so far as my own experience goes it is a fact that more men fail in making a success of their career from want of patient persistence than through drink or any other weakness."

I write this sitting in the sweet eye-stinging scent of a blazing log fire in a sheltered nook by the river side. I am in soaking waders. There is a bitter March north-easter blowing through the trees and ruffling the water.

Sleet is in the air. I am munching my sand-wiches, at four o'clock in the afternoon, having been too busy fishing to take my lunch earlier.

For four long days have I flogged the water with my fly, and there might have been never a fish in the river for all the notice the salmon took of it.

I was warned in the beginning that in such weather and low water success was impossible. Still I went on, and today, at the last pool and at the last cast made on the very lip of the fall over the weir, there came that sudden tug and heavy pull on my line which bends the great salmon rod and sends a thrill through every fibre of one's being.



It's dogged that does it

I was "into" a salmon! And then — but I won't bore you with a fishing yarn; it is enough to say that a shapely silvery form of an eighteen-pounder lay on the grass beside me.

And I am well content.

A fisherman reading this will understand, but to the average man this keeping on keeping on day after day at a hopeless and comfortless game borders on the ridiculous rather than the sublime.

But it has its moral all the same for each of us, whether fisherman or no. It suggests this, that *if a man has the patience and persistence to stick to it through foul and fair he will "get there" in the end.*

Dr. Wilkinson, one-time Bishop of St. Andrews, wrote, regarding doggedness, that it meant determined submission to the Divine Will. But it must not, therefore, be inferred that this should be quoted as an excuse for accepting reverses in the fatalist spirit or for giving up the struggle because "my luck is against me."

Rather, one should deal with the difficulty in the spirit of Commandant Eloff in the Boer War. He had remonstrated with President Kruger for not obtaining more artillery for the campaign. The President, in reproof, said: "If God wants us to win the war we shall win it—artillery or no artillery."

To this Eloff replied: "God has given you a stomach wherewith to enjoy roast goose; but He expects you to do the plucking and roasting of the goose." In other words, he implied God helps those who help themselves.

A fable tells how two frogs fell into a bowl of cream. One ejaculated, "This isn't water! It is an impossibility to swim in this stuff!" and he sank and was suffocated. The other gallantly tried to swim, and struggled until he could do no more. At the critical moment, when he felt he must give in, he found himself sitting on a pat of butter. The impossible had been overcome.

The great thing is to rule out the word "impossible" from your working vocabulary.

As Stephen Graham writes:

*"The impossible or nothing' be our cry,
Don't you loathe the possible?
So do I."*

When you are up against the blank wall of difficulty remember, though it looks high at first sight, closer investigation may show cracks and crannies by which you may surmount it; and even if it cannot be scaled, ten to one there is a way round.

If you are held up at one point, try another. Remember how General Foch at the Battle of the Marne reported to Joffre, his commander-in-chief: "My right has been thrown back; my left is in retreat; I am attacking with my centre." ~nd he won.

Mallory and Irvine had what was deemed an impossible task before them in the ascent of Mount Everest. Like Scott and his brave comrades in the equally difficult venture against the South Pole, they tackled a job which might probably demand their lives in return for winning. They gave their lives-but they won.

MOTTO OF THE ROYAL NORTH-WEST MOUNTED POLICE, CANADA

“In the little crimson manual ‘tis written plain and clear,
That who will wear the scarlet coat will say good-bye to fear;
Shall be a guardian of the right, a sleuth-hound on the trail.
In the little crimson manual *there's no such word as fail*;
Shall follow on though Heaven falls, or Hell's top turrets freeze,

Half round the world, if need there be, on bleeding hands and knees.
It's duty—duty first and last, the crimson manual saith;
The scarlet rider makes reply: ‘It's duty to the death’;
And so they sweep the solitudes, free men from all the earth.”

In a struggle against the impossible you may even be driven back for a bit, but that is the time to keep your face to the front. Keep your head.

In the Great War our army fell back before the German onrush from Cambrai to Amiens. It looked as if all were over with us, defeat in view, and success no longer possible. But at the final moment Lord Haig gave the call: “There is no other course open to us but to fight it out. Every position must be held to the last man. There must be no retirement. With our backs to the wall and believing in the justice of our cause each one of us must fight on to the end. The safety of our homes and the freedom of mankind depend alike upon the conduct of each one of us at this critical moment.” And forward our lads went with renewed determination, to the utter and final rout of the enemy.

Success is only gained by overcoming obstacles. If you are out to win you must expect to meet and fight and beat your enemy first.

So many people, especially young fellows, seem to think that success is to be obtained simply by holding out a hand to receive it, and when they find there is a blank wall of difficulty to be surmounted they are apt to feel disillusioned, disheartened. The task is greater than they had expected; hopeless, impossible.

But if they realise that nothing is impossible, and that nothing worth having is come by without a struggle, they can tackle life and its adventure with greater hope and confidence. Cheery optimism is the essential spirit.

The harder the tussle the greater the enjoyment in the end. Indeed, to many a man who has won through successfully the joy has been in the fight rather than in the victory.

Here for their satisfaction is what a business man of world-wide reputation has recently said:

“More men are beaten than fail. It is not wisdom they need, or money, or brilliance, or ‘pull,’ but just plain gristle and bone. This rude, simple, primitive power which we call ‘stick-to-it-iveness’ is the uncrowned king of the world of endeavour.”

Bit XVIII.

Live To Be 120

"No man goeth about a more godly business than he that careth for the right upbringing of his own and other men's children."

Socrates.

Only this week I have been asked, in a letter from a Scout, to live until I am one hundred and fifteen. Why he will have had enough of me at that precise age he does not say, but I replied that I would do my best to oblige him, though I could not make any definite promises.

It is, however, evident that people can live to be more than one hundred if they make up their minds to it. For instance, at Shendy, in the Sudan, a few years ago I met an old boy of a hundred and twenty. He came to see me; came ambling up on a smart trotting donkey. He was a little, wizened, puckered-up old thing, a bit unsteady on his legs but vivacious with his tongue, and evidently possessed of an impish joy in hustling along on his donkey.

I tried to get from him some definite evidence about his age, since birth registers are not kept accurately in that country—if at all. His first attempt was not convincing. He said that he was twenty when he divorced his first wife, and that, he remembered, was exactly one hundred years ago.



Once a Scout-always a Scout

So I said I did not want to pry into the sanctity of his domestic affairs; could he give me some events known in history in which he had taken part? Nothing was easier. In the old days, when Egypt sent a governor to rule over the Sudan, he was received at Shendy with all honours. A banquet was prepared for him, but as the inhabitants felt that none of them was of sufficiently high position to sit at the same table with so august a personage, he had the dinner all to himself in the hut assigned to him.

While he was busy at the meal the Sudanese soldiers, under the direction of my friend, who at that time was ranked as a sergeant, piled bales of cotton round the house; and he, being in command, set light to it with his own hand. The guest inside was burned as a sign that the Sudan had no use for Egyptian rulers.

I looked up the incident in a history book and found that it had actually occurred nearly a hundred years previously, and that if the hero was, as he stated, present and a sergeant, he might well claim his hundred and twenty years.

At the centenary, in 1912, of Napoleon's being fired (in both senses of the word) out of Moscow in 1812, there figured in the march past no fewer than eight veterans who had been present as soldiers in that campaign. Each of them must have been about one hundred and twenty years of age.

Only a year or two ago there died in America an old man who was reputed to be a hundred and thirty. His eldest son was ninety-six and his youngest seven! The fact came to light when the grandparents of the youngest child on the mother's side abducted him, and the sprightly old father took down his muzzleloader, got on his mule and, following them up, retrieved his son. This at a hundred and something!

So, with the examples before you to show that it is possible to live to such an age, the first step for the man who wants to be frisky at eighty is to make up his mind that he is going to work on for thirty or forty years beyond it. *Work . . .* that is the secret of keeping young. The fellow who does not work and does not like work is bound to become a vegetable and to fade early away. Work, so far from killing any man, is the elixir of life.

But there are numerous further ingredients necessary to the make-up of a centenarian. If a man takes life seriously he soon sees the end of it. Of course no man will admit that he has no sense of humour, but the early deaths of many tend to prove that they lacked it nevertheless.

A healthy stomach is naturally an important aid, but so is the ability to make yourself smile and whistle when things all go wrong. Do not go hankering round for things you do not possess. The richest man is the one with the fewest wants.

Keep out of clubs and away from cronies of your own age whose talk is of the great deeds they have done and the ailments from which they are suffering. Pretending to be young when your joints will not bear you out is no good, and only exposes you to ridicule. You must have the young heart and spirit. Doctors will prescribe early rising, plain food, moderate exercise, and all that kind of thing, but give me laughter, and plenty of it.

But, best of all, and that is where you catch the laughter through infection, is work amongst boys. There you cannot grow old. In the Boy Scout movement we had a rule that a man might be a Scoutmaster at any age between eighteen and eighty-one, so long as he remained a boy. We have had to extend this age limit, since we have some young and lively sparks over that age. Yes, really active and capable. Lord Meath *at the age of 80* went through our school of training, living under canvas, cooking his own food, and doing night as well as day work in the open, in the ordinary shorts and shirt of a Scout.

So the secret of youth seems to be this: join, or, if you have joined, stick to the Boy Scouts (as hobby teacher, playman, councillor, secretary, scoutmaster, or what you will), and you will not only be doing yourself good, but you will find yourself involved in a work as satisfying and as life-giving as any that can fall to the lot of man that of building up a new and better citizenship for your country.

