

CHARACTER EDUCATION SECTION

Opportunity Knocks

DOLORES TENSUAN *



FLORENCIA is very deeply absorbed with her reading. At times she knits her brows, bites her lips, or nods her head. Now and then she looks afar as if searching the clouds for something.

The mother who sits by the window mending socks, frequently glances at her child. She wonders what reading matter has so interested Florencia, that she has kept on reading for almost an hour.

Florencia finishes reading, cups her chin in her left hand and looks afar.

"That book you have just read seems to have interested you very much, my dear," said the mother.

"Yes, mother, it is the life history of Helen Keller, the deaf, dumb, and blind girl who succeeded in graduating in college because of her patience and per-

severance," answered Florencia.

"That's very wonderful of her. Her success is a very good proof that there is nothing impossible when there is the will to succeed. Isn't it?" eagerly asks the mother.

"Yes, it is, and that keeps me thinking, mother, if Helen Keller who was dumb, deaf, and blind finished her college work successfully why can't I satisfactorily perform my school work when I am lucky enough not to have any of her handicaps?"

"I'm glad you mentioned that matter," gladly answered Mrs. Cruz. "Yesterday your father and I met your teacher and when we questioned her about your standing in class, she said that you are not doing very well."

"She is right, mother, I really have been very neglectful of my school work lately. In fact, I had even thought of quitting my studies because of the discouraging marks I am getting, but this marvelous success of Helen Keller has completely inspired me to work harder. Yes, mother, I firmly resolve to be more patient and persevering in my studies."

"That is a very good resolution, Florencia. I've always prayed to God to make you realize that your failure in your school work is wholly due to your indifference, shall I say laziness?" says the mother.

"Laziness is the very term for it, mother. Well, goodbye, laziness. I've made up my mind to work hard espe-

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JOSE RIZAL



Where the coco palms swing and sway,
Where the grass and fields are ever
 green,
Where lies the blue Laguna Bay,
There Rizal was born on June nineteen.

Midst the tumult of oppression,
He lived to heed his country's cry,
With mighty pen he fought corruption,
And did what no one dared try.

Thus this mortal lived and died,
For his country and people's sake,
His name shall be known far and wide,
Inspiring awe in other nation's wake.

—Lulu de la Paz-Gabriel

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cially in overcoming my weaknesses. I will give my classmates no chance to laugh at me whenever I fail to answer a question and whenever I read orally," emphatically speaks Florencia.

"God, help you, my child. I wish you success," says the mother.

Beaming with enthusiasm, Florencia gets a reader and begins reading aloud the poem which she read so very poorly in class the day before. That her classmates laughed at her. She reads it over and over, putting more effort in improving her expression and pronunciation at every repetition. Her last reading pleases her so much that she goes to her mother and exclaims, "Oh, mother, I believe my teacher is right in telling me that I can be a good reader if I would only practice often. The way I read this poem now is ten times better than my reading yesterday."

"Of course, your teacher is right, Florencia. Almost all difficulties can be overcome if there is the determination and the patience and perseverance to overcome them."

"Well, that reminds me of the health poster we are required to submit tomorrow. Everytime we have poster-making. I don't prepare because I simply can't draw. But now, I will make one. If others can do it, why can't I?"

"That's a good rule to follow," smilingly approves the mother. She affectionately pats her child and goes to the kitchen to prepare the food.

With a very strong resolution Florencia begins making her poster. After about twenty minutes of persistent trying she finishes it. She views the neatly drawn poster with perfect satisfaction, then runs to her mother saying, "See, mother, see the poster I drew!"

"That is very nice. I never knew you can draw so well," comments the happy mother as she looks at the picture.

"How pleased my teacher will be when she sees it. I shall buy theme paper, mother. Do you want me to buy something for you at the store?"

"Please, buy five centavos' worth of biscuits
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for Corazon. She is already awake and she must be hungry."

"Yes, mother," says Florencia as she skips down the stairs.

Five-year old Corazon goes to the study table. She sees the crayons scattered on the table. With much delight she draws lines of all sorts on the very poster of Florencia. She laughs joyfully as she scrawls the multicolored lines on the paper. While she is looking at the ruined poster, Florencia arrives and nearly drops the biscuits when she sees the destroyed poster.

"You naughty, naughty girl!" cried Florencia as she snatches the paper and gives the little girl a pinch. "You have ruined my poster."

The mother hears the scoldings of Florencia and the cry of Corazon so she enters the room to find out the cause of the commotion.

"Mother, see what Nene did to my poster," sobs Florencia as she shows the paper.

"I'm sorry, but it was partly your fault. You shouldn't have left your poster on the table. Stop crying now. Crying won't mend matters so dry your tears and make another," advises the mother.

"Make another, Mother? No, never. Just think of it. I spent more than twenty minutes in making that and now it is destroyed. I can't make another, and I won't even if I can. Anyway, it is no longer

MY BROTHER'S KITE

My brother had a fine new kite.

An aeroplane, said he:

And if it had a pilot

He could make it cross the sea.

And so we tied a bamboo doll!

Upon the under side,

So he could fly the airplane

And have a lovely ride.

The pilot must have liked his plane

And liked the trip that day.

For he flew high, and broke the string,

And calmly sailed away.

Winnifred Lewis

my fault if I fail to hand in one tomorrow."

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What quality of Helen Keller impressed Florencia most?
2. How can you account for the poor class standing of Florencia?
3. What resolution did she make after reading the story of Helen Keller?
4. Was Florencia sincere in resolving to be more patient and more persevering in the performance of the school works? Justify your opinion.
5. Why is the story entitled "Opportunity Knocks"?

WHO HAD THE BEST

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thing to tell us, Jaime?"

"I enjoyed my vacation but my experiences may not be interesting to others."

"Let us hear them."

"I went camping. At the camp we followed a certain program of activities. We were not so free as Andres, but we found life on the hills very interesting. We had to obey rules about eating, sleeping, and playing. We took long hikes in the mountains but returned in time for lunch. How keen my appetite was after the walk.

"Is that not fine?" Miss Marquez commented.

"In the evening we held programs. Although everybody wanted to stay up longer, we had to go to bed at nine o'clock."

"Tomorrow we shall hear more stories. What are your comments, children?"

"Andres enjoyed his vacation because he was free to do as he pleased," Jose remarked.

"I think Jaime had a better vacation," Irmina countered. "Look, Jaime has grown bigger and taller."

"Andres forgot all the rules of health we learned at school," Nora seconded. "The question raised is: 'Who had the better vacation?'"

"Ah, yes, yes," the girls agreed.

"Tomorrow we shall discuss our vacation activities with respect to rules of health," Miss Marquez announced. "You and I are given this long vacation to gain health which will enable us to do our work well during the school year."