



American Leaders and Heroes: A preliminary text-book in United States History

Wilbur Fisk Gordy

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In teaching history to boys and girls from ten to twelve years old simple material should be used. Children of that age like action. They crave the dramatic, the picturesque, the concrete, the personal. When they read about Daniel Boone or Abraham Lincoln they do far more than admire their hero. By a mysterious, sympathetic process they so identify themselves with him as to feel that what they see in him is possible for them. Herein is suggested the ethical value of history. But such ethical stimulus, be it noted, can come only in so far as actions are translated into the thoughts and feelings embodied in the actions. In this process of passing from deeds to the hearts and heads of the doers the image-forming power plays a leading part. Therefore a special effort should be made to train the sensuous imagination by furnishing picturesque and dramatic incidents, and then so skilfully presenting them that the children may get living pictures. This I have endeavored to do in the preparation of this historical reader, by making prominent the personal traits of the heroes and leaders, as they are seen, in boyhood and manhood alike, in the environment of their everyday home and social life.

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