

THE UNIVERSITY OF HARD KNOCKS!

The School That Completes Our Education!

(Lesson 3 & Lesson 4)



Just So You Know

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Hopefully by giving you this information it will help you to also have a successful online business.

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It has been invaluable to me.

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Jim Phillips has also given me a heads up on another great opportunity.

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If you really want to succeed online than let me introduce you to Bryan.

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Talk about a great programmer, business person and human being. It is my privilege to introduce you to my friend.

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Well there you have it. I hope you will get to know some of my friends.

They certainly have been instrumental in helping me to become a success on a shoe string budget.

May you have the same success with them as I have.

The University of Hard Knocks!
By Ralph Parlette & Jim Phillips
ViralNEWS.com

About This eBook

The University of Hard Knocks!
Ralph Parlette (1870-1930)

LADIES and Gentlemen: I do not want to be seen in this lecture. I want to be heard. I am only the delivery wagon. When the delivery wagon comes to your house, you are not much interested in how it looks; you are interested in the goods it brings you. You know some very good goods are sometimes delivered to you in some very poor delivery wagons.

So in this lecture, please do not pay any attention to the delivery wagon--how much it squeaks and wheezes and rattles and wabbles. Do not pay much attention to the wrappings and strings. Get inside to the goods.

Really, I believe the goods are good. I believe I am to recite to you some of the multiplication table of life--not mine, not yours alone, but everybody's.

Can Only Pull the Plug!

Every audience has a different temperature, and that makes a lecture go differently before every audience. The kind of an audience is just as important as the kind of a lecture. A cold audience will make a good lecture poor, while a warm audience will make a poor lecture good.

Let me illustrate:

When I was a boy we had a barrel of sorghum in the woodshed. When mother wanted to make ginger-bread or cookies, she would send me to the woodshed to get a bucket of sorghum from that barrel.

Some warm September day I would pull the plug from the barrel and the sorghum would fairly squirt into my bucket. Later in the fall when it was colder, I would pull the plug but the sorghum would not squirt. It would come out slowly and reluctantly, so that I would have to wait a long while to get a little sorghum. And on some real cold winter day I would pull the plug, but the sorghum would not run at all. It would just look out at me.

I discovered it was the temperature.

I have brought a barrel of sorghum to this audience. The name of the sorghum is "The University of Hard Knocks." I can only pull the plug. I cannot make it run. That will depend upon the temperature of this audience. You can have all you want of it, but to get it to running freely, you will have to warm up.

Did You Bring a Bucket?

No matter how the sorghum runs, you have to have a bucket to get it. How much any one gets out of a lecture depends also upon the size of the bucket he brings to get it in. A big bucket can get filled at a very small stream. A little bucket gets little at the greatest stream. With no bucket you can get nothing at Niagara.

That often explains why one person says a lecture is great, while the next person says he got nothing out of it.

What It's All About

Here is a great mass of words and sentences and pictures to express two or three simple little ideas of life, that our education is our growing up from the Finite to the Infinite, and that it is done by our own personal overcoming, and that we never finish it.

Have you noticed that no sentence, nor a million sentences, can bound life? Have you noticed that every statement does not quite cover it? No statement, no library, can tell all about life. No success rule can alone solve the problem. You must average it all and struggle up to a higher vision.

We are told that the stomach needs bulk as well as nutriment. It would not prosper with the necessary elements in their condensed form. So abstract truths in their lowest terms do not always promote mental digestion like more bulk in the way of pictures and discussions of these truths. Here is bulk as well as nutriment.

If you get the feeling that the first personal pronoun is being overworked, I remind you that this is more a confession than a lecture. You cannot confess without referring to the confesser.

To Everybody in My Audience

I like you because I am like you.

I believe in you because I believe in myself. We are all one family. I believe in your Inside, not in your Outside, whoever you are, whatever you are, wherever you are.

I believe in the Angel of Good inside every block of human marble.
I believe it must be carved out in The University of Hard Knocks.

The University Of Hard Knocks! - 9 -

I believe all this pride, vanity, selfishness, self-righteousness, hypocrisy and human frailty are the Outside that must be chipped away.

I believe the Hard Knocks cannot injure the Angel, but can only reveal it.

I hope you are getting your Hard Knocks.

I care little about your glorious or inglorious past. I care little about your present. I care much about your future for that is to see more of the Angel in you.

The University of Hard Knocks

Lesson 3 - The College of Needful Knocks

The Bumps That Bump Into Us

BUT occasionally all of us get bumps that we do not bump into. They bump into us. They are the guideboard knocks that point us to the higher pathway.

You were bumped yesterday or years ago. Maybe the wound has not yet healed. Maybe you think it never will heal. You wondered why you were bumped. Some of you in this audience are just now wondering why.

You were doing right--doing just the best you knew how--and yet some blow came crushing upon you and gave you cruel pain.

It broke your heart. You have had your heart broken. I have had my heart broken more times than I care to talk about now. Your home was darkened, your plans were wrecked, you thought you had nothing more to live for.

I am like you. I have had more trouble than anybody else. I have never known anyone who had not had more trouble than anyone else.

But I am discovering that life only gets good after we have been killed a few times. Each death is a larger birth.

We all must learn, if we have not already learned, that these blows are lessons in The College of Needful Knocks. They point upward to a higher path than we have been traveling.

In other words, we are raw material. You know what raw material is--material that needs more Needful Knocks to make it more useful and valuable.

The clothing we wear, the food we eat, the house we live in, all have to have the Needful Knocks to become useful. And so does humanity need the same preparation for greater usefulness.

I should like to know every person in this audience. But the ones I should most appreciate knowing are the ones who have known the most of these knocks--who have faced the great crises of life and have been tried in the crucibles of affliction.

For I am learning that these lives are the gold tried in the fire.

The Sorrows of the Piano

See the piano on this stage? Good evening, Mr. Piano. I am glad to see you. You are so shiny, beautiful, valuable and full of music, if properly treated.

Do you know how you got upon this stage, Mr. Piano? You were bumped here. This is no reflection upon the janitor. You became a piano by the Needful Knocks.

I can see you back in your callow beginnings, when you were just a tree--a tall, green tree. You were green! Only green things grow.

Did you get the meaning of that, children? I hope you are green.

There you stood in the forest, a perfectly good, green young tree.

You got your lessons, combed your hair, went to Sunday school and were the best young tree you could be.

That is why you were bumped--because you were good! There came a man into the woods with an ax, and he looked for the best trees there to bump. He bumped you--hit you with the ax! How it hurt you!

And how unjust it was! He kept on hitting you. "The operation was just terrible." Finally you fell, crushed, broken, bleeding.

It is a very sad story. They took you all bumped and bleeding to the sawmill and they bumped and ripped you more. They cut you in pieces and hammered you day by day.

They did not bump the little, crooked, dissipated, cigaret-stunted trees. They were not worth bumping.

But shake, Mr. Piano. That is why you are on this stage. You were bumped here. All the beauty, harmony and value were bumped into you.

The Sufferings of the Red Mud

One day I was up the Missabe road about a hundred miles north of Duluth, Minnesota, and came to a hole in the ground. It was a big hole--about a half-mile of hole. There were steam-shovels at work throwing out of that hole what I thought was red mud.

"Kind sir, why are they throwing that red mud out of that hole?" I asked a native.

"That hain't red mud. That's iron ore, an' it's the best iron ore in the world."

"What is it worth?"

"It hain't worth nothin' here; that's why they're movin' it away."

There's red mud around every community that "hain't worth nothin'" until you move it--send it to college or somewhere.

Not very long after this, near Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, I saw some of this same red mud. It had been moved over the Great Lakes and the rails to what they call a blast furnace, the technological name of which being The College of Needful Knocks for Red Mud.

I watched this red mud matriculate into a great hopper with limestone, charcoal and other textbooks. Then they corked it up and school began. They roasted it. It is a great thing to be roasted.

When it was done roasting they stopped. Have you noticed that they always stop when anything is done roasting? If we are yet getting roasted, perhaps we are not done!

Then they pulled the plug out of the bottom of the college and held promotion exercises. The red mud squirted out into the sand. It was not red mud now, because it had been roasted. It was a freshman-- pig iron, worth more than red mud, because it had been roasted.

Some of the pig iron went into another department, a big teakettle, where it was again roasted, and now it came out a sophomore--steel, worth more than pig iron.

Some of the sophomore steel went up into another grade where it was roasted yet again and rolled thin into a junior. Some of that went on up and up, at every step getting more pounding and roasting and affliction.

It seemed as tho I could hear the suffering red mud crying out, "O, why did they take me away from my happy hole-in-the-ground? Why do they pound me and break my heart? I have been good and faithful. O, why do they roast me? O, I'll never get over this!"

But after they had given it a diploma--a pricemark telling how much it had been roasted--they took it proudly all over the world, labeled "Made in America." They hung it in show windows, they put it in glass cases. Many people admired it and said, "Isn't that fine work!" They paid much money for it now. They paid the most money for what had been roasted the most.

If a ton of that red mud had become watch-springs or razor-blades, the price had gone up into thousands of dollars.

My friends, you and I are the raw material, the green trees, the red mud. The Needful Knocks are necessary to make us serviceable.

Every bump is raising our price. Every bump is disclosing a path to a larger life. The diamond and the chunk of soft coal are exactly the same material, say the chemists. But the diamond has gone to The College of Needful Knocks more than has her crude sister of the coal-scuttle.

There is no human diamond that has not been crystallized in the crucibles of affliction. There is no gold that has not been refined in the fire.

Cripple Taught by Bumps

One evening when I was trying to lecture in a chautauqua tent in Illinois, a crippled woman was wheeled into the tent and brought right down to the foot of the platform. The subject was The University of Hard Knocks. Presently the cripple's face was shining brighter than the footlights.

She knew about the knocks!

Afterwards I went to her. "Little lady, I want to thank you for coming here. I have the feeling that I spoke the words, but you are the lecture itself."

What a smile she gave me! "Yes, I know about the hard knocks," she said. "I have been in pain most of my life. But I have learned all that I know sitting in this chair. I have learned to be patient and kind and loving and brave."

They told me this crippled woman was the sweetest-spirited, best-loved person in the town.

But her mother petulantly interrupted me. She had wheeled the cripple into the tent. She was tall and stately. She was well-gowned. She lived in one of the finest homes in the city. She had everything that money could buy. But her money seemed unable to buy the frown from her face.

"Mr. Lecture Man," she said, "why is everybody interested in my daughter and nobody interested in me? Why is my daughter happy and why am I not happy? My daughter is always happy and she hasn't a single thing to make her happy. I am not happy. I have not been happy for years. Why am I not happy?"

What would you have said? Just on the spur of the moment--I said, "Madam, I don't want to be unkind, but I really think the reason you are not happy is that you haven't been bumped enough."

I discover when I am unhappy and selfish and people don't use me right, I need another bump.

The cripple girl had traveled ahead of her jealous mother. For selfishness cripples us more than paralysis.

Schools of Sympathy

When I see a long row of cots in a hospital or sanitarium, I want to congratulate the patients lying there. They are learning the precious lessons of patience, sympathy, love, faith and courage.

They are getting the education in the humanities the world needs more than tables of logarithms. Only those who have suffered can sympathize. They are to become a precious part of our population.

The world needs them more than libraries and foundations.

The Silver Lining

There is no backward step in life. Whatever experiences come to us are truly new chapters of our education if we are willing to learn them.

We think this is true of the good things that come to us, but we do not want to think so of the bad things. Yet we grow more in lean years than in fat years. In fat years we put it in our pockets. In lean years we put it in our hearts. Material and spiritual prosperity do not often travel hand-in-hand. When we become materially very prosperous, so many of us begin to say, "Is not this Babylon that I have builded?" And about that time there comes some handwriting on the wall and a bump to save us.

Think of what might happen to you today. Your home might burn. We don't want your home to burn, but somebody's home is burning just now. A conflagration might sweep your town from the map. Your business might wreck. Your fortune might be swept away.

Your good name might be tarnished. Bereavement might take from you the one you love most.

You would never know how many real friends you have until then. But look out! Some of your friends would say, "I am so sorry for you.

You are down and out." Do not believe that you are down and out, for it is not true. The old enemy of humanity wants you to believe you are down and out. He wants you to sympathize with yourself. You are never down and out!

The truth is, another chapter of your real education has been opened. Will you read the lesson of the Needful Knocks?

The University Of Hard Knocks! - 15 -

A great conflagration, a cyclone, a railroad wreck, an epidemic or other public disaster brings sympathy, bravery, brotherhood and love in its wake.

There is a silver lining to every hard knocks cloud.

Out of the trenches of the Great War come nations chastened by sacrifice and purged of their dross.

Lesson 4 - "Shake The Barrel"

How We Decide Our Destinies

NOW as we learn the lessons of the Needless and the Needful Knocks, we get wisdom, understanding, happiness, strength, success and greatness. We go up in life. We become educated. Let me bring you a picture of it.

One day the train stopped at a station to take water. Beside the track was a grocery with a row of barrels of apples in front. There was one barrel full of big, red, fat apples. I rushed over and got a sack of the big, red, fat apples. Later as the train was under way, I looked in the sack and discovered there was not a big, red, fat apple there.

All I could figure out was that there was only one layer of the big, red, fat apples on the top, and the groceryman, not desiring to spoil his sign, had reached down under the top layer. He must have reached to the bottom, for he gave me the worst mess of runts and windfalls I ever saw in one sack. The things I said about the grocery business must have kept the recording angel busy.

Then I calmed down. Did the groceryman do that on purpose? Does the groceryman ever put the big apples on top and the little ones down underneath?

Do you? Is there a groceryman in the audience?

Man of sorrows, you have been slandered. It never occurred to me until that day on the train that the groceryman does not put the big ones on top and the little ones down underneath. He does not need to do it. It does itself. It is the shaking of the barrel that pushes the big ones up and the little ones down.

Shake to Their Places

You laugh? You don't believe that? Maybe your roads are so good and smooth that things do not shake on the road to town. But back in the Black Swamp of Ohio we had corduroy roads. Did you ever see a corduroy road? It was a layer of logs in the mud. Riding over it was the poetry of motion! The wagon "hit the high spots." And as I hauled a wagon-bed full of apples to the cider-mill over a corduroy road, the apples sorted out by the jolting.

The big apples would try to get to the top. The little, runty apples would try to hold a mass meeting at the bottom.

I saw that for thirty years before I saw it. Did you ever notice how long you have to see most things before you see them? I saw that when I played marbles. The big marbles would shake to the top of my pocket and the little ones would rattle down to the bottom.

You children try that tomorrow. Do not wait thirty years to learn that the big ones shake up and the little ones shake down. Put some big ones and some little things of about the same density in a box or other container and shake them. You will see the larger things shake upward and the smaller shake downward. You will see every thing shake to the place its size determines. A little larger one shakes a little higher, and a little smaller one a little lower.

When things find their place, you can shake on till doomsday, but you cannot change the place of one of the objects.

Mix them up again and shake. Watch them all shake back as they were before, the largest on top and the smallest at the bottom.

Lectures in Cans

At this place the lecturer exhibits a glass jar more than half-filled with small white beans and a few walnuts.

Let us try that right on the platform. Here is a glass jar and inside of it you see two sizes of objects--a lot of little white beans and some walnuts. You will pardon me for bringing such a simple and crude apparatus before you in a lecture, but I ask your forbearance. I am discovering that we can hear faster thru the eye than thru the ear. I want to make this so vivid that you will never forget it, and I do not want these young people to live thirty years before they see it.

If there are sermons in stones, there must be lectures in cans. This is a canned lecture. Let the can talk to you awhile.

You note as I shake the jar the little beans quickly settle down and the big walnuts shake up. Not one bean asks, "Which way do I go?" Not one walnut asks, "Which way do I go?" Each one automatically goes the right way. The little ones go down and the big ones go up.

Note that I mix them all up and then shake. Note that they arrange themselves just as they were before.

Suppose those objects could talk. I think I hear that littlest bean down in the bottom saying, "Help me! Help me! I am so unfortunate and low down. I never had no chance like them big ones up there. Help me up."

I say, "Yes, you little bean, I'll help you." So I lift him up to the top. See! I have boosted him. I have uplifted him.

See, the can shakes. Back to the bottom shakes the little bean. And I hear him say, "King's ex! I slipped. Try that again and I'll stay on top." So I put him back again on top.

The can shakes. The little bean again shakes back to the bottom. He is too small to stay up. He cannot stand prosperity.

Then I hear Little Bean say, "Well, if I cannot get to the top, you make them big ones come down. Give every one an equal chance."

So I say, "Yes, sir, Little Bean. Here, you big ones on top, get down. You Big Nuts get right down there on a level with Little Bean!" And you see I put them down.

But I shake the can, and the big ones go right back to the top with the same shakes that send the little ones back to the bottom.

There is only one way for those objects to change their place in the can. Lifting them up or putting them down will not do it. But change their size!

Equality of position demands quality of size. Let the little one grow bigger and he will shake up. Let the big one grow smaller and he will shake down.

The Shaking Barrel of Life

O, fellow apples! We are all apples in the barrel of life on the way to the market place of the future. It is a corduroy road and the barrel shakes all the time.

In the barrel are big apples, little apples, freckled apples, speckled apples, green apples, and dried apples. A bad boy on the front row shouted the other night, "And rotten apples!"

In other words, all the people of the world are in the great barrel of life. That barrel is shaking all the time. Every community is shaking, every place is shaking. The offices, the shops, the stores, the schools, the pulpits, the homes-- every place where we live or work is shaking. Life is a constant survival of the fittest.

The same law that shakes the little ones down and the big ones up in that can is shaking every person to the place he fits in the barrel of life. It is sending small people down and great people up.

And do you not see that we are very foolish when we want to be lifted up to some big place, or when we want some big person to be put down to some little place? We are foolishly trying to overturn the eternal law of life.

We shake right back to the places our size determines. We must get ready for places before we can get them and keep them.

The very worst thing that can happen to anybody is to be artificially boosted up into some place where he rattles.

I hear a good deal about destiny. Some people seem to think destiny is something like a train and if we do not get to the depot in time our train of destiny will run off and leave us, and we will have no destiny. There is destiny--that jar.

If we are small we shall have a small destiny. If we are great we shall have a great destiny. We cannot dodge our destiny.

Kings and Queens of Destiny

The objects in that jar cannot change their size. But thank God, you and I are not helpless victims of blind fate. We are not creatures of chance. We have it in our hands to decide our destiny as we grow or refuse to grow.

We shake down if we become small; we shake up if we become great.

And when we have reached the place our size determines, we stay there so long as we stay that size.

If we wish to change our place, we must first change our size. If we wish to go down, we must grow smaller and we shall shake down.

If we wish to go up, we must grow greater, and we shall shake up.

Each person is doing one of three things consciously or unconsciously.

1. He is holding his place.
2. He is going down.
3. He is going up.

In order to hold his place he must hold his size. He must fill the place. If he shrinks up he will rattle. Nobody can stay long where he rattles. Nature abhors a rattler. He shakes down to a smaller place.

In order to stay the same size he must grow enough each day to supply the loss by evaporation. Evaporation is going steadily on in lives as well as in liquids. If we are not growing any, we are rattling.

We Compel Promotion

So you young people should keep in mind that you will shake into the places you fit. And when you are in your places--in stores, shops, offices or elsewhere, if you want to hold your place you must keep growing enough to keep it tightly filled.

If you want a greater place, you simply grow greater and they cannot keep you down. You do not ask for promotion, you compel promotion. You grow greater, enlarge your dimensions, develop new capabilities, do more than you are paid to do--overflow your place, and you shake up to a greater place.

I believe if I were so fortunate or unfortunate as to have a number of people working for me, I would have a jar in my office filled with various sizes of objects. When an employee would come into the office and say, "Isn't it about time I was getting a raise?" I would say, "Go shake the jar, Charlie. That is the way you get raised. As you grow greater you won't need to ask to be promoted. You will promote yourself."

"Good Luck" and "Bad Luck"

This jar tells me so much about luck. I have noted that the lucky people shake up and the unlucky people shake down. That is, the lucky people grow great and the unlucky people shrivel and rattle.

Notice as I bump this jar. Two things happened. The little ones shook down and the big ones shook up. The bump that was bad luck to the little ones was good luck to the big ones. The same bump was both good luck and bad luck.

Luck does not depend upon the direction of the bump, but upon the size of the bump-ee!

The "Lucky" One

So everywhere you look you see the barrel sorting people according to size. Every business concern can tell you stories like that of the Chicago house where a number of young ladies worked. Some of them had been there for a long time. There came a raw, green Dutch girl from the country. It was her first office experience, and she got the bottom job.

The other girls poked fun at her and played jokes upon her because she was so green.

Do you remember that green things grow?

"Is not she the limit?" they oft spake one to another. She was. She made many blunders. But it is now recalled that she never made the same blunder twice. She learned the lesson with one helping to the bumps.

And she never "got done." When she had finished her work, the work she had been put at, she would discover something else that ought to be done, and she would go right on working, contrary to the rules of the union! Without being told, mind you. She had that rare faculty the world is bidding for--initiative.

The other girls "got done." When they had finished the work they had been put at, they would wait--O, so patiently they would wait--to be told what to do next.

Within three months every other girl in that office was asking questions of the little Dutch girl. She had learned more about business in three months than the others had learned in all the time they had been there. Nothing ever escaped her. She had become the most capable girl in the office.

The barrel did the rest. Today she is giving orders to all of them, for she is the office superintendent.

The other girls feel hurt about it. They will tell you in confidence that it was the rankest favoritism ever known. "There was nothing fair about it. Jennie ought to have been made superintendent. Jennie had been here four years."

The "Unlucky" One

The other day in a paper-mill I was standing beside a long machine making shiny super-calendered paper. I asked the man working there some questions about the machine, which he answered fairly well.

Then I asked him about a machine in the next room. He said, "I don't know nothing about it, boss, I don't work in there."

I asked him about another process, and he replied, "I don't know nothing about it, I never worked in there." I asked him about the pulpmill. He replied, "No, I don't know nothing about that, neither. I don't work in there." And he did not betray the least desire to know anything about anything.

"How long have you worked here?"

"About twelve years."

Going out of the building, I asked the foreman, "Do you see that man over there at the supercalendered machine?" pointing to the man who didn't know. "Is he a human being?"

The foreman's face clouded. "I hate to talk to you about that man. He is one of the kindest-hearted men we ever had in the works, but we've got to let him go. We're afraid he'll break the machine. He isn't interested, does not learn, doesn't try to learn."

So he had begun to rattle. Nobody can stay where he rattles. It is grow or go.

Life's Barrel the Leveler

So books could be filled with just such stories of how people have gone up and down. You may have noticed two brothers start with the same chance, and presently notice that one is going up and the other is going down.

Some of us begin life on the top branches, right in the sunshine of popular favor, and get our names in the blue-book at the start.

Some of us begin down in the shade on the bottom branches, and we do not even get invited. We often become discouraged as we look at the top-branchers, and we say, "O, if I only had his chance! If I were only up there I might amount to something. But I am too low down."

We can grow. Everybody can grow.

And afterwhile we are all in the barrel of life, shaken and bumped about. There the real people do not often ask us, "On what branch of that tree did you grow?" But they often inquire, "Are you big enough to fill this place?"

The Fatal Rattle!

Now life is mainly routine. You and I and everybody must go on doing pretty much the same things over and over. Every day we appear to have about the same round of duties.

But if we let life become routine, we are shaking down. The very routine of life must every day flash a new attractiveness. We must be learning new things and discovering new joys in our daily routine or we become unhappy. If we go on doing just the same things in the same way day after day, thinking the same thoughts, our eyes glued to precedents--just turning round and round in our places and not growing any, pretty soon we become mere machines. We wear smaller. The joy and juice go out of our lives. We shrivel and rattle.

The success, joy and glory of life are in learning, growing, going forward and upward. That is the only way to hold our place.

The farmer must be learning new things about farming to hold his place this progressive age as a farmer. The merchant must be growing into a greater, wiser merchant to hold his place among his competitors. The minister must be getting larger visions of the ministry as he goes back into the same old pulpit to keep on filling it. The teacher must be seeing new possibilities in the same old schoolroom. The mother must be getting a larger horizon in her homemaking.

We only live as we grow and learn. When anybody stays in the same place year after year and fills it, he does not rattle.

Unless the place is a grave!

I shiver as I see the pages of school advertisements in the journals labeled "Finishing Schools," and "A Place to Finish Your Child." I know the schools generally mean all right, but I fear the students will get the idea they are being finished, which finishes them. We never finish while we live. A school finishing is a commencement, not an end-ment.

I am sorry for the one who says, "I know all there is to know about that. You can't tell me anything about that." He is generally rattling.

The greater and wiser the man, the more anxious he is to be told.

I am sorry for the one who struts around saying, "I own the job.

They can't get along without me." For I feel that they are getting ready to get along without him. That noise you hear is the death-rattle in his throat.

Big business men keep their ears open for rattles in their machinery.

I am sorry for the man, community or institution that spends much time pointing backward with pride and talking about "in my day!" For it is mostly rattle. The live one's "my day" is today and tomorrow. The dead one's is yesterday.

We Must Get Ready to Get

We young people come up into life wanting great places. I would not give much for a young person (or any other person) who does not want a great place. I would not give much for anybody who does not look forward to greater and better things tomorrow.

We often think the way to get a great place is just to go after it and get it. If we do not have pull enough, get some more pull. Get some more testimonials.

We think if we could only get into a great place we would be great.

But unless we have grown as great as the place we would be a great joke, for we would rattle. And when we have grown as great as the place, that sized place will generally come seeking us.

We do not become great by getting into a great place, any more than a boy becomes a man by getting into his father's boots. He is in great boots, but he rattles. He must grow greater feet before he gets greater boots. But he must get the feet before he gets the boots.

We must get ready for things before we get them.

All life is preparation for greater things.

Moses was eighty years getting ready to do forty years work. The Master was thirty years getting ready to do three years work. So many of us expect to get ready in "four easy lessons by mail."

We can be a pumpkin in one summer, with the accent on the "punk." We can be a mushroom in a day, with the accent on the "mush." But we cannot become an oak that way.

The world is not greatly impressed by testimonials. The man who has the most testimonials generally needs them most to keep him from rattling. A testimonial so often becomes a crutch.

Many a man writes a testimonial to get rid of somebody. "Well, I hope it will do him some good. Anyhow, I have gotten him off my hands." I heard a Chicago superintendent say to his foreman, "Give him a testimonial and fire him!"

It is dangerous to overboost people, for the higher you boost them the farther they will fall.

The Menace of the Press-Notice

Now testimonials and press-notices very often serve useful ends. In lyceum work, in teaching, in very many lines, they are often useful to introduce a stranger. A letter of introduction is useful. A diploma, a degree, a certificate, a license, are but different kinds of testimonials.

The danger is that the hero of them may get to leaning upon them.

Then they become a mirror for his vanity instead of a monitor for his vitality.

Most testimonials and press-notices are frank flatteries. They magnify the good points and say little as possible about the bad ones. I look back over my lyceum life and see that I hindered my progress by reading my press-notices instead of listening to the verdict of my audiences. I avoided frank criticism. It would hurt me. Whenever I heard an adverse criticism, I would go and read a few press-notices. "There, I am all right, for this clipping says I am the greatest ever, and should he return, no hall would be able to contain the crowd."

And my vanity bump would again rise.

Alas! How often I have learned that when I did return the hall that was filled before was entirely too big for the audience! The editors of America--God bless them! They are always trying to boost a home enterprise--not for the sake of the imported attraction but for the sake of the home folks who import it.

We must read people, not press-notices.

When you get to the place where you can stand aside and "see yourself go by"--when you can keep still and see every fibre of you and your work mercilessly dissected, shake hands with yourself and rejoice, for the kingdom of success is yours.

The Artificial Uplift

There are so many loving, sincere, foolish, cruel uplift movements in the land. They spring up, fail, wail, disappear, only to be succeeded by twice as many more. They fail because instead of having the barrel do the uplifting, they try to do it with a derrick.

The victims of the artificial uplift cannot stay uplifted. They rattle back, and "the last estate of that man is worse than the first."

You cannot uplift a beggar by giving him alms. You are using the derrick. We must feed the hungry and clothe the naked, but that is not helping them, that is propping them. The beggar who asks you to help him does not want to be helped. He wants to be propped. He wants you to license him and professionalize him as a beggar.

You can only help a man to help himself. Help him to grow. You cannot help many people, for there are not many people willing to be helped on the inside. Not many willing to grow up.

When Peter and John went up to the temple they found the lame beggar sitting at the gate Beautiful. Every day the beggar had been "helped." Every day as they laid him at the gate people would pass thru the gate and see him. He would say,

"Help me!" "Poor man," they would reply, "you are in a bad fix. Here is help," and they would throw him some money.

And so every day that beggar got to be more of a beggar. The public "helped" him to be poorer in spirit, more helpless and a more hopeless cripple. No doubt he belonged after a few days of the "helping" to the Jerusalem Beggars' Union and carried his card.

Maybe he paid a commission for such a choice beggars' beat.

But Peter really helped him. "Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk."

Fix the People, Not the Barrel

I used to say, "Nobody uses me right. Nobody gives me a chance." But if chances had been snakes, I would have been bitten a hundred times a day. We need oculists, not opportunities.

I used to work on the "section" and get a dollar and fifteen cents a day. I rattled there. I did not earn my dollar fifteen. I tried to see how little I could do and look like I was working. I was the Artful Dodger of Section Sixteen. When the whistle would blow--O, joyful sound!--I would leave my pick hang right up in the air. I would not bring it down again for a soulless corporation.

I used to wonder as I passed Bill Barlow's bank on the way down to the section-house, why I was not president of that bank. I wondered why I was not sitting upon one of those mahogany seats instead of pumping a handcar. I was naturally bright. I used to say "If the rich wasn't getting richer and the poor poorer, I'd be president of a bank."

Did you ever hear that line of conversation? It generally comes from somebody who rattles where he is.

I am so glad now that I did not get to be president of the bank.

They are glad, too! I would have rattled down in about fifteen minutes, down to the peanut row, for I was only a peanut. Remember, the hand-car job is just as honorable as the bank job, but as I was not faithful over a few things, I would have rattled over many things.

The fairy books love to tell about some clodhopper suddenly enchanted up into a king. But life's good fairies see to it that the clodhopper is enchanted into readiness for kingship before he lands upon the throne.

The only way to rule others is to learn to rule ourself.

I used to say, "Just wait till I get to Congress." I think they are all waiting! "I'll fix things. I'll pass laws requiring all apples to be the same size. Yes, I'll pass laws to turn the barrel upside down, so the little ones will be on the top and the big ones will be at the bottom."

But I had not seen that it wouldn't matter which end was the top, the big ones would shake right up to it and the little ones would shake down to the bottom.

The little man has the chance now, just as fast as he grows. You cannot fix the barrel. You can only fix the people inside the barrel.

Have you ever noticed that the man who is not willing to fix himself, is the one who wants to get the most laws passed to fix other people? He wants something for nothing.

That Cruel Fate

O, I am so glad I did not get the things I wanted at the time I wanted them! They would have been coffee-pots. Thank goodness, we do not get the coffee-pot until we are ready to handle it.

Today you and I have things we couldn't have yesterday. We just wanted them yesterday.

O, how we wanted them! But a cruel fate would not let us have them. Today we have them. They come to us as naturally today, and we see it is because we have grown ready for them, and the barrel has shaken us up to them.

Today you and I want things beyond our reach. O, how we want them!

But a cruel fate will not let us have them.

Do you not see that "cruel fate" is our own smallness and unreadiness? As we grow greater we have greater things. We have today all we can stand today. More would wreck us. More would start us rattling.

Getting up is growing up.

And this blessed old barrel of life is just waiting and anxious to shake everybody up as fast as everybody grows.