

# A CONFESSION OF FAILURE —AS A MEANS TO SUCCESS

By JAMES HOWARD KEHLER

I have undertaken a job that is too big for me. I have agreed to advertise a series of books which are so important to every American today that no words of mine can do justice to them.

I have worked for weeks trying to write an advertisement that would make these books seem as important to you as they seem to me. I have failed. That is, I have failed unless this confession of failure succeeds in arresting your attention to such an extent that you will investigate these books and find out for yourself what I am unable to convey to you.

If you will do this, you will find in the books what I found there—and what I am unable to express to you. The reason I am not able to express it is because these books tell the story of America—and because that story is

## THE BIGGEST STORY IN THE WORLD

These books tell the story of the real America—the soul of America—the most thrilling, throbbing, and romantic story of all time.

There is no miracle in all recorded history like the miracle of these United States. And this story never has been told before as it is told in these books, edited by Edwin Markham and called

## "THE REAL AMERICA IN ROMANCE"

You think you know your country?—that you love your country?—that you would be willing to die for your country? No doubt. So did I.

But now I say to you that you do not know your country unless you have read these books. And you do not know yourself. You do not know to what heights and depths your heart can be stirred. You cannot know that exaltation of daily living for your country which makes every man momentarily willing to die for his country, unless you have read these stories of the real America, as edited by EDWIN MARKHAM, the great patriot, poet, and inspired author of "The Man with the Hoe."

## IS AMERICA YOUR RELIGION?

America should be a religion to every American today. It was—and is—a religion to the man who edited these books—and it will be to you and to your children if you will introduce these books to your family circle.

These books express the genius of America—and the heart-throb of America—they express that soul which is the essence of America—they make you literally feel the birth-pangs of this great republic—its growing-pains, its fears, hopes, loves, hates, sacrifices, and triumphs—above all, you will feel its glowing romance, the dying glory of its heroic past, the splendor of its future destiny—if only the traditions of this past be kept untarnished.

When I discovered these books, I arranged with the publishers for a new and better edition—to be sold, despite the advanced cost of materials, at the old price—a price which nets the publisher only the barest margin over the cost of production—just enough to cover the cost of distribution.

I arranged also that all of the money received for the books should go back into more books—and into advertising to distribute the books. I agreed to handle the advertising minus my usual commission, and Marshall Field & Company have agreed to distribute the books for me on a similar basis—a margin to cover only the cost of handling. I have done all of this because I believe my country needs to know these books if the American spirit is to be preserved.

I dare to hope that I can place at least a hundred thousand sets of these books in American homes and schools. If I am a good enough advertising man, I can do it. I have the whole-hearted, patriotic co-operation of the publishers, William H. Wise & Company—and of the retail distributors, Marshall Field & Company, in this effort. The rest is up to me—and to you.

I now ask for your co-operation. I appeal to all of those who can afford it, to buy these books. If you can buy more than one set, do so, and see that they be placed in the hands of some one who cannot afford them. No person in America—young or old—should be denied the inspiration of Edwin Markham's great message—the great message of Americanism—at this crisis in our country's history.

## IN CONCLUSION

I end where I began, so far as having expressed these books to you is concerned. I have failed to express them.

But I cannot believe that the public will ever fail to respond to sincerity—however expressed—and I have tried here merely to tell the truth about my own actions to a new situation—the grim fact of war in a country which is organized for peace—and which must be stimulated quickly and vividly to a realization of its new duties, responsibilities and opportunities.

Mr. Markham's books did this for me. They helped me to realize the shortcomings of my own Americanism, of which I had always felt proud before. They helped me to mobilize my feelings, my family, my business—for whatever war may bring or my country may need.

To advertise these books seemed the first and most valuable service I could render, because advertising is my business and I know something of its power, as well as its technique.

I have myself contributed all that I can afford to this effort. I shall contribute more if I can afford more as time goes on. For I do not intend to quit until every American has had an opportunity to share in the regenerative power of these books.

The present glory of America lies in her heroic past. The story of that past never been told in living words before. Her future splendor must be built on that storied past. The story must become a living, potent part of every day of the daily life of every American man, woman, boy, and girl.

If America will receive this message now—will absorb into her vitals this story of her own great past—the future of America is safe—her bright future assured. I commend these books to you, for yourself and for your children, with all the earnestness of which I am capable. They are for sale in Chicago only by Marshall Field & Company—Retail Book Section—Third Floor.

## THIS MAY INTEREST YOU

It is the story of how I discovered these books

The man who asked me to read the "Real America in Romance" had to insist. The title did not interest me and I did not think the books would. But I finally agreed to try.

I picked a volume at random, and started in after dinner, expecting the book to put me to sleep. I finished it at dawn the next morning—and was reading the next volume before breakfast.

I couldn't quit—and before the next night I found my whole family in a similar state of enthusiasm over these astonishing books with the dull title—a title which now, however, had become luminous with a new light of sparkling romance, fascinating adventure, and renewed idealism and faith.

I laughed and was thrilled—was amused and uplifted—and I don't mind confessing that I wet those books with honest tears in more than one place.

For these books are romance as well as history—history of a new kind—true tales of America strung on a thread of romance that makes each book a complete and thrilling novel.

This is history in unforgettable form—in inspiring form—history in the vital human terms of great loves, dangers, sacrifices and triumphs. The form is that of fiction, but the incidents are facts.

I remember that the first volume I read covered our Civil War period—and the story was that of two star-crossed lovers—one from the South and one from the North—who went through that baptism of fire as only lovers can—separated by circumstance, but bound together by a great and sacrificial love.

Imagine my amazement, after sitting up all night to finish this great love story, to hear from the man who is said to own the best Civil War library in the world—not excepting the Congressional Library—that he considered this book not only the most interesting but the most accurate history of the Civil War ever written!

As I look back now and review the great adventure of reading these books, it seems to me that their outstanding characteristic is their universality of appeal. Mothers and daughters, fathers and sons, seem to be equally interested. I have tested it not only in my own family, but in many others—on plain ordinary folks and on professors of literature, historians, and other sophisticated readers.

I made this test in order to find out whether or not they would affect others as they had affected me.

The verdict was always the same. These books are so interesting that they will keep you up nights—and yet so truly historical and inspirational that you will be a better citizen for reading them.

After my own experience with the books, I went to the publisher—asked him to make a new edition and allow me to advertise the books. I offered to give my time, talent, and as much money as I could afford, to get these books before the public.

I made another discovery then—I found a new type of publisher—new, at least, to me. I found this publisher—William H. Wise—ready to invest a fortune in a new edition of these books—but on one condition only—that nobody—including himself—should make more than the cost of handling out of it.

The new edition has cost tremendously more than any previous edition. The cost of everything that goes into books has increased—on many items more than 100 per cent. In spite of this and of the fact that forty new color plates have been added to the books, the new edition is to be sold at the price of the old—because this publisher does not want a profit on patriotic books in war time.

I found the great retail book section of Marshall Field & Company willing and eager to co-operate in such an enterprise. They listened to my story and immediately placed their great selling resources at my disposal.

That is the story of how I discovered these books—and why I am advertising them.

Getting people to read these books is my idea of PREPAREDNESS—preparedness not only for war, but preparedness for everyday CITIZENSHIP. People who are prepared to live for their country will always be ready to die for it if need be.

Our fathers and grandfathers were always prepared. They knew the history of our country, because they helped to make it—and they loved the thing for which they had sacrificed so much.

We and our children are not fired to love of country by the mere recital of facts. Facts are dry and dull. Never until these books were written has there been a chance for us or our children to re-live the history of our country—to burn with the same emotions that fired our fathers to live heroic lives and—when the time came—to die as heroically as they had lived.

I appeal particularly to parents, to school teachers, to newspaper editors and writers, to ministers, and to all who have to do with the molding of lives into efficient citizenship—to help me with this campaign. I ask you to buy these books, read them, and talk about them—and to induce others to do the same. They will be placed on sale this morning by Marshall Field & Company.

Thank you.

James Howard Kehler

## WHAT SOME REAL AMERICANS SAY ABOUT "THE REAL AMERICA IN ROMANCE"

Admiral Dewey Said.

"I have already read one volume, which I find exceedingly interesting. I anticipate very much pleasure in reading the others."

John D. Shoop, Supt. of the Chicago Schools, says:

"The educational world is indebted to the creators of this work for the new and unique setting which has been given to the events in our nation's history."

Judge Ben B. Lindsey says:

"It is difficult to get young people to read history because they think it is dry. When one has taken up one of these volumes he cannot keep from reading it."

Mrs. Julia G. Scott, President General of the D. A. R., says:

"The heavy debt of gratitude to this great-hearted poet laureate of democracy—Edwin Markham—has been greatly augmented by the appearance of this monumental work, this splendid national epic, full of the poetry and pathos, the wild adventure, splendid heroism, and unrivaled achievements of our glorious history."

Professor Shepardson of the University of Chicago says:

"I can think of nothing better for the home library than this publication. It is certain to be read with enjoyment and profit by the older members of the family as well as the younger."

Georgene Faulkner, "the Story Lady," says:

"It seems to me that this series of books should be in constant use in every home. From our experience, if they are placed in the home they will be in constant use."

Florence Holbrook, Principal, the Forrestville School, says:

"The best work on the history of our country possible to imagine or desire."

Major Rowan, the Man Who Carried "the Message to Garcia," says:

"I congratulate Mr. Edwin Markham and I congratulate the country, on the fact that the necessary lesson of patriotism has been made so easy by such competent hands."

The Literary Digest says:

"These volumes make dry bones stand on feet. They supply dry bones also with flesh and blood, making them breathing figures—active, potent and alive."

R. J. Cuddihy, Publisher, The Literary Digest, says:

"When I took up the first volume, I expected to entertain myself for an hour or two, but was so fascinated by the story that I found myself still reading at 2 A. M., without having noticed the passage of time."

Governor Johnson of Minnesota says:

"I know of no set of books which has given me more satisfaction and keener enjoyment."

Former Vice-President Adlai E. Stevenson, says:

"An inspiration to American youth. Should have an abiding place in every American library."

Clark Howell, Editor of the Atlanta Constitution, says:

"These volumes should occupy a place in every library and I am glad to number them among the books in mine."

A Father Writes:

"My thirteen year old son refused at first to look at the books because he thought they were historical. After being required to read the first two chapters of volume 1 as a punishment, he is so deeply interested that I have to compel him to go to bed and come to his meals."  
N. A. Mattlock, Huntsville, Mo.

## I BELIEVE THAT ABRAHAM LINCOLN

would gladly have given a year of his labor for this opportunity—and would have sat up nights after splitting rails all day—to read these books by the light of a pine knot—as he did to read other great books—and that

## BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

would have walked from New York to Philadelphia—living on crusts of bread for days—for the privilege of buying one such book as these—as he is said to have done for the sake of buying another book.

## THE BIG QUESTION IS

what will you do to get them? The publisher is willing to give them to you on the easiest possible terms. I am willing to put every ounce of advertising talent I possess, and every dollar I can get, into getting you to buy and read them—into getting these wonderful stories into the hearts and lives of the present and the coming generation of Americans.

Even if you must make a sacrifice in order to buy these books, do so—they are worth it.

## Act Today—Only 200 Sets are Available Now

If you want to be sure of immediate delivery, I advise you to act today. The new edition is just off the press and only 200 sets are bound and ready for delivery. These sets ought not to last through the day. There will be plenty of books later—the publishers are rushing delivery as much as possible—but if you want to begin tonight the great adventure of sharing in the destiny of your country—ORDER THESE BOOKS TODAY.

## "THE REAL AMERICA IN ROMANCE"

Edited by EDWIN MARKHAM

The books are on sale in Chicago by

MARSHALL FIELD & CO.—RETAIL BOOK SECTION—THIRD FLOOR

NOTE—Out-of-town inquiries for information should be addressed to the publishers—William H. Wise & Company, 1200 Mallers Building, Chicago