

His Munificent Gift to Orphan Boys a Long Cherished Idea James Young

Another name has been added to the list of America's great donors-- Milton S. Hershey. His gift of a business valued at \$60,000,000 to care for a race of orphan boys has placed him in the forefront of the nation's benefactors. This fortune is unlike any of those given away with free hands in the last few years. It came neither from oil, steel nor finance, but from the modest chocolate bar. The Hershey Industrial School will be a memorial to a man who had a new idea.

What sort of man is he, and what led him to choose his country's waifs as his heirs? Mr. Hershey says that he did not know what to do with his money, that he had a great deal more than he required and wanted it used for a purpose of enduring good. So he picked out the boys who never get a chance and decided to give them one--the biggest chance they have ever had in the history of the world.

He started as a poor boy and has prospered far beyond the visions of most men. But he never forgot his struggle to make a beginning. Once he plowed the very farmlands where his plant now stands. And the little stone school in which he learned his letters rises on the lawn before his mansion. He has converted the theatre of his early struggles into a model industrial town, the home of a great business and thousands of workers. This year the Hershey business will earn about \$4,000,000 and a large part of that is to be the boys' share, as it is likely the fund will multiply instead of decrease. Generations of poor boys as yet unborn will benefit from the daily sales of chocolate bars that run into the millions.

At 66, Mr. Hershey is short, stout, ruddy-faced, gray-haired with a ready smile. He has the look of what is called a practical man. No theories about him, not even in the planning of his school and the gift of his business, but lots of hard thinking according to his own rules. He talks slowly and not very much at any time. Most of his remarks end with an inclusive wave of the hand and the assurance that "You know".

Perhaps you don't, but he leaves the subject there, and looks as though he hoped you would not open another one.

Doubtless the efficiency man would pronounce Mr. Hershey hopeless, with no chance of success, if such an expert were called upon to pass on his methods. According to all the rules, he is old-fashioned. He will not have a telephone in his home or office, and never uses one if he can avoid doing so. He seldom writes a letter, but sends many telegrams. He practically never signs his name and is not an officer in any of his corporations although he owned almost every share of stock until it was turned over in trust for the nation's orphan boys.

And he has other old-fashioned ideas. Every man is honest until found otherwise, and maybe then. He does not believe in watching men or checking them up with a foot rule. Over his desk hangs this motto, "Business is a matter of human service". He says that the success of his business for a half dozen years has surprised him more than anybody else. He had built up a large establishment for which he expected a fair growth. But the rate of progression has exceeded anything he anticipated a decade ago.

It was somewhat difficult to get Mr. Hershey's impressions of his life. There is not much to tell," he said, sitting in his big home on a hill-side at Hershey, Pa. "It has been work for the most part, I guess. My people came to this country from Switzerland in 1709 and settled in Pennsylvania. For more than a century they have lived in this section. I was not an orphan boy, but I had to work. I never got beyond the country schoolhouse. You can see it now, down on the lawn there. When I built this house I bought the school along with the land. I can remember many a day that I sat right in that little stone building. We never had more than twenty scholars and usually fewer. The teacher was strict in those days, but I guess we needed to be kept under a strong thumb."

" Well, when school ended for me, I went to work as a printer's devil, over on the old Lancaster Farmer. I have been trying to buy a copy of that paper of the time I hustled type in its composing room and washed

off the galleys. It was all hand type then, and a fellow had to be mighty careful. I remember one day when I dropped some-- pied it, you know--and I can still hear what the foreman said."

"But printing didn't get along so well with me, or I didn't with printing, whichever way you please. So I became an apprentice confectioner and when I was twenty-one went into business for myself. Every boy should work for himself. Strike out and try to do something. Don't wait for anybody else to do it; go do it yourself. That was my idea in the candy business, but I had a hard time in those days. I was making caramels, starting in Philadelphia, and afterward moving to New York. Things did not progress as they might have done and I gave it up in New York, coming back to Philadelphia, where I started again in 1896. Caramels were my specialty. I thought that I could make better caramels than anybody else ever made. The Lancaster business went well from the start. Before long I was selling caramels faster than I could make them."

That was the day the tissue-wrapped caramel was a familiar confection, sold everywhere in lots of a penny's worth to a dollar box. There were several large manufacturers. They proposed to Mr. Hershey that he join them in a "trust", then also at the height of its fashion. He declined but offered to sell his business. This was promptly accepted and \$1,000,000 paid across the counter. He had arrived.

The sale of the business gave opportunity to explore new trade channels. Mr. Hershey had been manufacturing chocolate to flavor his caramels. Now he turned attention to the production of chocolate as a confection. What is called sweet chocolate had been sold in this country for some time. He developed milk and almond chocolate and put it up in bars, an innovation. The rest is a familiar story. Bar chocolate has grown in favor until it constitutes a mid-day bite for a large number of busy Americans.

It was bar chocolate that built Hershey, Pa. The genius of that town decided that Lancaster was not an acceptable site for the kind of plant he wanted. So he ~~re~~turned to his old home, now in the town of Hershey, and decided that he would build a city where his boyhood was spent. The

full stature of a city is yet to be realized, but Hershey is one of the most charming towns in the State. Certainly it would be hard to find an industrial community that excels it. In any direction the eye turns it is met by pleasant vistas. There are Greek porticos and Colonial doorways, where in most industrial communities nothing but concrete and iron flourish. When the worker in a Hershey factory looks out of the big windows his glance falls on trees, rambling brooks, rustic bridges and flower beds. There are no ash piles, rubbish nor soul-chilling prospects. There is not an ugly house in Hershey and not a forbidden sign. It might be called the town of smiles.

In 1903 Hershey was a range of hills, largely given to farming. Today it has three or four car lines radiating to all the centers roundabout, the big Hershey plant, a trust company, a department store run for the benefit of the community, schools, homes, everything that goes into a model community. Hershey is not an incorporated town, but has a township government. Practically all of it belongs to Mr. Hershey, including his 75 farms scattered in the section near by. Three fourths of his employees own their homes.

How such a great business had been built was a natural question. "We turned out the best chocolate we could make", said Mr. Hershey, "and the business just grew by itself. We never advertise. Not long ago a smart fellow came to us and said something like this: 'If you will give me such and such a percentage of your advertising appropriation, I will produce such and such a result.' But I told him that we had no appropriation, that we did not advertise. He was astounded, wouldn't believe we could do business without advertising. But it is a fact. The best advertising is the right kind of goods. People will learn about them and buy all you can make."

Mr. Hershey began operations at his new town without expert help. His foremen, of course, were highly skilled, but the rank and file of workers came from the country boys and girls living around Hershey. Delicate embossing presses in the printing plant are run by men who learned their trade at the plow handles.

"Take a man of fair intelligence, give him a fair chance, and he soon can learn to do anything that another man of fair intelligence is doing," said Mr. Hershey. "The trouble with this world is the lack of opportunity. If we could find a means of leveling heads in the matter of opportunity, we need not worry about leveling them in the matter of accomplishment. It is the place where a man starts more than where he ends that counts. In many of our big industries they spend a lot of time rubbing up the machinery and the brass doorknobs. Here we are trying to rub up the human element and we do not have brass doorknobs. Almost every problem of business depends on the human side. What business needs is a better understanding of the worker. I believe that we are improving, going a long way ahead all the time, but so much is yet to be done that we cannot mend our ways too fast."

There never has been a labor union in Hershey and never a strike. Every three months each employee with the plant for that period receives an extra dividend on his labor. The payment for the last period amounted to twenty-three per cent of salary already received, and has risen to twenty-six per cent. It is intended to represent one-fourth of the Hershey earnings. From the remaining three-fourths such sums will be deducted as the expansion of the business requires, and the rest added to the Hershey fund. All of the capital stock in the Hershey companies has been made over to this fund, so that the business will continue indefinitely for the benefit of the boys.

Mr. Hershey was asked how he reached the decision disposing of his fortune. "I am 66 years old and do not need much money," he said. "My business has been far more successful than I ever expected it to be. If I should drop out, what would become of the business, the capital and the earnings? As matters have been arranged the business will go right on, a considerable part of the profits to be used for the Hershey Industrial School. The capital, of course, remains intact. Well, I have no heirs--that is, no children. So I decided to make the orphan boys of the United States my heirs. The orphan boys has a harder time than anybody else, you know. There are always relatives or outsiders to take

an orphan girl. Girls are useful in the home and people are glad to get them. But boys are likely to be looked upon as a nuisance. The more spirit they have the bigger the nuisance, from that standpoint. So I want to help those boys. We must start with them when they are young. Our school at present take boys of four or five. We tried the older ones, but their characters were formed and some of them badly formed. There was nothing we could do. As the twig is bent so the tree inclines. We will limit our attention to the little fellows, at least for some time to come, and try to give them the best start possible."

There are 120 boys in the school, which accepted its first charge in 1910. The only conditions are that the newcomer be of the required age, "poor and an orphan," as Mr. Hershey expressed it. He has some well-defined ideas as to what a poor boy should learn. "Our school will provide every boy in its care ~~with~~ a thorough common school education," he said, "supplemented by instruction in the useful crafts. We are teaching the boys agriculture, horticulture, dairying, blacksmith work, the rudiments of electrical work, carpentry and such things. We do not plan to turn them out finished artisans, but to provide a foundation on which they may build. And when they leave us at 18 we will give them \$100 each to begin life. That is more than I had."

It was suggested to Mr. Hershey that the large capital available would have made possible an academic training for most of the orphan boys in the United States. "We do not intend to turn out a race of professors," he replied. "The thing that a poor boy needs is knowledge of a trade, a way to make a living. We will provide him with the groundwork. Academic training is all right but a luxury for poor boys. What service is Latin when a fellow has to hoe a patch or run a lathe? But we expect to develop a plan under which boys of special promise in the academic branches may be sent to college."

Listening to Mr. Hershey discuss his aims, thought of his 66 years slipped away, and his vigor and alertness stood forth. He worked out his plans for the school with the help of his associates. Experts have had no hand in it. Neither has Mr. Hershey any elaborate social system

or any theories to prove. The school will not be a psychological test tube. It is merely a home for orphan boys who have no other place to go. Another of the same kind is planned for Cuba.

"Our boys are our finest possession," said Mr. Hershey. "With them must rest the realization of all those high hopes held by this generation. They are the future itself, growing up before our eyes. And we do not give them the kind of care they should have. Often we hear it said that 'children are not what they used to be.' Well, I have an idea that children are just about what they always have been. Sometimes I wonder if the parents are not different. The biggest influence in a boy's life is what his dad does. He watches him at the dinner table, going off to work, coming home. He knows exactly his dad's way of life and most of his thoughts. When his dad is a fine, brave man, bearing his part of the struggle like a man should, the boy is going to be the same sort of man. But if his dad happens to be shiftless or mean or weak, the boys at his side is shaped the same way. Every boy, good or bad, high or low, feels that his dad is the model of life he should follow. I wish every dad could get that idea into his mind and see what it would do for him. And when a boy doesn't happen to have any sort of dad he is a special mark for destiny. I am afraid that most of our orphan boys have a bad time of it and that many never get the right start. They tell me that the youngsters who go to prison never had a chance. Well, I am going to give some of them a chance, in my way."

Why he gave the business to the boys instead of his employees, perhaps letting them take full control, as had been done in several cases, was a natural question. "I am not certain how the business would have been run," he replied. "It is one thing to have a fine organization under responsible heads and another to let the organization function by itself. I do not know how such an experiment would turn out. It is too big a one for me to undertake. Besides that, our employees really are partners in the business, receiving their fourth interest of the earnings regularly, without any obligation or risk. One of my reasons in creating the plan to carry on the business was the provision of employment for

those who have helped build it up. The business might have been sold some day and their assurance of future happiness spoiled. I did not want that to happen. Another point was this: Most of our employees are grown up and well started in life. I know that they are well off, have all they will require. But these orphan boys we have been talking about have nothing. There are many of them now and many more will follow. Without some kind of help they have no assurances for the future, not even a fair chance for health and schooling. So I think the profits from the business will have larger benefits than if I had given it outright to my employees."

"Suppose you had had two or three sons. Would you still have felt that the business should go to the boys?" "Well," said Mr. Hershey and he paused while the clock ticked loudly in the still room. "My wife and I decided that we ought to do this. She has gone on; did not live to see the plan completed. It was hers and mine. If we had had two or three sons we might have felt different. No man could answer that. But I think that I would have given them what they needed and turned the rest over to the boys. Too much money is an evil influence for a boy. I am certain I would have felt that way about my own. Money spoils more men than it makes. The inheritance of great fortunes is a bad thing. Let us not place any curbs on the creation of fortunes, but we should limit their inheritance, I believe. Yes, I think if I had had those sons you mention I still would have wanted the poor boys to get the business, or most of it. Because they are our boys, you know, after all, whether we happen to be their dads or not."

Assuredly, there could be no more beautiful place for an orphan boy to get his start in life. The school was first opened in the old Hershey homestead, where the donor was born, and now includes a number of buildings. Others are to be added. They rise on the sloping side of a long, rolling hill, with another range two miles across the valley. Wherever the eyes turn there is beauty of sky and nature--wooded hills, a stream in the valley, and pleasant farmlands stretching far away. But best of all, think of an orphan boy having for his guardian a man who gave him as much chocolate as he can eat!

PREFACE

Volumes could be written about the life of Milton Snavely Hershey. However, after many people asked many questions about Mr. Hershey, I decided to write a short story of what I learned from him and about him, during the twenty-one years I was his personal physician. His thoughts, his philosophy and especially his plans for the future of the town and the schools of Derry Township.

It is a sad commentary that so few people really knew Mr. Hershey: a man with body, mind and soul, and all these component parts working together diligently to make this a better world to live in.

This book is written in memory of Mr. Hershey and is not for sale. It is written, not by a journalist but by a small town physician.

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Herman H. Hostetter, A.B., M.S., M.D.

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THE
BODY, MIND AND SOUL
OF
MILTON SNAVELY HERSHLEY



by Herman H. Hostetter

ained in their choice of vocation of trade; not only to make a living, but to live with themselves, as parents and in their place in society.

HIS PLANS FOR THE FUTURE IN EDUCATION-It was during the last week in August, just five of six weeks before Mr. Hershey died, at a professor from one of our State Universities came to see Mr. Hershey. He came because he could not realize how any man who did not go above fourth grade in the public schools could be so extremely interested in education and plan education so far in the future. Mr. Hershey told this professor, "I am going to build a new high school that will be adequate for many, many years to come. In twenty or twenty-five years the demand for trained mechanics and technicians will be so great at the schools will not be able to supply the demand. So, I am going to build a Technical-Vocational School which will surpass any other institution of its kind in the world. In twenty or twenty-five years the colleges and universities will not be able to accommodate all the boys and girls who want to go to college. I am going to build a new Junior College and when the time comes, we will change the Junior College into a four year college and there should be plenty of money here to do it. I will take the ground between Cocoa Avenue, Governor Road and Homestead Road and make a nice campus for these schools. The Technical-Vocational school will be for the boys in the Milton Hershey School, the children in the Derry Township School and the children of my employees." The man from the university was astonished, saying that neither the state nor the federal government ever thought of planning education so far in advance, not even five years. Mr. Hershey repeatedly expressed his wishes to Mr. Staples that his plans for the future should be executed.

The closing of the Hershey Junior College is still a concern among the people of the community and the educational and business people of the State. A reporter from one of the widely read magazines spent an hour with me after the closing of the college to get information as to what Mr. Hershey's plans were for the future education in Hershey. He seemed very anxious for this information and said that the information I gave him confirmed the information he had already received. This article was never published, as to the best of my knowledge. I am still waiting for someone to prove that Mr. Hershey did not wish the Junior College to be continued, to support it, when up to the time of his death the Junior College was his hobby and he was very proud of it. When just weeks before his death he expressed his wishes to the professor from the University. Why, if this was his wish, did they wait so long to fulfill it? Until the doubt in their mind is satisfied, I heard many of the people say, "God bless their soul."

I could not finish my story on the life of Mr. Hershey and live with a clear conscience and a feeling that I broke faith with Mr. Hershey if I would not try to correct some of the information that was given in a feature story in one of our newspapers.

First, that Mr. Hershey channeled his money in a construction program that mixed forethought with improvisation. Mr. Hershey never planned anything in a hurry. He gave months and sometimes years to careful study, investigation, and thought to anything he ever constructed. Because he planned not just for a day, a month, or a year; but, that it would perpetuate itself indefinitely. At least on two occasions he told me he was approached about building a Medical Center in Hershey. He said, "This I would never do because it is not a place for a Medical Center, and I want all of my money for the benefit of my employees and the people of Hershey, for the education of the children in Derry Township and the children of my employees--all my money."

The only time he ever gave any thought or consideration to building any other hospital than the community hospital, was when Dr. Chambers from the Hospital for Crippled Children at Elizabethtown approached him about building a hospital for crippled children in connection with the Milton Hershey School.

Second, that he had small patience with details. Why did he creep around or under the machines in the factory when they were not working properly? Why, in the latter years of his life when driving along the road and he saw something in the field that he had never seen before, did he get out of his car and walk some distance into the field to discover a new sinkhole? When he got too close to the edge, the ground caved in and Mr. Hershey went with it. The driver of the car had to help him out. Why, if he was not concerned with detail, did he drive into the field, when he saw a haystack at an unusual time of the year, to see what it might be hiding? Why, did he and Mr. Staples spend hours concerning the question in Cuba, that they would have to be ready when the occasion arose to get their money invested or lose all of it. Why was he interested in the welfare of every man, woman or child in Derry Township--especially the children and their education?

Third, that Mr. Hershey felt that everything was serene. Mr. Hershey was greatly concerned about the future of the organization, the town and its people. Mr. Hershey said, "If the wrong people or organization get control, they can spend or give away more money in a short time than I have made in my life, to build monuments unto themselves, for their own financial gains, ego and recognition--whose heads would swell and hearts

would shrink, who would give to those who had plenty and take away from those who had little or none. He was worried what might happen to the Milton Hershey School and the Schools of Derry Township.

Fourth, THAT HE WAS IGNORING THINGS OUTSIDE OF DERRY TOWNSHIP. Why, did he give large sums of money to the hospitals in the nearby cities? Why did he give large sums of money to one man in the manufacturing business and another in the quarry business who were going bankrupt before the Second World War? They became millionaires during the war. They did not live in Derry Township. Why did he give aid to another concern who went in business in competition in the chocolate business, giving them sugar and cocoa beans; who without Mr. Hershey's help had to close their factory? Really, most of the people he helped did not live in Derry Township; especially the poor, for they were not as fortunate as the people living in Hershey. Was he ignoring things and people outside of Derry Township when he was approached by men who thought he should build homes for all of his employees who lived outside of the township? Emphatically, Mr. Hershey said, "No, don't you realize what would happen to those towns if I had all my employees living there move into Hershey? They would soon become ghost towns." He tried to help them instead of destroying them. He never wished to destroy, but did his best to build up.

Fifth, THAT HIS GENEROSITY WAS ASTONISHING BUT NOT DEDICATED -- If Mr. Hershey's generosity was not dedicated, then the work of our Good Lord who took care of the sick and the blind along the way was not dedicated. Mr. Hershey gave to the sick, the poor, the hungry and the needy--regardless of their name, their color, their religion or creed, or where they lived. This was his life, his greatest happiness and soul satisfaction. He always wanted to know who needed help. I gave away many more thousands of dollars of his money than he was years old when he died, and at his death the recipients never knew who their benefactor was.

Sixth, that Mr. Hershey's idiosyncrasies were magnified in his latter years; that he was niggardly. That he was niggardly is the gravest insult that can be given to the memory of Mr. Hershey and is as far from the truth as Heaven is from Hell. Here again, I say that he did not believe in giving to those that have and take away from those who had little or none. The cousin who came to see Mr. Hershey on Christmas Day and found him dejected, really was the dejected man when he left Mr. Hershey. The man who came to see Mr. Hershey on Christmas Day had come to ask for an increase in salary, and as Mr. Hershey remarked, "This man thought that

the better the day, the better the deed." Mr. Hershey listened to his story and replied, "If you had not been a relative of mine, I would never have employed you. You have been a liability to the company ever since you have been employed. Now, if you can get a better job with more money, I wish you well." I ask you, did this make Mr. Hershey niggardly?

Seventh, that his associates had to scheme to replace his frayed clothing. Mr. Hershey never wore any frayed clothing. He was always neatly dressed and groomed, as neat as any of his associates and often better. Where this untruth probably originated was when he had planned to go to the shore and found that the seam of his trousers had been ripped for an inch or two. This was not noticeable, but he asked if anyone knew how to use a needle and thread, and if they might repair his trousers, which they did. He said, "There are many people who need a new suit worse than I do." The suit he wore looked like new and was not frayed.

There is only one thing worse than telling a deliberate falsehood, and that is giving circulation to a falsehood which has originated by someone else.

Mr. Hershey believed in paying his employees well for what they were worth, and if they could do better they were at liberty to leave. Very few ever left. They well knew that it was not only their wages or salary paid, but many fine fringe benefits his employees and the people living in Hershey were given. The rents and taxes were low and the rates of the utilities were low. He kept the streets and even the alleys in repair and clean. He put in the sewer and disposal plant. He put in the curbing and the sidewalks. He had the trees and lawns trimmed and mowed. He had the sidewalks cleaned when it snowed. During the depression he sent his attorney, Mr. Snyder, to Washington to get permission to sell his milk to the employees five cents a quart cheaper than the regular market price. He was never granted this permission.

Several of the top officials came to see Mr. Hershey, trying to persuade him that all the officials of the company should get complimentary tickets to all the shows, hockey games and other important amusements coming to Hershey. It was a short meeting. He told them that if he wished to give complimentary tickets he would give them to the men working in the ditch who could not afford to buy tickets for these events and probably never saw a good show.

Mr. Hershey believed, "In this blooming civilization, with its economic setup, relatively few men can afford tailor-made suits or shoes built according to their own lasts. But, there is not a man who can't tailor the garments of his own soul; to get an excellent fit in principles; wearing