

Ida M. Tarbell

History of the Standard Oil Company

Ida Tarbell was one of the little group of crusading journalist - muckrackers, as President Roosevelt called them—who in articles and books exposed the social evils and injustice of the time. Miss Tarbell's most sensational series of articles, written for McClure's magazine beginning in 1903, was on John D. Rockefeller and the beginnings of the Standard Oil Company. Her bold denunciation of Rockefeller was the epitome of the self-made man and the national symbol of the free-enterprise system. Miss Tarbell's expose` of the origins of his company and the methods be used to acquire his fortune caused many reflective Americans to consider the virtues and vices of the free-enterprise system itself. In 1904 Miss Tarbell's articles were collected in a book from which the following selection is taken.

Now, in 1872 Mr. Rockefeller owned a successful refinery in Cleveland. He had the advantage of water transportation a part of the year, access to two great trunk lines the year around. Under such able management as he could give it, his concern was bound to go on, given the demand for refined oil. It was bound to draw other firms to it. When he went into the South Improvement Company, it was not to save his own business but to destroy others. When he worked so persistently to secure rebates after the breaking up of the South Improvement Company, it was in the face of an industry united against them.

It was not to save his business that he compelled the Empire Transportation Company to go out of the oil business in 1877. Nothing but grave mismanagement could have destroyed his business at that moment; it was to get every refinery in the country but his own out of

the way. It was not the necessity to save his business which compelled Mr. Rockefeller to make war on the Tidewater. He and the Tidewater could both have lived. It was to prevent prices of transportation and of refined oil going down under competition. What necessity was there for Mr. Rockefeller trying to prevent the United States Pipe Line doing business? Only the greed of power and money. Every great campaign against rival interests which the Standard Oil Company has carried on has been inaugurated, not to save its life but to build up and sustain a monopoly in the oil industry. These are not mere affirmations of a hostile critic; they are facts proved by documents and figures

Very often people who admit the facts, are willing to see that Mr. Rockefeller has employed force and fraud to secure his ends, justify him by declaring, "It's business." That is, "it's business" has come to be a legitimate excuse for hard dealing, sly tricks, special privileges. It is a common enough thing to hear men arguing that the ordinary laws of morality do not apply in business. Now, if the Standard Oil Company were the only concern in the country guilty of the practices which have given it monopolistic power, this story would never have been written. Were it alone in these methods, public scorn would long ago have made short work of the Standard Oil Company. But it is simply the most conspicuous type of what can be done by these practices. The methods it employs with such acumen, persistency, and secrecy are employed by all sorts of businessmen, from corner grocers up to bankers. If exposed, they are excused on the ground that this is business. If the point is pushed, frequently the defender of the practice falls back on the Christian doctrine of charity, and points that we are erring mortals and must allow for each other's weaknesses!—an excuse which, if carried to its legitimate conclusion, would leave our businessmen weeping on one another's shoulder's over human frailty, while they picked one another's pockets.

One of the most depressing features of the ethical side of the matter is that instead of such methods arousing contempt they are

more or less openly admired. And this is logical. Canonize "business success," and men who make a success like that of the Standard Oil Trust become national heroes! The history of its organization is studied as a practical lesson in money-making. It is the most startling feature of the case to one who would like to feel that it is possible to be a commercial people and yet a race of gentlemen. Of course such practices exclude men by all the codes from the rank of gentlemen, just as such practices would exclude men from the sporting world or athletic field. There is no gaming table in the world where loaded dice are tolerated, no athletic field where men must not start fair. Yet Mr. Rockefeller has systematically played with loaded dice, and it is doubtful if there has ever been a time since 1872 when he has run a race with a competitor and started fair. Business played in this way loses all its sportsmanlike qualities. It is fit only for tricksters...

And what are we going to do about it, for it is our business? We the people of the United States, and nobody else, must cure whatever is wrong in the industrial situation, typified by this narrative of the growth of the Standard Oil Company. That our first task is to secure free and equal transportation privileges by rail, pipe and waterway is evident. It is not an easy matter. It is one which may require operations which will seem severe; but the whole system of discrimination has been nothing but violence, and those who have profited by it cannot complain if the curing of the evils they have wrought bring hardship in turn on them. At all events, until the transportation matter is settled, and right, the monopolistic trust will be with us -- a leech on our pockets, a barrier to our free efforts.

As for the ethical side, there is no cure but in an increasing scorn of unfair play, an increasing sense that a thing won by breaking the rules of the game is not worth the winning. When the businessman who fights to secure special privileges, to crowd his competitor off the track by other than fair competitive methods, receives the same summary disdainful ostracism by his fellows that the doctor of lawyer

who is "unprofessional," the athlete who abuses the rules, receives, we shall have gone a long way toward making commerce a fit pursuit for our young men.



John D. Rockefeller



Ida M. Tarbell

from: mohawic.k12.ny.us/progressive/tarbell1.html

Jacob Riis Discovers How the Other Half Lives

A Danish immigrant, Jacob Riis brought to his adopted country not only intelligence and industry, but faith in the possibility of creating here a more just and more humane social order. As a newspaper reporter he was familiar with life in the slums and the tenements of New York, and as a reformer he was determined to improve the lot of the poor and the underprivileged. *How the Other Half Lives* was a powerful piece of journalism, which did more to dramatize the problem of tenement-house reform than did anything else at that time. President Theodore Roosevelt called Jacob Riis "the best American I ever knew."

New York's wage earners have no other place to live, more is the pity. They are truly poor for having no better homes; waxing poorer in purse as the exorbitant rents to which they are tied, as ever was serf to soil, keep rising. The wonder is that they are not all corrupted, and speedily, by their surroundings. If on the contrary there be a steady working up, if not out of the slough, the fact is a powerful argument for the optimist's belief that the world is after all growing better not worse, and would go far toward disarming apprehension were it not for the steadier growth of the sediment of the slums and its constant menace. Such an impulse toward better things there certainly is. The German ragpicker of thirty years ago, quite as low in the scale as his Italian successor, is the thrifty tradesman or prosperous farmer of today.

The Italian scavenger of our time is fast graduating into exclusive control of the corner fruit stands, while his black-eyed boy monopolizes the bootblackening industry in which a few years ago he was an intruder. The Irish hod carrier in the sec-

ond generation has become a bricklayer, if not the alderman of his ward, while the Chinese coolie is in almost exclusive possession of the laundry business. The reason is obvious. The poorest immigrant comes here with the purpose and ambition to better himself and, given half a chance, might be reasonably expected to make the most of it. To the false plea that he prefers the squalid homes in which his kind are housed there could be no better answer. The truth is his half chance has too long been wanting, and for the bad result he has been unjustly blamed.

As emigration from east to west follows the latitude, so does the foreign influx in New York distribute itself along certain well-defined lines that waver and break only under the stronger pressure of a more gregarious race or the encroachments of inexorable business. A feeling of dependence upon mutual effort, natural to strangers in a strange land, unacquainted with its language and customs, sufficiently accounts for this.

The Irishman is the true cosmopolitan immi-

grant. All-pervading, he shares his lodging with perfect impartiality with the Italian, the Greek, and the "Dutchman," yielding only to sheer force of numbers, and objects equally to them all. A map of the city, colored to designate nationalities, would show more stripes than on the skin of a zebra and more colors than any rainbow. The city on such a map would fall into two great halves, green for the Irish prevailing in the West Side tenement districts and blue for the Germans on the East Side. But intermingled with these ground colors would be an odd variety of tints that would give the whole the appearance of an extraordinary crazy quilt. From down in the Sixth Ward, upon the site of the old Collect Pond that in the days of the fathers drained the hills which are no more, the red of the Italian would be seen forcing its way northward along the line of Mulberry Street to the quarter of the French purple on Bleecker Street and south Fifth Avenue, to lose itself and reappear, after a lapse of miles, in the Little Italy of Harlem, east of Second Avenue. Dashes of red, sharply defined, would be seen strung through the annexed district northward to the city line. On the West Side the red would be seen overrunning the old Africa of Thompson Street, pushing the black of the Negro rapidly uptown, against querulous but unavailing protests, occupying his home, his church, his trade and all, with merciless impartiality. There is a church in Mulberry Street that has stood for two generations as a sort of milestone of these migrations. Built originally for the worship of staid New Yorkers of the old stock, it was engulfed by the colored tide when the draft riots drove the Negroes out of reach of Cherry Street and the Five Points. Within the past decade the advance wave of the Italian onset reached it, and today the arms of United Italy adorn its front. The Negroes have made a stand at several points along Seventh and Eighth Avenues, but their main body, still pursued by the Italian foe, is on the march yet, and the black mark will be found overshadowing today many blocks on the East Side, with One Hundredth Street as the center, where colonies of them have settled recently.

Hardly less aggressive than the Italian, the

Russian and Polish Jew, having overrun the district between Rivington and Division Streets, east of the Bowery, to the point of suffocation, is filling the tenements of the old Seventh Ward to the river front and disputing with the Italian every foot of available space in the back alleys of Mulberry Street. The two races, differing hopelessly in much, have this in common; they carry their slums with them wherever they go, if allowed to do it. Little Italy already rivals its parent, the "Bend," in foulness. Other nationalities that begin at the bottom make a fresh start when crowded up the ladder. Happily both are manageable, the one by rabbinical, the other by the civil law. Between the dull gray of the Jew, his favorite color, and the Italian red, would be seen squeezed in on the map a sharp streak of yellow marking the narrow boundaries of Chinatown. Dovetailed in with the German population, the poor but thrifty Bohemian might be picked out by the somber hue of his life as of his philosophy, struggling against heavy odds in the big human beehives of the East Side. Colonies of his people extend northward, with long lapses of space, from below the Cooper Institute more than three miles. The Bohemian is the only foreigner with any considerable representation in the city who counts no wealthy man of his race, none who has not to work hard for a living or has got beyond the reach of the tenement.

Down near the Battery, the West Side emerald would be soiled by a dirty stain, spreading rapidly like a splash of ink on a sheet of blotting paper, headquarters of the Arab tribe that in a single year has swelled from the original dozen to twelve hundred, intent, every mother's son, on trade and barter. Dots and dashes of color here and there would show where the Finnish sailors worship their *Djumala* (God), the Greek peddlers the ancient name of their race, and the Swiss the goddess of thrift. And so on to the end of the long register, all toiling together in the galling fetters of the tenement. Were the question raised who makes the most of life thus mortgaged, who resists most stubbornly its leveling tendency—knows how to drag even the barracks upward a part of the way at least toward the ideal plane of the home—the

palm must be unhesitatingly awarded the Teuton. The Italian and the poor Jew rise only by compulsion. The Chinaman does not rise at all; here, as at home, he remains stationary. The Irishman's genius runs to public affairs rather than domestic life; wherever he is mustered in force the saloon is the gorgeous center of political activity. The German struggles vainly to learn his trick; his Teutonic wit is too heavy, and the political ladder he raises from his saloon usually too short or too clumsy to reach the desired goal. The best part of his life is lived at home, and he makes himself a home independent of the surroundings, giving the lie to the saying, unhappily become a maxim of social truth, that pauperism and drunkenness naturally grow in the tenements. He makes the most of his tenement, and it should be added that whenever and as soon as he can save up money enough, he gets out and never crosses the threshold of one again.

Hamilton Street, like Water Street, is not what it was. The missions drove from the latter the worst of its dives. A sailors mission has lately made its appearance in Hamilton Street, but there are no dives there, nothing worse than the ubiquitous saloon and tough tenements.

Enough of them everywhere. Suppose we look into one, No. — Cherry Street. Be a little careful, please! The hall is dark, and you might stumble over the children pitching pennies back there. Not that it would hurt them; kicks and cuffs are their daily diet. They have little else. Here where the hall turns and dives into utter darkness is a step, and another, another. A flight of stairs. You can feel your way if you cannot see it. Close? Yes! What would you have? All the fresh air that ever enters these stairs comes from the hall door that is forever slamming and from the windows of dark bedrooms that in turn receive from the stairs their sole supply of the elements God meant to be free but man deals out with such niggardly hand. That was a woman filling her pail by the hydrant you just bumped against. The sinks are in the hallway, that all the tenants may have access—and all be poisoned alike by their summer stench. Hear the

pump squeak! It is the lullaby of tenement house babes. In summer, when a thousand thirsty throats pant for a cooling drink in this block, it is worked in vain. But the saloon, whose open door you passed in the hall, is always there. The smell of it has followed you up. Here is a door. Listen! That short, hacking cough, that tiny, helpless wail—what do they mean? They mean that the soiled bow of white you saw on the door downstairs will have another story to tell—oh! a sadly familiar story—before the day is at an end. The child is dying with measles. With half a chance it might have lived, but it had none. That dark bedroom killed it.

"It was took all of a suddint," says the mother, smoothing the throbbing little body with trembling hands. There is no unkindness in the rough voice of the man in the jumper who sits by the window grimly smoking a clay pipe, with the little life ebbing out in his sight, bitter as his words sound: "Hush, Mary! If we cannot keep the baby, need we complain—such as we?"

Such as we! What if the words ring in your ears as we grope our way up the stairs and down from floor to floor, listening to the sounds behind the closed doors—some of quarreling, some of coarse songs, more of profanity. They are true. When the summer heats come with their suffering they have meaning more terrible than words can tell. Come over here. Step carefully over this baby—it is a baby, spite of its rags and dirt—under these iron bridges called fire escapes, but loaded down, despite the incessant watchfulness of the firemen, with broken household goods, with washtubs and barrels, over which no man could climb from a fire. This gap between dingy brick walls is the yard. That strip of smoke-colored sky up there is the heaven of these people. Do you wonder the name does not attract them to the churches? That baby's parents live in the rear tenement here. She is at least as clean as the steps we are now climbing. There are plenty of houses with half a hundred such in. The tenement is much like the one in front we just left, only fouler, closer, darker—we will not say more cheerless. The word is a mockery. A hundred thousand people lived in rear tene-

ments in New York last year. Here is a room neater than the rest. The woman, a stout matron with hard lines of care in her face, is at the wash-tub. "I try to keep the childer clean," she says, apologetically, but with a hopeless glance around. The spice of hot soapsuds is added to the air already tainted with the smell of boiling cabbage, of rags and uncleanness all about. It makes an overpowering compound. It is Thursday, but patched linen is hung upon the pulley line from the window. There is no Monday cleaning in the tenements. It is washday all the week round, for a change of clothing is scarce among the poor. They

are poverty's honest badge, these perennial lines of rags hung out to dry, those that are not the washerwoman's professional shingle. The true line to be drawn between pauperism and honest poverty is the clothesline. With it begins the effort to be clean that is the first and the best evidence of a desire to be honest.

What sort of an answer, think you, would come from these tenements to the question "Is life worth living?" were they heard at all in the discussion?

JACOB A. RIIS
How the Other Half Lives
1890

from Witness in America, Stephen Ambrose &
Douglas Brinkley, eds.

CHAPTER
17

Section 3

LITERATURE SELECTION *from The Jungle*
by Upton Sinclair

Upton Sinclair's shocking portrayal of Chicago slaughterhouses in the early 1900s, as seen through the eyes of Lithuanian immigrants, raised the public's awareness and prompted Congress to pass the Meat Inspection Act and the Pure Food and Drug Act. How do characters in this novel excerpt respond to working in a meatpacking plant?

Entering one of the Durham buildings, they [Jurgis and Jokubas] found a number of other visitors waiting; and before long there came a guide, to escort them through the place. They make a great feature of showing strangers through the packing plants, for it is a good advertisement. But *ponas* Jokubas whispered maliciously that the visitors did not see any more than the packers wanted them to.

They climbed a long series of stairways outside of the building, to the top of its five or six stories. Here was the chute, with its river of hogs, all patiently toiling upward; there was a place for them to rest to cool off, and then through another passageway they went into a room from which there is no returning for hogs.

It was a long, narrow room, with a gallery along it for visitors. At the head there was a great iron wheel, about twenty feet in circumference, with rings here and there along its edge. Upon both sides of this wheel there was a narrow space, into which came the hogs at the end of their journey; in the midst of them stood a great burly Negro, bare-armed and bare-chested. He was resting for the moment, for the wheel had stopped while men were cleaning up. In a minute or two, however, it began slowly to revolve, and then the men upon each side of it sprang to work. They had chains, which they fastened about the leg of the nearest hog, and the other end of the chain they hooked into one of the rings upon the wheel. So, as the wheel turned, a hog was suddenly jerked off his feet and borne aloft.

At the same instant the ear was assailed by a most terrifying shriek; the visitors started in alarm, the women turned pale and shrank back. The shriek was followed by another, louder and yet more agonizing—for once started upon that journey, the hog never came back; at the top of the wheel he was shunted off upon a trolley, and went sailing down the room. And meantime another was swung up, and then another, and another, until there was a double line of them, each dangling by a foot and kicking in

frenzy—and squealing. The uproar was appalling, perilous to the eardrums; one feared there was too much sound for the room to hold—that the walls must give way or the ceiling crack. There were high squeals and low squeals, grunts, and wails of agony; there would come a momentary lull, and then a fresh outburst, louder than ever, surging up to a deafening climax. It was too much for some of the visitors—the men would look at each other, laughing nervously, and the women would stand with hands clenched, and the blood rushing to their faces, and the tears starting in their eyes.

Meantime, heedless of all these things, the men upon the floor were going about their work. Neither squeals of hogs nor tears of visitors made any difference to them; one by one they hooked up the hogs, and one by one with a swift stroke they slit their throats. There was a long line of hogs, with squeals and lifeblood ebbing away together; until at last each started again, and vanished with a splash into a huge vat of boiling water. . . .

The carcass hog was scooped out of the vat by machinery, and then it fell to the second floor, passing on the way through a wonderful machine with numerous scrapers, which adjusted themselves to the size and shape of the animal, and sent it out at the other end with nearly all of its bristles removed. It was then again strung up by machinery, and sent upon another trolley ride; this time passing between two lines of men, who sat upon a raised platform, each doing a certain single thing to the carcass as it came to him. One scraped the outside of a leg; another scraped the inside of the same leg. One with a swift stroke cut the throat; another with two swift strokes severed the head, which fell to the floor and vanished through a hole. Another made a slit down the body; a second opened the body wider; a third with a saw cut the breastbone; a fourth loosened the entrails; a fifth pulled them out—and they also slid through a hole in the floor. There were men to scrape each side and men to scrape the back; there

were men to clean the carcass inside, to trim it and wash it. Looking down this room, one saw, creeping slowly, a line of dangling hogs a hundred yards in length; and for every yard there was a man, working as if a demon were after him. At the end of the hog's progress every inch of the carcass had been gone over several times; and then it was rolled into the chilling room, where it stayed for twenty-four hours and where a stranger might lose himself in a forest of freezing hogs.

Before the carcass was admitted here, however, it had to pass a government inspector, who sat in the doorway and felt of the glands in the neck for tuberculosis. This government inspector did not have the manner of a man who was worked to death; he was apparently not haunted by a fear that the hog might get by him before he had finished his testing. If you were a sociable person, he was quite willing to enter into a conversation with you, and to explain to you the deadly nature of the ptomaines which are found in tubercular pork; and while he was talking with you you could hardly be so ungrateful as to notice that a dozen carcasses were passing him untouched. This inspector wore a blue uniform, with brass buttons, and he gave an atmosphere of authority to the scene, and, as it were, put the stamp of official approval upon the things which were done in Durham's.

Jurgis went down the line with the rest of the visitors, staring openmouthed, lost in wonder. He had dressed hogs himself in the forest of Lithuania; but he had never expected to live to see one hog dressed by several hundred men. It was like a wonderful poem to him, and he took it all in guilelessly—even to the conspicuous signs demanding immaculate cleanliness of the employees. Jurgis was vexed when the cynical Jokubas translated these signs with sarcastic comments, offering to take them to the secret rooms where the spoiled meats went to be doctored. . . .

With one member trimming beef in a cannery, and another working in a sausage factory, the family had a first-hand knowledge of the great majority of Packingtown swindles. For it was the custom, as they found, whenever meat was so spoiled that it could not be used for anything else, either to can it or else to chop it up into sausage. With what had been told them by Jonas, who had worked in the pickle rooms, they could now study the whole of the spoiled-meat industry on the inside, and read a new and grim meaning into that old Packingtown jest—that they use everything of the pig except the squeal.

Jonas had told them how the meat that was taken out of pickle would often be found sour, and how they would rub it up with soda to take away the smell, and sell it to be eaten on free-lunch counters; also of all the miracles of chemistry which they performed, giving to any sort of meat, fresh or salted, whole or chopped, any color and any flavor and any odor they chose. In the pickling of hams they had an ingenious apparatus, by which they saved time and increased the capacity of the plant—a machine consisting of a hollow needle attached to a pump; by plunging this needle into the meat and working with his foot, a man could fill a ham with pickle in a few seconds. And yet, in spite of this, there would be hams found spoiled, some of them with an odor so bad that a man could hardly bear to be in the room with them. To pump into these the packers had a second and much stronger pickle which destroyed the odor—a process known to the workers as “giving them thirty per cent.” Also, after the hams had been smoked, there would be found some that had gone to the bad. Formerly these had been sold as “Number Three Grade,” but later on some ingenious person had hit upon a new device, and now they would extract the bone, about which the bad part generally lay, and insert in the hole a white-hot iron. After this invention there was no longer Number One, Two, and Three Grade—there was only Number One Grade. The packers were always originating such schemes—they had what they called “boneless hams,” which were all the odds and ends of pork stuffed into casings; and “California hams,” which were the shoulders, with big knuckle joints, and nearly all the meat cut out; and fancy “skinned hams,” which were made of the oldest hogs, whose skins were so heavy and coarse no one would buy them—that is, until they had been cooked and chopped fine and labeled “head cheese!”

It was only when the whole ham was spoiled that it came into the department of Elzbieta. Cut up by the two-thousand-revolutions-a-minute flyers, and mixed with half a ton of other meat, no odor that ever was in a ham could make any difference. There was never the least attention paid to what was cut up for sausage; there would come all the way back from Europe old sausage that had been rejected, and that was moldy and white—it would be dosed with borax and glycerine, and dumped into the hoppers, and made over again for home consumption. There would be meat that had tumbled out on the floor, in the dirt and sawdust, where the workers had

tramped and spit uncounted billions of consumption germs. There would be meat stored in great piles in rooms; and the water from leaky roofs would drip over it, and thousands of rats would race about on it. It was too dark in these storage places to see well, but a man could run his hand over these piles of meat and sweep off handfuls of the dried dung of rats. These rats were nuisances, and the packers would put poisoned bread out for them; they would die, and then rats, bread, and meat would go into the hoppers together. This is no fairy story and no joke; the meat would be shoveled into carts, and the man who did the shoveling would not trouble to lift out a rat even when he saw one—there were things that went into the sausage in comparison with which a poisoned rat was a tidbit. There was no place for the men to wash their hands before they ate their dinner, and so they made a practice of washing them in the water that was to be ladled into the sausage. There were the butt-ends of smoked meat, and the scraps of corned beef, and all the odds and ends of the waste of the plants, that would be dumped into old barrels in the cellar and left there. Under the system of rigid economy which the packers enforced, there were some jobs that it only paid to do once in a long time, and among these was the cleaning out of the waste barrels. Every spring they did it; and in the barrels would be dirt and rust and old nails and stale water—and cartload after cartload of it would be taken up and dumped into the hoppers with fresh meat, and sent out to the public's breakfast. Some of it they would make into "smoked" sausage—but as the smoking took time, and was therefore expensive, they would call upon their chemistry department, and preserve it with borax and color it with gelatin to make it brown. All of their sausage came out of the same bowl, but when they came to wrap it they would stamp some of it "special," and for this they would charge two cents more a pound.

Such were the new surroundings in which Elzbieta was placed, and such was the work she was compelled to do. It was stupefying, brutalizing work; it left her no time to think, no strength for anything. She was part of the machine she tended, and every faculty that was not needed for the machine was doomed to be crushed out of existence. There was only one mercy about the cruel grind—that it gave her the gift of insensibility. Little by little she sank into a torpor—she fell silent. She would meet Jurgis and Ona in the evening, and the three would walk

home together, often without saying a word. Ona, too, was falling into a habit of silence—Ona, who had once gone about singing like a bird. She was sick and miserable, and often she would barely have strength enough to drag herself home. And there they would eat what they had to eat, and afterward, because there was only their misery to talk of, they would crawl into bed and fall into a stupor and never stir until it was time to get up again, and dress by candlelight, and go back to the machines. They were so numbed that they did not even suffer much from hunger, now; only the children continued to fret when the food ran short.

Yet the soul of Ona was not dead—the souls of none of them were dead, but only sleeping; and now and then they would waken, and these were cruel times. The gates of memory would roll open—old joys would stretch out their arms to them, old hopes and dreams would call to them, and they would stir beneath the burden that lay upon them, and feel its forever immeasurable weight. They could not even cry out beneath it; but anguish would seize them, more dreadful than the agony of death. It was a thing scarcely to be spoken—a thing never spoken by all the world, that w not know its own defeat.

They were beaten; they had lost the game, they were swept aside. It was not less tragic because it was so sordid, because it had to do with wages and grocery bills and rents. They had dreamed of freedom; of a chance to look about them and learn something; to be decent and clean, to see their child grow up to be strong. And now it was all gone—it would never be! They had played the game and they had lost. Six years more of toil they had to face before they could expect the least respite, the cessation of the payments upon the house; and how cruelly certain it was that they could never stand six years of such a life as they were living!

Discussion Questions

1. How does Jurgis react to the tour of Durham's meatpacking plant?
2. In your own words, describe how working in a meatpacking plant affects Ona and Elzbieta.
3. In your opinion, which details in this excerpt most convincingly highlighted problems in the meatpacking industry in the early 1900s?
4. Based on your reading of this excerpt, why do you think Sinclair titled his novel *The Jungle*?

Collier's for December 2 1905



The Great American Fraud

By SAMUEL HOPKINS ADAMS

IV-The Subtle Poisons

This article deals with the dangerous powders and other preparations which are sold in large quantities as cures for headache, depression, and similar ailments. It is the fourth article in this series which aims to explain and expose the harm done to the public by the Patent Medicine industry. The next article "Preying on the Incurables," will be published in COLLIER'S for December 23

AN ACETANILID DEATH RECORD

This list of fatalities is made up from statements published in the newspapers. In every case the person who died had taken to relieve a headache or as a bracer a patent medicine containing acetanilid, without a doctor's prescription. This list does not include the case of a dog in Altoona, Pennsylvania, which died immediately after eating some sample headache powders. The dog did not know any better.

Mrs. Minnie Bishop, Louisville, Ky.; Oct. 16, 1903
 Mrs. Mary Cusick and Mrs. Julia Ward,
 of 172 Perry Street, New York City; Nov. 27, 1903
 Frank P. Stock, Scranton, Pa.; Dec. 7, 1903
 C. Frank Henderson, Toledo, O.; Dec. 13, 1903
 Jacob E. Staley, St. Paul, Mich.; Feb. 18, 1904
 Charles M. Scott, New Albany, Ind.; March 13, 1904
 Oscar McKinley, Pittsburg, Pa.; April 13, 1904
 Otis Staines, student at Wabash College; April 13, 1904
 Mrs. Florence Rumsey, Clinton, Ia.; April 23, 1904
 Jenny McGee, Philadelphia, Pa.; May 26, 1904
 Mrs. William Mabee, Leoni, Mich.; Sept. 9, 1904
 Mrs. Jacob Friedman, of Southbend, Ind.; Oct. 19, 1904
 Miss Libbie North, Rockdale, N. Y.; Oct. 26, 1904
 Margaret Hanshan, Dayton, O.; October 29, 1804
 Samuel Williamson, New York City; Nov. 21, 1904
 George Kublish, St. Louis, Mo.; Nov. 24, 1904
 Robert Breck, St. Louis, Mo., Nov. 27, 1904
 Mrs. Harvey Haven, Oriskany Falls, N.Y.; Jan. 17, 1905
 Mrs. Jennie Whyler, Akron, O.; April 3, 1905
 Mrs. Augusta Strothmann, St. Louis, Mo.; June 20, 1905
 Mrs. Mary Bispels, Philadelphia, Pa.; July 2, 1905
 Mrs. Thos. Patterson, Huntington, W. Va.; Aug 15, 1905

Some of these victims died from alleged overdose; others from the prescribed dose. In almost every instance the local papers suppressed the name of the fatal remedy.

IGNORANCE and credulous hope make the market for most proprietary remedies. Intelligent people are not given largely to the use of the glaringly advertised cure-alls, such as liquezone or Peruna. Nostrums there are, however, which reach the thinking classes as well as the readily gulled. Depending, as they do, for their success upon the lure of some subtle drug concealed under a trade-mark name, or some opiate not readily obtainable under its own label, these are the most dangerous of all quack medicines, not only in their immediate effect, but because they create enslaving appetites, sometimes obscure and difficult of treatment, most often tragically obvious. Of these concealed drugs the headache powders are the most widely used, and of the headache powders, rangeine is the most conspicuous.

Orangeine prints its formula. It is therefore, its proprietors claim, not a secret remedy. But to all intents and purposes *it* is secret, because to the uninformed public the vitally important word "acetanilid" in the formula means little or nothing. Worse than its secrecy is its policy of careful and dangerous deception. Orangeine, like practically all the headache powders, is simply a mixture of acetanilid with less potent drugs. Of course, there is no orange in it, except the orange hue of the boxes and wrappers which is its advertising symbol. But this is an unimportant deception. The wickedness of the fraud lies in this: That whereas the nostrum, by virtue of its acetanilid content, thins the blood, depresses the heart, and finally undermines the whole system, it claims *to strengthen the heart and to produce better blood*. Thus far in the patent medicine field I have not encountered so direct and specific an inversion of the true facts.

Recent years have added to the mortality records of our cities a surprising and alarming number of sudden deaths from heart failure. In the year 1902 New York City alone reported a death rate from this cause of 1.34 per thousand of population; that is, about six times as great as the typhoid fever death record. It was about that time that the headache powders were being widely advertised and there is every reason to believe that the increased mortality, which is still in evidence, is due largely to the secret weakening of the heart by acetanilid. Occasionally, a death occurs so definitely traceable to this poison that there is no room for doubt, as in the following report by Dr. J. L. Miller of Chicago, in the "Journal of the American Medical Association," upon the death of Miss Frances Robson:

"I was first called to see the patient, a young lady, physically sound, who had been taking Orangeine powders for a number of weeks for insomnia. The rest of the family noticed that she was very blue, and for this reason I was called. When I saw the patient she complained of a sense of faintness and inability to keep warm. At this time she had taken a box of six Orangeine powders within about eight hours. She was warned of the danger of continuing the indiscriminate use of the remedy, but insisted that many of her friends had used it and claimed that it was harmless. The family promised to see that she did not obtain any more of the remedy. Three days later, however, I was called to the house and found the patient dead. The family said that she had gone to her room the evening before in her usual health. The next morning, the patient not

appearing, they investigated and found her déad. The case was reported to the coroner, and the coroner's verdict was "Death was from the effect of an overdose of Orangeine powders administered by her own hand, whether accidentally or otherwise, unknown to the jury."

Last July an eighteen-year-old Philadelphia girl got a box of Orangeine powders at a drub store, having been told that they would cure headache. There was nothing on the label or in the printed matter inclosed with the preparation warning her of the dangerous character of the nostrum. Following the printed advice, she took two powders. In three hours she was dead. Coroner Dugan's verdict follows:

"Mary A. Bispels came to her death from kidney and heart disease, aggravated by poisoning by acetanilid taken in Orangeine headache powders."

(top)

Prescribing Without Authority

Yet this poison is being recommended every day by people who know nothing of it and nothing of the susceptibility of the friends to whom they advocate it. For example, here is a testimonial from the Orangeine booklet:

"Miss A. A. Phillips, 66 Powers Street, Brooklyn, writes: 'I always keep Orangeine in my desk at school, and through its request applications to the sick, I am called both "doctor and magician."'"

If the school herein referred to is a public frequent, the matter is one for the Board of Education; if a private school, for the Health Department of the County Medical Society. That a school teacher should be allowed to continue giving, however well-meaning her foolhardiness may be, a harmful and possibly fatal dose to the children intrusted to her care, seems rather a significant commentary on the quality of watchfulness in certain institutions.

Obscurity as to the real nature of the drug, fostered by careful deception, is the safeguard of the acetanilid vender. Were its perilous quality known, the headache powder would hardly be so widely used. And were the even more important fact that the use of these powders becomes a habit, akin to the opium or cocaine habits, understood by the public, the repeated sales which are the basis of Orangeine's prosperity would undoubtedly be greatly cut down. Orangeine fulfils the prime requisite of a patent medicine in being a good "repeater." Did it not foster its own demand in the form of a persistent craving, it would hardly be profitable. Its advertising invites to the formation of an addiction to the drug. "Get the habit," it might logically advertise, in imitation of a certain prominent exploitation along legitimate lines. Not only is its value as a cure for nervousness and headaches insisted upon, but its prospective dupes are advised to take this powerful drug as a *bracer*.

"When, as often, you reach home, tired in body and mind...take an Orangeine powder-lie down for thirty-minutes nap-if possible-anyway, relax, then take another."

"To induce sleep, take an Orangeine powder immediately before retiring. When wakeful, an Orangeine powder will have a normalizing, quieting effect."

It is also recommended as a good thing to begin the day the day's work on in the morning-that is take Orangeine night, morning and between meals!

The powders pretend to cure asthma, biliousness, headaches, colds, catarrh, and grip (dose: powder every four hours during the day for a week! - a pretty fair start on the Orangeine habit). diarrhea, hay fever, insomnia, influenza, neuralgia, seasickness, and sciatica.

Of course, they do not cure any of these; they do practically nothing but give temporary relief by depressing the heart. With the return to normal conditions of blood circulation comes a recurrence of the nervousness, headache, or whatnot, and the incentive to more of the drug until it becomes a necessity. In my own acquaintance, I know half a dozen persons who have come to depend on one or another of these headache preparations to keep them going. One young woman whom I have in mind told me quite innocently that she had been taking five or six Orangeine powders a day for several months, having changed from Koehler's Powders when someone told her they were dangerous! Because of her growing paleness her husband had called in their physician, but neither of them had mentioned the little matter of the nostrum, having accepted with a childlike faith the asseverations of its beneficent qualities. Yet they were of an order of intelligence that would scoff at the idea of drinking Swamp Root or Peruna. That particular victim had the beginning of the typical blue skin, pictured in the street-car advertisements of Orangeine (the advertisements are a little mixed, as they put the blue hue on the "before-taking," whereas it should go on the "after-taking"). And, by the way, I can conscientiously recommend Orangeine, Koehler's Powders, Royal Pain Powders, and others of that class to women who wish for a complexion of a dead, pasty white, verging to a puffy blueness under the eyes and about the lips. Patient use of these drugs will even produce an interesting and picturesque, if not intrinsically beautiful, purplish-gray hue of the face and neck. *(top)*

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Lincoln Steffens

From *The Shame of the Cities*

Perhaps the most influential of the muckrakers was Lincoln Steffens. Steffens' articles were published in McClure's magazine in 1902 and 1903 and then collected in The Shame of the Cities, published in 1904

The commercial spirit is the spirit of profit, not patriotism; of credit, not honor; of individual gain, not national prosperity; of trade and dickering, not principle. "My business is sacred " says the business man in his heart.

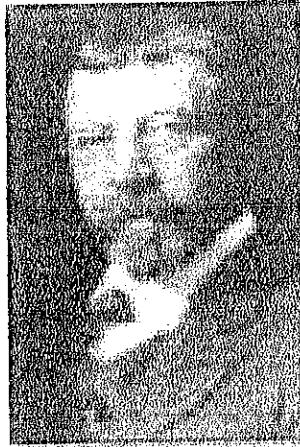
"Whatever prospers my business, is good; it must be. Whatever hinders it, is wrong; it must be. A bribe is bad, that is, it is a bad thing to take; but it is not so bad to give one, not if it is necessary to my business." "Business is business" is not a political sentiment, but our politician has caught it. He takes essentially the same view of the bribe, only he saves his self-respect by piling all his contempt upon the bribe-giver and he has the great advantage of candor. "It is wrong, maybe," he says, "but if a rich merchant can afford to do business with me for the sake of a convenience or to increase his already great wealth, I can afford, for the sake of living, to meet him half way. I make no pretensions to virtue, not even on Sunday."

And as for giving bad government or good, how about the merchant who gives bad goods or good goods, according to the demand? But there is hope, not alone despair, in the commercialism of our politics. If our political leaders are to be always a lot of political merchants, they will supply any demand we may create. All we have to do is to establish a steady demand for good government. The boss has us split up into parties. To him parties are nothing but means to his corrupt ends. He "bolts" his party, but we must not; the bribe-giver changes his party, from one election to another, from one county to another, from one city to another, but the honest voter must not.

Why? Because if the honest voter cared no more for his party than the politician and the grafter, their the honest vote would govern, and that would be bad—for graft. It is idiotic, this devotion to a machine that is used to take our sovereignty from us.

If we would leave parties to the politicians, and would vote not for the party, not even for men, but for the city, and the State, and the nation, we should rule parties, and cities, and States, and nation. If we would vote in mass on the more promising ticket, or, if the two are equally bad, would throw out the party that is in, and wait till the next election and then throw out the other party that is in—then, I say, the commercial politician would feel a demand for good government and he would supply it. That process would take a generation or more to complete, for the politicians now really do not know what good government is. But it has taken as long to develop bad

government, and the politicians know what that is. If it would not "go," they would offer something else, and, if the demand were steady, they, being so commercial, would "deliver the goods."



From: www.edheritage.org/1910/teach/1904steffens.htm