

THE BLESSING OF BUSINESS

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The Blessing of Business by E. W. Howe

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E. W. HOWE

THE BLESSING OF BUSINESS

*The
Blessing of Business*

By E. W. HOWE

Author of "The Story of a Country Town,"
"A Moonlight Boy," etc.

Crane & Company, Publishers
Topeka, Kansas
1918

"Astounding hypocrisy is the chief symbol of our American, life which leads us habitually, and upon all subjects that most intimately concern us, to formulate two distinct sets of opinions, one of which we mouth magnificently, and the other of which we cherish and put into practice in secret. On the one hand, in almost any field you choose, there is the doctrine that is sweet-sounding; and on the other hand there is the doctrine that will work.—*H. L. Mencken.*

THE BLESSING OF BUSINESS.

I.

The first principle is life ; the second, maintenance of life. The thing of greatest human interest and importance, therefore, is the production and distribution of food, the manufacture of necessities ;

Or what we call *Business*.

Religion, education, art, politics, are all secondary to it, since we live because of our work ; and without life we should need neither salvation, learning, homes, literature, nor anything else. Business is nothing more than food-getting ; incidentally, it

means founding a home, a family, assisting in building a school, a road, a street, and finally, appreciation of a painting, a book, a sermon, or a poem.

Of living creatures, business men are nearest sane ; their philosophy is as accurate as their multiplication table.

All should have ideals they cannot quite reach ; all should be a little high-minded, and accomplish some of the greater good ; but it is business men who know these things may easily be made professional and mischievous.

In thousands of years there has been no advance in public morals, in philosophy, in religion or in politics,

but the advance in business has been the greatest miracle the world has ever known. The business man knows the weakness of propositions ; the danger signs, the failings of men ; he knows how much statements should be discounted, and herein lies his value to the world. The statement is always being made that the business man has no appreciation of anything except money ; he is frankly accused of lack of interest in patriotism, liberty, art, and the finer feelings generally ; it is contended that all he contributes to higher things is coaxed out of him by orators and writers.

The world is full of business men who have as beautiful dreams as the

professionals, but who have learned to know where the absurd begins.

Every great improvement in the world's history is due, directly or indirectly, to the munificence of some man successful in the world's affairs. Every great charitable institution is founded on the surplus earnings of active men, who did good while earning their money, and, having learned philanthropy, closed their lives with a burst of it. Look up the history of nearly any institution of learning or art gallery, and you will find an endowment from a practical man. The men of great learning did not build the institutions in which they teach, although nearly all of them unjustly criticise the men who did.