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THE TROPHIES OF MILTIADES

Being a Heart to Heart Talk to Chemawa Students
By The Superintendent



I WONDER how many of you high school students have read Plutarch's *Lives*? If you have not read them you should do so. In my school days such books were sought after and eagerly read by all ambitious students. They were a never failing fountain of inspiration and served to revive our drooping spirits in times of discouragement and to give us courage for renewed effort. They will do the same for you. Get thee to the library!

Plutarch was born about the middle of the first century after the Christian era and lived to a ripe old age. He wrote many important books, but the one that gave him the most celebrity and by which he is best known is his *"Lives"*—lives of such great men as Solon, Themistocles, Aristides, Pericles, Alexander, Demosthenes, Marcellus, Pompey, Cicero, Caesar, and others. All these are the names of great Greeks and Romans famous in history. You should know something about them.

Of all the *"Lives"* of Plutarch none made quite so deep an impression on my youthful mind as that of Themistocles, one of the greatest generals and statesmen of ancient Greece. Plutarch tells us that Themistocles was of obscure birth, but that even as a boy he was unusually bright and intelligent. He was ambitious and possessed a passion for distinction. He was still a mere youth when the battle of Marathon was fought and won under the skillful leadership of Miltiades. He doubtless had seen this great general return home laden with trophies of victory and receive the plaudits of the people. The great battle of Marathon about which every one was talking, was constantly in his mind and he longed to crown himself with glory as Miltiades had done when that illustrious general completely overcame the great Persian army. He dreamed dreams and saw visions—visions of glory and success. So absorbed did he become in laying plans for his future greatness he could not sleep. The sports and recreations that had hitherto greatly interested him, ceased to occupy his thoughts and spare time. He became silent, reserved and absent-minded. When his friends questioned him as to the

cause of his serious attitude, he replied, "The trophies of Miltiades will not suffer me to sleep." And herein is the subject of this little preachment.

A trophy is a memorial of victory—an emblem of accomplishment. It was not the intrinsic value of the trophies of Miltiades that inspired Themistocles and caused the fires of ambition to be kindled in his breast; nor was it their utility, for trophies are often quite useless articles in so far as their practical value is concerned. To Themistocles, these trophies spelled success. They were emblems of victory, not rewards. They reminded him that if he would succeed in life he must cease floating and begin to swim. He had been floating long enough. The floater never gets anywhere except by chance. He can neither keep off the shoals nor avoid the rocks of disaster. ~~It~~ takes a self-propeller to steer himself safely and surely into the harbor of success. Themistocles realized this and began to generate energy—to put vim into his study and thinking and to concentrate his mind on his future. We must get up steam and become self-propelling if we expect to get anywhere. We must learn to do the right thing at the right time without being told.

Education is valuable only to those who know how to use it—and, knowing how, use it to good purpose. Philip D. Armour once said, "Anybody can cut prices, but it takes brains to make a better article." The only education that is worth anything is that which fits one for efficient and useful service; that which enables one to do his work better—to make a better article, to master the arts of life.

The great captains of industry—the men who manage the banks, the factories, the railroads, the producers and distributors of the world's wealth—are men who seized opportunity by the forelock. Andrew Carnegie once gave expression to his observations along this line as follows: "The young man who complains that he never had a chance is the same young man who has been canvassed over and over again by his superiors, and found destitute of necessary qualifications, or is deemed unworthy of closer relations with the firm owing to some objectionable act, habit, or association of which he thought his employer ignorant." And the Laird of Skiboo was right.

Every boy who thinks he has no chance on account of the handicaps of poverty, should take courage from the following examples of eminent men, all poor boys,

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