

CHAPTER 1

THAT MILLION-DOLLAR MOMENT

One morning when I was a lad I met a neighbor, Dan Parks. He looked pale, and I said to him, "Mr. Parks, you're not looking well this morning."

"No," he replied, "I went to town yesterday and got drunk, and I don't feel too good this morning. But," he added, "I had a fine time, and the whisky did me a lot of good."

Boy that I was, I said, "Why, Mr. Parks, you don't mean to say that getting drunk did you good? How could whisky do you good when it makes you feel bad?"

"Don't know, but it does," he replied. "And as soon as I get some more money I'm going to town and do it again."

While you and I are not Dan Parks, yet some of us have ideas of pleasure and satisfaction that need to be changed and elevated. This is what education is, after all - the gaining of noble ideals and their attainment here and hereafter.

There's no time like the present time,
The future is not ours;
If we would make our lives sublime,
Improve the present hours.

Everyone is searching for enjoyment and satisfaction. The heathen and the Christian both seek it. Among heathen people's ideas of pleasure and satisfaction may differ materially; but, for that matter, so do ours.

We are to find our pleasure in each moment as we live it, as well as in the final reward. While we are gaining an education to accomplish something worthwhile in the hereafter, we can also be enjoying our study, research, and social life.

Opportunity has been depicted as the god Hermes, with winged sandals, running swiftly. He had a long lock of hair on his forehead which might be grasped by anyone as the runner came by; but after he had passed there was no way of getting hold of him, for he was bald on the top and back of his head. Every moment presents some type of opportunity which may be grasped as it comes, but there is no

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possibility of catching the golden moment after it has gone by. If we take each opportunity as it comes to us and make it do its full measure of service, we shall find a happiness and satisfaction that will carry us forward to our goal.

In a certain battle a strong fort was being assaulted. I here was dangerous work to be done in order to capture the citadel. The officer in charge of the company lined up his men and said, "I want a man to volunteer to do this dangerous job. He may take one step forward when I give the signal." The signal was given and every man moved one step forward. What made each one take that step? Patriotism, you say - love of his country. Do you not think there was a certain, definite thrill that went through every soldier at that moment? Yes, there is an indefinable thrill in being able to tackle a hard job.

"Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: so shall thy poverty come." This is what wise Solomon said. Delaying when there is something to be done brings not only poverty of money, but poverty of soul. One does not learn to swim by standing on the edge of a pool and looking at the water. It is even better to dive in than to wade in.

When the alarm rings to call us from bed in the early, cold morning, it is so easy to pull the bedclothes about us and take another snore or two. But those stolen naps are not satisfying. On the other hand, when the alarm shouts at us, if we jump out of bed, dress, and get at the work of the moment, there is a mental exhilaration that is highly satisfying. If you have not formed the habit of responding to the alarm, begin to do so now. Thus you will learn one of the laws of real pleasure and true success. Use the same technique in doing the assignment of each day, particularly the one that you dread most. Make this habit serve you by being on time at every appointment. As we grasp and improve each moment that comes to us we get zest and satisfaction from life. Seize the million-dollar moment and make it yours!

You ask why I speak of "That Million-Dollar Moment"? For this simple reason: Fortunes are often made or lost on the choice, the decision, of a single moment. One of Gods greatest gifts to man is the power of choice. "Choose you this day whom ye will serve," said Joshua to his people, and they did. Likewise do we. Life is one constant succession of choices. It is when we learn to make the wise choice, and only then, that we are traveling the road of the millionaire. Right here let me define what I mean, and don't mean, by that word "millionaire."

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I do not mean one who possesses a huge sum of money, but rather one who is possessed by the spirit of a good cause. A good cause is that from which good results. Service for others is its main root. A good cause is as a tree of life whose fruit is genuine, lasting enjoyment.

In its large sense a choice is a resolution, a definite, living purpose. Nathaniel Hawthorne, a famous American author, made one of his characters say: "In truth, there is no such thing in man's nature as a settled and full resolve either for good or evil except at the very moment of execution."

The golden moment-the now-is that moment when we actually begin doing the thing we have resolved to accomplish.

Our wise Creator has given to all intelligent beings in His immense universe the inalienable right to choose and to do. "The will is the governing power in the nature of man, the power of decision, or choice." - Education, page 289. There is large difference between a wish and a will: "We do not live by our wishings but by our doings."

Let it be understood, then, that the golden moment of which we speak is not a temporary, fleeting one. It is permanent and holding - that's what makes it of real worth. John J. Ingalls personifies opportunity and makes it say:

Master of human destinies am I!
Fame, love, and fortune on my footsteps wait.
Cities and fields I walk; I penetrate
Deserts and seas remote, and passing by
Hovel and mart and palace - soon or late
I knock unbidden once at every gate!

If sleeping, wake - if feasting, rise before
I turn away. It is the hour of fate,
And they who follow me reach every state
Mortals desire, and conquer every foe
Save death; but those who doubt or hesitate,
Condemned to failure, penury, and woe,
Seek me in vain and uselessly implore.
I answer not, and I return no more!