

January 31, 1924

Dear Rutger:

I have been thinking a little - not much - about our talk the other day, and I have a feeling that you have a piece of work in mind which it would be quite out of the question for me to do.

If I am not wrong, what you want is what is called an inspirational book - a Samuel Smiles biography. Far be it from me to underestimate the value of that kind of literature. It is possible - perhaps probable that it would do more good than anything I could produce; but I simply could not write that kind of thing about the Judge, as much as, in many ways, I appreciate him. I think I should appreciate him more if I knew more about him, also I fancy that I would be less inclined to present him as a model. As I look at him he is one of the best types that the 'hard boiled' big business period has produced, but the best type of that period does not stir me to great enthusiasm or make me desire to hold him up as a model.

I don't want you for a moment to think you are going to get something from me that will make the farmer boy see visions; but I want to put this clearly, that if Judge Gary makes an appointment with me, that I shall tell him - perhaps not as bluntly as I have you - just how I feel about this.

I do respect his integrity, so far as I am able to judge of it; he has done a lot of things of which I think most highly; and I admire the fight he has had to make to put them through. I do not, however, like his world - I don't like the making of a thing like the U.S. Steel Corporation, though there is no question that if you are going to make that kind of thing it could not be done more successfully or more respectably than Judge Gary has done it.

The only way in which I would go into this would be on a basis of entire frankness, that if he is willing to look me in the eye and discuss whether he was right or wrong, give me the documents, open up the records of his board, trusting to my honor not to use anything to which he would object, if he is willing to give me his honest judgment of men and enterprises, to let me criticize the position of the Steel Corporation on the tariff and not to weep tears of sentiment over his nice little speeches at his annual dinners, etc., etc., why, I will think about it.

Now, I am going to be very frank with the Judge, my dear Rutger, but I want you to know that in doing it, I shall take good care not to spike your guns for an inspirational story which a more amiable and sentimental human being would undoubtedly get out of the Judge's career. But, on my honor, I believe that if he would put everything on the table and I could treat it in my way I would do more for him than even Samuel Smiles could have done - and perhaps for the farmer boy, too.

Now, what I am trying to do is to get down on paper just how I feel about this thing at this moment, the result of my talk with you, and with the idea that the Judge may be willing to discuss the matter with me.

You need not be afraid that we will quarrel. We really are very good friends.

Faithfully yours,

I.T.M.

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not read