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CONTENTS

| | |
|--|-----|
| COMMENT | 161 |
| EDITORIALS | 162 |
| CHAPTERS FROM THE LIFE OF FREDERICK W. TAYLOR | 165 |
| By Frank Barkley Copley | |
| A PRACTICAL PLAN FOR RATING THE EFFICIENCY OF AN OFFICE OR- GANIZATION | 178 |
| By W. H. Leffingwell | |
| UNSYSTEMATIZED, SYSTEMATIZED AND SCIENTIFIC MANAGEMENT | 189 |
| By H. P. Kendall | |
| COMMITTEE ON MANAGEMENT WEEK | 201 |
| NEWS OF THE SECTIONS | 202 |
| MEMBERSHIP CAMPAIGN | 203 |

COMMENT

COURTESY of the publishers permits us to print
three selected chapters from Copley's "Frederick
W. Taylor," which comes from the press this month.
Two of these chapters relate to the beginnings of sci-
entific management in the '80s, the other to one of Tay-
lor's later non-industrial researches. Three out of
seventy-seven chapters do not give a fair sample of the
whole, for no one chapter is complete in itself; but
there is enough to indicate that whoever sets out to
read the book has an interesting excursion before him.
It will provide a new background for a profitable re-
reading of the "Principles of Scientific Management"
and "Shop Management."

AS the author of this life makes clear, Taylor was not
primarily a philosopher and writer. He had two
styles; in his speech he was detailed, pell-mell and over-
whelming; in his few written papers he deliberately
cultivated a compact style and these papers were usually
addressed to a particular audience. The result is that
those who did not hear him in person expound his
philosophy and explain his system, and who are de-
pendent on his written papers, have had difficulty in
getting an adequate idea of the scope of his activities,
the range of his thinking, and even of that concrete
thing known as his system. He was not able tempera-
mentally to dissociate himself from his campaign, ob-
jectify his philosophy and the system which expressed
it, and write a comprehensive exposition of the whole.
That is why this life of Taylor is so important and will
for many years undoubtedly be a source of reference
concerning the origin, nature and development of sci-
entific management.

REWARDED by indefatigable research, Copley is
able to tell the whole story: aspects of Taylor's
ancestry and personality which made it inevitable that
his life work should be something of the nature it came
to be; management methods in the '80s and '90s which
made it inevitable, once Taylor was in industry, that his
life work should be exactly what it came to be; the
step by step building up of a system of management to
meet practical conditions which confronted him as gang-
boss, as foreman and finally as chief engineer; then his
realization of a basic logic in the system as developed
and an attempt to formulate the principles involved;
finally the struggle to give it to the world by concrete
example and by the written word;—the story is told
in detail and largely by the use of correspondence from
Taylor's unusually complete files and of memoranda
which have not heretofore been published.

IT should be remembered, however, that the work
was not planned to be a treatise on scientific man-
agement, but the story of a man's life. Because the
man devoted his life to one continuing purpose, the
story necessarily became one primarily of that purpose.
But the author's original and constant aim was to por-
tray the man through the incidents of his career, and in
that he has succeeded admirably. Elements of weak-
ness as well as of strength, and incidents of defeat as
well as of victory, have been impartially set forth. In
no respect is it a conventional biography; it reads more
like a novel; it is the drama of a man fighting an en-
vironment of which he was a generation in advance;