

A VISIT TO MR. HUGHES

By BRUCE BARTON

THE edition of "Who's Who in America" for 1900 did not contain the name of Charles Evans Hughes. The volume of Poole's "Index" that ends with 1904 shows not one single magazine article written about him.

But one year later—in 1905—his name was a household word; two years later he was Governor of New York; and a few months thereafter narrowly escaped nomination for the Presidency.

There ought to be an inspiration in that for every young man in the United States; an inspiration, and a moral.

The inspiration is the proof that, in spite of the tremendous growth of the country, the complex organization of business, and the long start with which some men are born over others, Opportunity is just as big to-day as it ever was.

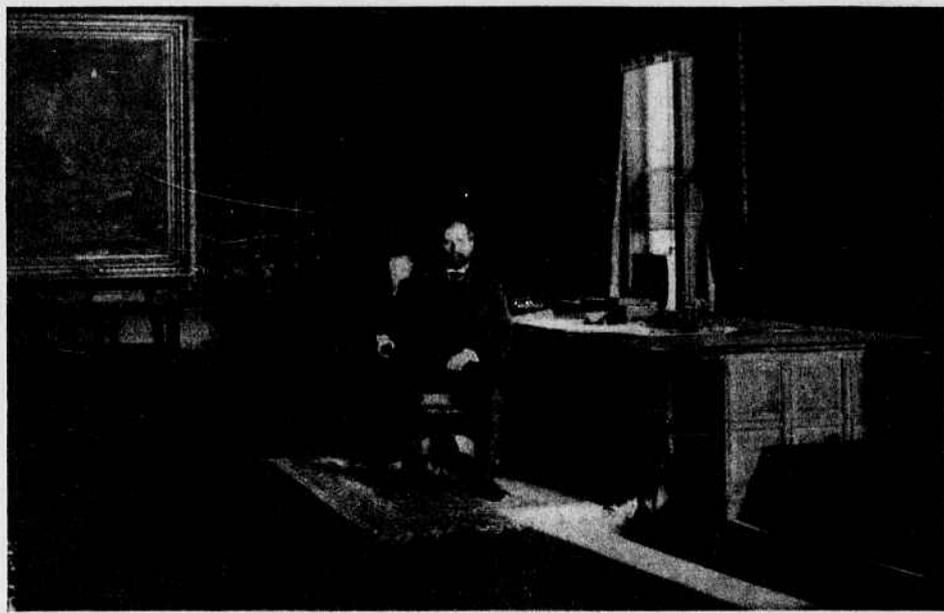
Lincoln's law office in Springfield was a no more unlikely place for the lightning to strike in 1860 than Hughes' law office in New York in 1905. Lincoln had at least been a member of the State and national legislatures. Hughes had been nothing with any publicity attached to it. He was utterly unknown outside the ranks of his college, his profession, and his church.

The moral is this: There is only one thing for a man to do in this world—to deliver the goods and keep himself fit. The fool hires a press agent, joins many clubs, and wears himself out trying to look for Opportunity. The wise man uses only one form of advertisement—consistent, steady results in his job, whatever it happens to be, careful meantime to keep himself physically well and mentally growing. And when Opportunity comes to him, he is ready to make more progress in a single year than most men make in a lifetime.

I HAVE talked with Mr. Hughes only twice. The first time was in Chicago, when, as Governor of New York, he had been invited to deliver the speech at the Washington's Birthday celebration held under the auspices of the Union League Club. It was a holiday, and there are fifty golf clubs within a few miles of Chicago; yet the Auditorium was packed. We had heard of this new comet who had flashed across the eastern horizon, and we came out to be shown. We wanted to know what manner of man he was.

And we were satisfied. Grover Cleveland, McKinley, Roosevelt, Lodge—most of the big men of the day had been invited to deliver that annual address in former years. There were many men in the Hughes audience who had heard them all. And I remember one of them saying to me that never from that platform had he heard an abler address. The logic was perfect. The delivery was not that of a practised orator. There was, in fact, no oratory at all. Just a strong man standing solidly on his feet, and talking out in a voice that filled the theater and had an honest twang in it.

Afterward I met him for a moment. I was



"It has become first nature with him to face facts squarely and decide upon them, no matter what the decision may mean to his fortunes or those of his friends."

only a kid, of course, just out of college; and he was Governor of the Empire State; it wasn't to be expected that he would pay much attention to me. But when I had met Teddy a little while before I had sort of thrilled with the experience for hours. Mr. Hughes didn't make me feel that way. I admired him. But I would have charged up San Juan Hill or swam the River of Doubt in December if Teddy had given the word.

Hughes was almost too admirable, too perfect. Logic 100%; deportment 100%; efficiency 100%; good old-fashioned deviltry 0. Not one redeeming vice. I would have voted for him for any office he might ask for, but I wouldn't have cheered my head off for him.

I set down this experience of ten years ago in some detail, because I want to contrast it with the entirely different experience I had with him a few weeks back. The years have dealt kindly with Mr. Hughes. He is a bit stouter; his beard is shorter, and gray instead of red; and there is a bald spot of considerable dimensions on the top of his head. But he has mellowed wonderfully. I can't explain it. I have seen the Supreme Court in session often. I can't understand how any man could have dozed with it for years and come out more human than when he went in. But Governor Hughes has done it. There is a sparkle in his eye and a charm in his smile and laugh that were not there ten years ago. I would have dreaded a little to be shut up alone for very long with the Hughes of ten years ago; but I want to serve notice on him right now that if the Hughes of to-day ever invites me to go fishing with him I am going to accept.

It was a busy morning on which I saw him last. He had delivered his speech of acceptance the night before, and every man that had the slightest chance of getting by the doorkeeper had crowded in to congratulate him on it or tell him how he could have made it better. I went in just behind a famous college president and a United States Senator, and just before a couple of Congressmen and a Governor. We were the successful ones, and as we passed by the doughty Major who guarded the door, we received pathetic

glances from the horde of the unsuccessful—the drooping, shabby, ever hopeful crowd that always gathers about a candidate's headquarters. Old politicians, their whiskers tinted with tobacco juice; negro gentlemen from the South, wearing celluloid collars and promising to put Mississippi into the Republican column if only they could have a word with Mr. Hughes; serious-looking men with a mission, wanting indorsement—these the candidate has always with him. And this year the number is doubled, for women are in national politics; and women with a mission were there, each with the millenium neatly wrapped up and tucked under her arm.

I shot some questions at him, some very pertinent questions. He jumped at them like a full-back jumping for the ball. His answers

were quick, decisive, clean cut as diamonds. It was fun to see his mind work, and his eye sparkle as he scored a point. Only a mind in a perfectly healthy body can work like that. Mr. Hughes' body is healthy; he has kept himself in splendid shape. His eye showed that he had slept soundly in spite of the excitement of the night before. Indeed, there was no trace of that night's work upon him except a slight huskiness in his voice.

I sometimes worry about my youngster (age nine months) because he is so distressingly healthy. I am afraid he will never be a famous man. All famous men seem to have been started out with a very small reservoir of physical strength. Mr. Roosevelt was a delicate lad; Wilson's parents did not let him learn to read until he was nine years old; and Hughes had so little excess energy that for years after he began the practice of law he was compelled to take long summer vacations in Switzerland, and was able only by the utmost care to make his strength meet the demands upon it. Both the President and Mr. Hughes to-day are a splendid testimony to what years of clean living can do.

HUGHES, like the President, was born in a preacher's household. Only one story has come down from his boyhood, and that one he would probably like to suppress. It is to the effect that at five years of age he protested against the primary schoolteacher who had him in charge because "she went over the same things too many times," and presented to his father "Charles Hughes' Plan of Study." His father approved the plan and allowed Charles to follow it for the next few years.

He graduated from Brown University, studied law, and began practice in New York. No wealthy friends, no fortune, no family connections—just one poor young lawyer among the thousands and thousands in New York, all with the same education and equipment. Good night, Mr. Hughes.

But along about 1905 an investigation was authorized into the history and operations of the Consolidated Gas Company of New York. The committee having the investigation in charge began looking around for an attorney. It was a good