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MONDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 1902

A FEW EXCEPTIONS

We are always glad to have distinguished men to visit our University and address us at assembly. It adds interest to our weekly gathering and makes it something more than a meeting to hear the scripture read. And though the speakers simply give us some ideas that show all too plainly the evidences of wear; some oft repeated lore, some trite maxims of success, yet their words have more than ordinary weight because of the speaker's station in life. If they tell us what the price of success is, we easily conclude that they must know since they have purchased the coveted article themselves.

We are in danger, however, of accepting as conclusive from a speaker of note something we would scoff at, if asserted by a man of lowly station. The danger is further enhanced by the fact that the man of little learning must depend for the acceptance of his doctrine solely on its logical soundness, while the man of some talent has the advantage of dressing up his ideas in rhetorical garnish. We are so pleased with the way the thing is put that we are loth to question its soundness.

Mr. Tongue's address last Wednesday morning was a masterpiece so far as rhetorical excellence goes. It would be hard to find anything more apt in diction, more forceful in arrangement or richer in figure and allusion. To the one who has pondered over what he said, some of his deductions must seem a little questionable.

He held up before us a few popular ideals of successful men and proceeded to show that they were all hardworkers. He concluded, there-

fore, that hard work was the one necessary help to success. He did not explain how many a less fortunate individual works himself to death only to be pronounced a miserable failure. His argument shows perhaps, that hard work is an element in success but not necessarily the sole generating cause.

He seemed not to reckon with heredity as a force at all. Or, at least, he sought to rule out that consideration by asserting that great men's sons seldom amount to anything, else every English peer would be "an intellectual all in all." He forgot that the mental accomplishments of the parents like their sins may be visited upon their children even to the third and fourth generations and in time the remote descendants of English peers may prove to be more than ordinary individuals.

He forgot also that the successful man is often the fellow who is shrewd enough to give society just what it wants at just the right time. Now the process of determining the social need is often a tedious and generally an experimental one; and the man who happens along just at the right time to profit by a series of experiments which his predecessors have made reaps the harvest of their sowing in what they have done—or rather failed to do—and forges rapidly to the front while the world accords him success.

Though hard work is perhaps a common element in all successful careers, there must be some inherent adaptability to the task undertaken and the strenuous effort must be applied at the right time and in the right direction.

His examples of successful men were almost without exception historical characters who had done something striking whether for the uplifting of humanity or not. While the speaker was giving us so many trite maxims, he might have told us that the true measure of success is not what we do but how we do it. Once, indeed he did mention the faithful hod-carrier, the rustic ploughman and the mountain school teacher, but instead of dwelling on these unattractive creatures, he hastened back to the contemplation of law-givers, conquerors, and emancipators.

The speaker should have enforced the thought, too often neglected, that the man who tries to act well the humble part which Providence has assigned him and looks not always to the gratification of his own selfish aims but to the uplifting of those about him is the successful man, though none but the few he has benefited may ever mention his name.

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