THE PERSONAL RELATION IN INDUSTRY

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The personal relation in industry by John D. Rockefeller

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BY
JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER, JR.

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NEW YORK

ADDRESS DELIVERED AT CORNELL UNIVERSITY ON THE OCCASION OF FOUNDER'S DAY JANUARY ELEVENTH

1917

The Personal Relation in Industry

AM glad to have this opportunity of speaking to you men, numbers of whom will be the future leaders in industry.

Heretofore the Chief Executives of important industrial corporations have been selected largely because of their capacity as organizers or financiers.

The time is rapidly coming however when the important qualification for such positions will be a man's ability to deal successfully and amicably with labor. Yet how to do this is a subject which, I fancy, is never taught or referred to in the classroom.

Like knowledge of the problems of sex, than which no department of life is more sacred, vital or deserving of full and ennobling instruction, an understanding of this subject is left to be acquired by experience, often costly or bitter, or through chance information, gleaned too frequently from ignorant and unreliable sources.

Just as the first of these two themes is coming to be taught sympathetically and helpfully in our schools and colleges, so I believe the second, the personal relation in industry, will eventually be regarded as an important part of those college courses which aim to fit men for business life.

After all, is it not the personal relations with one's fellows which, when rightly entered into, bring joy and inspiration into our lives and lead to success, and which, on the other hand, if disregarded or wrongly interpreted, bring equally sorrow and discouragement and lead to failure?

Getting the best out of life through—the personal relation

Think what the ideal personal relation between a father and son may mean to both. Some of us have known such contact. Our lives have been fuller and richer as a result, freer from sin and sorrow. Others of us know from bitter experience what the absence of this relationship has involved.

How helpful to a student is such a

friendly association with some professor who commands his confidence, respect and regard, and who is interested in his college work, not for itself alone, but quite as much because of its bearing on his future life's usefulness.

What would college life be without the personal relationships which are formed during its happy days and often continued close and intimate through life?

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Can you imagine a successful football team composed of strangers, having no points of contact, no sympathy with each other, no common cause inspiring them to strive for victory? Team play, the support of one player by another, would be well nigh impossible.

Even in the army, where formerly the man who had become the most perfect machine was regarded as the best soldier,