

# REACHING THE ROOF

*H. Spencer Lewis, FRC*

Not long ago, a contractor started to build a home in the suburbs of this city, and I was interested in watching the care with which he constructed the foundation. It appeared to me that a very fine and attractive home was to be built on the concrete walls which he planned and constructed so carefully.

Shortly thereafter I met the contractor at a luncheon and asked him how his new house was progressing, and was astonished to hear him say that he was just completing the roof. "Why," said I, "you have reached the roof very quickly."

"Yes," replied the contractor, "you know when some persons build, they plan a roof that is very close to the ground and does not take much time or much effort to build up from the foundation to the roof."

I could not help pondering over his rather philosophical statement because it contained a whole book full of thought. Undoubtedly, one of the reasons why so many persons in the world today have not achieved a higher or greater place in life is that they have too easily reached the roof. In all of their plans, in all of their considerations, desires, and ambitions, they visualized a roof that was very close to the foundation, and after their structure was completed and the roof in place, their building was lowly, humble, insignificant, and probably insufficient to represent their true possibilities in life.

Truly, one can dream too vaguely, too ambitiously, or too magnificently, and place the roof of one's contemplated structure far beyond feasible heights, but it is very seldom that the ones who do this fail to reach an impressive height in their desire to reach the roof. They may fail to fulfill their plans, but in their attempts to do so they

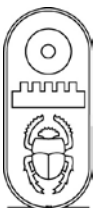
often rise far beyond those who are ultra-conservative and too careful.

Of the two classes of individuals, those who are extremely conservative or pessimistic, doubtful, skeptical, reserved, and hesitating are the losers in life's great game. Such persons start out with self-imposed limitations, and it is seldom that they reach beyond those limitations. Those who are overambitious, and who seem to hitch their wagons to a star, and who think that the sky is the limit, and that nothing is beyond their capabilities are more apt to achieve success and at least accomplish something magnificent than those who are self-restrained.

## Meeting Obligations

I have heard economists and some of the most eminent financiers in America say that the only way that young married couples or young persons individually ever accumulate vast material holdings or become possessed of real material wealth is by getting into debt and by assuming large contracts and obligations, and then being forced to meet them. They say that more homes have been acquired by young couples who have plunged themselves into the obligation of paying for a beautiful home than by those who attempted to save for it and buy such a home when sufficient funds were at hand. However true this may be, I do know that the man or woman who mentally conceives and plans a great structure or career in life and determines to make good on these plans is the one who generally succeeds in doing so.

The greater the ambition, the greater the enthusiasm and the desire to make good. The higher and more lofty the goal, the more determination is exerted to reach it. Commonplace obstacles that deter and



disparage the individual who is attempting to reach only a mediocre place mean nothing to the one who has a great plan or an enormous idea to work out.

### Stick With It!

Resorting again to the illustration of building a home, we can see that the person who plans to build only a four-room bungalow, twelve to fourteen feet in height, and build it quickly with a limited amount of money and time, will become greatly discouraged in his or her efforts to complete such a building if on the day planned for laying the foundation the rain pours upon the ground and continues to do so for a number of days until the ground is wet and soggy. And after the rain is over, if there are a few days of snow and freezing temperatures, then the builder will surely abandon plans of going to work to start the home. If the builder then meets with a few disappointments in securing the right material or a sufficient amount of capital, he or she will probably be discouraged completely, and permanently abandon the whole enterprise.

Such a person in planning a small and limited structure expects to complete it within a very short time and have it over with. Any obstacles that delay the matter for weeks or months are equivalent to obstacles which prevent the person from achieving his or her end altogether.

On the other hand, the builder who

plans a structure that will take a long time to complete and will have to be carried on through all kinds of weather and diverse conditions and circumstances, has the foresight to see obstacles that delay the project for a few weeks or months as inconsequential in comparison to the time necessary to realize the goal, and is therefore unaffected by these obstacles to any serious degree.

### Building the Rosicrucian Order

I remember well the plans for our own organization when it became apparent that I would have to work out most of the details

for the development of the Rosicrucian activities in America for the new cycle under my direction. I might have given much thought to the possible delays, the inevitable disappointments, and the personal problems that would confront me. Considering these, I might easily have arranged to construct an organization that would have had a good foundation but a roof not too high above that foundation. But instead of doing this, I allowed my mentally-created structure to tower into the skies to enormous heights, and I raised the roof of the structure so high that from where I stood in the picture I could neither see where it was nor what it looked

like. In fact, I never felt sure that there was a roof upon this mental structure or that a roof was even necessary, for it seemed to me that the only thing to consider was



*H. Spencer Lewis on "Reaching the Roof": "I allowed my mentally-created structure to tower into the skies to enormous heights..." symbolized by Rosicrucian Park's obelisk in the process of being placed into position, 1937.*

to make the foundation so strong and the walls so supported that story after story could be added to the building in its rising heights without limit and without fear of collapse or weakness.

The plans seemed to be beyond reason, and many were the serious warnings given to me that I was undertaking too great a work, too great a structure to be accomplished in a lifetime, or by any moderate-sized group of individuals. Every possible or potential obstacle was carefully pointed out to me. As months and years passed, most of these obstacles made their appearance in due form and due time. Every one of the predicted interferences and hundreds unsuspected by even the wisest of builders likewise presented themselves. But since the work was an enormous one, the task a magnificent one, and the structure so bewildering in all of its dimensions, the obstacles, difficulties, problems, and delays were taken merely as a matter of course and really spared us all in our efforts.

What the structure is today is a result of the great plans. Whether these plans will all be realized in my lifetime or not is immaterial. The very greatness of the work has carried us on in its ponderous and overwhelming vastness. We are also hopelessly entangled in the scheme of things and we have no more fear of the ultimate being attained than we have of our long and carefully laid foundation crumbling away.

True, we have not reached the roof and it is not our ambition to reach the roof rapidly. The roof is still so far beyond us that we can only think of the work we have to do on each rising level of each

new section of height accomplished in our work.

How different is all of this from the conservative, limited plan of those who hesitate and fear to build and plan magnificently! It is only through the broadness of vision, through the unlimited heights of our ambitions, and the very greatness of our ideals that we really lift ourselves up and beyond the commonplace. The Rosicrucian organization in America is planned to be in its present cycle just



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what it has been in each of its previous cycles in this and other lands; namely, an unusual, distinctive, magnificent structure of unlimited and unrestricted heights of attainment. It must not only battle its way in attempting to rise above the pull and influence of earthly matters as it reaches up into the heights of glory, but it must push its way through the clouds that gather in the heights above

the earth and often darken and obscure the heavens beyond. It means work and sacrifice and a steadfastness of faith, as well as a determination to bear the burden of the cross until the heights are reached, and then raise that cross upon the very pinnacle.

To those thousands of members and readers who have expressed their joy and pride in being associated with the work of this kind, let me urge that in their own lives they plan with the greater vision in mind and with the illimitable heights as the true domain of their creating, and in this way find the joy of reaching out and beyond the average and the commonplace into the unique and the exceptional.

Do not be in such a hurry to reach the roof of the structure that you will plan it too close to the earth.

