

A SCHOOLTEACHER MADE THIS MAN GREAT

by Arthur Bartlett



Fred Lerner

"THE most thankless job in the world," said the tired-looking teacher, "is trying to make men and women out of boys and girls. They resent us while we're struggling with them, and forget us when we've made them attain the priceless estate they've fought so hard to avoid."

"I know how you feel," said the woman next to him, at the dinner party. "It's pretty discouraging being a parent, too, sometimes."

The conversation around the dinner table proceeded, veered off into other channels. "I understand," someone remarked, "that the Pasteur Institute has a new serum for measles nearly perfected. That will certainly make life more pleasant for all of us who have anything to do with children."

The guest of honor smiled. "That reminds me of a story," he said.

The story concerned a lad named Harry Plotz and a teacher named Campbell. It started thirty years or so ago, when Harry Plotz was one of Campbell's pupils in Public School No. 25 in Brooklyn. Campbell was interested in Harry, because the boy was bright; and when he began to play hooky the teacher made it his job — though of course it wasn't — to look him up and find out what was wrong. Harry said he was fed up; he wanted to quit school once and for all, and go to work.

Campbell had an idea. He was athletic

coach as well as teacher, and he began suggesting the possibilities of an athletic career. Harry agreed to come back and try — and it worked. In 1910, he ran the hundred-yard dash in ten seconds flat — the first boy in the New York public-school system to do it. What

was more important, he did excellent work in his studies.

He went on through high school, and Campbell kept track of him, gave him advice and encouragement from time to time. It came time for him to graduate. Campbell, now a

SHINING ARMOR

No knight in shining armor went away
To face the dragon snorting clouds of flame
Across the myth, more bravely than today
A slender girl to this great city came.
Behold the slant of hat, the cheeks too red
For one to guess that tears were lately there,
The half-smile and the birdlike lift of head —
And scent new conquest vibrant on the air.

A perky feather struck its attitude,
The little heels tapped bravely to a door,
And call it fact or but contrary mood,
I saw a shining armor that she wore —
A thing that dreams in lonely hours had made
Because her eyes were gentle . . . and afraid.

—GLENN WARD DRESBACH

principal, sent for him, asked him what he was going to do next. Harry Plotz shook his head doubtfully.

"Go to work, I suppose," he said. "Of course, I'd like to study medicine, but I can't."

"Why not?" asked Campbell.

"It costs money," said Harry Plotz.

"Of course it does," said Campbell. "Now let's see what you could do . . ."

The next fall Harry Plotz entered medical school. Campbell didn't see him again for three years. Then he met him on the street, near the Board of Education building where Campbell, having stepped up another notch in the school system, now had an office. Young Plotz looked frightful. His eyes were blood-shot, his cheeks pale and drawn.

"Hello, Harry," said Campbell. "Come on up to my office." And when they were up there: "Now what in the world are you doing?" he demanded. "Hitting the booze, or something?"

Harry Plotz shook his head. He hadn't been getting much sleep, he said. He had been sitting up over his microscope.

"Getting along all right?" Campbell asked.

"No," said Harry Plotz, heavily. "I think I may as well quit." Anatomy had him down, he said. There was an examination coming, and he knew he wouldn't be able to pass it. Anatomy bored him, and he couldn't study it.

"Now, bugs!" he said. "There's something worth while." His whole attitude changed, and he began talking eagerly about his microscopic studies. He had been putting all his time into it. He couldn't see why he should bother himself with stuff like anatomy.

"Come to my house for dinner tonight," said Campbell. "Let's talk this over."

Harry Plotz came, and his old teacher gave him a two-hour talk as severe as any football coach ever gave a losing team between the halves. When Harry Plotz left that night, he knew that he was going back to get his degree, even though it meant studying anatomy.

He got the degree. A few years later, the newspapers carried an important story: a young intern named Dr. Harry Plotz had isolated the typhus bacillus. When the World War broke out, it was Dr. Harry Plotz who cleaned up typhus-plagued Serbia. And a few years later, it was Dr. Harry Plotz who was called to carry on the work of the great Pasteur, as head of the Pasteur Institute in Paris. And of course it was Dr. Harry Plotz who was directing the research that might virtually end that scourge of children, measles.

The guest of honor — his name was Dr. Harold G. Campbell, and he is now superintendent of schools of the City of New York — paused, then turned to the tired-looking teacher.

"It's not such a thankless job, working with young people," he said. "When the news came out about Harry Plotz's success in isolating the typhus bacillus, he received letters of congratulation from distinguished men all over the world — from men like Sir William Osler and the Mayo brothers. He told me about it when he acknowledged my own letter of congratulation. And he said, 'But it was your letter I was waiting for. You are the man who really isolated the typhus bacillus.'"

Dr. Campbell smiled. "Perhaps I'll develop a serum for measles, too," he said, "though I haven't the faintest idea how one would start doing it."

Reward enough, for teacher or parent — to be made able to do the great things that you don't know how to do!

THIS WEEK MAGAZINE

A SCHOOLTEACHER MADE THIS MAN GREAT . . . by ARTHUR BARTLETT	2
MEN ARE UNKIND . . . by DOROTHY BLACK	4
Illustrated by August Bleser	
SHE HATED HOUSEWORK — SO SHE WENT IN THE MOVIES	
by LUPTON A. WILKINSON	6
WHERE WOULD YOU GO? . . . by HENDRIK WILLEM VAN LOON	7
Drawings by the Author	
HALF AN HOUR — SINGAPORE . . . by F. BRITTEN AUSTIN	8
Illustrated by Mortimer Wilson	
HUMANITY'S HALL OF FAME . . . by WILLIAM EVANS	10
SERVICES RENDERED . . . by WHITNEY WILLIAMS	10
WEATHER WISDOM . . . by HAROLD HART	10

HOWLERS . . . by CECIL HUNT	11
HOW TO CHARM A CAMERA . . . by SYLVIA BLYTHE	13
Drawing by Major Felten	
CAN YOU NAME HIM? . . . by KATHLEEN MASTERSON	13
WHEN FORKS WERE YOUNG . . . by A. R. ARMSTRONG	13
RAINY SATURDAY . . . by SARA HENDERSON HAY	13
HIGH EATING! . . . by GRACE TURNER	14

Cover Photograph in Color by Paul Hesse

The names and descriptions of all characters that appear in short stories, serials and semi-fiction articles in THIS WEEK MAGAZINE are wholly fictitious. Any use of a name which happens to be the same as that of any person, living or dead, is entirely coincidental.