

Random Reminiscences of Men and Events

by

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Chapter 6

The Difficult Art of Giving

It is, no doubt, easy to write platitudes and generalities about the joys of giving, and the duty that one owes to one's fellow men, and to put together again all the familiar phrases that have served for generations whenever the subject has been taken up.

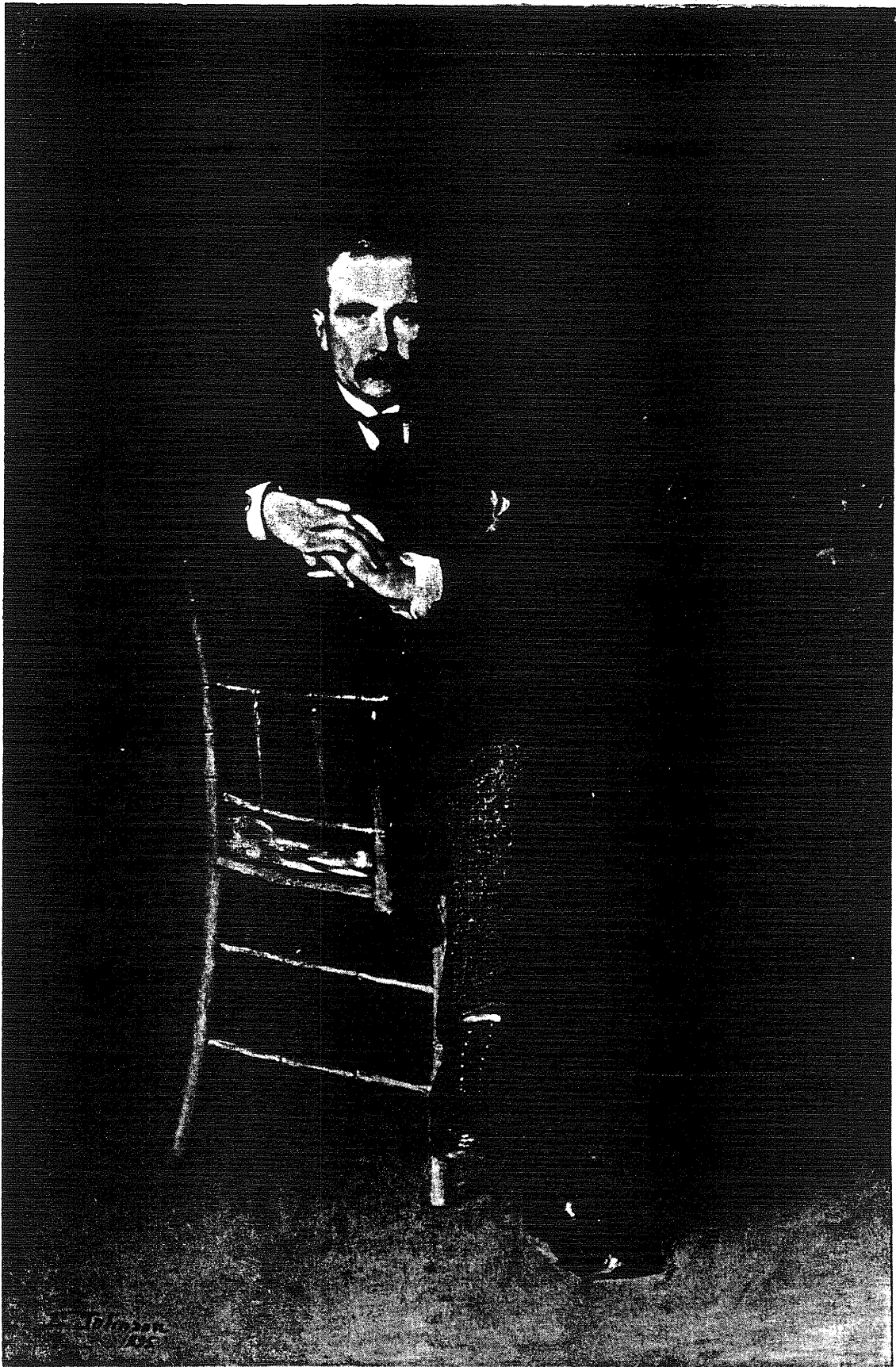
I can hardly hope to succeed in starting any new interest in this great subject when gifted writers have so often failed. Yet I confess I find much more interest in it at this time than in rambling on, as I have been doing, about the affairs of business and trade. It is most difficult, however, to dwell upon a very practical and businesslike side of benefactions generally, without seeming to ignore, or at least to fail to appreciate fully, the spirit of giving which has its source in the heart, and which, of course, makes it all worthwhile.

In this country we have come to the period when we can well afford to ask the ablest men to devote more of their time, thought, and money to the public well-being. I am not so presumptuous as to attempt to define exactly what this betterment work should consist of. Every man will do that for himself, and his own conclusion will be final for himself. It is well, I think, that no narrow or preconceived plan should be set down as the best.

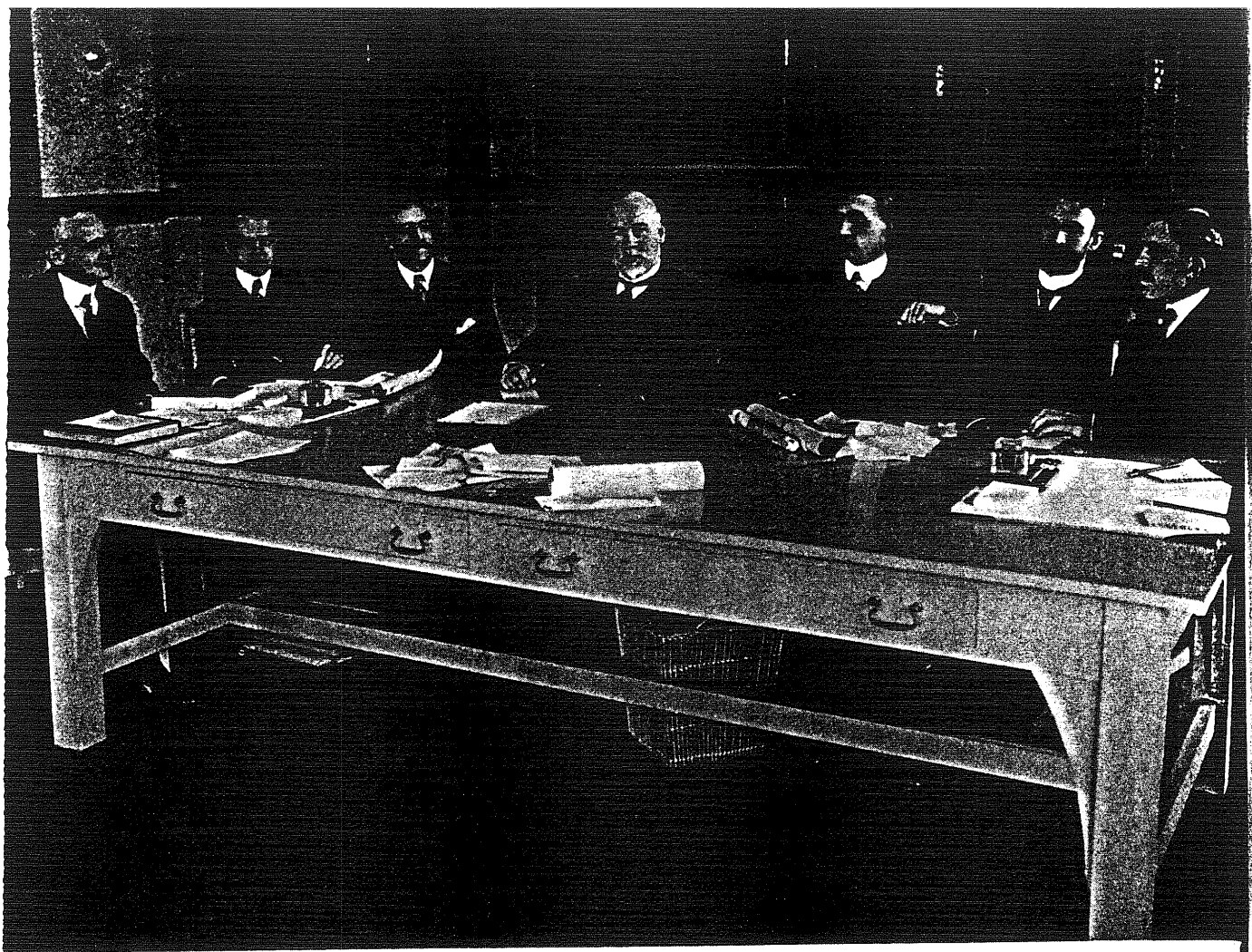
I am sure it is a mistake to assume that the possession of money in great abundance necessarily brings happiness. The very rich are just like all the rest of us; and if they get pleasure from the possession of money, it comes from their ability to do things which give satisfaction to someone besides themselves.

Limitations of the Rich

The mere expenditure of money for things, so I am told by those who profess to know, soon palls upon one. The novelty of being able to purchase



The Eastman Johnson portrait of Mr. Rockefeller, completed in 1895.



Dr. Simon Flexner, Dr. L. Emmett Holt, Dr. T. Mitchell Prudden, Dr. William H. Welch, Dr. Christian A. Herter, Dr. Theobald Smith, and Dr. Herman M. Biggs: The Board of Directors of the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research in 1908.

anything one wants soon passes, because what people most seek cannot be bought with money. These rich men we read about in the newspapers cannot get personal returns beyond a well-defined limit for their expenditure. They cannot gratify the pleasures of the palate beyond very moderate bounds, since they cannot purchase a good digestion; they cannot lavish very much money on fine raiment for themselves or their families without suffering from public ridicule; and in their homes they cannot go much beyond the comforts of the less wealthy without involving them in more pain than pleasure. As I study wealthy men, I can see but one way in which they can secure a real equivalent for money spent, and that is to cultivate a taste for giving where the money may produce an effect which will be a lasting gratification.

A man of business may often most properly consider that he does his share in building up a property which gives steady work for few or many people; and his contribution consists in giving to his employees good working conditions, new opportunities, and a strong stimulus to good work. Just so long as he has the welfare of his employees in his mind and follows his convictions, no one can help honoring such a man. It would be the narrowest

sort of view to take, and I think the meanest, to consider that good works consist chiefly in the outright giving of money.

The Best Philanthropy

The best philanthropy, the help that does the most good and the least harm, the help that nourishes civilization at its very root, that most widely disseminates health, righteousness, and happiness, is not what is usually called charity. It is, in my judgment, the investment of effort or time or money, carefully considered with relation to the power of employing people at a remunerative wage, to expand and develop the resources at hand, and to give opportunity for progress and healthful labor where it did not exist before. No mere money-giving is comparable to this in its lasting and beneficial results.

If, as I am accustomed to think, this statement is a correct one, how vast indeed is the philanthropic field! It may be urged that the daily vocation of life is one thing, and the work of philanthropy quite another. I have no sympathy with this notion. The man who plans to do all his giving on Sunday is a poor prop for the institutions of the country.

The excuse for referring so often to the busy man of affairs is that his help is most needed. I know of men who have followed out this large plan of developing work, not as a temporary matter, but as a permanent principle. These men have taken up doubtful enterprises and carried them through to success often at great risk, and in the face of great skepticism, not as a matter only of personal profit, but in the larger spirit of general uplift.

Disinterested Service the Road to Success

If I were to give advice to a young man starting out in life, I should say to him: If you aim for a large, broad-gauged success, do not begin your business career, whether you sell your labor or are an independent producer, with the idea of getting from the world by hook or crook all you can. In the choice of your profession or your business employment, let your first thought be: Where can I fit in so that I may be most effective in the work of the world? Where can I lend a hand in a way most effectively to advance the general interests? Enter life in such a spirit, choose your vocation in that way, and you have taken the first step on the highest road to a large success. Investigation will show that the great fortunes which have been made in this country, and the same is probably true of other lands, have come to men who have performed great and far-reaching economic services—men who, with great faith in the future of their country, have done most for the development of its resources. The man will be most successful who confers the greatest service on the world. Commercial enterprises that are needed by the public will pay. Commercial enterprises that are not needed fail, and ought to fail.

On the other hand, the one thing which such a business philosopher would be most careful to avoid in his investments of time and effort or money, is

the unnecessary duplication of existing industries. He would regard all money spent in increasing needless competition as wasted, and worse. The man who puts up a second factory when the factory in existence will supply the public demand adequately and cheaply is wasting the national wealth and destroying the national prosperity, taking the bread from the laborer and unnecessarily introducing heartache and misery into the world.

Probably the greatest single obstacle to the progress and happiness of the American people lies in the willingness of so many men to invest their time and money in multiplying competitive industries instead of opening up new fields, and putting their money into lines of industry and development that are needed. It requires a better type of mind to seek out and to support or to create the new than to follow the worn paths of accepted success; but here is the great chance in our still rapidly developing country. The penalty of a selfish attempt to make the world confer a living without contributing to the progress or happiness of mankind is generally a failure to the individual. The pity is that when he goes down he inflicts heartache and misery also on others who are in no way responsible.

The Generosity of Service

Probably the most generous people in the world are the very poor, who assume each other's burdens in the crises which come so often to the hard pressed. The mother in the tenement falls ill and the neighbor in the next room assumes her burdens. The father loses his work, and neighbors supply food to his children from their own scanty store. How often one hears of cases where the orphans are taken over and brought up by the poor friend whose benefaction means great additional hardship! This sort of genuine service makes the most princely gift from superabundance look insignificant indeed. The Jews have had for centuries a precept that one-tenth of a man's possessions must be devoted to good works, but even this measure of giving is but a rough yardstick to go by. To give a tenth of one's income is well-nigh an impossibility to some, while to others it means a miserable pittance. If the spirit is there, the matter of proportion is soon lost sight of. It is only the spirit of giving that counts, and the very poor give without any self-consciousness. But I fear that I am dealing with generalities again.

The education of children in my early days may have been straightlaced, yet I have always been thankful that the custom was quite general to teach young people to give systematically of money that they themselves had earned. It is a good thing to lead children to realize early the importance of their obligations to others but, I confess, it is increasingly difficult; for what were luxuries then have become commonplaces now. It should be a greater pleasure and satisfaction to give money for a good cause than to earn it, and I have always indulged the hope that during my life I should be able to help establish efficiency in giving so that wealth may be of greater use to the present and future generations.

Perhaps just here lies the difference between the gifts of money and of

service. The poor meet promptly the misfortunes which confront the home circle and household of the neighbor. The giver of money, if his contribution is to be valuable, must add service in the way of study and he must help to attack and improve underlying conditions. Not being so pressed by the racking necessities, it is he that should be better able to attack the subject from a more scientific standpoint; but the final analysis is the same: his money is a feeble offering without the study behind it which will make its expenditure effective.

Great hospitals conducted by noble and unselfish men and women are doing wonderful work; but no less important are the achievements in research that reveal hitherto unknown facts about diseases and provide the remedies by which many of them can be relieved or even stamped out.

To help the sick and distressed appeals to the kindhearted always, but to help the investigator who is striving successfully to attack the causes which bring about sickness and distress does not so strongly attract the giver of money. The first appeals to the sentiments overpoweringly, but the second has the head to deal with. Yet I am sure we are making wonderful advances in this field of scientific giving. All over the world the need of dealing with the questions of philanthropy with something beyond the impulses of emotion is evident, and everywhere help is being given to those heroic men and women who are devoting themselves to the practical and essentially scientific tasks. It is a good and inspiring thing to recall occasionally the heroism, for example, of the men who risked and sacrificed their lives to discover the facts about yellow fever, a sacrifice for which untold generations will bless them; and this same spirit has animated the professions of medicine and surgery.

Help to Scientific Research

How far may this spirit of sacrifice properly extend? A great number of scientific men every year give up everything to arrive at some helpful contribution to the sum of human knowledge, and I have sometimes thought that good people who lightly and freely criticize their actions scarcely realize just what such criticism means. It is one thing to stand on the comfortable ground of placid inaction and put forth words of cynical wisdom, and another to plunge into the work itself and through strenuous experience earn the right to express strong conclusions.

For my own part, I have stood so much as a placid onlooker that I have not had the hardihood even to suggest how people so much more experienced and wise in those things than I should work out the details even of those plans with which I have had the honor to be associated.

There has been a good deal of criticism, no doubt sincere, of experiments on living dumb animals, and the person who stands for the defenseless animal has such an overwhelming appeal to the emotions that it is perhaps useless to allude to the other side of the controversy. Dr. Simon Flexner, of the Institute for Medical Research, has had to face exaggerated and even



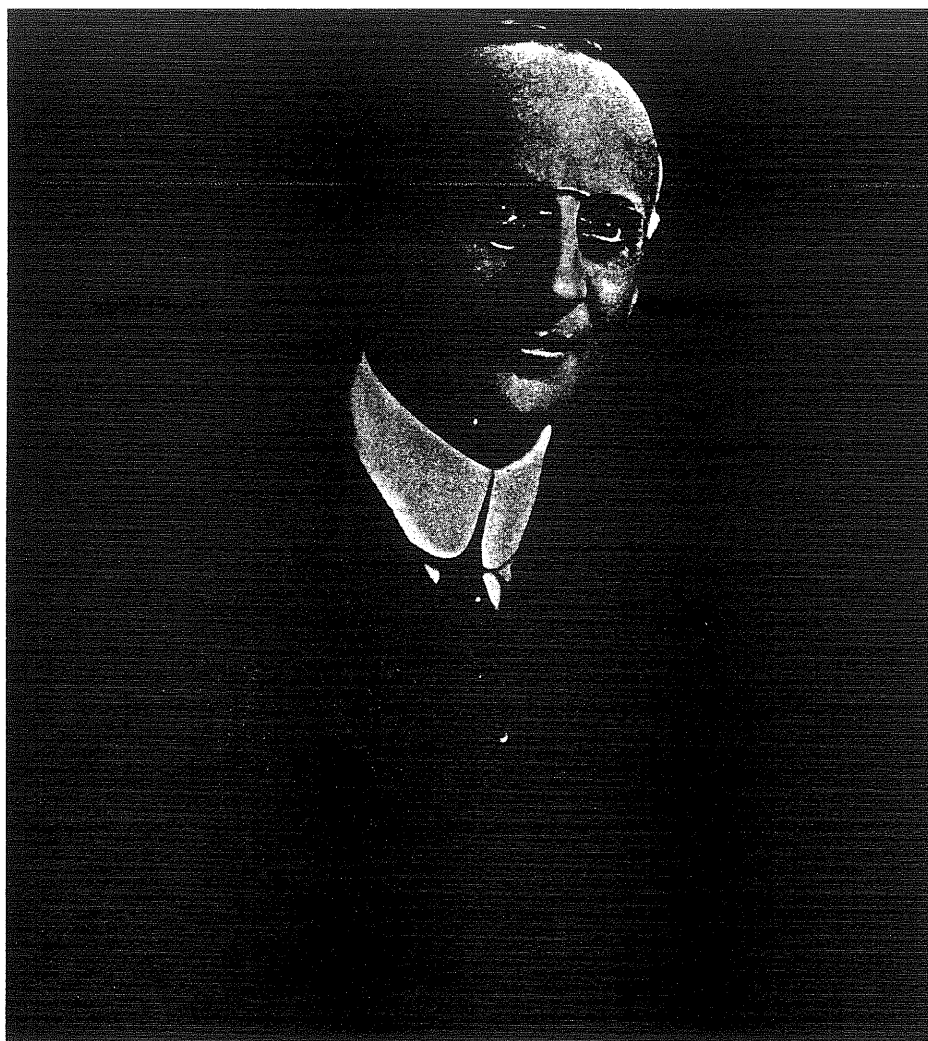
The Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research, New York City.

sensational reports, which have no basis of truth whatever. But consider for a moment what has been accomplished recently under the direction of Dr. Flexner in discovering a remedy for epidemic cerebro-spinal meningitis. It is true that in discovering this cure the lives of perhaps fifteen animals were sacrificed, as I learn, most of them monkeys; but for each one of these animals which lost its life, already scores of human lives have been saved. Large-hearted men like Dr. Flexner and his associates do not permit unnecessary pain to defenseless animals.

I have been deeply interested in the story of a desperate experiment to save a child's life, told in a letter written by one of my associates soon after the event described, and it seems worthy of repeating. I am therefore copying it here. Dr. Alexis Carrel has been associated with Dr. Flexner and his work, and his wonderful skill has been the result of his experiments and experiences.

Dr. Alexis Carrel, one of the Institute's staff, has been making some interesting studies in experimental surgery, and has successfully transplanted organs from one animal to another, and blood vessels from one species to another. He had the opportunity recently of applying the skill thus acquired to the saving of a human life under circumstances which attracted great interest among the medical fraternity of this city. One of the best known of the younger surgeons in New York had a child born early last March, which developed a disease in which the blood, for some reason, exudes from the blood vessels into the tissues of the body, and ordinarily the child dies of this internal hemorrhage. When this child was five days old it was evident that it was dying. The father and his brother, who is one of the most distinguished men in the profession, and one or two other doctors were in consultation with reference to it, but considered the case entirely hopeless.

It so happened that the father had been impressed with the work which Dr.



Dr. Simon Flexner, head of the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research.

Carrel had been doing at the Institute, and had spent several days with him studying his methods. He became convinced that the only possibility of saving the child's life was by the direct transfusion of blood. While this has been done between adults, the blood vessels of a young infant are so delicate that it seemed impossible that the operation could be successfully carried on. It is necessary not only that the blood vessels of the two persons should be united together, but it must be done in such a way that the interior lining of the vessels, which is a smooth, shiny tissue, should be continuous. If the blood comes in contact with the muscular coat of the blood vessels, it will clot and stop the circulation.

Fortunately, Dr. Carrel had been experimenting on the blood vessels of some very young animals, and the father was convinced that if any man in the country could perform the operation successfully, it would be he.

It was then the middle of the night. But Dr. Carrel was called on, and when the situation was explained to him, and it was made clear that the child would die anyhow, he readily consented to attempt the operation, although expressing very slight hope of its successful outcome.

The father offered himself as the person whose blood should be furnished to the child. It was impossible to give anaesthetics to either of them. In a child of that age there is only one vein large enough to be used, and that is in the back of the leg, and deepseated. A prominent surgeon who was present exposed this vein. He said afterward that there was no sign of life in the child, and expressed the belief that

the child had been, to all intents and purposes, dead for ten minutes. In view of its condition he raised the question whether it was worth while to proceed further with the attempt. The father, however, insisted upon going on, and the surgeon then exposed the radial artery in the surgeon's wrist, and was obliged to dissect it back about six inches, in order to pull it out far enough to make the connection with the child's vein.

This part of the work the surgeon who did it afterward described as the "blacksmith part of the job." He said that the child's vein was about the size of a match and the consistency of wet cigarette paper, and it seemed utterly impossible for anyone to successfully unite these two vessels. Dr. Carrel, however, accomplished this feat. And then occurred what the doctors who were present described as one of the most dramatic incidents in the history of surgery. The blood from the father's artery was released, and began to flow into the child's body, amounting to about a pint. The first sign of life was a little pink tinge at the top of one of the ears, then the lips, which had become perfectly blue, began to change to red, and then suddenly, as though the child had been taken from a hot mustard bath, a pink flow broke out all over its body, and it began to cry lustily. After about eight minutes the two were separated. The child at that time was crying for food. It was fed, and from that moment began to eat and sleep regularly, and made a complete recovery.

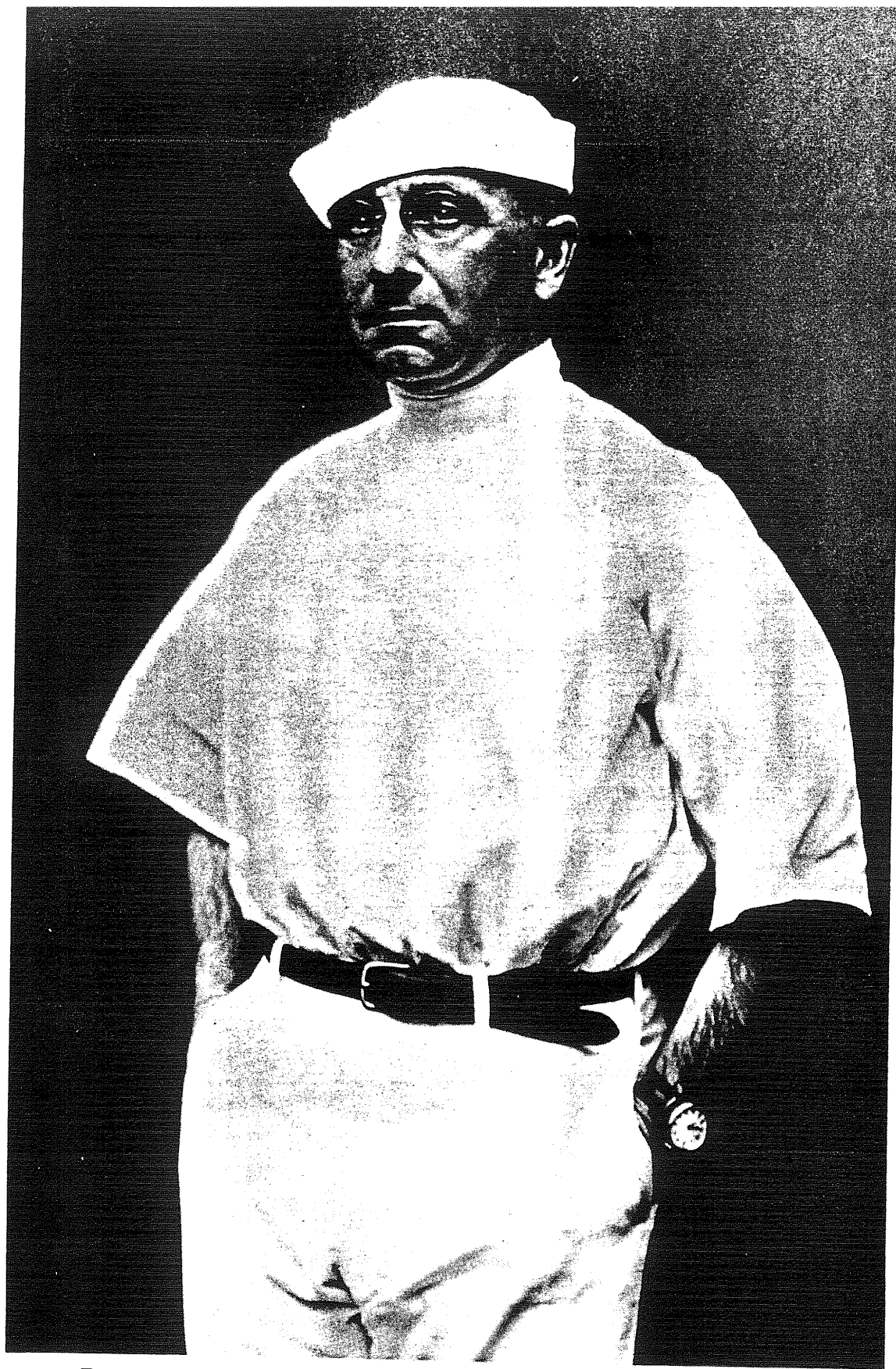
The father appeared before a legislative committee at Albany, in opposition to certain bills which were pending at the last session to restrict animal experimentation, and told this incident, and said at the close that when he saw Dr. Carrel's experiments he had no idea that they would so soon be available for saving human life; much less did he imagine that the life to be saved would be that of his own child.

The Fundamental Thing in all Help

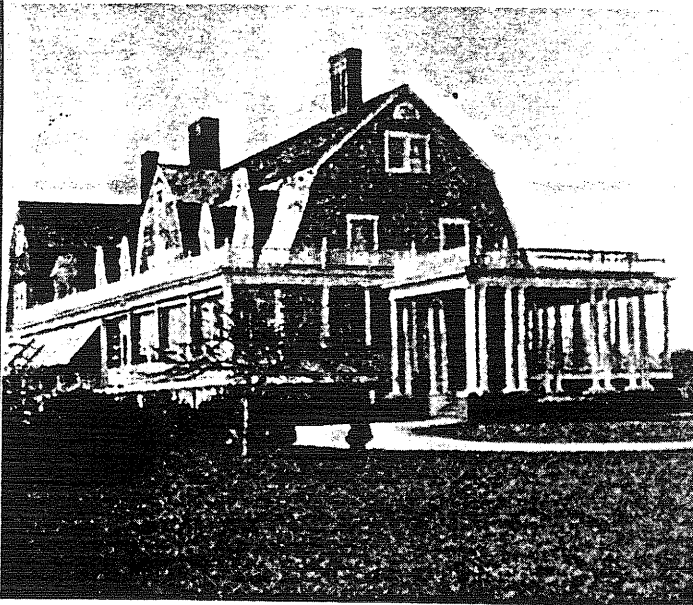
If the people can be educated to help themselves, we strike at the root of many of the evils of the world. This is the fundamental thing and it is worth saying even if it has been said so often that its truth is lost sight of in its constant repetition.

The only thing which is of lasting benefit to a man is that which he does for himself. Money which comes to him without effort on his part is seldom a benefit and often a curse. That is the principal objection to speculation—it is not because more lose than gain, though that is true—but it is because those who gain are apt to receive more injury from their success than they would have received from failure. And so with regard to money or other things which are given by one person to another. It is only in the exceptional case that the receiver is really benefited. But, if we can help people to help themselves, then there is a permanent blessing conferred.

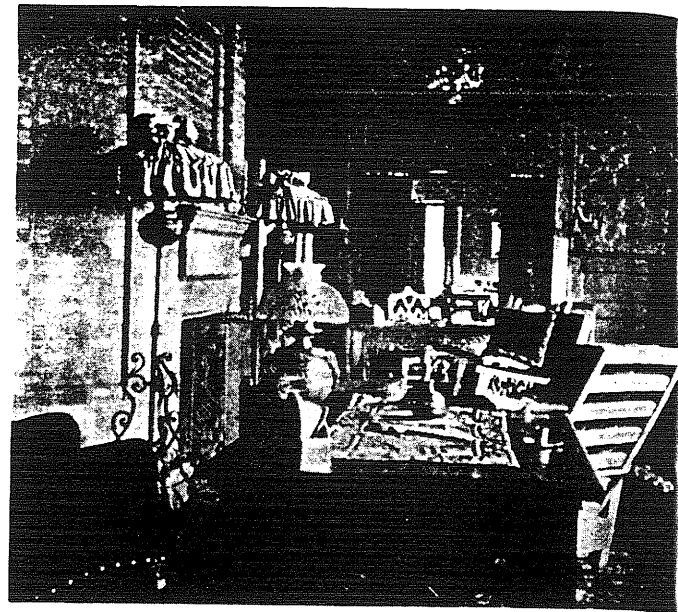
Men who are studying the problem of disease tell us that it is becoming more and more evident that the forces which conquer sickness are within the body itself, and that it is only when these are reduced below the normal that disease can get a foothold. The way to ward off disease, therefore, is to tone up the body generally; and, when disease has secured a foothold, the way to combat it is to help these natural resisting agencies which are in the body already. In the same way the failures which a man makes in his life are



Dr. Alexis Carrel, of the staff of the Rockefeller Institute, performed a then remarkable blood transfusion from the arm of a fellow physician to his dying infant, thus saving the life of the child, in 1909.



Lakewood, New Jersey.



The library in the house at Lakewood.

due almost always to some defect in his personality, some weakness of body, or mind, or character, will, or temperament. The only way to overcome these failings is to build up his personality from within, so that he, by virtue of what is within him, may overcome the weakness which was the cause of the failure. It is only those efforts the man himself puts forth that can really help him.

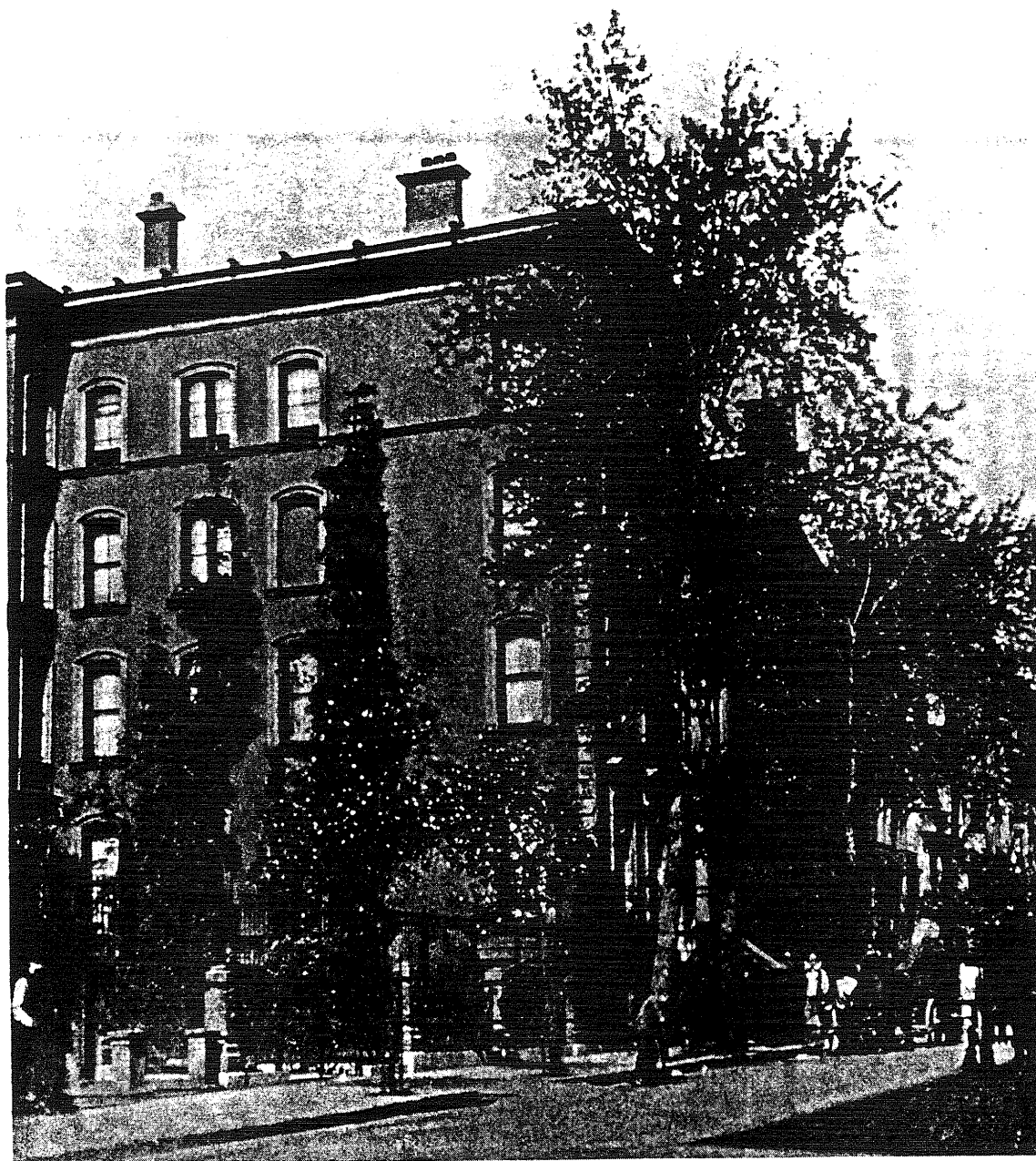
We all desire to see the widest possible distribution of the blessings of life. Many crude plans have been suggested, some of which utterly ignore the essential facts of human nature, and if carried out would perhaps drag our whole civilization down into hopeless misery. It is my belief that the principal cause for the economic differences between people is their difference in personality, and that it is only as we can assist in the wider distribution of those qualities which go to make up a strong personality that we can assist in the wider distribution of wealth. Under normal conditions the man who is strong in body, in mind, in character, and in will need never suffer want. But these qualities can never be developed in a man unless by his own efforts, and the most that any other can do for him is, as I have said, to help him to help himself.

We must always remember that there is not enough money for the work of human uplift and that there never can be. How vitally important it is, therefore, that the expenditure should go as far as possible and be used with the greatest intelligence!

I have been frank to say that I believe in the spirit of combination and cooperation when properly and fairly conducted in the world of commercial affairs, on the principle that it helps to reduce waste; and waste is a dissipation of power. I sincerely hope and thoroughly believe that this same princi-

Mr. Rockefeller walking on Fifth Avenue after the close of service at the Fifth Avenue Baptist Church. Two of his grandchildren follow.





Mr. Rockefeller's New York City home.

ple will eventually prevail in the art of giving as it does in business. It is not merely the tendency of the times developed by more exacting conditions in industry, but it should make its most effective appeal to the hearts of the people who are striving to do the most good to the largest number.

Some Underlying Principles

At the risk of making this chapter very dull, and I am told that this is a fault which inexperienced authors should avoid at all hazards, I may perhaps be pardoned if I set down here some of the fundamental principles which



Mr. John D. Rockefeller in 1880.

have been at the bottom of all my own plans. I have undertaken no work of any importance for many years which, in a general way, has not followed out these broad lines, and I believe no really constructive effort can be made in philanthropic work without such a well-defined and consecutive purpose.

My own conversion to the feeling that an organized plan was an absolute necessity came about in this way.

About the year 1890 I was still following the haphazard fashion of giving here and there as appeals presented themselves. I investigated as I could, and worked myself almost to a nervous breakdown in groping my way, without sufficient guide or chart, through this ever-widening field of philan-

thropic endeavor. There was then forced upon me the necessity to organize and plan this department of our daily tasks on as distinct lines of progress as we did our business affairs; and I will try to describe the underlying principles we arrived at, and have since followed out, and hope still greatly to extend.

It may be beyond the pale of good taste to speak at all of such a personal subject—I am not unmindful of this—but I can make these observations with at least a little better grace because so much of the hard work and hard thinking are done by my family and associates, who devote their lives to it.

Every right-minded man has a philosophy of life, whether he knows it or not. Hidden away in his mind are certain governing principles, whether he formulates them in words or not, which govern his life. Surely his ideal ought to be to contribute all that he can, however little it may be, whether of money or service, to human progress.

Certainly one's ideal should be to use one's means, both in one's investment and in benefactions, for the advancement of civilization. But the question as to what civilization is and what are the great laws which govern its advance have been seriously studied. Our investments not less than gifts have been directed to such ends as we have thought would tend to produce these results. If you were to go into our office, and ask our committee on benevolence or our committee on investment in what they consider civilization to consist, they would say that they have found in their study that the most convenient analysis of the elements which go to make up civilization runs about as follows:

1st. Progress in the means of subsistence, that is to say, progress in abundance and variety of food-supply, clothing, shelter, sanitation, public health, commerce, manufacture, the growth of the public wealth, etc.

2nd. Progress in government and law, that is to say, in the enactment of laws securing justice and equity to every man, consistent with the largest individual liberty, and the due and orderly enforcement of the same upon all.

3rd. Progress in literature and language.

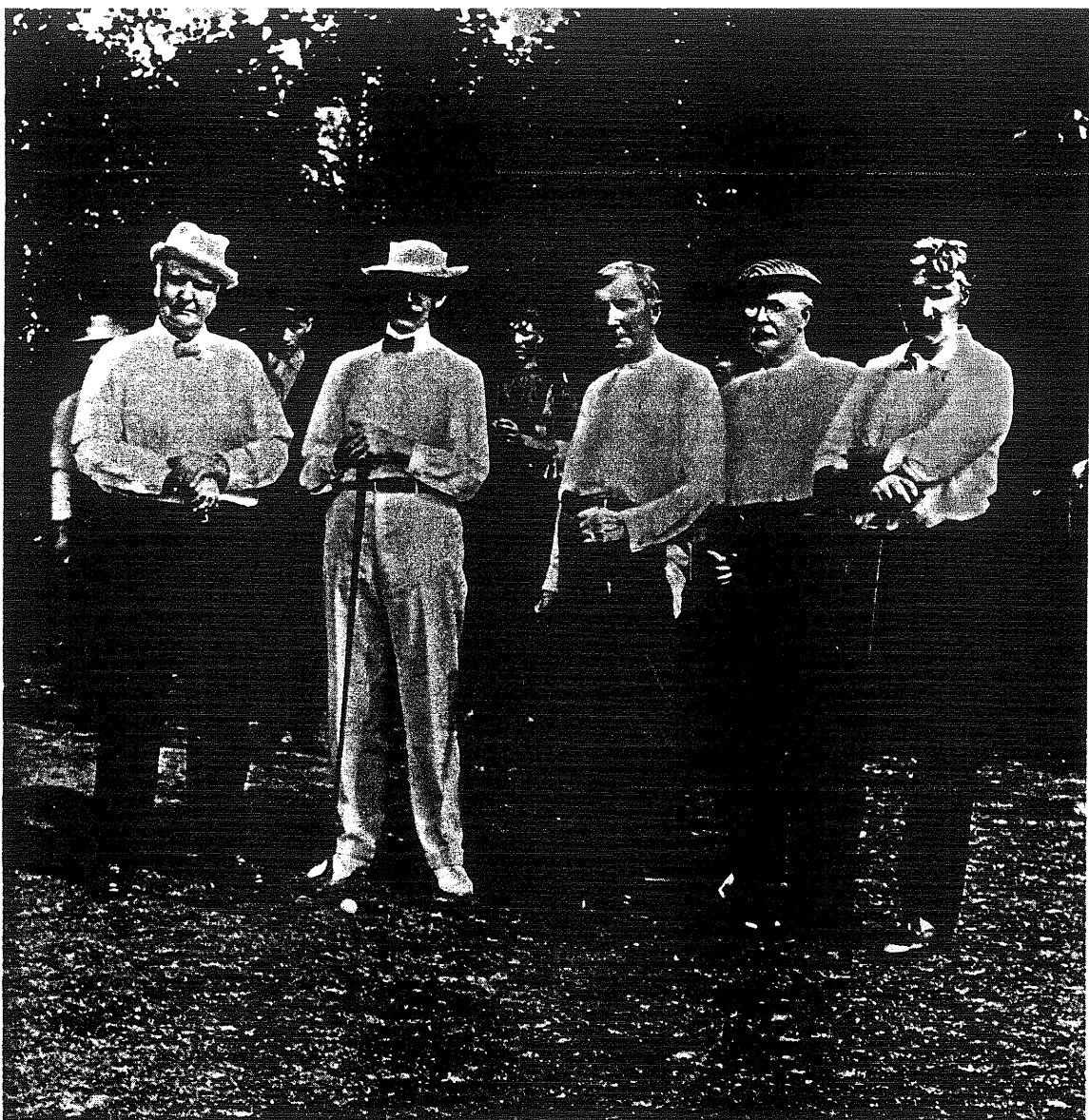
4th. Progress in science and philosophy.

5th. Progress in art and refinement.

6th. Progress in morality and religion.

If you were to ask them, as indeed they are very often asked, which of these they regard as fundamental, they would reply that they would not attempt to answer, that the question is purely an academic one, that all these go hand in hand, but that historically the first of them—namely, progress in means of subsistence—had generally preceded progress in government, in literature, in knowledge, in refinement, and in religion. Though not itself of the highest importance, it is the foundation upon which the whole superstructure of civilization is built, and without which it could not exist.

Accordingly, we have sought, so far as we could, to make investments in such a way as will tend to multiply, to cheapen, and to diffuse as universally as possible the comforts of life. We claim no credit for preferring these lines of investment. We make no sacrifices. These are the lines of largest and



Dr. H. F. Biggar, Mr. Elias M. Johnson, Mr. John D. Rockefeller, Captain L. T. Scofield and Dr. Charles A. Eaton pause during a Cleveland golf game in 1905.

surest return. In this particular, namely, in cheapness, ease of acquirement, and universality of means of subsistence, our country easily surpasses that of any other in the world, though we are behind other countries, perhaps, in most of the others.

It may be asked: How is it consistent with the universal diffusion of these blessings that vast sums of money should be in single hands? The reply is, as I see it, that, while men of wealth control great sums of money, they do not and cannot use them for themselves. They have, indeed, the legal title to large properties, and they do control the investment of them, but that is as far as their own relation to them extends or can extend. The money is universally diffused, in the sense that it is kept invested and it passes into the pay envelope week by week.

Up to the present time no scheme has yet presented itself which seems to afford a better method of handling capital than that of individual ownership. We might put our money into the treasury of the nation and of the various states, but we do not find any promise in the national or state legislatures,

viewed from the experiences of the past, that the funds would be expended for the general weal more effectively than under the present methods, nor do we find in any of the schemes of socialism a promise that wealth would be more wisely administered for the general good. It is the duty of men of means to maintain the title to their property and to administer their funds until some man, or body of men, shall rise up capable of administering for the general good the capital of the country better than they can.

The next four elements of progress mentioned in the enumeration above, namely, progress in government and law, in language and literature, in science and philosophy, in art and refinement, we for ourselves have thought to be best promoted by means of the higher education, and accordingly we have had the great satisfaction of putting such sums as we could into various forms of education in our own and in foreign lands—and education not merely along the lines of disseminating more generally the known, but quite as much, and perhaps even more, in promoting original investigation. An individual institution of learning can have only a narrow sphere. It can reach only a limited number of people. But every new fact discovered, every widening of the boundaries of human knowledge by research becomes universally known to all institutions of learning, and becomes a benefaction at once to the whole race.

Quite as interesting as any phase of the work have been the new lines entered upon by our committee. We have not been satisfied with giving to causes which have appealed to us. We have felt that the mere fact that this or the other cause makes it appeal is no reason why we should give to it any more than to a thousand other causes, perhaps more worthy, which do not happen to have come under our eye. The mere fact of a personal appeal creates no claim which did not exist before, and no preference over other causes more worthy which may not have made their appeal. So this little committee of ours has not been content to let the benevolences drift into the channels of mere convenience—to give to the institutions which have sought aid and to neglect others. This department has studied the field of human progress, and sought to contribute to each of those elements which we believe tend most to promote it. Where it has not found organizations ready to its hand for such purpose, the members of the committee have sought to create them. We are still working on new, and, I hope, expanding lines, which make large demands on one's intelligence and study.

Chapter 7

The Benevolent Trust

Going a step further in the plan of making benefactions increasingly effective which I took up in the last chapter under the title "The Difficult Art of Giving," I am tempted to take the opportunity to dwell a little upon the subject of combination in charitable work, which has been something of a hobby with me for many years.

If a combination to do business is effective in saving waste and in getting better results, why is not combination far more important in philanthropic work? The general idea of cooperation in giving for education, I have felt, scored a real step in advance when Mr. Andrew Carnegie consented to become a member of the General Education Board. For in accepting a position in this directorate he has, it seems to me, stamped with his approval this vital principle of cooperation in aiding the educational institutions of our country.

I rejoice, as everybody must, in Mr. Carnegie's enthusiasm for using his wealth for the benefit of his less fortunate fellows, and I think his devotion to his adopted land's welfare has set a striking example for all time.

The General Education Board, of which Mr. Carnegie has now become a member, is interesting as an example of an organization formed for the purpose of working out, in an orderly and rather scientific way, the problem of helping to stimulate and improve education in all parts of our country. What this organization may eventually accomplish, of course, no one can tell, but surely, under its present board of directors, it will go very far. Here, again, I feel that I may speak frankly and express my personal faith in its success, since I am not a member of the board, and have never attended a meeting, and the work is all done by others.

There are some other and larger plans thought out on careful and broad lines, which I have been studying for many years, and we can see that they are growing into definite shape. It is good to know that there are always unselfish men, of the best caliber, to help in every large philanthropic enter-

prise. One of the most satisfactory and stimulating pieces of good fortune that has come to me is the evidence that so many busy people are willing to turn aside from their work in pressing fields of labor and to give their best thoughts and energies without compensation to the work of human uplift. Doctors, clergymen, lawyers, as well as many high-grade men of affairs, are devoting their best and most unselfish efforts to some of the plans that we are all trying to work out.

Take, as one example of many similar cases, Mr. Robert C. Ogden, who for years, while devoting himself to an exacting business, still found time, supported by wonderful enthusiasm, to give force by his own personality to work done in difficult parts of the educational world, particularly to improving the common-school system of the South. His efforts have been wisely directed along fundamental lines which must produce results through the years to come.

Fortunately my children have been as earnest as I, and much more diligent, in carefully and intelligently carrying out the work already begun, and agree with me that at least the same energy and thought should be expended in the proper and effective use of money when acquired as was exerted in the earning of it.

The General Education Board has made, or is making, a careful study of the location, aims, work, resources, administration, and educational value, present and prospective, of the institutions of higher learning in the United States. The board makes its contributions, averaging something like \$2,000,000 a year, on the most careful comparative study of needs and opportunities throughout the country. Its records are open to all. Many benefactors of education are availing themselves of these disinterested inquiries, and it is hoped that more will do so.

A large number of individuals are contributing to the support of educational institutions in our country. To help an inefficient, ill-located, unnecessary school is a waste. I am told by those who have given most careful study to this problem that it is highly probable that enough money has been squandered on unwise educational projects to have built up a national system of higher education adequate to our needs if the money had been properly directed to that end. Many of the good people who bestow their beneficence on education may well give more thought to investigating the character of the enterprises that they are importuned to help, and this study ought to take into account the kind of people who are responsible for their management, their location, and the facilities supplied by other institutions round about. A thorough examination such as this is generally quite impossible for an individual, and he either declines to give from lack of accurate knowledge, or he may give without due consideration. If, however, this work of inquiry is done, and well done, by the General Education Board, through officers of intelligence, skill, and sympathy, trained to the work, an important and needed service is rendered. The walls of sectarian exclusiveness are fast disappearing, as they should, and the best people are standing shoulder to shoulder as they attack the great problems of general uplift.

Roman Catholic Charities

Just here it occurs to me to testify to the fact that the Roman Catholic Church, as I have observed in my experience, has advanced a long way in this direction. I have been surprised to learn how far a given sum of money has gone in the hands of priests and nuns, and how really effective is their use of it. I fully appreciate the splendid service done by other workers in the field, but I have seen the organization of the Roman Church secure better results with a given sum of money than other church organizations are accustomed to secure from the same expenditure. I speak of this merely to point the value of the principle of organization, in which I believe so heartily. It is unnecessary to dwell upon the centuries of experience which the Church of Rome has gone through to perfect a great power of organization.

Studying these problems has been a source of the greatest interest to me. My assistants, quite distinct from any board, have an organization of sufficient size to investigate the many requests that come to us. This is done from the office of our committee in New York. For an individual to attempt to keep any close watch of single cases would be impossible. I am called upon to explain this fact many times. To read the hundreds of letters daily received at our office would be beyond the power of any one man, and surely, if the many good people who write would only reflect a little, they must realize that it is impossible for me personally to consider their applications.

The plan that we have worked out, and I hope improved upon year after year, has been the result of experience, and I refer to it now only as one contribution to a general subject which is of such great moment to earnest people; and this must be my excuse for speaking so frankly.

The Appeals that Come

The reading, assorting, and investigating of the hundreds of letters of appeal which are received daily at my office are attended to by a department organized for this purpose. The task is not so difficult as at first it might seem. The letters are, to be sure, of great variety, from all sorts of people in every condition of life, and, indeed, from all parts of the world. Four-fifths of these letters are, however, requests for money for personal use, with no other title to consideration than that the writer would be gratified to have it.

There remain numbers of requests which all must recognize as worthy of notice. These may be divided, roughly, as follows:

The claims of local charities. The town or city in which one lives has a definite appeal to all its citizens, and all good neighbors will wish to cooperate with friends and fellow townsmen. But these local charities, hospitals, kindergartens, and the like, ought not to make appeal outside the local communities which they serve. The burden should be carried by the people who are on the spot and who are, or should be, most familiar with local needs.

Then come the national and international claims. These properly appeal especially to men of large means throughout the country, whose wealth admits of their doing something more than assist in caring for the local charities. There are many great national and international philanthropic and Christian organizations that cover the whole field of world-wide charity; and, while people of reputed wealth all receive appeals from individual workers throughout the world for personal assistance, the prudent and thoughtful giver will, more and more, choose these great and responsible organizations as the medium for his gifts and the distribution of his funds to distant fields. This has been my custom, and the experience of every day serves only to confirm its wisdom.

The great value of dealing with an organization which knows all the facts, and can best decide just where the help can be applied to the best advantage, has impressed itself upon me through the results of long years of experience. For example, one is asked to give in a certain field of missionary work a sum, for a definite purpose—let us say a hospital. To comply with this request will take, say, \$10,000. It seems wise and natural to give this amount. The missionary who wants this money is working under the direction of a strong and capable religious denomination.

Suppose the request is referred to the manager of the board of this denomination and it transpires that there are many good reasons why a new hospital is not badly needed at this point, and by a little good management the needs of this missionary can be met by another hospital in its neighborhood; whereas another missionary in another place has no such possibility for any hospital facilities whatever. There is no question that the money should be spent in the place last named. These conditions the managers of all the mission stations know, although perhaps the one who is giving the money never heard of them, and in my judgement he is wise in not acting until he has consulted these men of larger information.

It is interesting to follow the mental processes that some excellent souls go through to cloud their consciences when they consider what their duty actually is. For instance, one man says: "I do not believe in giving money to street beggars." I agree with him, I do not believe in the practice either; but that is not a reason why one should be exempt from doing something to help the situation represented by the street beggar. Because one does not yield to the importunities of such people is exactly the reason one should join and uphold the charity organization societies of one's own locality, which deal justly and humanely with this class, separating the worthy from the unworthy.

Another says: "I don't give to such and such a board, because I have read that of the money given only half or less actually gets to the person needing help." This is often not a true statement of fact, as proved again and again, and even if it were true in part it does not relieve the possible giver from the duty of helping to make the organization more efficient. By no possible chance is it a valid excuse for closing up one's pocketbook and dismissing the whole subject from one's mind.

Institutions as They Relate to Each Other

Surely it is wise to be careful not to duplicate effort and not to inaugurate new charities in fields already covered, but rather to strengthen and perfect those already at work. There is a great deal of rivalry and a vast amount of duplication, and one of the most difficult things in giving is to ascertain when the field is fully covered. Many people simply consider whether the institution to which they are giving is thoughtfully and well managed, without stopping to discover whether the field is not already occupied by others; and for this reason one ought not to investigate a single institution by itself, but always in its relation to all similar institutions in the territory. Here is a case in point:

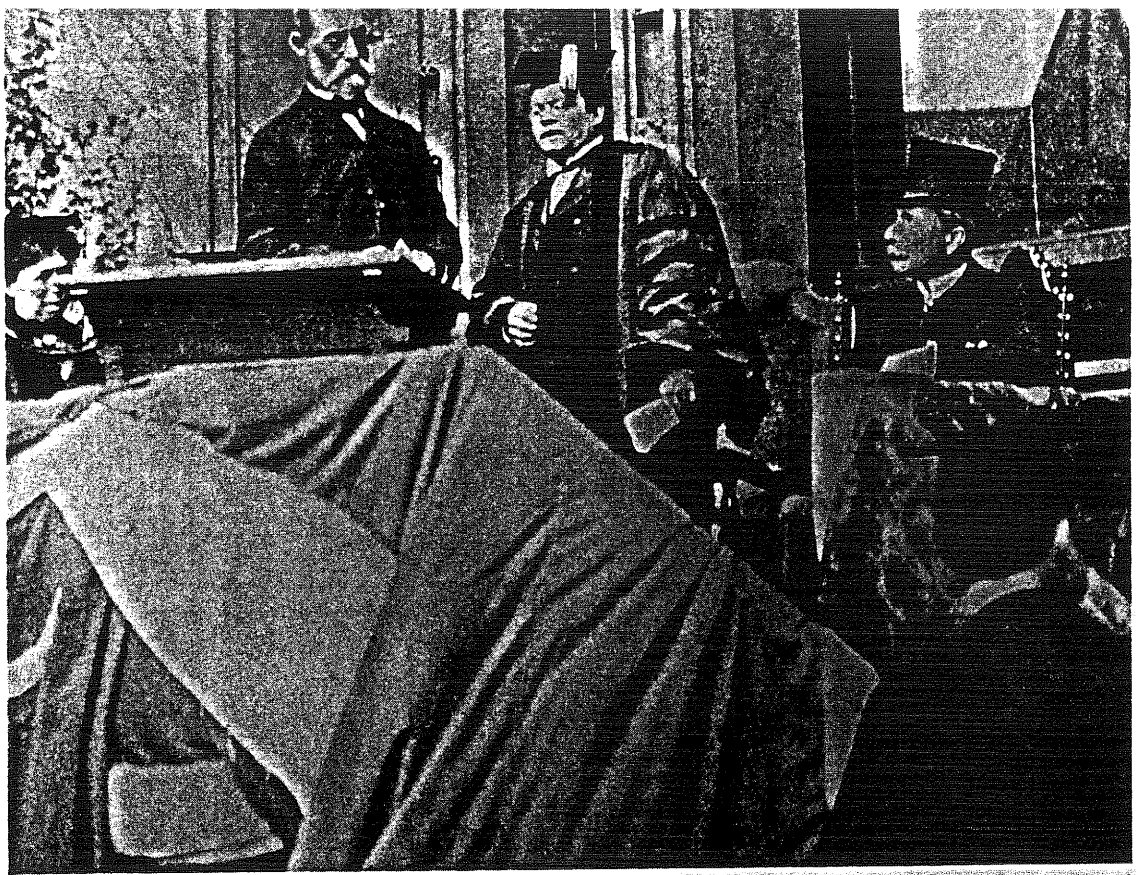
A number of enthusiastic people had a plan for founding an orphan asylum which was to be conducted by one of our strongest religious denominations. The raising of the necessary funds was begun, and among the people who were asked to subscribe was a man who always made it a practice to study the situation carefully before committing himself to a contribution. He asked one of the promoters of the new institution how many beds the present asylums serving this community provided, how efficient they were, where located, and what particular class of institution was lacking in the community.

To none of these questions were answers forthcoming, so he had this information gathered on his own account with the purpose of helping to make the new plan effective. His studies revealed the fact that the city where the new asylum was to be built was so well provided with such institutions that there were already vastly more beds for children than there were applicants to fill them, and that the field was well and fully covered. These facts being presented to the organizers of the enterprise, it was shown that no real need for such an institution existed. I wish I might add that the scheme was abandoned. It was not. Such charities seldom are when once the sympathies of the worthy people, however misinformed, are heartily enlisted.

It may be urged that doing the work in this systematic and apparently cold-blooded way leaves out of consideration, to a large extent, the merits of individual cases. My contention is that the organization of work in combination should not and does not stifle the work of individuals, but strengthens and stimulates it. The orderly combination of philanthropic effort is growing daily, and at the same time the spirit of broad philanthropy never was so general as it is now.

The Claim of Higher Education

The giver who works out these problems for himself will, no doubt, find many critics. So many people see the pressing needs of everyday life that possibly they fail to realize those which are, if less obvious, of an even larger significance—for instance, the great claims of higher education. Ignorance is the source of a large part of the poverty and a vast amount of the crime in



Mr. Rockefeller at the decennial celebration of the University of Chicago in 1901.

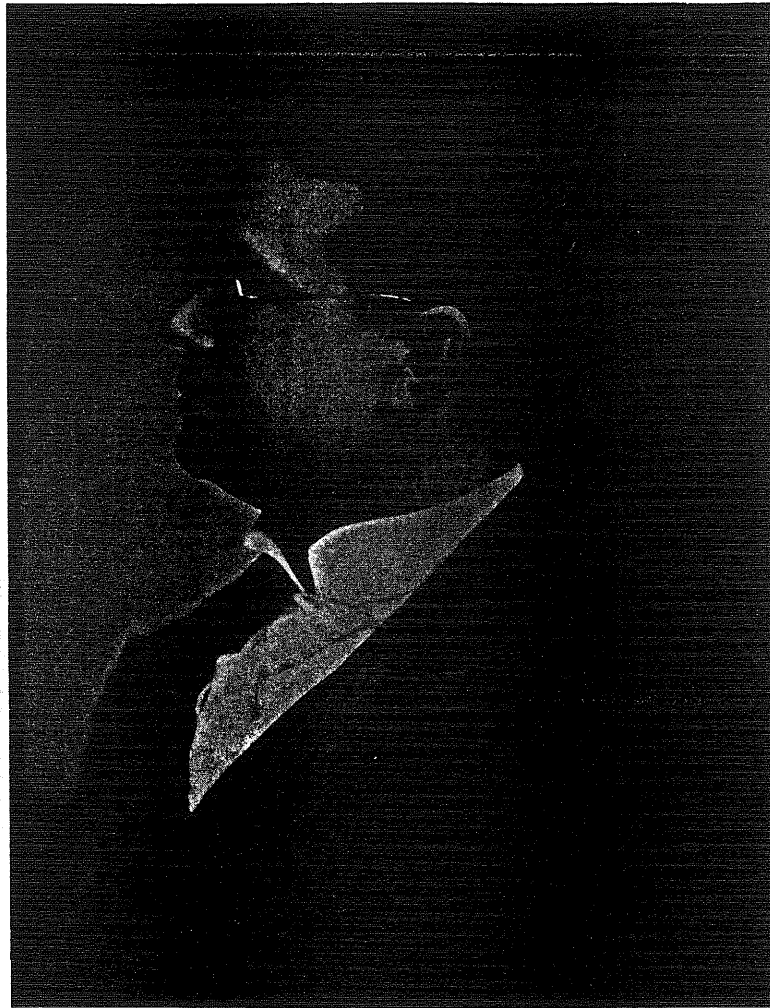
the world—hence the need of education. If we assist the highest forms of education—in whatever field—we secure the widest influence in enlarging the boundaries of human knowledge; for all the new facts discovered or set in motion become the universal heritage. I think we cannot overestimate the importance of this matter. The mere fact that most of the great achievements in science, medicine, art, and literature are the flower of the higher education is sufficient. Some great writer will one day show how these things have ministered to the wants of all the people, educated and uneducated, high and low, rich and poor, and made life more what we all wish it to be.

The best philanthropy is constantly in search of the finalities—a search for cause, an attempt to cure evils at their source. My interest in the University of Chicago has been enhanced by the fact that while it has comprehensively considered the other features of a collegiate course it has given so much attention to research.

Dr. William R. Harper

The mention of this promising young institution always brings to my mind the figure of Dr. William R. Harper, whose enthusiasm for its work was so great that no vision of its future seemed too large.

My first meeting with Dr. Harper was at Vassar College, where one of my daughters was a student. He used to come, as the guest of Dr. James M. Taylor, the president, to lecture on Sundays; and as I frequently spent weekends there, I saw and talked much with the young professor, then of Yale,

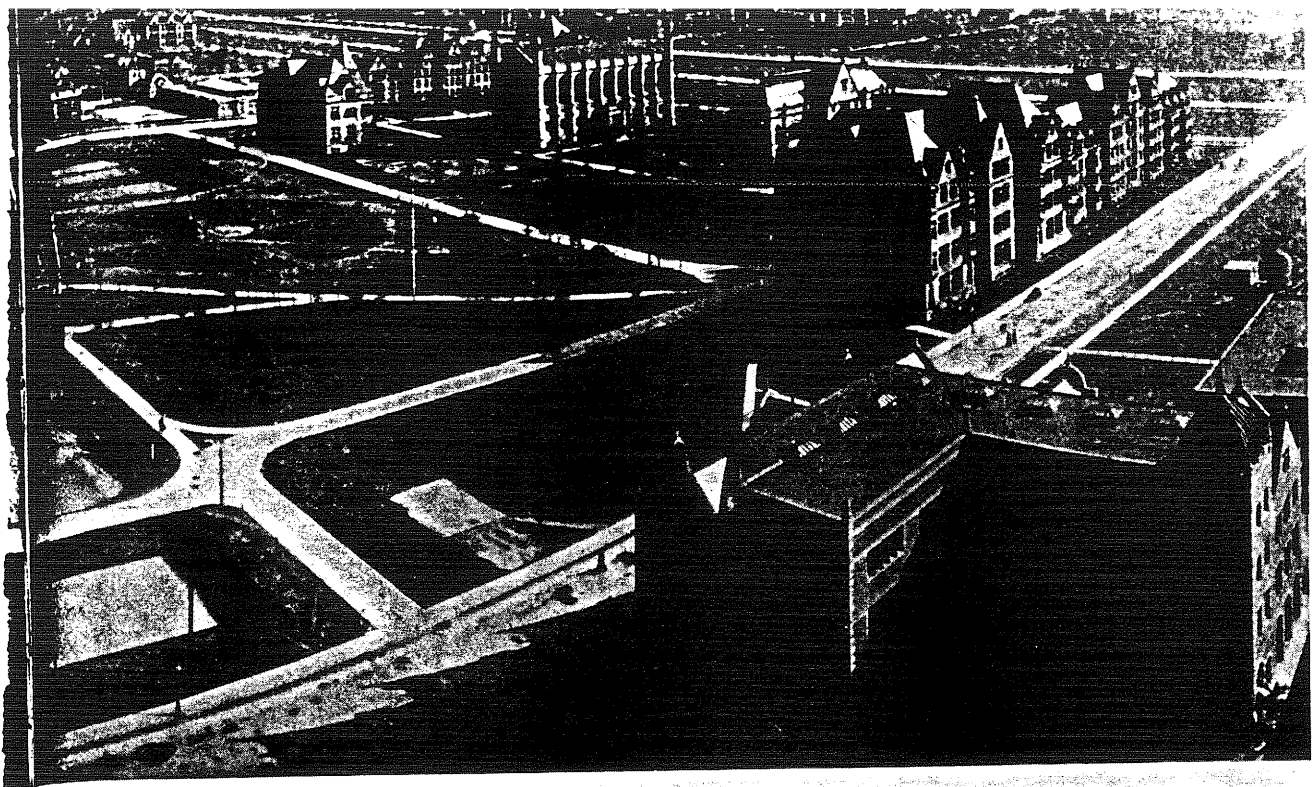


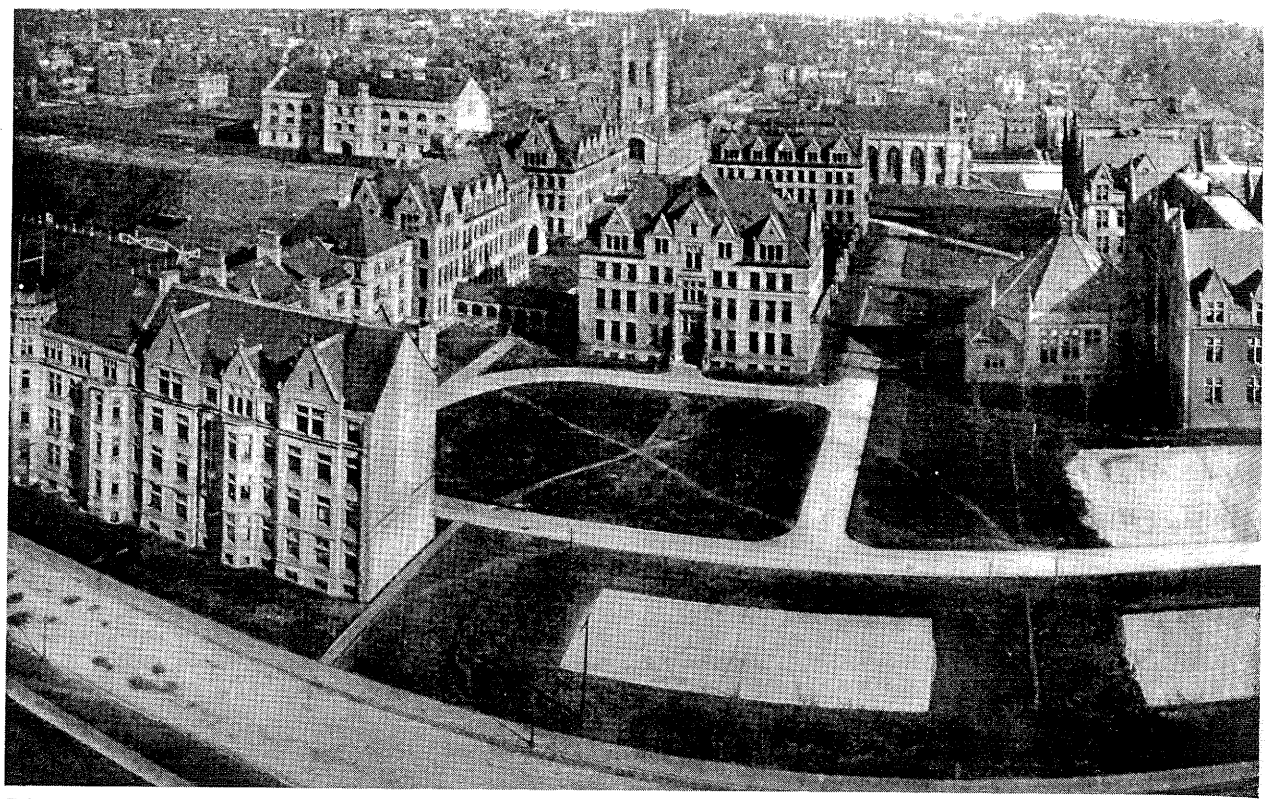
Dr. William R. Harper, President of the University of Chicago.

and caught in some degree the contagion of his enthusiasm.

When the university had been founded, and he had taken the presidency, our great ambition was to secure the best instructors and to organize the new institution, unhampered by traditions, according to the most modern ideals. He raised millions of dollars among the people of Chicago and the Middle West, and won the personal interest of their leading citizens. Here lay his great strength, for he secured not only their money but their loyal support and strong personal interest—the best kind of help and cooperation. He built even better than he knew. His lofty ideals embodied in the university awakened a deeper interest in higher education throughout the Central West, and stirred individuals, denominations, and legislatures to effective action. The world will probably never realize how largely the present splendid university system of the Central Western states is due indirectly to the genius of this man.

With all his extraordinary power of work and his executive and organizing ability, Dr. Harper was a man of exquisite personal charm. We count it among the rich and delightful experiences of our home life that Dr. and Mrs.





The University of Chicago in 1904 (above). The University of Chicago in 1908 (below).



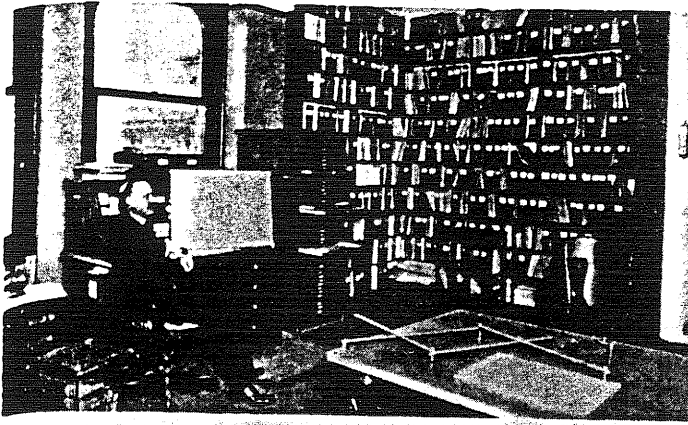
Harper could occasionally spend days together with us for a brief respite from the exacting cares and responsibilities of the university work. As a friend and companion, in daily intercourse, no one could be more delightful than he.

It has been my good fortune to contribute at various times to the University of Chicago, of which Dr. Harper was president, and the newspapers not unnaturally supposed at such times that he used the occasions of our personal association to secure these contributions. The cartoonists used to find this a fruitful theme. They would picture Dr. Harper as a hypnotist waving his magic spell, or would represent him forcing his way into my inner office where I was pictured as busy cutting coupons and from which delightful employment I incontinently fled out of the window at sight of him; or they would represent me as fleeing across rivers on cakes of floating ice with Dr. Harper in hot pursuit; or perhaps he would be following close on my trail, like the wolf in the Russian story, in inaccessible country retreats, while I escaped only by means of the slight delays I occasioned him by now and then dropping a million-dollar bill, which he would be obliged to stop and pick up.

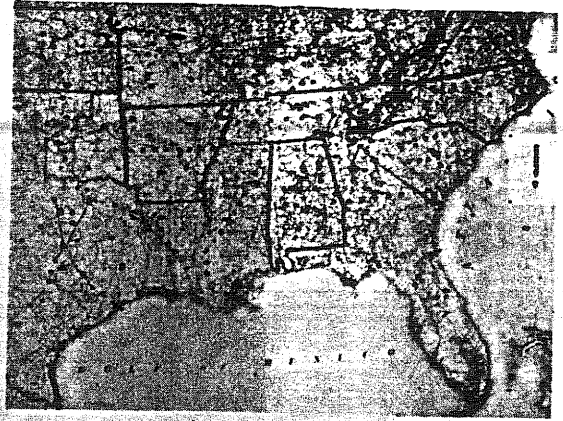
These cartoons were intended to be very amusing, and some of them certainly did have a flavor of humor, but they were never humorous to Dr. Harper. They were in fact a source of deep humiliation to him, and I am sure he would, were he living, be glad to have me say, as I now do, that during the entire period of his presidency of the University of Chicago, he never once either wrote me a letter or asked me personally for a dollar of money for the University of Chicago. In the most intimate daily intercourse with him in my home, the finances of the University of Chicago were never canvassed or discussed.

The method of procedure in this case has been substantially the same as with all other contributions. The presentation of the needs of the university has been made in writing by the officers of the university, whose special duty it is to prepare its budgets and superintend its finance. A committee of the trustees, with the president, have annually conferred, at a fixed time, with our Department of Benevolence, as to its needs. Their conclusions have generally been entirely unanimous and I have found no occasion hitherto seriously to depart from their recommendations. There have been no personal interviews and no personal solicitations. It has been a pleasure to me to make these contributions, but that pleasure has arisen out of the fact that the university is located in a great center of empire; that it has rooted itself in the affections and interest of the people among whom it is located; that it is doing a great and needed work—in fine, that it has been able to attract and to justify the contributions of its patrons east and west. It is not personal interviews and impassioned appeals, but sound and justifying worth, that should attract and secure the funds of philanthropy.

The people in great numbers who are constantly importuning me for personal interviews in behalf of favorite causes err in supposing that the interview, were it possible, is the best way, or even a good way, of securing



In the General Education Board Office.



Part of a map of educational institutions.

what they want. Our practice has been uniformly to request applicants to state their cases tersely, but nevertheless as fully as they think necessary, in writing. Their application is carefully considered by very competent people chosen for this purpose. If, thereupon, personal interviews are found desirable by our assistants, they are invited from our office.

Written presentations form the necessary basis of investigation, of consultation and comparison of views between the different members of our staff, and of the final presentation to me.

It is impossible to conduct this department of our work in any other way. The rule requiring written presentation as against the interview is enforced and adhered to not, as the applicant sometimes supposes, as a cold rebuff to him, but in order to secure for his cause, if it be a good one, the careful consideration which is its due—a consideration that cannot be given in a mere verbal interview.

The Reason for Conditional Gifts

It is easy to do harm in giving money. To give to institutions which should be supported by others is not the best philanthropy. Such giving only serves to dry up the natural springs of charity.

It is highly important that every charitable institution shall have at all times the largest possible number of current contributors. This means that the institution shall constantly be making its appeals; but, if these constant appeals are to be successful, the institution is forced to do excellent work and meet real and manifest needs. Moreover, the interest of many people affords the best assurance of wise economy and unselfish management as well as of continued support.

We frequently make our gifts conditional on the giving of others, not because we wish to force people to do their duty, but because we wish in this way to root the institution in the affections of as many people as possible who, as contributors, become personally concerned, and thereafter may be counted on to give to the institution their watchful interest and cooperation. Conditional gifts are often criticized, and sometimes, it may be, by people



Mr. Wallace Buttrick (left), secretary of the General Education Board.

who have not thought the matter out fully.

Criticism which is deliberate, sober, and fair is always valuable and it should be welcomed by all who desire progress. I have had at least my full share of adverse criticism, but I can truly say that it has not embittered me, nor left me with any harsh feeling against a living soul. Nor do I wish to be critical of those whose conscientious judgment, frankly expressed, differs from my own. No matter how noisy the pessimists may be, we know that the world is getting better steadily and rapidly, and that is a good thing to remember in our moments of depression or humiliation.

The Benevolent Trusts

✓ To return to the subject of the Benevolent Trust, which is a name for corporations to manage the business side of benefactions. The idea needs, and to be successful must have, the help of men who have been trained along practical lines. The best men of business should be attracted by its possibilities for good. When it is eventually worked out, as it will be in some form, and probably in a better one than we can now forecast, how worthy it

will be of the efforts of our ablest men!

We shall have the best charities supported generously and adequately, managed with scientific efficiency by the ablest men, who will gladly be held strictly accountable to the donors of the money, not only for correct financing of the funds, but for the intelligent and effective use of every penny. Today the whole machinery of benevolence is conducted upon more or less haphazard principles. Good men and women are wearing out their lives to raise money to sustain institutions which are conducted by more or less unskilled methods. This is a tremendous waste of our best material.

We cannot afford to have great souls who are capable of doing the most effective work slaving to raise the money. That should be a businessman's task, and he should be supreme in managing the machinery of the expenses. The teachers, the workers, and the inspired leaders of the people should be relieved of these pressing and belittling money cares. They have more than enough to do in tilling their tremendous and never fully occupied field, and they should be free from any care which might in any wise divert them from that work.

When these benevolent trusts come into active being, such organizations on broad lines will be sure to attract the brains of the best men we have in our commercial affairs, as great business opportunities attract them now. Our successful businessmen as a class, and the exceptions only prove the truth of assertion, have a high standard of honor. I have sometimes been tempted to say that our clergymen could gain by knowing the essentials of business life better. The closer association with men of affairs would, I think, benefit both classes. People who have had much to do with ministers and those who hold confidential positions in our churches have at times had surprising experiences in meeting what is sometimes practiced in the way of ecclesiastical business because these good men have had so little of business training in the work-a-day world.

The whole system of proper relations, whether it be in commerce or in the church, or in the sciences, rests on honor. Able businessmen seek to confine their dealings to people who tell the truth and keep their promises; and the representatives of the church, who are often prone to attack businessmen as a type of what is selfish and mean, have some great lessons to learn, and they will gladly learn them as these two types of workers grow closer together.

The Benevolent Trusts when they come will raise these standards; they will look the facts in the face; they will applaud and sustain the effective workers and institutions; and they will uplift the intelligent standard of good work in helping all the people chiefly to help themselves. There are already signs that these combinations are coming, and coming quickly, and in the directorates of these trusts you will eventually find the flower of our American manhood, the men who not only know how to make money, but who accept the great responsibility of administering it wisely.

A few years ago, on the occasion of the decennial anniversary of the University of Chicago, I was attending a university dinner, and having been

asked to speak I had jotted down a few notes.

When the time arrived to stand up and face these guests—men of worth and position—my notes meant nothing to me. As I thought of the latent power for good that rests with these rich and influential people I was greatly affected. I threw down my notes and started to plead for my Benevolent Trust plan.

“You men,” I said, “are always looking forward to doing something, for good causes. I know how very busy you are. You work in a treadmill from which you see no escape. I can easily understand that you feel that it is beyond your present power carefully to study the needs of humanity, and that you wait to give until you have considered many things and decided upon some course of action. Now, why not do with what you can give to others as you do with what you want to keep for yourself and your children: put it into a Trust? You would not place a fortune for your children in the hands of an inexperienced person, no matter how good he might be. Let us be as careful with the money we would spend for the benefit of others as if we were laying it aside for our own family’s future use. Directors carry on these affairs in your behalf. Let us erect a foundation, a trust, and engage directors who will make it a life work to manage, with our personal cooperation, this business of benevolence properly and effectively. And I beg you, attend to it *now*, don’t wait.”

I confess I felt most strongly on the subject, and I feel so now.