

Pushing to the Front

Orison Swett Marden



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No man is born into this world whose work is not born with him.—LOWELL. Things don't turn up in this world until somebody turns them up.—GARFIELD. Vigilance in watching opportunity; tact and daring in seizing upon opportunity; force and persistence in crowding opportunity to its utmost of possible achievement-these are the martial virtues which must command success.-AUSTIN PHELPS. "I will find a way or make one." There never was a day that did not bring its own opportunity for doing good that never could have been done before, and never can be again.-W. H. BURLEIGH. "Are you in earnest? Seize this very minute; What you can do, or dream you can, begin it." "If we succeed, what will the world say?" asked Captain Berry in delight, when Nelson had explained his carefully formed plan before the battle of the Nile. "There is no if in the case," replied Nelson. "That we shall succeed is certain. Who may live to tell the tale is a very different question." Then, as his captains rose from the council to go to their respective ships, he added: "Before this time to-morrow I shall have gained a peerage or Westminster Abbey." His quick eye and daring spirit saw an opportunity of glorious victory where others saw only probable defeat. "Is it POSSIBLE to cross the path?" asked Napoleon of the engineers who had been sent to explore the dreaded pass of St. Bernard. "Perhaps," was the hesitating reply, "it is within the limits of possibility." "FORWARD THEN," said the Little Corporal, without heeding their account of apparently insurmountable difficulties. England and Austria laughed in scorn at the idea of transporting across the Alps, where "no wheel had ever rolled, or by any possibility could roll," an army of sixty thousand men, with ponderous artillery, tons of cannon balls and baggage, and all the bulky munitions of war. But the besieged Massena was starving in Genoa, and the victorious Austrians thundered at the gates of Nice, and Napoleon was not the man to fail his former comrades in their hour of peril. When this "impossible" deed was accomplished, some saw that it might have been done long before. Others excused themselves from encountering such gigantic obstacles by calling them insuperable. Many a commander had possessed the necessary supplies, tools, and rugged soldiers, but lacked the grit and resolution of Bonaparte, who did not shrink from mere difficulties, however great, but out of his very need made and mastered his opportunity. Grant at New Orleans had just been seriously injured by a fall from his horse, when he received orders to take command at Chattanooga, so sorely beset by the Confederates that its surrender seemed only a question of a few days; for the hills around were all aglow by night with the camp-fires of the enemy, and supplies had been cut off. Though in great pain, he immediately gave directions for his removal to the new scene of action.

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