

## Standard Oil on Troubled Waters

*The Personal Relation in Industry, by John D. Rockefeller, Jr. New York: Boni and Liveright. \$1.75.*

MR. JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER, JR., believes that Labor and Capital are partners, and should act accordingly. This rather novel point of view prepares the reader for a certain wildness of opinion, and he is rewarded, for Mr. Rockefeller also believes that "honesty is the best policy," that you should "do as you would be done by," and that "the industrial problem is a great human problem."

If you have already guessed that Mr. Rockefeller is a well-meaning man, you are not far from right. For indeed his book is a masterpiece of good intention, pure and unalloyed by the baser metal of thought. He wants everybody to be happy. Labor must have a square deal, and representation, for Mr. Rockefeller quotes an expert who told him that what employees really sought was "not higher wages, but recognition as men." And "the interests of Capital can no more be neglected than those of Labor." This can easily be arranged, since, unlike Labor, the stockholders desire other things more than "recognition as men." Management must also have its share, and the community has a stake in industry which cannot be overlooked. Every one of these four must get what he justly wants. How is this to be accomplished? How are we to arrive at that happy state when industry will be a Christmas tree on which Capital, Management, the Community and Labor will find hung their respective presents—dividends, a certificate of humanity, a salary check and a revised price list?

Mr. Rockefeller, who is saddened by the spectacle of things as they are, chiefly the ill-feeling between Capital and Labor, is filled with a double nostalgia for things as they used to be and as they might be again. He recalls with melancholy pleasure the good old days when "industry was on a small scale, when the employer came into direct contact with his employees, and the personal sympathy which grew out of that contact made the rough places smooth." But those times when boss and workman called each other "by their first names" are gone forever, they have given way to large factories in which the personal touch is quite lacking, they have been replaced by conditions such as force Mr. Rockefeller to admit that "organized Capital sometimes conducts itself in an unworthy manner, contrary to law. . . ." This is all wrong, of course, but Mr. Rockefeller sees light ahead. "Surely a way out of the impenetrable maze will be found. . . . Today the world is passing through a period of reconstruction. . . . Partnership, not enmity, is the watchword. . . . Hostility between Labor and Capital is unthinkable. . . . Who, then, will dare to block the wheels of progress?"

There seem to be no candidates for this unpopular post, so Mr. Rockefeller recounts the few, large and simple things necessary for a return to the friendly days of "I'm your boss—call me Bill." Among them are "a recognition of the brotherhood of man," of the principle of trying to put yourself in the other man's place," the spirits of "cooperation and goodwill," of "community," of "justice, fair play, and brotherhood." In industry let the same rules "prevail as in a boxing bout, in a match of golf, or a football game"; "let the contest be clean, gentlemanly,

sportsmanlike, a contest always having regard for the rights of the other man."

Against this general philosophic background Mr. Rockefeller erects a more specific program of reconstruction for industry.

If we look into our own experience, we find that the misunderstandings which we have had with other men have been largely the result of lack of contact. We have not seen eye to eye.

Men cannot sit around a table together for a few hours or several days perhaps and talk about matters of common interest, with points of view however diverse, with whatever of misunderstanding or distrust, without coming to see that after all there is much of good in the worst of us and not so much of bad in most of us as the rest of us have sometimes assumed.

The above conclusions were arrived at by Mr. Rockefeller after considerable thought, and at the end of some years. What aroused his attention appears chiefly to have been the strike by the employees of the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company, the chief features of which will be recalled to most people by the word Ludlow. In regard to this strike Mr. Rockefeller uses terms which are, from him, scathing.

I frankly confess that I felt there was something fundamentally wrong in a condition of affairs which made possible the loss of human lives, engendered hatred and bitterness and brought suffering and privation upon hundreds of human beings. . . . It became evident to those responsible for the management . . . that matters could not be allowed to remain as they were. Any situation . . . out of which so much bitterness could grow, clearly required amelioration. . . .

Out of this doubt that everything was all right in Colorado grew the representation plan for employees, the details of which as put on paper Mr. Rockefeller explains at length, but of whose operation in practice he says nothing.

Before the plan was put into effect, Mr. Rockefeller made a tour of the company's property. It was intimate, affectionate, and democratic. These traits he lays at the door of "my sainted mother and my honored father, whose training and example I regard as a priceless heritage," and who is not seldom seen "returning home in his automobile with half-a-dozen or a dozen Italian and Hungarian workmen crowded about him on the seats and standing on the running boards as he gives them a lift on their way home."

Of course his tour was a success:

If you will pardon a personal reference, may I say that when I visited Colorado some eighteen months ago, I had the opportunity of talking with hundreds, if not thousands, of the employees. . . . I went into the men's homes, talked with their wives and husbands, . . . and had just such friendly relations with them as any man going among them would have had. . . . I inquired specifically about the water supply at each camp. . . . I asked what opportunities you men, my partners [this from an address to the employees] had for getting together socially, and I visited some of your clubhouses and saw plans for others. I went into your wash houses and talked with the men before and after bathing. . . . As you know, we have pretty nearly slept together—it has been reported that I slept in one of your nightshirts—I would have been proud had the report been true.

Mr. Rockefeller is a sure-enough Christian. But it is a crippled Christianity that has all heart and no head.

ROBERT LITTELL.

## Africa at the Peace Conference

*African Questions at the Peace Conference, by George Louis Beer, Edited by Louis Herbert Gray. New York: The Macmillan Company. \$6.00.*

MR. GEORGE LOUIS BEER was one of the most remarkable—perhaps the most remarkable—of the able and devoted body of advisers whom President Wilson brought over with him to Paris in 1918-19. Already known for his five volumes of authoritative historical work on the British Colonial System, and for a suggestive book on the English-speaking Peoples, published during the war, he was asked to undertake the study of colonial questions in Colonel House's Inquiry, and later appointed Chief of the Colonial Division of the American delegation at Paris. There his influence extended far beyond the bounds of his own subject. His wide knowledge, his scrupulous exactitude, and his unselfish accessibility, not only made him known to a wide circle, but helped to maintain the standard of discussion on the plane of true scholarship. He was designated the first Secretary of the Permanent Mandates Commission; but his work had overtaxed him, and he died at New York in March, 1920, at the age of forty-eight.

This volume, edited and brought up to date by a colleague, contains the papers on African and one or two other territorial questions prepared by him for the Peace Conference. They are of interest to British readers for numerous reasons. It is true that, unlike some of the other American inside publications regarding the Peace Conference, they are not sensational. Mr. Baruch gave us the Smuts Memorandum, which belonged, we have been told, to the most secret category of documents. Mr. Lamont gave us the unforgettable picture of the interview between the President and his economic advisers after he had yielded on the pensions clause. Mr. Bullitt told us of his Russian mission and of his disowning by the British Premier on his return. Mr. Lansing astounded us by revealing his complete lack of touch with his chief on the principles and proposals of the Covenant. Mr. Ray Stannard Baker, with all the President's documents at his command, has let light, sometimes even more than he suspects, into innumerable dark corners. Side by side with these "revelations" Mr. Beer's admirably compiled and documented memoranda may seem of secondary interest. Yet they deserve to be read, by others than professed students, as models of clear, detailed, and impartial discussion on a host of difficult and contentious problems.

As an American, Mr. Beer approaches African questions with complete detachment; yet his studies had cured him both of facile idealism and of a predominantly commercial outlook. He loses no opportunity of advocating the Open Door, but "the vitally important side of the questions," he writes at the opening of his survey on Central Africa, "is the development of a sound African civilization; the secondary side is Africa as a source of supply to the Western world and as a market for its finished wares." He is particularly interested in the development of cultivation by native producers, and points out that neglect of this principle must have for a consequence that "many of the colonies, practically all except the British, will have to change so fundamentally as almost to begin their economic life afresh." He is also keenly interested in the relations between India and East Africa, citing Sir John Kirk's dictum that "East Africa is the America of the Hindu." In his

summarized recommendations he definitely advises that German East Africa "be entrusted by mandate to the British Empire as a place of settlement for British East India," declaring it to be "essential" that "India's need of a country for unrestricted immigration be met." In another place (p. 63) he remarks, regarding Indian immigration, with as much of irony as he permitted to his most scrupulous pen, that "it is not altogether plain why the addition of German East Africa to the British colonies in this region should be necessary to its success."

On trade questions he is equally definite and outspoken. In proposing that the Cameroons should be placed under a French mandate, he stipulates as a condition to be insisted on, "if possible," "that all existing and future international agreements about equality of opportunity and freedom of navigation of rivers should apply, not only to all the Cameroons, but also to all French Equatorial and West Africa."

On the other hand, he points out that the Open Door is a formula of limited application. "Until Africa is secured from competing territorial ambitions, it would be unwise to oblige any State to open its colonies to economic penetration aimed at detaching them. Fears of such nature kept Portugal and Belgium from welcoming German capital in the past. . . . The crux of the problem is to eliminate the political motive. That effected, the difficulty will not consist in giving equal opportunities to the private capital of all nations, but in attracting it at all. This will be especially the case," he adds, "if the native is adequately protected from exploitation by effective labor laws."

Beer had never been to Tropical Africa; but he had intended to undertake regular visits to the mandated and other areas as part of his Geneva work. It will be interesting to see whether this project will materialize in other hands. In any case, the Permanent Mandates Commission has set out on its task, as its proceedings show, with the blend of high principle, prudent judgment, and pertinacious curiosity for which Beer's inquiries were undoubtedly the preparation.

The editor has added to the value of the volume by over a hundred pages of useful documentary appendices.

ALFRED E. ZIMMERN.

## Our American Theatre

*Our American Theatre, by Oliver M. Sayler, with Illustrations by Lucie R. Sayler. New York: Brentano's. \$4.00.*

HAVE you ever wondered how it would seem to read a book that was present in all its parts yet somehow absent as a whole? Such a paradoxical effect may be reached—or nearly—by the help of Mr. Sayler's latest. Perhaps this is because the book practically dispenses with historical perspective; perhaps because, though full of revolt and reform, it lays small stress on revolt *from* what and reform *of* what. Eliza skips nimbly from ice-cake to ice-cake on her way to emancipation, yet we hardly hear the bloodhounds or see the shore she has just left behind. The children of Hope stand neatly marshalled for the maw of Moloch, but Moloch himself would appear to be functioning elsewhere, or nowhere. Yet, as everybody knows, the fiery furnace of Things as They Are burns and glows nightly in the vicinity of Times Square, and the bloodhounds bay loudly along a good half-mile of Broad-