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GETTING A START

By NATHANIEL C. FOWLER, Jr.

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THE "SURE-THY-ARE-RIGHTERS"

JOHN AND TOM.

"I want you to meet George Lewis," said my friend. "He is one of those fellows who, when he knows he is right, can't be turned or influenced."

"I should be delighted to meet him," I replied, "because I know him by reputation and he stands high in his community as a man of the strictest integrity; but, John, I don't think you have given him a very good character."

"What do you mean?"

"You said that when he knows he is right nothing can change him or influence him."

"I meant what I said," retorted my friend. "No, you didn't," I replied, "for, if you did, you could not have any respect for George Lewis."

"Explains yourself."

"The best of us, John, never claim to know by ourselves, and of ourselves, what is absolutely right or wrong. The noblest man is weak and realizes it. His ability to differentiate between the good and the bad is not vested wholly in himself. He obtains this proficiency—if I may call it such—because of his contact with men of honor and with those of the opposite type. He absorbs public opinion and becomes composite."

"You don't mean to say," interrupted John, "that public opinion is always right?"

"No," I replied. "The majority is frequently wrong, and the minority is often right, and vice versa."

"Then, how are we to decide upon what is right and what is wrong?"

"If our intention is to do right, and we are constantly fighting temptation, our actions will usually be what they should be; but when we allow our own individual judgment to prevail exclusively, we may be wrong, even though we intend to be right. Alone we are not able to take care of ourselves; far less able than is the animal, who is guided by instinct, not by conscience. If a man reasons by himself alone, he is as likely to be wrong as right. If he combines what he knows with what others know, and allows composite opinion to assist in guiding him, he is not likely to make serious mistakes."

"The opinion of others may be wrong," interrupted John.

"Granted," I replied, "but the man with a sensitive conscience and a noble character can differentiate with a large degree of accuracy. He will not depend upon the opinion of the mob, even though it may be the majority. He will consult with intelligent and honest men, and he and they together, not separately, will decide any question which may come up. If his experience is greater than that of those with whom he consults, he will allow his own judgment larger play. If, on the other hand, he is convinced that others know better than he does, he will set aside his own opinion, to a certain extent, at least. For example, a professional man is of variance with the policy of an administration, a matter which concerns business. Probably his opinion is worth practically nothing, and if the policy of the administration is accepted by business men of character and integrity, the man is a fool if he allows himself to question it."

"Men of ability, of character, of honor, of integrity, seldom know; they think."

Reflected Light in Movies. Discussing the question of eye strain in relation to motion pictures, the Medical Times notes that the rays from the projection machine are reflected from the screen directly into the eyes of the spectators.

This annoyance might be eliminated if the rays were thrown along a horizontal plane so that the reflected light would pass over the heads of the audience. In this case, however, the position of the machine structure would be illegal, under most city ordinances.

"Would it be possible," asks the Times, "to locate the projecting machine in the basement at a central point, to the rear of the audience, and have an open avenue in the floor through which the pictures could be projected to the screen on an ascending plane of sufficient degree to reflect the rays above the visual line of the audience, and thus remove a most irritating feature of an otherwise pleasing and interesting diversion?"

Melting Tones. "There'll be no dancing tonight," remarked the host after a hasty inspection of the photograph cabinet.

"Why not?" inquired the guest. "Machine out of order?"

"No, the machine's all right, but you know those ragtime records I had?"

"Yes, yes. What about them?"

"Somebody left them out in the sun this afternoon, and they melted in jig time."

Amateur Medical Laws. In Louisiana, new laws and important amendments to laws regulating the practice of medicine have recently been passed. These states are California, New Hampshire, New Jersey and Tennessee.

John and Tom were classmates. For several years they studied and played together. Both were attentive, well-behaved, honest, and neither appeared to be superior to the other. After graduation they entered a wholesale dry goods house, began at the bottom, and were given opportunity to learn the business.

During the first year there was no perceptible difference in their work, or the result of it, and both received the same amount of raise in salary. At the end of the second year, however, John was promoted and occupied a position much superior to that held by Tom. Why? Did John possess greater ability than Tom? Was he more faithful? Was he more attentive to his duties? Probably not. He did one thing, however, the importance of which Tom did not seem to realize.

He became familiar, not only with those things which pertained to his immediate duties and to his department of work, but he went beyond them. He visited other dry goods stores and studied their methods. He talked with men in his line of work who were connected with other establishments. He read dry goods trade papers and every book upon the subject which he could obtain. He grounded himself in dry goods, knew the history of the business, and to a large extent, the action and policy of it, not only in regard to his own house, but with reference to dry goods houses in general. He became familiar with credits; he followed the market. In five years he was the head of a large department, and in ten years a member of the firm, although, of course, his interest was small.

I am aware that this rapid promotion is not usual, for many a good man, ambitious and taking the initiative, does not become a partner in ten years, or twenty years, or thirty years; but it may be stated as a fact that no one who does as John did ever gets beyond a subordinate position or is allowed to assume more than ordinary responsibility.

Tom was as faithful, as honest, as hard a worker as John. Tom worked, and was satisfied with doing his duty. John worked, and did more than his duty. Tom attended to those things which he was told to do. John did all that Tom did, and more. Tom loved to work, and worked. John loved to work, and worked, but he also threw his mind into his work. He made it a part of himself, and therefore, it was not drudgery.

The foregoing is but another illustration of the contention which I have always held, namely, that doing one's duty is not sufficient, that faithfulness is not enough. To succeed, and to occupy a position above a subordinate one, requires not only work and hard work, but an intense love for the work, and, above all, the taking of the initiative, doing what you do not have to do, assuming responsibility which is not placed upon you, feeling that you are a part of the business and not a mere employee.

The load that you voluntarily shoulder is not half as hard to carry as is the burden which is thrust upon you.

OBJECTED TO THE "DUCTS"

Colored Farmer Reasoned That He Had Several Good Causes for Complaint.

In Georgia they tell this one: A Georgian advertised a fine truck farm near Augusta for sale. A retired real estate man of Newark, N. J., without answering the advertisement, decided he would go down and look the place over. He did so without the owner being present. He viewed the farm and returned to Augusta, hunted up the owner, and said:

"I thought about buying the farm you advertised for sale, but I don't believe I want the place."

"What is the matter? Any misrepresentation?"

"No, but, you see, I planned to do a little planting. I find I can't raise crops there?"

"Why not?"

"Why, ducks eat the crops."

"Ducks? What do you mean, man?"

"Why, the negro tenant you have there tipped me off."

"Wonder what is all this? Jump into the car here with me and let me see what it is all about."

"John," said the owner, "What do you mean by saying to this gentleman that ducks destroy all your crops?"

"They do, boss," the negro mumbled. "You knows dey do. Ain't no use trying to make no crops."

"Tell me what you mean, nigger."

"Oh, you knows, boss—you knows all about it. First dat dare mule you let me hab; you 'ducks for dat. Den de wagon; you 'ducks for dat. Den de fertilizer; you 'ducks for dat. De pervisions; you 'ducks again. Hits 'ducks for dis and 'ducks for dat. I'll when I say by done come 'ducks eat up all de crop."

The two gentlemen, after having a hearty laugh, closed the deal.

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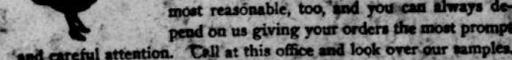
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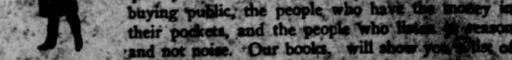
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