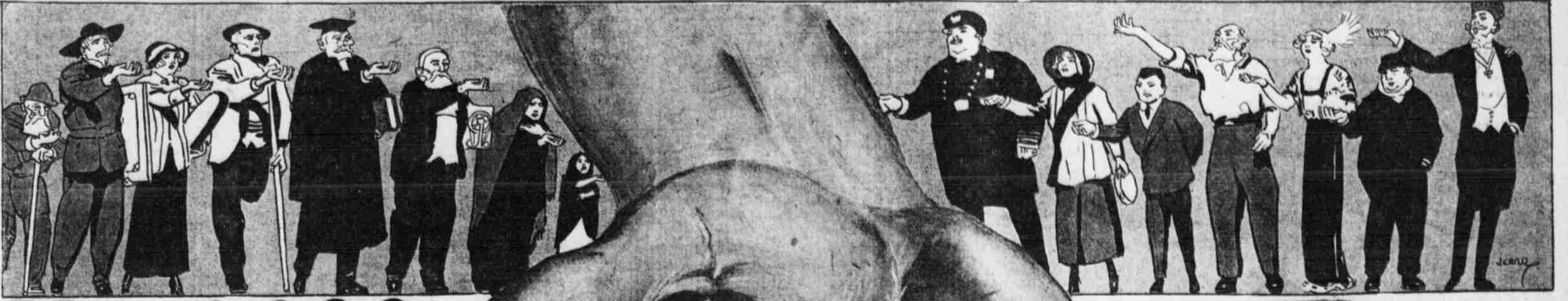


THE OMAHA SUNDAY BEE MAGAZINE PAGE

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How 6,000 People Begged Mrs. Harriman for \$267,000,000!

The Remarkable Efforts of the Financier's Widow to Discover the Worthy Among Those Who Asked Her For Three Times Her Entire Fortune-- And the Surprising Things She Found Out

"YOU will never miss it" is the favorite argument of the begging letter writer.

The fallacy of this argument is apparent in the authorized statement that within two years after the death of E. H. Harriman, the railway magnate, his widow received 6,000 begging letters asking for an aggregate of \$267,000,000.

What is the conscientious, philanthropically inclined master or mistress of millions to do in such a situation? Laboriously examine into the merits of each application for material aid, submit to being impoverished, or throw all the begging letters into the waste basket?

Mrs. Harriman chose the courses first named. First, to the limit of her time and strength, she read and analyzed each of those 6,000 begging letters. Then, convinced that many of them contained legitimate requests, she submitted the whole correspondence for expert analysis to William H. Allen, Director of the Bureau of Municipal Research and National Training School for Public Service. The extremely interesting, and often surprising, result is Mr. Allen's book, lately issued by Dodd, Mead & Co., N. Y., and called "Modern Philanthropy; a Study of Efficient Appealing and Giving."

In a foreword Mrs. Harriman writes:

"Gifts spiritual, gifts mental, and gifts material are the three greatest means of expressing human interest. They have been unequally bestowed upon men and unequally obtained by men."

"Man's individual gifts must be used systematically as well as sympathetically to be successful in their mission of benefiting himself, his country and his race."

With the aid of a card index system, Mr. Allen classified and analyzed those 6,000 begging letters sent to Mrs. Harriman. Two of his interesting conclusions are:

"That those who give 'without missing it' are sure to miss it in their giving."

"That there is need for a correspondence school in the art of appealing and the art of giving."

For example as to the former, the emotionally metaphorical woman who wrote asking Mrs. Harriman for "Just one drop from your overflowing bucket for a sister in deep waters."

"Please do sit down and write a check for one million dollars," wrote another woman. "It will look so small that you will see you'll never miss the sum and make me famous and fortunate."

A man writing from California was so tactless as to convey a hint about the Biblical camel and needle's eye: "You could never miss \$1,700, and when a man goes to the home beyond he cannot take his riches with him."

Three thousand of these letters were from men, women and children in the United States, asking \$22,000,000 for themselves; 1,400 personal letters from Europe, Asia, Africa and Australia asked for \$32,000,000; 1,100 benevolent agencies in the United States wanted

\$207,000,000, while various institutions in foreign countries asked for \$5,000,000. Yet, writes the expert: "With few exceptions requests are prefaced with the assurance that writers want only what Mrs. Harriman would never miss."

Two out of three of these begging letters were from women; less than ten per cent asked aid for others--the majority of these personal beggars had "troubles of their own."

One letter in twenty-five, only, was from a minor; but these were nearly always altruistic, often in the interest of "mamma, who is sick and worrying for the debts." Only about one in ten of the personal letters were from illiterate persons, while 338 were apparently from persons of far more than average education.

"It is not merely the slum-dweller," writes Mr. Allen, "or the slumworker in a great city who writes to the rich men and women advertised in the press. On the contrary, 3,500 different localities are represented by these 6,000 appeals. For Mrs. Harriman's office and our own we prepared two pin maps indicating the localities in the United States after the first 2,000 letters had come. Little black pins mean individuals asking for themselves and families. Large red pins are used for colleges and universities, little red ones for industrial schools, etc.; white for churches, green for hospitals, yellow for boys' clubs; blue for homes and asylums, lavender for scientific and civic bodies.

In explaining why so much study was given to these letters, Mr. Allen, who seems to be speaking for Mrs. Harriman, says:

"The first twenty or fifty times one reads: 'You will never miss such a trifle, while to me, one thousand dollars would look like Heaven itself,' the heart response is immediate. It seems imperative to answer an appeal to save a tuberculosis fiancé, rescue a paralyzed baby, rebuild a church that was struck by lightning, supply the last fifty thousand toward a college which will illumine a State, or give an old couple the longed-for trip back home."

"What right have I with an income of \$50 or \$500 a day to hesitate when I pass distress, or when it comes to me in my morning mail?"

"Is there any lesson in these hundreds of appeals for me, for others who want to give wisely, for those who ask and for those who are trying to understand, interpret and direct social forces?"

So even personal letters were carefully analyzed that contained excuses like these:

"I have set my alarm clock for 2 a. m. Each time it rings I will rise and ask God to ask you for \$50,000."

"God loveth a cheerful giver."

"May the Holy Spirit do His work in your heart and lead you to give \$1,500,000" (to a Western univer-

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A few simple pretty clothes for a girl of 22. "Do you blame me for not wanting to marry him when he is wealthy unless I have them?"

"Merely the gift of an automobile for my aged mother and myself, which would be nothing in your sight; \$400 in the Lord's name," for a minister whose present automobile is worn out.

"A tombstone so expensive that I am unable to do much, still it is a sacred duty."

Money to put an artificial leg on the market. Twenty-five dollars to pay for copyright of a drama. Fifty dollars to carry out a plan to keep a family of twelve children from tormenting their neighbors. To pay debts contracted without her husband's knowledge.

"This letter will reach you on Saturday. Will you have the kindness to send me an answer by special delivery, as on Sunday ordinary mail is not circulated. My time is limited in this hotel."

"One of the freakiest letters," writes Mr. Allen, "fairly reeking with insincerity, was from a man who claimed to have spent ten years demonstrating from first-hand contact that 'it is worth while to investigate the horrors, disgraces, malevolent and ignorant outrages, procedures intensely dangerous to health and life itself, now borne with equanimity and patience by all the generous and trustful public..... among ordinary cheap restaurants where the majority of our Americans are now getting their pot luck.'"

The tactlessness of many of these mendicant letter writers was amazing. A wife whose husband was "in bad health and unable to work" ad-

ressed Mrs. Harriman as "Dear Sis in Christ."

"A business man in need of more capital started his letter to Mrs. Harriman with the inquiry, 'Is your soul saved?'"

A woman who admitted that she was only "the candlestick of Heaven's light" wanted the means of financing a scheme to revive "the lost art of letter writing."

A man with a record of fifty-eight jail sentences in one year desired the means of placing on the market a "health remedy made of celery water."

A champion crank ended his letter thus: "Yours for the immediate restoration of truth, justice and sexless progress as the sound basis of all things common in these 'last' days." And signed, "Mispah."

Dread of the "waste basket" cropped out in many of the letters. This is a favorite expression of that dread: "In the name of humanity do not throw this letter into the waste basket until you have read it."

Hundreds "do protest too much" at the start, as: "This is not a begging letter." And, "If you know how it hurts me to write." And, "I am not an impostor," and, "if you will ask my minister," etc.

Many of the requests from charity and other benevolent institutions contained phrases that were monuments of imbecility, bad taste and insincerity. Here are a few examples:

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"All the world seemed to Mrs. Harriman to be reaching out a begging hand to her. Behind the appealing hand she knew were real need, real merit, real opportunities for philanthropy—but how to FIND THEM OUT?"

What They Asked For

- 1800 Wanted Outright Gifts of \$8,000,000.
- 617 Wanted "Loans" of \$5,000,000.
- 216 Wanted to Sell Objects for \$8,000,000.
- 238 Wanted Employment and Investment Tips.
- 330 Wanted Business Capital of \$5,000,000.
- 500 Wanted \$1,500,000 to Buy Homes.
- 206 Wanted \$120,000 for Medical Care.
- 1100 American Benevolent Agencies Asked \$207,000,000.
- 1400 Foreign Letters Asked for \$32,000,000.
- 150 Foreign Institutions Asked for \$6,000,000.

Mrs. Harriman's Entire Fortune is Only \$75,000,000.



Mrs. Mary W. Harriman, Widow of the Late Financier.



Mrs. Harriman's Begging Map—the Most Remarkable Map in the World, as the Begging Letters Came in the Places They Were Sent from Were Marked with Pins—Little Black Pins for Individuals, Large Red Pins for Colleges and Universities, Little Red Pins for Industrial Schools, etc., White for Churches, Green for Hospitals, Yellow for Boys' Clubs, Blue for Homes, Lavender for Scientific and Civic Bodies. The Colors of the Pins Cannot Be Seen on This Reproduction, but Their Distribution Can Be. The Illustration is from Director William H. Allen's "Modern Philanthropy," the Remarkable Book That Details the Harriman Begging Letter Research.

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sity). "We would appreciate a reply over your own signature."

"It was a very great pleasure to see you once more and to know of God's kindly dealings with you. P. S. Section 3, above, is not quite true in fact, but I trust you are to be a co-laborer and so I send this with a photograph of myself."

It is recognized that begging letters must be examined carefully as a basis for discriminate and helpful giving. In some cases a begging letter furnishes evidence that the writer should have other attention at once—that some one should "ting for an ambulance." For in-

stance: "A man who leaves his wife and children in an institution and borrows money from hotel clerks with which to buy newspaper and Bible quotations to further 'one of the greatest' constructive schemes to make \$850,000,000" should be examined for his sanity. Otherwise, instead of becoming one of the most 'helpful, progressive and useful men of my time,' he may easily become a homicide."

Accordingly—with Mrs. Harriman's encouragement—Mr. Allen's book ends with a carefully thought-out "Magna Charta for Givers."

Heat That Makes Iron Boil Like Water

FOR some years past scientific men have been striving to produce heat fiercer than any temperature of which we have experience in ordinary life. The greatest heat ever developed by the agency of man was obtained by Sir Andrew Noble, who exploded cordite in closed vessels, so that a pressure of fifty tons to the square inch was registered, and a degree of heat never previously recorded.

The highest temperature reached in fuel furnaces for practical purposes is between 1,700 and 1,800 degrees centigrade, and at such a heat freckle and porcelain are melted. Then we come to the flame fed with hydrogen and oxygen, or oxygen and coal gas; by these means a temperature of 2,900 degrees centigrade may be obtained.

A new industry solely dependent upon the employment of great heat is that of melting quartz. This mineral, fused by the oxy-hydrogen flame, is converted into tubes and flasks and other vessels for chemical purposes. These vessels are absolutely inert, and may be heated hundreds of degrees higher than is possible with glass; they may also be plunged at such heat into cold water without injury.

It has been discovered that by whirling a centrifugal wheel at high velocity in the combustion-chamber of a furnace the nitrogen is cast to one side, while the oxygen is concentrated, and in this way a brighter flame and greater heat are obtained. A similar appliance used during the combustion of coal in a furnace enabled a firm of paper-makers to save twenty-seven per cent of their coal bill by the elimination of the hydrogen gas formed in combustion.

But most remarkable of all the phases of the utilization of extreme heat is the discovery of the welding material known as thermite. The inventor discovered that aluminum is very much attracted to oxygen, and holds it closer than a brother. Therefore he mixed granulated aluminum with oxide of iron, for the lighter metal wants oxygen, and the oxide of iron has it to give. A small quantity of magnesium filings was placed on top of the mixture and a storm-match applied, and immediately a mass of molten iron was seen boiling at a temperature of 3,000 degrees centigrade—much higher than any temperature in ordinary use.



Above is Mary Harriman, Now Mrs. C. C. Rumsey; Below Miss Carol Harriman, Daughters Whose Financial Welfare the Late Mr. Harriman Left in His Wife's Hands Together with His Whole Fortune.

PHOTO BY PAUCKER & CO. N.Y.