SUCCESS
It's Three Pillars

By LORD BEAVERBROOK

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Success—that is the royal road we all want to tread, for the echo off its flagstones sounds pleasantly in the mind. It gives to man all that the natural man desires, the opportunity of exercising his activities to the full, the sense of power, the feeling that life is a slave, not a master, the knowledge that some great industry has quickened into life under the impulse of a single brain.

To each his own particular branch of this difficult art. The artist knows one joy, the soldier another; what delights the business man leaves the politician cold. But however much each section of society abuses the ambitions or the morals of the other, all worship equally at the same shrine. No man really wants to spend his whole life as a reporter, a clerk, a subaltern, a private Member, or a curate. Downing street is as attractive as the oak-leaves of the field-marshal; York and Canterbury as pleasant as a dominance in Lombard street or Burlington House.

Gift of the Gods

For my own part I speak of the only field of success I know—the world of ordinary affairs. And I start with a contradiction in terms. Success is a constitutional temperament bestowed on the recipient by the gods. And yet you may have all the gifts of the fairies and fail utterly. Man cannot add an inch to his stature, but by taking thought he can walk erect; all the gifts given at birth can be destroyed by a single curse.

Like all human affairs success is partly a matter of predestination and partly of free will. You cannot make the genius, but you can either improve or destroy it, and most men and women possess the assets which can be turned into success.

But those who possess the precious gifts will have both to hoard and to expand them.

Three Pillars

What are the qualities which make for success? They are three: Judgment, Industry, and Health, and perhaps the greatest of these is judgment. These are the three pillars which hold up the fabric of success. But in using the word judgment one has said everything.

In the affairs of the world it is the supreme quality. How many men have brilliant schemes and yet are quite unable to execute them, and through their very brilliancy stumble unawares upon ruin? For round judgment there cluster many hundred qualities, like the setting round a jewel; the



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capacity to read the hearts of men; to draw an inexhaustible fountain of wisdom from every particle of experience in the past, and turn the current of this knowledge into the dynamic action of the future. Genius goes to the heart of a matter like an arrow from a bow, but judgment is the quality which learns from the world what the world has to teach and then goes one better. Shelley had genius, but he would not have been a success in Wall Street—though the poet showed a flash of business knowledge in refusing to lend money to Byron.

In the ultimate resort judgment is the power to assimilate knowledge and to use it. The opinions of men and the movement of markets are all so much material for the perfected instrument of the mind.

But judgment may prove a sterile capacity if it is not accompanied by industry. The mill must have grist on which to work and it is industry which pours in the grain.

A great opportunity may be lost and an irretrievable error committed by a brief break in the lucidity of the intellect or in the train of thought. "He who would be Caesar anywhere," says Kipling, "must know everything." Nearly everything comes to the man who is always all there.

Men are not really born either hopelessly idle, or preternaturally industrious. They may move in one direction or the other as will or circumstances dictate, but it is open to any man to be industrious. Hogarth's industrious and idle apprentice point a moral, but they do not tell a true tale. The real trouble about industry is to apply it in the right direction—and it is therefore the servant of judgment. The true secret of industry well applied is concentration, and there are many well-known ways of learning that art—the most potent handmaiden of success. Industry can be acquired, it should never be squandered.

But health is the foundation both of judgment and industry—and therefore of success. And without health everything is difficult. Who can exercise a sound judgment if he is feeling irritable in the morning? Who can work hard if he is suffering from a perpetual feeling of malaise?

The future lies with the people who will take exercise and not too much exercise. Athleticism may be hopeless as a career, but as a drug it is invaluable. No ordinary man can hope to succeed who does not work his body in moderation. The danger of the athlete is to believe that in kicking a goal he has won the game of life. His object is no longer to be fit for work but to be superfit for play. He sees the means and the end through an inverted telescope. The story books always tell us that the Rowing Blue finishes up as a High Court Judge.

Sport and Pleasure

The truth is very different. The career of sport leads only to failure, satiety, or impotence. The hero of the playing fields becomes the dunce of the office. Other men go on playing till middle-age robs them of their physical powers. At the end the whole thing is revealed as vanity. Play tennis or golf once a day and you may be famous; play it three times a day and you will be in danger of being thought a professional—without the reward.

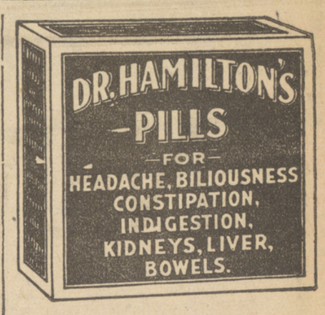
The pursuit of pleasure is equally ephemeral. Time and experience rob even amusement of its charm, and the night before is not worth next morning's headache. Practical success alone makes early middle-age the most pleasurable period of a man's career. What has been worked for in youth then comes to its fruition.

It is true that brains alone are not influence and that money alone is not influence, but brains and money combined are power. And fame, the other object of ambition, is only another name for either money or power.

Never was there a moment more favorable for turning talent towards opportunity and opportunity into triumph than Great Britain now presents to the man or woman whom ambition stirs to make a success of life. The dominions of the British Empire abolished long ago the privileges which birth confers. No bar has been set there to prevent poverty rising to the heights of wealth and power, if the man were found equal to the task.

The same development has taken place in Great Britain today. Men are no longer born into Cabinets; the ladder of education is rapidly reaching a perfection which enables a man born in a cottage or a slum attaining the zenith of success and power.

There stand the three attributes to be attained—judgment, industry, and health. Judgment can be improved, industry can be acquired, health can be attained by those who will take the trouble. These are the three pillars on which we can build the golden pinnacle of success.



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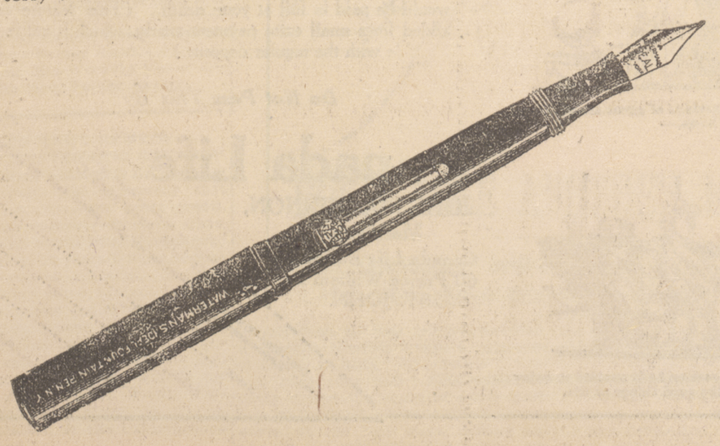

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