

shield its own turpitude beneath the folds of the nation's flag.

So long as the American people are actuated by dishonest sentiment rather than by devotion to the ideals for which their fathers died, their national existence is endangered. We must feel that behind all our patriotic pretences is the spirit of a universal citizenship, if those pretences are to provide any sustaining force for the national life. We must realize under God the mission of the American people, even as Christ foresaw the mission of his Judean followers. It is not the mission of world conquest or world exploitation, but the mission of brotherhood defined in terms of equal rights to all, and revealed in the uncompromising standards of national righteousness.

BOOKS

LITTLE JOURNEYS TO THE HOMES OF GREAT BUSINESS MEN.

A Criticism.

Elbert Hubbard is a prolific writer and a lecturer of repute. His *Roycrofters* and his *East Aurora* are known around the world, and their reason for being has been heralded as rather for the uplifting of the people than commercial. One of his literary outputs is his "Little Journeys," which is too well known to need description. A series of "Little Journeys" to the homes of business men, is offered by him to the public for 1909, and we are informed that they are being introduced into our high schools as text books. These books deal in a cursory and rather pleasing way with the lives of great business men.

The great business men are, of course, the men who were successful in accumulating a great deal of property which they had to leave behind them when they answered the last call. In the present state of human understanding a business man could not be esteemed as great unless he had got together a great accumulation of wealth of one sort and another which kept him in hot water all the time trying to prevent its decrease and working overtime to make it increase. The greatness of the pile of wealth measured in millions casts the gleam of gold over the man and blinds the eyes of the biographer to the qualities that are overcome by acquisitiveness to the moral degeneration of the man.

It would be hardly worth while to criticise the *Little Journeys*, but for the fact that so much of the literature of the day is written in the same fullsome style as to men of wealth, and holds up to the growing youth of the country an ideal of wealth accumulation as the summit of human felicity and usefulness. Considering this, it may be worth while to call attention to one of the *Little*

Journeys, probably a fair sample of all the rest. "A Little Journey to the Home of P. D. Armour."

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The future great packer worked on his father's farm until he was nineteen years old and then joined the procession of gold seekers that went to California.

The author says "he walked all the way and arrived on schedule." "Schedule" is a good word, and as used indicates that the future great man had a time table marked down somewhere and arrived on time. Ordinary men who went at the same time were content to arrive most any time whole and alive.

Arriving, he at once decided that mining was a gamble and that he would bet on nothing but his own ability. So he went to work for the gamblers at five dollars a day digging ditches.

The author says nothing about the fact that mining with open opportunities was so successful a gamble that wages for ditch digging were five dollars a day.

In five years the future millionaire had saved eight thousand dollars, and that being all he wanted at that time he went back to the old home, where he found nothing to do that would pay five dollars a day for common labor. So he went west again, to Milwaukee, where he joined fortunes with one John Plankinton, who was in the packing business.

The author is frank enough to say that "John was knowing," and made Armour his partner. He further states that "they discovered how to make a hog yield four hams."

If this is true, it may disclose one of the secrets of the growth of great fortunes. It is unfortunate that the secret was lost, for many who are in the packing business now would pay well for it, not for publication, but for exclusive use in their own business. Whether or no this is a good thing to put into the public schools is a question. Four hams from one hog might be a little more nutritious than the famous wooden hams of Connecticut, but the element of deceit would be too conspicuous.

The enthusiasm of the author and his strenuous endeavor to make his subject great, has led him to disclose something that a cautious writer would have concealed. The author continues: "Our soldiers needed the hams and the barrelled pork, so shortly more hogs came to market. The war's end found the new firm much stronger and well stocked with large orders for mess pork sold for future delivery at war time prices, which contracts they filled at much lower cost and to their financial satisfaction. Their guesser was good and they prospered."

Consciously or unconsciously the writer here reveals one of the secrets of the great fortunes that are held out to the rising generation as the prizes

to be desired. But a little analysis may be necessary to make things wholly clear to those who have not learned to think, or those who do not understand financial puzzles.

Observe, then, that a war is on in which our soldiers needed hams so bad that skillful packers made the hog produce four hams. They needed pork so bad that the new firm accumulated, not a stock of pork, but a large stock of orders for pork to be delivered in the future. Putting it plainly, there was then as now an organization where any man with money or credit could sell what he did not have, and buy what he did not expect to accept. Contracts of that sort would be settled by the payment of differences in prices instead of the delivery and acceptance of the actual goods. The new firm foresaw that at the close of the war lower prices were inevitable, and sold pork short to whoever differed with them in opinion; and when settling time came they found they were right in their opinion and the parties on the other side were wrong. So their "contracts were filled at a much lower cost and to their financial satisfaction."

To make it plainer yet, some people thought pork was going higher and they bet with the new firm to that effect and lost. The community was no richer by these transactions. There was no more wealth in the world, but the new firm was financially satisfied and people who transferred their wealth to the new firm were correspondingly dissatisfied.

Some of the courts have held such transactions to be gambling and some of them have decided that it is plain business. People who have tried it thoroughly, even if they are in a measure successful, will, if they are honest, tell you that the whole machinery from beginning to end, is what General Sherman declared war to be, "Hell."

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According to the advertisements, Little Journeys praising this sort of business will be placed in our public schools. Our children will

be taught to look upon the successful gambler as a great man.

That he is a great man no one can deny. The successful speculator has the same elements of greatness that mark all the great warriors and conquerors of history. But is it not time to teach the people, both young and old, that such greatness has filled the world with sorrow and woe and deluged it with blood? that such greatness is built upon the wreck and ruin of the many, and leads away from and not toward the teachings of the Man of Nazareth?

There are other things in this Little Journey that are calculated to mislead the youthful mind—things which emphasize the glory and grandeur of the wealth that can please itself with the distribution of five dollar bills to the man that pleases the distributor, and can recompense itself by strategic ruin of some unfortunate competitor. The real objection to such books is that they are carelessly written and give to youthful readers false impressions of the real truths that underlie human relations. The square deal in economic and political reform is delayed by the false ideals which this book is the means of spreading.

GEO. V. WELLS.

PERIODICALS

"The American Ideal" is a new Single Tax monthly—the issue for July being the fifth—which is published for 20 cents a year and is edited by John H. Meyer, 2588 Seegar avenue, Cincinnati. It is an attractively printed 4-page paper with a variety of good matter.

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The June Chautauquan is a Conservation Number devoted wholly to the history and present status of the movement for the preservation of our nation's natural resources. Most important, there is published in full with many illustrations, the "Inventory of Resources" as given in the report of the National Conservation Commission last January; and this is

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