

## *Consequences of Idleness*

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1. Many young persons seem to think it of not much consequence if they do not improve their time well in youth, vainly expecting that they can make it up by diligence when they are older. They also think it is disgraceful for men and women to be idle, but that there can be no harm for persons who are young to spend their time in any manner they please.

2. George Jones thought so. When he was twelve years old, he went to an academy to prepare to enter college. His father was at great expense in obtaining books for him, clothing him, and paying his tuition. But George was idle. The preceptor of the academy would often tell him that if he did not study diligently when young he would never succeed well.

3. But George thought of nothing but present pleasure. He would often go to school without having made any preparation for his morning lesson; and, when called to recite with his class, he would stammer and make such blunders that the rest of the class could not help laughing at him. He was one of the poorest scholars in the school, because he was one of the most idle.

4. When recess came, and all the boys ran out of the academy upon the play-ground, idle George would come moping along. Instead of studying diligently while in school, he was indolent and half asleep. When the proper time for play came, he had no relish for it. I recollect very well, that, when "tossing up" for a game of ball, we used to choose every body on the play-ground before we chose George; and if there were enough without him we used to leave him out. Thus he was unhappy in school and out of school.

5. There is nothing which makes a person enjoy play so well as to study hard. When recess was over, and the rest of the boys returned, fresh and vigorous, to their studies, George might be seen lagging and moping along to his seat. Sometimes he would be asleep in school; sometimes he would pass his time in catching flies, and penning them up in little holes, which he cut in his seat; and sometimes, when the preceptor's back was turned, he would throw a paper ball across the room.

6. When the class was called up to recite, George would come drowsily along, looking as mean and ashamed as though he were going to be whipped. The rest of the class stepped up to the recitation with alacrity, and appeared happy and contented. When it came George's turn

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"Consequences of Idleness," Lesson 39, in *McGuffey's Fourth Eclectic Reader*, ed. William Holmes McGuffey (New York: American Book Company, 1879), 110-12.

to recite, he would be so long in doing it, and make such blunders, that all most heartily wished him out of the class.

7. At last, George went with his class to enter college. Though he passed a very poor examination, he was admitted with the rest; for those who examined him thought it was possible that the reason why he did not answer questions better was because he was frightened. Now came hard times for poor George. In college there is not much mercy shown to bad scholars; and George had neglected his studies so long that he could not now keep up with his class, let him try ever so hard.

8. He could, without much difficulty, get along in the academy, where there were only two or three boys of his own class to laugh at him. But now he had to go into a large recitation room, filled with students from all parts of the country. In the presence of all these, he must rise and recite to a professor. Poor fellow! He paid dearly for his idleness.

9. You would have pitied him if you could have seen him trembling in his seat, every moment expecting to be called upon to recite. And when he was called upon, he would stand up and take what the class called a "dead set;" that is, he could not recite at all. Sometimes he would make such ludicrous blunders that the whole class would burst into a laugh. Such are the applauses an idler gets. He was wretched, of course. He had been idle so long that he hardly knew how to apply his mind to study. All the good scholars avoided him; they were ashamed to be seen in his company. He became discouraged, and gradually grew dissipated.

10. The officers of the college were soon compelled to suspend him. He returned in a few months, but did no better; and his father was then advised to take him from college. He left college, despised by every one. A few months ago, I met him, a poor wanderer, without money and without friends. Such are the wages of idleness. I hope every reader will, from this history, take warning, and "stamp improvement on the wings of time."

### *Advantages of Industry*

1. I gave you, in the last lesson, the history of George Jones, an idle boy, and showed you the consequences of his idleness. I shall now give you the history of Charles Bullard, a classmate of George. Charles was about the same age as George, and did not possess superior talents.

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"Advantages of Industry," Lesson 40, in *McGuffey's Fourth Eclectic Reader*, ed. William Holmes McGuffey (New York: American Book Company, 1879), 113-15.

## Henry, the Boot-Black

1. Henry was a kind, good boy. His father was dead, and his mother was very poor. He had a little sister about two years old.

2. He wanted to help his mother, for she could not always earn enough to buy food for her little family.

3. One day, a man gave him a dollar for finding a pocket-book which he had lost.

4. Henry might have kept all the money, for no one saw him when he found it. But his mother had taught him to be honest, and never to keep what did not belong to him.

5. With the dollar he bought a box, three brushes, and some blacking. He then went to the corner of the street, and said to every one whose boots did not look nice, "Black your boots, sir, please?"

6. He was so polite that gentlemen soon began to notice him, and to let him black their boots. The first day he brought home fifty cents, which he gave to his mother to buy food with.

7. When he gave her the money, she said, as she dropped a tear of joy, "You are a dear, good boy, Henry. I did not know how I could earn enough to buy bread with, but now I think we can manage to get along quite well."

8. Henry worked all the day, and went to school in the evening. He earned almost enough to support his mother and his little sister.

"Henry, the Boot-Black," Lesson 14, in *McGuffey's Second Eclectic Reader*, ed. William Holmes McGuffey (Chicago: American Book Company, 1879), 35-37.

## The Fireside

1. One winter night, Mrs. Lord and her two little girls sat by a bright fire in their pleasant home. The girls were sewing, and their mother was busy at her knitting.

"The Fireside," Lesson 33, in *McGuffey's Second Eclectic Reader*, ed. William Holmes McGuffey (New York: American Book Company, 1879), 70-72.



2. At last, Katie finished her work, and, looking up, said, "Mother, I think the fire is brighter than usual. How I love to hear it crackle!"

3. "And I was about to say," cried Mary, "that this is a better light than we had last night."

4. "My dears," said their mother, "it must be that you feel happier than usual to-night. Perhaps that is the reason why you think the fire better, and the light brighter."

5. "But, mother," said Mary, "I do not see why we are happier now than we were then; for last night cousin Jane was here, and we played 'Puss in the corner' and 'Blind man' until we all were tired."

6. "I know! I know why!" said Katie. "It is because we have all been doing something useful to-night. We feel happy because we have been busy."

7. "You are right, my dear," said their mother. "I am glad you have both learned that there may be something more pleasant than play, and, at the same time, more instructive."

The McGuffey Readers were six schoolbooks for elementary school children. They were published over the period 1836 to 1857 but went through numerous editions throughout the rest of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth. The Readers sold about 122 million copies.

McGUFFEY'S  
FOURTH READER.



I. PERSEVERANCE.

1. "WILL you give my kite a lift?" said my little nephew to his sister, after trying in vain to make it fly by dragging it along the ground. Lucy very kindly took it up and threw it into the air, but, her brother neglecting to run off at the same moment, the kite fell down again.

who are these kids?  
what are their surroundings like?

FOURTH READER.

2. "Ah! now, how awkward you are!" said the little fellow. "It was your fault entirely," answered his sister. "Try again, children," said I.

3. Lucy once more took up the kite. But now John was in too great a hurry; he ran off so suddenly that he twitched the kite out of her hand, and it fell flat as before. "Well, who is to blame now?" asked Lucy. "Try again," said I.

4. They did, and with more care; but a side wind coming suddenly, as Lucy let go the kite, it was blown against some shrubs, and the tail became entangled in a moment, leaving the poor kite hanging with its head downward.

5. "There, there!" exclaimed John, "that comes of your throwing it all to one side." "As if I could make the wind blow straight," said Lucy. In the meantime, I went to the kite's assistance; and having disengaged the long tail, I rolled it up, saying, "Come, children, there are too many trees here; let us find a more open space, and then try again."

6. We presently found a nice grassplot, at one side of which I took my stand; and all things being prepared, I tossed the kite up just as little John ran off. It rose with all the dignity of a balloon, and promised a lofty flight; but John, delighted to find it pulling so hard at the string, stopped short to look upward and admire. The string slackened, the kite wavered, and, the wind not being very favorable, down came the kite to the grass. "O John, you should not have stopped," said I. "However, try again."

7. "I won't try any more," replied he, rather sulkily. "It is of no use, you see. The kite won't fly, and I don't want to be plagued with it any longer." "Oh, fie, my little man! would you give up the sport,

after all the pains we have taken both to make and to fly the kite? A few disappointments ought not to discourage us. Come, I have wound up your string, and now try again."

8. And he did try, and succeeded, for the kite was carried upward on the breeze as lightly as a feather; and when the string was all out, John stood in great delight, holding fast the stick and gazing on the kite, which now seemed like a little white speck in the blue sky. "Look, look, aunt, how high it flies! and it pulls like a team of horses, so that I can hardly hold it. I wish I had a mile of string: I am sure it would go to the end of it."

9. After enjoying the sight as long as he pleased, little John proceeded to roll up the string slowly; and when the kite fell, he took it up with great glee, saying that it was not at all hurt, and that it had behaved very well. "Shall we come out to-morrow, aunt, after lessons, and try again?"

10. "I have no objection, my dear, if the weather is fine. And now, as we walk home, tell me what you have learned from your morning's sport." "I have learned to fly my kite properly." "You may thank aunt for it, brother," said Lucy, "for you would have given it up long ago, if she had not persuaded you to try again."

11. "Yes, dear children, I wish to teach you the value of perseverance, even when nothing more depends upon it than the flying of a kite. Whenever you fail in your attempts to do any good thing, let your motto be,—try again."

DEFINITIONS.—In defining words, that meaning is given which is appropriate to them in the connection in which they are used.

LXX. THE HERITAGE.

James Russell Lowell (b. 1819, d. 1891) was born in Cambridge, Mass., and was graduated from Harvard College. He entered the profession of law; but, in 1843, turned aside to publish "The Pioneer, a Literary and Critical Magazine." In 1856 he was appointed professor of Belles-lettres in Harvard College. From 1877 to 1885 he was U.S. Minister, first to Spain, afterwards to Great Britain. Lowell's powers as a writer were very versatile, and his poems range from the most dreamy and imaginative to the most trenchant and witty. Among his most noted poetical works are "The Biglow Papers," "A Fable for Critics," "The Vision of Sir Launfal," "The Cathedral," and "The Legend of Brittany;" while "Conversations on some of the Old Poets," "Among my Books," and "My Study Windows," place him in the front rank as an essayist.

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1. The rich man's son inherits lands,  
 And piles of brick, and stone, and gold,  
 And he inherits soft white hands,  
 And tender flesh that fears the cold,  
 Nor dares to wear a garment old;  
 A heritage, it seems to me,  
 One scarce would wish to hold in fee.
2. The rich man's son inherits cares;  
 The bank may break, the factory burn,  
 A breath may burst his bubble shares,  
 And soft white hands could hardly earn  
 A living that would serve his turn;  
 A heritage, it seems to me,  
 One scarce would wish to hold in fee.
3. The rich man's son inherits wants,  
 His stomach craves for dainty fare;  
 With sated heart, he hears the pants  
 Of toiling hinds with brown arms bare,  
 And wearies in his easy-chair;  
 A heritage, it seems to me,  
 One scarce would wish to hold in fee.

4. What doth the poor man's son inherit?  
Stout muscles and a sinewy heart,  
 A hardy frame, a hardier spirit;  
 King of two hands, he does his part  
 In every useful toil and art;  
 A heritage, it seems to me,  
 A king might wish to hold in fee.
5. What doth the poor man's son inherit?  
Wishes o'erjoyed with humble things,  
 A rank adjudged by toil-won merit,  
Content that from employment springs,  
A heart that in his labor sings;  
 A heritage, it seems to me,  
 A king might wish to hold in fee.
6. What doth the poor man's son inherit?  
 A patience learned of being poor,  
 Courage, if sorrow come, to bear it,  
A fellow-feeling that is sure  
To make the outcast bless his door;  
 A heritage, it seems to me,  
 A king might wish to hold in fee.
7. O rich man's son! there is a toil  
 That with all others level stands:  
Large charity doth never soil,  
 But only whiten soft, white hands,—  
 This is the best crop from thy lands;  
 A heritage, it seems to me,  
 Worth being rich to hold in fee.
8. O poor man's son! scorn not thy state;  
 There is worse weariness than thine  
 In merely being rich and great:

what the poem

## II. TRY, TRY AGAIN.

1. 'Tis a lesson you should heed,  
Try, try again;  
If at first you don't succeed,  
Try, try again;  
Then your courage should appear,  
For, if you will persevere,  
You will conquer, never fear;  
Try, try again.
2. Once or twice though you should fail,  
Try, try again;  
If you would at last prevail,  
Try, try again;  
If we strive, 'tis no disgrace  
Though we do not win the race;  
What should you do in the case?  
Try, try again.
3. If you find your task is hard,  
Try, try again;  
  
Time will bring you your reward,  
Try, try again.  
All that other folks can do,  
Why, with patience, should not you?  
Only keep this rule in view:  
Try, try again.

## FOURTH READER.

## XII. WHERE THERE IS A WILL THERE IS A WAY.

1. HENRY BOND was about ten years old when his father died. His mother found it difficult to provide for the support of a large family, thus left entirely in her care. By good management, however, she contrived to do so, and also to send Henry, the oldest, to school, and to supply him, for the most part, with such books as he needed.

2. At one time, however, Henry wanted a grammar, in order to join a class in that study, and his mother could not furnish him with the money to buy it. He was very much troubled about it, and went to bed with a heavy heart, thinking what could be done.

3. On waking in the morning, he found that a deep snow had fallen, and the cold wind was blowing furiously. "Ah," said he, "it is an ill wind that blows nobody good."

4. He rose, ran to the house of a neighbor, and offered his service to clear a path around his premises. The offer was accepted. Having completed this work, and received his pay, he went to another place for the same purpose, and then to another, until he had earned enough to buy a grammar.

5. When school commenced, Henry was in his seat, the happiest boy there, ready to begin the lesson in his new book.

6. From that time, Henry was always the first in all his classes. He knew no such word as fail, but always succeeded in all he attempted. Having the will, he always found the way.

DEFINITIONS.—1. Mān'āge-ment, manner of directing things. 2. Fār'nish, to supply. 3. Fū'ri-ōs-ly, violently. 4. Bērv'īce, labor. Prēm'ī-seq, grounds around a house.

realistic?  
kids don't have  
to work