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Ambition

By Samuel Rosinger

Ambition is a word of unsavoury origin. It is derived from the latin "to go around," and had reference to the Roman politician's habit of soliciting votes, a habit, by the way, which unfortunately has survived to this very day. In its present usage, it means an eager and sustained desire for preferment or attainment. Ambition is a goad to success and achievement. It keeps the goal we aim at, before our eyes, and urges us to persist in our efforts to reach it, no matter with what difficulties the road may be beset.

One who lacks ambition, leads a purposeless life. Instead of concentrating his strength upon a worthy object, he fritters his efforts, scatters his powers and wastes his time and opportunities. He makes neither plans nor provisions, but is shiftless and leaves things to chance. He lives not for the future, but for the day. An ambitionless person does not experience the joy of growth and the delight of self-realization, but remains stationery and stunted. He goes through life merely sipping its scum and skimming its surface, but not soaring to its sublime heights and probing its unfathomable depths and searching its mysteries and miracles.

Ambition, like all other laudable traits, must be developed in early childhood. Necessity, the mother of invention, is a very powerful stimulus to ambition. If we do not spoil our children by granting them all their hearts' desires and all their wishes and whims, but make them render some service, be it ever so nominal, for the care and comfort they receive from us, they will gradually realize that the coveted prizes of life are not awarded to the lazy and indolent, but that it is the ambitious and industrious who capture them. Indulgence stifles the noblest impulses of the child and kills every spark of ambition in him. An overdose of kindness is as fatal to a child, as an overdose of some powerful stimulating drug. A child can meet with no greater handicap than to be born to wealthy parents who lack the insight and judgment to rear him so, that instead of depending on their possessions, he should lean on his innate powers and resourcefulness.

Of course, ambition is only a means to an end, and is desirable only if it is centered on a worthy aim and object. As a general rule, let us not become slaves to our ambitions, but let ambition help us to obtain mastery over all the forces that are calculated to make of our lives that happy combination of humanity and divinity that will meet with the commendation of our fellowmen and the approval of God.

ROTARYGRAMS

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Slants at the Meeting

If you confuse quality with variety then Joe Lederer's denouement last week would brand the program as excellentissimo, as he had trios, duets, monologues, political talks and thrift speeches.

However, we wouldn't indict him for lese majeste nor award him with the gran prix. His efforts remind us of the Citizens Committee that was looking for the nudist colony . . . they couldn't find anything prominent enough to tie to.

Howell Happ made a valiant effort to stimulate the purchase of political pre-requisites. As we recall he recently identified himself as the recipient of the student loan fund and an un-employed lawyer. The latter is the frankest admittance from one of his ilk, as these Blackstone birds are deft masters in the employment of the Latin word "alibi."

In juggling their jingles Misses Stegall and Williams seem to have lost the key, but they pulled the right chord when they got on the "Big Bad Wolf."

Theron Brown's oration was untimely, if you ask us. The new squeal doesn't call for thrift, rather prodigality. Paradoxically you hoard by spending. Speaking of saving we are left with so little now we couldn't even save our face.

Maybe Ben Franklin was a good man. It seems he had everything outlined, tucked in, stowed away and labelled according to his biographers; but when he peeled off those wise-cracks about thrift he hadn't come under the NRA. We are not trying to stimulate thrift we are endeavoring to weaken hoarding.

Besides, we are revolutionary and if some guy ever develops sufficient courage to debunk a lot of the poppycock and legendary bull about the fundamental qualities of our ancestors and get down to a common sense basis the world will be better off.

—Check.

Old Game, New Rules

Eyes of the world are almost literally turned towards the United States these days. The National Recovery Act is a popular topic from Tokyo to London . . . And there is much to talk about.

Already the NRA has produced gratifying results. Some enthusiasts, violently reacting from the dark days of the past three years, unhesitatingly proclaim that the Blue Eagle, emblem of the New Deal, is in reality the Blue Bird of Happiness, thinly disguised. Happy days, they sing, are here again.

But, at the risk of being pigeon-holed as a grouser, let us venture the observation that recovery is far from being a fact achieved. Happily it is true that business throughout America is improving, but the long pull is certainly ahead.

Signing codes of ethics and business practice is important, but not enough. Abuses as ancient as trade itself are not to be eradicated by the swish of a flowing pen. Human nature can be altered, but it is not going to be changed by a miracle. Neither President Roosevelt nor General Johnson is Aladdin.

The acid test is going to come after the fanfare has died away, after the parade is past. It will come when the wheels of the new machinery begin, creakingly at first, to mesh and turn. Then every signer of a code will in his own way meet his own temptation to evade it by playing fast and loose with regulations governing wages, hours, and practices. Then each consumer must decide whether he or she will forego the saving of pennies or dollars by buying from those who observe the spirit of the act instead of from those who do not.

The New Deal has changed the rules of the game, but no one is excused from playing, and playing hard. There is nothing magic about the NRA; it is man made. Sound principles of buying and selling goods for profit are just as applicable as ever they were. Men and women will continue to be attracted to good goods, attractively and courteously offered. The NRA has brought no moratorium on keen thinking, analytical judgment, decisive action.

The rules have changed, but not the game.—The Rotarian.

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—R—

Youth, Not So Flaming

Many evidences are at hand to show that the young people are looking ahead with a clearer notion of "what it's all about" than did their parents. They recognize froth for what it is.

A smart magazine, popular only a few years ago with college students, has, in the vernacular, "folded up" for want of support. The football hero of yesterday isn't lionized quite so much as he was. Why? "We see him in the classroom," one young lady smilingly told an inquirer. Athletics are increasingly regarded as means of acquiring personal enjoyment and health and not as public spectacles alone. In short, a new youth, not quite so incandescent as his older brother or sister, is emerging from these late depression days.

The plain fact of the matter is, however, that the whole world is getting over a giddy headache, brought on by the World War. It is seeing more clearly than it did. The response to the National Recovery Act is in itself testimony of a growing understanding of the troubles of economic and social health. Newspapers are printing less news on "sex, money, and crime" to make space for news on science, business, religion, and education. Labor controversies are being settled more and more by arbitration and less by violence and bloodshed. In short, youth is but one of many signs of the times that a new epoch is emerging.—The Rotarian.

—R—

Everybody is entitled to courtesy—even your wife.

—R—

The happiness of people is all that makes business or anything else worth while.