

Prosperity Brings Friends

It is natural that prosperity should attract friendship, or at least the semblance of friendship. The friends of a prosperous man derive many obvious advantages from their connection with him. If their rich friend is hospitable, he invites all who have the privilege of caring him to pleasant entertainments in his fine house and beautiful grounds. The rich man has also many opportunities of conferring more material benefits on his friends. Also from a feeling of vanity most men take a great deal of pleasure in being seen frequently in the company of the rich and powerful. Thus there are many motives by which men are urged to cultivate the friendship of the prosperous.

But when the rich man loses his wealth, or the powerful man is deprived of his power, all the friends, who were attracted only by considerations of self-interest, fall away. They did not love the man himself but his riches, his hospitality and his favors he could confer on those who pleased him. Therefore, when, owing to a change of fortune, he loses the power of conferring benefits, and is himself in need of the help of others, they leave him and seek more profitable friendships.

The true friend is constant in evil as in good fortune, and remains faithful until death. Thus it is that friendship is tried by adversity, as gold is tried by fire, and it is one of the consolations of adversity, that it gives us the satisfaction of knowing that those who cultivate our friendship are not self-seekers, acting with an eye to their own advantage, but true friends who love us for ourselves.

History and fiction give us many instances of friends tried by adversity, some of whom were found wanting in the hours of trial, while others show their genuine worth. One should therefore, cultivate friends who are friends in need and friends indeed.