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ABOUT SUCCESS AND FAILURE

Everywhere and under all conditions we hear people making excuses for their failures to get on. They are dissatisfied with their lots, miserable because of their seemingly inferior positions, and envious of the success of others. If they could only get somewhere else, into some other occupation, into some other school; if they could only have someone else's opportunity, some other fellow's chance, they, too, would be successful and contented. But they never can do anything where they are or with what they have. Each imagines that the other fellow has the best chance.

Those people who do not get on in the world have a good deal to say about other people's good fortune and superior opportunities, and they do not think of putting the blame for their lack of success where it belongs. They excuse their own failure on the ground that those who have succeeded have always been "boosted," or "favored," or someone or something outside of themselves "gave them a lift."

A young man who has risen rapidly from an office boy to the possession of a fine business of his own, and owes his success entirely to his own pluck, industry and initiative, in speaking of his experiences, says that during his climb as an employe he was laughed at constantly by his comrades for working so much harder than he needed to, doing more than he was paid for or was expected of him. When he worked after hours to clean up and get things ready for the next morning, they would tell him he was a fool to do so much without over-time pay, that his employer would probably never know he was working over-time, and that even if he did learn of it he wouldn't appreciate it. "And now," he said, "these same fellows are saying that my success is due to the fact that from the very beginning my opportunities were better than theirs; that even in the old days when we used to work together the boss always favored me and was prejudiced against them. They positively resent my success and seem to think I have in some way injured them."

The tendency to under-rate our own chances and to over-rate those of our fellow-workers is common among all classes of people. Wherever we go the same

tendency to under value what they have and to magnify the value of what the other fellow has is noticeable. This seems to be an element of our natures. We have a feeling of dissatisfaction with what we have and a longing for what our more successful or more prosperous neighbor possesses. In longing for what we do not have, or looking forward to some big thing we hope to have, we miss much enjoyment that we could get from what we do have and of the multitude of pleasant things within our reach.

Happiness, fortune, opportunity—everything—is somewhere else. The good things are for others. How much energy has been lost; how many lives have been spoiled by this fruitless longing for other fields, other opportunities out of our reach; in dreaming of what we would do if we were in somebody else's place.

Has it ever occurred to our students that there are people all around you envying you your good fortune, your opportunity to get an education under government supervision, your chance to procure vocational training as well as academic education without that great effort to pay the bills required of all white people? And yet we find so many students in our government schools dissatisfied. The good fortune and happiness which you are looking for elsewhere are right within yourselves. Instead of wasting your energies in useless repining and in envying others what they have attained through hard work, instead of longing to be someone else, or to have somebody else's opportunity, make the most of what you have. Do the best you can where you are, and you will be surprised at the strength you will develop and the progress you will make, and how the obstacles that now discourage you will be overcome. Envy and inertia will never get you anywhere—it only brings you discontent and unhappiness.

Everywhere there are discontented men and women who are more or less soured on life, because they could not get what they longed for so badly. They feel that life has cheated them, when the truth is they have cheated themselves. They are struggling along in an uncongenial environment, envying those who have succeeded where they failed, railing at the fate which

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