

DAILY REPORTER.

VOL. II. NO. 17.

McMINNVILLE, OREGON, FRIDAY, JANUARY 21, 1887

PRICE TWO CENTS.

The Daily Reporter.

Entered in the Postoffice at McMinnville for Transmission Through the Mails as Second Class Matter.

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OUR BOYS.

In glancing over the possible openings for boys, one is forced to admit that unless a lad have genius, perseverance, and a good, physical constitution, he will find the beginning of a professional life almost insurmountably difficult, if he be obliged from the start to depend upon his profession for a living. So large is the competition, even in our own comparatively new country, and still more so in England and on the Continent, that the inducements to enter the so-called learned professions are financially very small. The satisfaction of ultimate success, and the intellectual pleasures which such a course makes possible, are regarded by any true student as more than compensations for the early discomforts, and we would never urge considerations of a financial nature against a boy's following his natural bent. That is a fatal policy which advises him to choose his calling simply for the money returns it promises, for he will learn sooner or later that money is but a small factor in true success. But we would very strongly urge such considerations in attempting to dissuade those who have no natural qualifications for a professional life from entering upon so unpromising a career. There are many whose scholarly abilities are too meager to permit the hope of successful competition when pitted against their more gifted brothers. It is certainly unfortunate, if not pitiable, that these young men should, through mistaken notions of what is respectable and what is praiseworthy, rush into a course which can bring them only failure and mortification.

Each year, thousands of young men are graduated from our universities and schools of learning, only a very small proportion of whom are ever heard of afterward in the real contests of life. And it has become a notable fact that an advertisement for a man to fill any but a manual position will bring a number of college graduates out of all proportion to the total applicants. This proves nothing against our schemes of education, for the contrary evidence is too overwhelming. The men of whom as a nation we are most proud, the brightest minds in science, literature, law, medicine, theology, and the fine arts, have been for the most part educated in universities and colleges. But the failure of such a large proportion of college-bred men to attain even ordinary usefulness in the events of life does prove that, for them at least, some element was lacking which should have contributed to their preparation for subsequent duties. Had they been blessed with the three qualifications already enumerated, success would have been possible in almost any direction. But unfortunately very few have genius; a smaller proportion than should, have good health; and of the three, perseverance only appears to be a cultivable quality, and even this is largely limited by physical endurance. A very successful man of affairs, quoted by an English contemporary, *Industries*, when asked for the secret of his success, replied, "I had the physical constitution to begin work at six o'clock in the morning, and keep on till eight, nine, or ten at night, and that for twenty years." One would say that his success was well deserved.

It is not a Utopian tenet that teaches the possibility of success for all normally constituted men. The essential condition is the right choice of a vocation. It is a serious question, what to do with our boys, for it is just here that so many fatal blunders are made. The parent or guardian, actuated by the best motives in the world, is very apt to lay out a plan of life framed entirely from his own point of view, and unmindful that what may prove eminently successful in one case may be equally disastrous in another. And very often the decision is rendered more difficult by

the majority of men does not lead to success. And since this plan, whether it be of design or the mischievous fatalistic drifting which is no plan, begins when the man is still a boy, it is in the boy that our hope for the future lies. How is he to be trained, and his skill and character developed?

We are accustomed to believe that demand and supply regulate themselves, but in this very problem of the future of our boys, we are brought face to face with a curious incongruity. We see on the one hand the overcrowded professions, and hosts of clerks who are ready to apply for any vacant position, however low the salary, while on the other hand we see a market for labor which is so far from being glutted that its supplies must be brought from foreign countries. But between these unequally balanced classes, little or no exchange is possible, for it is a characteristic of the latter class that its members must be able to use their hands and eyes, as well as the brain, and must have a manual dexterity sufficient to place them among the ranks of the great industrial army of producers.

What is wanted to-day in our own country is skilled labor. Education in its highest form is wanted, but it must be coupled with an ability to do something, if it is to gain for its possessor any position in life. It must find some mode of expression, or the world is none the richer. Americans are noted for their ingenuity, but in how few has a thorough technical education brought out its highest powers of expression! Here is a field which can be heartily recommended to any boy who has decided to take the reins of life in his own hands instead of leaving them to the caprice of circumstances. If he has a taste for the mechanic arts, he has a splendid opportunity for the exercise of his powers. The acquisition of manual dexterity is not difficult. It requires little beyond intelligent perseverance. But when this skill of hand is once acquired, it brings an independence which many a man in apparently easier circumstances of life might well envy. Nor is it the humble calling which the drawing-room is apt to picture it. The possibilities open to the skilled worker are almost unlimited. Some new and more excellent creation is always possible, and from the workshop the directors of large undertakings are commonly chosen.—*Scientific American*.

Complaint is made that early marriages are becoming common among the boys and girls in the east end of London. Boys and girls of 12 "keep company," and at 14 or 15 every lad has his lassie. In a single district a boy of sixteen recently married a girl of the same age. In a printing office in one district there are four married boys. The eldest is only 19 and receives 13 shillings a week; the next is 18, has three years of his apprenticeship still to serve, and has two children; the youngest is 16, and has a wife and child to support on 11 shillings a week. Another boy is known whose age is between 16 and 17, and he has two children. Still another boy of 16 has one child.—*Philadelphia Record*.

We respectfully suggest to the lemonade-venders that they purchase a new lemon this year. The cost will be trifling, and the lemon will last them for many generations. The lemon which they have used for so many years is, doubtless, valuable as a historical relic, and is fragrant with the aroma of old associations. But the present generation is thoughtless, unromantic, and fickle, and craves for something new.—*Lyons Union*.

Pedantic old gentleman (to restaurant waiter)—"I believe it is improper to speak disrespectfully of one's elders?" E. W.—"So I've 'eard, sir." P. O. G.—"Then I will be silent concerning the duckling you have just brought me."—*London Judy*.

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