Carnegie Institute of Technology

Address by Frank F. Nicola, Esq.

At the Carnegie Day Exercises, November 24, 1920

To me, Andrew Carnegie has never appeared to be a superman. He was more helpful to us all by reason of his being a plain, practical man of great heart and a wonderful mind. Early in life his ideas with relation to his work, his application of his time, and his money, and his aspirations began to form to the end that he became not only a worker and a producer, but a reformer, a philosopher and a business idealist. The Carnegie I will talk about is the man you, and you, and you, can become if you husband your strength as he did. It is not necessary, in order to be helpful to humanity, that you should be worth one million or one hundred million dollars. Your mental and physical powers, coupled with vision, enthusiasm, and education, can accomplish wonders. Wealth is not the measure of the man. While it seems to be an important factor, it is, after all, the least factor in man's intellectual and spiritual development. No man with simply the dollar mark carries beyond his death—in fact, the sooner that event occurs, the better. We have had the remarkable manifestation in our city of a man who started without a dollar and ended without a dollar, and yet was deeper in the hearts of his countrymen and more influential in adding to the happiness and directing the destinies of his fellows than any other man among millions of men, and that man was John Brashear, whose birthday hundreds of thousands are celebrating this very day. These two men worked hand in hand, helping and influencing each other in their undertakings in behalf of mankind.
As each year went by in Mr. Carnegie's life, the hunger within his soul became more manifest. He felt deeply and studied deeply the relationship between men. His position was such that he was familiar with all manner of men in all stations of life. He realized that one of the important reasons for continuing existence was the eternal hope of satisfying the hunger of the soul—that another reason—and so rarely expressed, was that men seek to develop the best that is in themselves so that others may be benefited thereby. From this desire springs the family and the love and protection of the wife and children. Through them and them only can man idealize and carry forward what he hungers for. Certainly, if our only interest in life is only our immediate betterment, this world could not go far, for unconsciously as well as consciously, we look into the future and there is maintained within us strongly, our determination to help produce the fittest that the fittest might survive.

Mr. Carnegie knew that there was unrest, but he felt it to be unrest from lack of understanding; therefore his first motive was to satisfy the hunger for education. He did not foresee the social upheaval in Russia, but intuitively, he was arranging, so far as he could, to put his fellow-citizens in command of that knowledge which would enable them to come face to face with any catastrophe. Unhappily, a people of one hundred and fifty millions are apparently in the throes of despair, endeavoring to accomplish in a night results that experience has taught us can only eventuate as a result of gradual processes and perhaps never fully. I beg of you who hunger to see an immediate change, to hesitate to throw aside the structure of thousands and thousands of years. I advise you to keep on building, but to make better use of men and materials. It takes twenty-five years to make a good man; it takes a hundred years to make a good tree. Don't throw aside the individuality and training of that human, nor cut down the forest's growth of a century to give way to dreams and anarchy. Endeavor by example and agitation to bring about a sound evolution rather than a chimerical revolution. On earth, there is nothing great but man, and let us hesitate before we throw away that
greatness to experiment with new programs. Better survive some of the ills we have, than fly to those that the world is suffering from today.

To those who have studied dispassionately the social and industrial conditions in this country during the last fifty years and made comparisons of each decade with the present, it must be apparent that a remarkable evolution is rapidly taking place. It is not the result of an overthrow of Government, but of enlightened and refined selfishness, as well as an increased proprietorship on the part of all men and women in the affairs of our country. Today, management and men are sharing direction and ownership, and are idealizing business. The understanding between Labor and Capital is becoming daily more intelligent—and it is intelligence that is bringing them together. Owners of industries are instituting profit-sharing, insurance, pension, and mutual management plans solely because they have become enlightened in spirit and substance. Inside of ten years, I foresee that there will be hardly an industry in this country in which its workers are not partners. It is not only the right thing to do, but, as a matter of fact, it pays in every way. It was Mr. Carnegie's prayer and his ambition that he could bring about clear thinking. He felt that there would be no remedy following class government—that it was better to improve what we have than to tear down and start anew. To his mind, there was nothing so important as human life, and therefore he provided educational facilities because he understood they were necessary to human life. He felt that the power was within ourselves, and once we had a reasonable opportunity and a reasonable understanding, we would meet each difficulty that came up intelligently, and the result of the judgment of our whole people would undoubtedly be what was best for them. We have recently passed through a popular expression of the people's will which, I take it, was not the approval of any particular political party, but rather an emphatic protest against autocratic power and against those conditions that seemed to be drifting this country swiftly into extreme radicalism. It was the expression of citizens who not only
believed in a sound, sane government, but looked forward to a betterment of our conditions by improving existing foundations.

Within the last week, there has been a Stop, Look and Listen conference of the leaders of the largest labor organizations in this country. They have made the splendid announcement that they propose to have a series of conferences between Labor and Capital with reference to a better understanding and, in fact, the education of both. Labor colleges, with reference to the special needs of working men, are being established by the unions in many large cities. The one at Boston, under the guidance of some of the best intellects in the country, is doing splendid work. There is nothing in the recent election returns from industrial centers to indicate that the laboring men themselves desire class control. They want man to man consideration, and there is no question but what they will get it.

I am a decided optimist in the future on industrial relations. The gap between men in different positions of power is lessening. The word “employee” is giving way to that of “co-worker” and “partner.” To the extent that we establish ownership in the hands of millions will we check radicalism.

Mr. Carnegie proved that vastness of accomplishment is within ourselves—that any man of force, judgment, integrity, and applied knowledge, may do great things, but that every man to be really useful must fully sense his obligation to other men. In other words, whether his power be that of a painter, a sculptor, an architect, a writer, a doctor, a musician, a lawyer or a business man—he is simply a trustee. We all know how repeatedly Mr. Carnegie gave emphasis to that. I bring it out here today because it is my hope that you men and women are not opportunists—that you are looking to the future, that you are trying to get something out of this institution that will help you help the other fellow, that will make you truly and faithfully an executor of this knowledge, and that occupying that position of trus-
teeship and pursuing your lives unselfishly and helpfully you may be able to do big work.

Another point I want to bring out that should concern not only you, but all men who are successful and who in the course of time accumulate large fortunes—and that is the question of inheritance, on which Mr. Carnegie gave very pronounced and very early views that brought him under severe criticism of those who felt that money was money and entirely belonged to those who legally owned it. Mr. Carnegie did not believe—and he was consistent in that throughout his life and in his will—in handing over great fortunes to his heirs. It was an evidence of his trusteeship that he considered money was simply a part of an agency—and whatever we acquire should be acquired as a result of our work and our production and not following inheritance. He wanted to do everything in his power to encourage work, thrift and individual ownership, but that ownership not to be for the purpose of handing from the producing father to the non-producing son. His views on that subject have had great influence with other men of energy and success. Any fair mind, noting the increasing distribution of wealth for the benefit of the people by Rockefeller, Carnegie, Sage, Frick and many thousands of others, must have reason to believe that public opinion is being educated in the right direction. What has happened, I foresee, will be increased a hundredfold to the extent that there can be no longer any question that men and women are accepting Carnegie's theory of work, production, wealth, and trusteeship. This is merely another form of enlightened selfishness and enlightened partnership. What a joy it is to feel that our people during the last seven years of the world's upheaval have so spontaneously and so abundantly responded to every welfare demand made on them.

I wish to mark as forcefully as I can that the tendency of the times is against the concentration of wealth in a few hands; but what is necessary to restrain concentration is not exotic legislation, but educating the public up to a point where public sentiment will be as Mr. Carnegie desired it to
be—dead set against the man who accumulates money for the sake of money. Give every man the opportunity to exercise his full faculties—honestly and fairly encouraging him in his enterprise. Let him build a fortune as large as he will, but if through his life he does not fulfill his trusteeship in behalf of his fellows, then let the State take his place as trustee. I do not mean that we should leave behind those whom we have educated to a certain condition in life without reasonable provision, but there is a great deal of difference between reasonable provision and enormous fortunes which can only serve to degenerate the beneficiaries, so I say to you, let it continue in your mind that your talents and accomplishments are simply that of trusteeship. You will have changes—big changes—wonderful changes that come about gradually, that will be sustained by public opinion. No law is of any use until it is enforced by public opinion. Whatever new and big thing you do, will be done against odds. If you feel that you are doing the right thing, do it. What most people need is the courage of their convictions. With education, there is no goal that even the average man cannot reach if he will concentrate his energies—live a simple life, be thrifty, and all the time be dominated by an idealism that means that he is not working solely for himself, but is working for others. No matter what the competition or criticism is, remember those words of Richard Burton:

"Do what thy manhood bids thee do,
From none but self expect applause,
He noblest lives and noblest dies,
Who makes and keeps his self-made laws."

I want to again emphasize the value of courage—yes, I may say particularly the value of Carnegie courage. There is not a man or woman here who, at some time and often for long times, is not under a spell of doubt and hesitation. Perhaps it is lack of money, lack of health, or lack of the love of a good and strong woman. Perhaps it is a feeling of unfair treatment, limited ability, failure to accomplish what you have set out to do, or, in the midst of your accomplish-
ment, you lack the strength of purpose at the right time to carry forward your problem to successful issue; but if you get the Carnegie spirit you will realize there is no such thing as failure. There are no greater assets in the whole world than courage, confidence in yourself and confidence in the other fellow. I hold in my hand a card given to me thirty years ago by one of Pittsburgh's greatest optimists and greatest citizens—Henry J. Heinz. He did as much to stimulate and strengthen the courage of youth as any man I ever knew. On that card is an old Chinese proverb which I earnestly hope you will never permit to pass from your memory:

"Money gone—nothing gone,
   Bend thee to the oar and get thee some more;
Friends gone—much gone,
   Win thee glory—it will be another story;
Courage gone—all gone,
   Better never to have been born."

In closing, I want to thank you for your patient attention and to congratulate you on being the legatees and trustees of the idealism of Andrew Carnegie, and further congratulate you on being under the direction and influence of a man of vision and courage who loves you and this work above all else.—Doctor Hamerschlag.