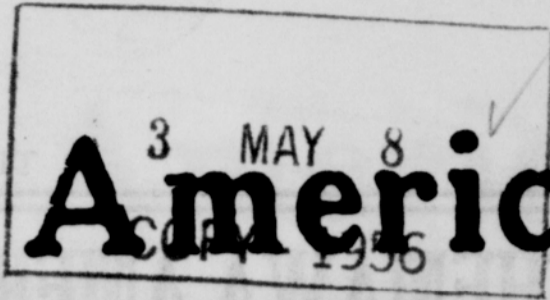


The Chemawa American



Printed at Chemawa, Oregon, and Devoted to the Interests of Indian Education

Vol. XXII

Wednesday, February 18, 1920

No. 19

OVERCOME OBSTACLES

On the evening of February 8th Supt. Hall in an address to the students assembled in chapel drew attention to the necessity of cultivating strength in the formation of proper habits. It was a splendid, practical talk, and was as follows:

Every one of you students who have reached the age where you can think rightly have a well-defined idea that you would like to attain success, honor, influence. In fact, all young people have this idea. But practically 90 out of every 100 fail because they lack the backbone to overcome difficulties, the hard things which present themselves on the way. And why is it a fact that so many dodge the difficult things as they come up? Because it is the easy way.

Judging by my own experience when I was a school-boy, the first thing that occurred to me in the morning was a intricate problem in mathematics, science or translation, which I found difficult to handle, or some knotty question concerning my work. In order to solve the problem or master the lesson it would take a couple of hours or more, while it would take but a few minutes to get my parents or a teacher to help me out. To yield to the latter method was mighty easy; to resist and do the work myself was hard. It follows that the surrender to obstacles and hard work is the general rule and successful resistance the exception. However, here and there you find boys and girls who do overcome obstacles, and who keep it up in nearly everything that presents itself to them and who triumph over difficulties. In these students we recognize masters, those who acquire the conquering habit, and we find this class of students rejoicing in their strength, which comes from repeated victories.

Habitually mastering difficulties places a student on a sure road to overcome all obstacles in whatever vocation he engages, and the large majority of fellows who weakly yield when difficulties arise are the very material on which the conquering man builds. There are two ways to deal with hard things: One is to give up, yield to that lazy feeling; give up mathematics on account of the study being hard; pass your lessons up generally, and give up a fight which would

have placed you at the top because it took too much effort. Follow this line of surrender for a year or so and where are you?

Just examine your backbone, test your mind, your moral strength, your conscience also. See how your whole capacity for achievement has been weakened until you are incapable, probably forever, like the great mass of lunk heads that you see around you.

It appears to me that a boy or girl with any sense at all will first try the other way, which is to tackle the difficulties as they come and be their master instead of their servant. Master the problems or knotty questions in your school work and realize the joy of victory—see how strong you will be for the next day's work. Master those hard things faithfully until it becomes a habit. Then see how strong your mind has become, how you jump ahead in your work, how you grow to be a master instead of a nonentity. Try this habit of honest effort; commence right now this obstacle-conquering habit, and if it fails you then go back to the weak method of surrendering to difficulties and take your place with the great mass of people who accepted defeat for being helpless, as this helpless habit begins early and it grows. It commences by dodging responsibility, with a desire to unload your work onto someone else; by never doing a thing that is not required of you. Never broaden your mind by study or proper reading, but just drift along. In time you will wonder why other boys or girls are getting to the front while you are in the rear.

Your mind may have become so stunted through laziness, and lack of ambition, and inability to think right, that you lay all the blame for your failures on your teacher, your department, your school, for you will not have enough discernment to know that it is absolutely all in yourself and you alone.

So, students, cultivate strength, determination rather than weakness, and in time take your places in the company of the strong men and women—the world's helpers of today.

“How much are potatoes worth now?”

“They're worth no more than they ever were, but they're costing about six times as much.”