

The Egotism of Andrew Carnegie

The Philadelphia North-American prints the following timely article: It is now several days since the Carnegie egotism reached its full flower of offensiveness and without even the redeeming qualities of cynicism or of sardonic humor proposed to impose upon ex-presidents of the United States a pension of \$25,000 a year for life. We have searched in vain for any sign of approval of this Carnegie scheme to make the little ironmaster the fairy godfather of the United States government. If a single good word has been said for it, such has escaped our attention.

We can not recall any proposition related to public policy that, so far as it has been discussed at all, has induced such universal reprobation. There seems to be a general sentiment that the dignity of the nation has been offended; that one individual who has nothing to commend him except his millions has set himself up as a power so much greater than the republic that he condescends to patronize it. He pats it on the head and says, "Now, if you are a good little boy, I'll give you \$25,000 with which to play store." Only, in this instance, the game is not "store," but "statesman."

Now, this offended dignity of the nation, this monumental conceit of the almsgiver comprise one phase of the incident well worth considering. Although, to our mind, not by any means the most important phase, it is, however, the most obvious and the most irritating. This feeling is something entirely apart from the revulsion to "tainted money" which has been exhibited on several occasions, when Mr. Carnegie's greatest rival as a money-getter, Mr. Rockefeller, proposed large donations to religious work.

In the main, Mr. Rockefeller's public benefactions have been received with general approval. They have aided in invaluable work of science, in the search for the causes, and therefore the cures, of diseases which have been age-long enemies of humanity. Rockefeller endowments have helped to promote efficiency in public education, in every grade, from the elementary in the common schools to the post-graduate in the professional.

Mr. Rockefeller by his prodigious contributions virtually founded a great university in Chicago. He could easily have had his name blazoned thereon. He did not. If he has ever even tried to control or to influence the teachings of the institution to which he has given more than \$30,000,000, it has not been apparent in results. For, long after Chicago university become a center of free thought in social and political science, in philosophy and, to some degree, in religion, Mr. Rockefeller continues to pour his millions into its lap.

It was only when Mr. Rockefeller offered large sums directly to the cause of religion that the cry of "tainted money" was raised. The crimes by which the Standard Oil monopoly had been established were so enormous and the impression of criminality in connection with that trust was so clear in the public mind that Mr. Rockefeller's donations to religion in his declining years suggested an attempt to pave a royal road to heaven. Those who had to travel by the common route rather resented what seemed like unjust discrimination in interstellar commerce.

But, aside from Mr. Rockefeller's religious endowments, his benefactions have never aroused public opposition. The only adverse comment they have raised has been due to the evidence of such tremendous power in the hands of one man. There has been general agreement that Mr. Rockefeller has distributed his endowments with rare judgment for the public good and with singular good taste and commendable freedom from bumptiousness, self-advertising or offensive egotism.

This review of the Rockefeller method is particularly valuable in helping to form an estimate of the methods and motives of the Carnegie endowments. If Mr. Carnegie has ever given anything for any other primary purpose than that of advertising the greatness of Mr. Carnegie, it has escaped the attention of his avid and tireless press agents. He has studied the English-speaking world with buildings, across the face of which he has plastered the name of Carnegie, and for which he has shrewdly exacted a contract from each local community for perpetual maintenance.

In his early days Mr. Carnegie discovered that the most lasting monument to the memory of man is literature. He essayed, through a hack writer, to produce a book. He was wise

enough to judge the completed work as insufficient to give its proxy author a place in the world of letters. But he still retained his belief that fame is to be had through books. And so when the fortune wheel of the trustmakers gave him wealth beyond even his own wildest dreams of opulence, he proceeded to purchase fame through other people's books.

He could not produce a book which would circulate throughout the world and for all time, but he could and did invent a scheme by which the name of Carnegie would be associated with books forever. He could not be a great actor. He could not play Hamlet, but he could associate his name with the great art by being a billposter and keeping his sign across the face of the hoardings. And, with business acumen, he induced each community that nurtured his imperishable fame to pay half the cost.

But he was not content merely to rest his fame on the books that others wrote. It should also have a foundation on the lives that others risked. Mr. Carnegie could not be a hero, but his money would purchase for him a share in the heroism of the world. Heretofore men and women had risked their lives for their fellows out of pure heroic instincts. Mr. Carnegie gave the world a new and higher motive for great hazards. Each person who took supreme risk to save human life would have the unparalleled honor of being a Carnegie hero. He could wear a Carnegie medal and share the Carnegie bounty. Here, indeed, was something worth striving for, something to stimulate the flagging intrepidity of the race. Who would not risk life for the greater glory and wider advertising of Carnegie?

Then, having made millions manufacturing implements of war, Mr. Carnegie erected a \$10,000,000 international monument to peace and Carnegie. He also proceeded to pension everybody in sight. That is, everybody who might, through a sense of gratitude for the favor to come, inculcate into the mind of youth the greatness and goodness of Carnegie.

But that was not enough. There was one conspicuous blank spot still in sight. The name of Carnegie must be written there. The nation itself must be made to feel and help to advertise the greatness of this man. He would pension the men upon whom the nation had conferred the highest honor—the greatest honor that any man receives from his fellows on the face of the earth. He would give to the world a picture of the most-honored men in all the world feeding out of the hand of Carnegie. And then could the world doubt as to who is its greatest man?

We think this is a fairly accurate description of the picture in Mr. Carnegie's mind. We do not believe that he had any sinister designs against the government. If he had had, he would have offered to pension not the ex-president, but the actual president. For Mr. Carnegie's monumental conceit there would have appeared nothing out of keeping in such a proceeding should it have suggested itself to his purposes.

Mr. Archbold had long paid pensions to judges and senators and representatives in congress. No doubt Mr. Carnegie would have tried to pension a president if such appealed to him as the necessary move in his game. And in offering a pension to ex-presidents he probably had no intention of swerving the judgment of the actual presidents.

He did not think that with \$25,000 a year for life dangling before him an occupant of the White House might be unconsciously influenced to pursue such public policy as would best protect the securities from which that \$25,000 was to come, and, incidentally, from which Mr. Carnegie's enormous income is derived.

Such action on the part of the president might involve tariff laws, railroad regulation, prosecution for rebates and other discrimination. It might involve the vast body of new laws which presently will seek to eradicate the conditions in the steel trust's plants which have been described as virtual slavery—twelve hours a day, seven days a week, twenty-four hours continuous work when shifts change, and a frightful toll of killed and maimed, all at wages less than needed to keep a family on the American standard.

We do not think that Mr. Carnegie had this unconscious influence in mind when he offered to make every president of the United States his pensioner. But we believe that the most dangerous element in his proposal was just this pos-

sible influence, beside which even Mr. Carnegie's unparalleled bumptiousness becomes tame and innocuous.

NOT THE AMERICAN THEORY

Secretary of War Stimson, in his annual report, pleads for the retention of the Philippines, referring to those who favor independence as displaying "misplaced sentimentality or lazy self-interest." The American policy, he says, should be continued to completion for "until that time all proposals for independence are pleas for national recreancy on our part, and for the repudiation of the heavy and difficult burden which thus far we have been bravely and consistently sustaining. Even more it is unjust to the great masses of Filipino people, in whose behalf the high sounding slogans of 'liberty' and 'independence' are shouted. After having been for centuries sunk in ignorance and held in economic subjection, they are now being aroused to self-supporting manhood and being welded into national solidarity. Along this line, and along this line alone, lies the true port of liberty and independence."

When Mr. Stimson refers to "misplaced sentimentality" he uses the language of King George, and when he says that the "true port of liberty and independence" lie along the line of colonialism he preaches the doctrine that was shot to pieces upon every victorious battlefield in the American revolution. If the Americans had never enjoyed independence until they were "fit" for it, America would even now be a British colony. Filipinos have demonstrated that they love liberty, enough to die for it, and that is the test. Colonialism and exploitation will not teach them the art of self-government any more than one could learn to swim by avoiding water. These people will learn more of the perfect principle of popular government when the American people shall demonstrate that their own charter of liberty, the declaration of independence, is, indeed, a passionate chant of human freedom written not for one particular period but for all time and for all men. We can do more for them by treating them in perfect armory with our national pretensions than by all the costly guardianship and colonialism that money can buy or that the spirit of thrones can conceive.

MR. ROOSEVELT'S PARTY

From the letters he has written to individuals and the speeches he delivered at Chicago recently it is plain that Mr. Roosevelt is through with the republican party. He says that that party is so thoroughly reactionary that good can not come out of it. He says the same thing of the democratic party. His statements with respect to the republican party have some force for neither under Taft or Roosevelt did the republican party render to the people relief from the oppression of special interests. His charge against the democratic party, however, is not forceful for the reason that while Mr. Roosevelt himself was permitting the steel trust to gobble up its rivals and while he was being elected to the presidency by campaign funds contributed by the trusts, the democratic party was standing for real progressive principles. Fortunately, democratic leaders now have the opportunity to prove that Mr. Roosevelt's indictment of the democratic party is without substantial basis. If the administration and the congress chosen to represent the democratic party, shall, as The Commoner believes they will, faithfully discharge their obligations to the people, there will be one progressive party in America, whose name will lead all others in the hearts of the people. In that day the title of "democrat" will be the highest title in fact as well as in theory in the politics of the world.

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If you want to make a reactionary democrat mad just suggest that platform pledges should be carried out—in fact, it is one way—and a pretty reliable one, too, of finding out whether a democratic official is of the reactionary type.