From the Dictionary of American Biography, 1935

1. **Rogers, Henry Huttleston** (January 29, 1840 -May 19, 1909), capitalist, was the son of Rowland and Mary Eldridge (Huttleston) Rogers, both of early New England ancestry. His middle name is often given as Huddleston, which appears to have been the earlier form in the family; to this spelling his son and namesake returned. He was born at Mattapoisett, Mass., but was brought up at Fairhaven, near by, where in boyhood he carried newspapers and delivered groceries. He later served for a time as a railroad brakeman and baggageman. He was twenty-one when the newly discovered oil fields in Pennsylvania drew fortune seekers to that region. Rogers and a friend, Charles P. Ellis, went together to the Oil City district, each having about $600 in savings. They presently built a small refinery at a cost of $1,800, borrowing the additional funds necessary. On a visit to his home town in 1862, Rogers was married to Abbie Palmer Gifford. In Pennsylvania he met several men destined to become leaders in the oil industry, among them Charles Pratt who in 1866 asked Rogers to become associated with him in his refinery business in Brooklyn. There Rogers devised the machinery by which naphtha was first successfully separated from the crude oil-an epochal invention for the industry *(Current Literature,* July 1909). A patent (No.120,-539) was granted on Oct. 31, 1871.

- When the Rockefellers organized the Standard Oil Company in 1874, they took over the Pratt business and with it Rogers, now recognized as both an expert oil man and an able executive with a genius for organization. He was made chairman of the manufacturing committee of the new corporation, a little later a trustee, and before 1890 he was vice-president. He conceived the idea of long pipe lines for transporting oil, and organized the National Transit Company, the first corporation with such an object. This was his favorite promotion, and he remained president of the company long after the actual technical management of the oil business itself had been given over by him to others so that he and William Rockefeller *[q.v.]* might devote their time to the operation of the huge financial machine known to Wall Street as "Standard Oil." Either personally or in behalf of this trust, Rogers was interested in several businesses other than oil-gas, copper, steel, banking, and railroads. In 1884 with associates he formed the Consolidated Gas Company, and thereafter for several years he was instrumental in gaining control of great city plants, fighting terrific battles with rivals for some of them, as in the case of Boston. Almost the whole story of his gas interests was one of warfare, as

was his connection with copper. During the '90'S, when he was virtually the directing head of Standard Oil, he became interested in Anaconda and other copper properties. In 1899 he formed the first $75,000,000 section of the gigantic trust, Amalgamated Copper, which was the subject of such acrid criticism then and for years after-ward. In the building of this great trust, some of the most ruthless strokes in modern business history were dealt-the $38,000,000 "watering of the stock of the first corporation, its subsequent manipulation, the seizure of the copper property of the Butte & Boston Consolidated Mining Company, the using it as a weapon against the Boston & Montana Consolidated Copper and Silver Mining Company, the guerrilla warfare against certain private interests, the wrecking of the Globe Bank of Boston. Standard Oil's interest in steel properties led to Rogers' becoming one of the directors of the United States Steel Corporation when it was organized in 1901. He was long the transportation magnate of Staten Island, being the principal owner of its railroads, traction lines, and ferries. He was a director of the Santa Fe, St. Paul, Lackawanna, Union Pacific, and several other railroads. He was a close associate of E. H. Harriman in the latter's extensive railroad operations, and when Harriman became interested in the insurance business, Rogers, who had long been a trustee of the Mutual Life, was drawn with him into the scandal and governmental investigation of 1905, but as usual emerged almost unruffled. He sustained his worst tactical defeat, however, in an ouster suit brought by the State of Missouri in 1905, in which he, at first defiant, was forced to testify and admit the Standard's secret ownership of certain subsidiary oil companies (218 *Missouri Reports,* I; 116 *Southwestern Reporter,* 902; see also 224 *United States, 270).* His last great individual enterprise was the building of the remarkable, low-grade Virginian Railway from the West Virginia coal fields to Norfolk. It was an achievement unique in business annals for one man to build a $40,000,000 railroad on his own resources and credit, and that, too, partly in a time of financial stress, the panic of 1907. But the strain of doing it proved fatal to him. He was at his desk on May 18, 1909, but the next morning, in New York City, suddenly died of an apoplectic stroke. His first wife had died May 21, 1894, leaving four children. He afterward married Emelle (or Emelie) Augusta Randel, the divorced wife of Lucius Hart, who, together with a son and three daughters, survived him.

Rogers was a tall, handsome man of distinguished presence and a curious duality of nature. In business he was known as a man of cold steel; away from business lie was democratic, a faithful friend, a wit and raconteur. Even

the bitterest of his enemies testified to the almost hypnotic charm of his presence when he chose to exercise it. To the end of his life some of the humblest of the citizens of his boyhood home remained his intimate friends and called him "Hen." His summer home was there, and there at week-ends he found his happiest relaxation. He paved Fairhaven's streets, he gave it a town hall, grammar and high school buildings, a handsome public library, a Masonic lodge building, a costly Unitarian church and parsonage. There he founded the Atlas Tack Company, the largest concern of its kind in America. His fondness for Mark Twain's writings led to an acquaintance with the humorist, and finding the latter in difficulties because of the failure of his publishers, Rogers practically took charge of his affairs and remained his business manager and counselor until death.

Who's Who in America, I909; obituaries in all New York evening and morning papers, May 19, 20, 1909; N. Y. *World,* Mar. 12, Sept. 5, 1907; all New York newspapers of Jan. 6- 8, 1906 when the Missouri suit against Standard Oil was being tried; *Harper's Weekly,* May 29, 1909; *Nation* (N. Y.), May 27*,* 1909; *Current Literature,* July 1909; *World's Work,* May 1905; Thomas W. Lawson, *Frenzied Finance* (1905), the most violent of all the criticisms of Rogers ; Ida M. Tarbell, *The Hist. of the Standard Oil Company (2* vols., 1904); R. I. Warshow, *The Story of Wall Street* (1929); *Dedication of the Memorial Monument to Henry Huttleston Rogers, Jan. 29, 1912. Town Hall, Fairhaven, Mass.* (n.d.) ; George Huddleston, comp., *Huddleston Family Tables* (1933); information in regard to the spelling of his middle name from his son, Col. Henry H. Rogers.) A. F. H.

Thomas W. Lawson's description of Henry Rogers

1. "TYPE=PICT;ALT=lawson"

THE MEN IN POWER BEHIND THE "SYSTEM"

IN the great Thing known to the world as " Standard Oil,"' the most perfect embodiment of a "system" which I will endeavor to get before my readers in later chapters, there are three heads, Henry H. Rogers, William Rockefeller, and John D. Rockefeller. All the other members are distinctively lieutenants, or subordinate workers, unless possibly I except James Stillman, who, from his peculiar connection with "Standard Oil" and his individually independent position, should perhaps be placed in the category of heads.

Some one has said: "If you would know who is the head of a family, slip into the home." The world, the big, arbitrary, hit or miss, too-much-in-a-hurry-to-correct-its-mistakes world, has decided that the master of "Standard Oil" is John I). Rockefeller, and John D. Rockefeller it is to all but those who have a pass-key to the "Standard Oil" home. To those the head of " Standard Oil "-the "Standard Oil" the world knows as it knows St. Paul, Shakespeare, or Jack the Giant-killer, or any of the things it knows well but not at all-is Henry H. Rogers. John D. Rockefeller may have more money, more actual dollars, 'than Henry H. Rogers, or all other members of the "Standard Oil" family, and in the early days of "Standard Oil" may have been looked up to as the big gun by his partners, and allowed to take the hugest hunks of the profits, and may have so handled and judiciously invested these as to be at the beginning of the twentieth century the richest man on earth, but none of these things alters the fact that the big brain, the big body, the head of " Standard Oil," is Henry H. Rogers.

Take station at the entrance of 26 Broadway and watch the different members of the "Standard Oil" family as they enter the building: you will exclaim once and only once:

"There goes the Master!" And the man who calls forth the cry will be Henry H. Rogers.

The big, jovial detective who stands all day long with one foot resting on the sidewalk and one on the first stone step of the home of "Standard Oil" will make oath he shows no different sign to

Henry H. Rogers than to a Rockefeller, a Payne, a Flagler, a Pratt, or an O'Day; yet watch him when Mr. Rogers passes up the steps-an unconscious deference marks his salutation-the tribute of the soldier to the commanding general.

Follow through the door bearing the sign, "Henry H. Rogers, President of the National Transit Co.," on the eleventh floor, and pass from the outer office into the beautiful, spacious mahogany apartment beyond, with its decorations of bronze bulls and bears and yacht-models, its walls covered with neatly framed autograph letters from Lincoln, Grant, "Torn" Reed, Mark Twain, and other real, big men, and it will come over you like a flash that here, unmistakably, is the *sanctum sanctorum* of the mightiest business institution of modern times. If a single doubt lingers, read what the men in the frames have said to Henry H. Rogers, and you will have proof positive that these judges of human nature knew this man, not only as the master of "Standard Oil," but also as a sturdy and resolute friend whose jovial humanity they had recognized and enjoyed.

Did my readers ever hear of 'the National Transit Company? Very few have - yet the presidency of it is the modest title of Henry H. Rogers. When the world is ladling out honors to the "Standard Oil" kings, and spouting of their wondrous riches, how often is Henry H. Rogers mentioned? Not often, for he is never where the public can get a glimpse of him. He is too busy pulling the wires

playing the buttons in the shadows just behind the throne. Had it not been that that divinity which disposes of men's purposes compelled this man, as he neared the end of his remarkable career, to come into the open on Amalgamated, he might never have been known as the real master of "Standard Oil." But if he is missing when the public is hurrahing, he is sufficiently in evidence when clouds lower or when the danger-signal is run to the masthead at 26 Broadway. He who reads "Standard Oil" history will note that, from its first deal until this day, whenever bricks, cabbages, or aged eggs were being presented to " Standard Oil," always were Henry H. Rogers' towering form and defiant eye to be seen in the foreground where the missiles flew thickest During the past twenty years, whenever the great political parties have lined-up for their regular once-in-four-years' tussle, there would be found Henry H. Rogers, calm as a race-track gambler, *"sizing-up"* the entries, their weights and handicaps. Every twist and turn in the pedigrees and records of Republicans and Democrats are as familiar to him as the "dope-sheets" are to the gambler, for is he not at the receiving end of the greatest information bureau in the world?

A Standard Oil agent is in every hamlet in the country, and who better than these trained and intelligent observers to interpret the varying trends of feelings in their communities? Tabulated and analyzed, these reports enable Rogers, the sagacious politician, to diagnose the drift of the country far ahead of the most astute of campaign managers. He is never in doubt about who will win the election. Before the contest is under way he has picked his winner and is beside him with generous offers of war expenses.

When labor would howl its anathemas at Standard Oil, and the Rockefellers and other stout-hearted generals and captains of this band of merry money-makers would fall to discussing conciliation and retreat, it was always Henry H. Rogers who fired at his associates his now famous panacea for all Standard Oil opposition: "We'll see Standard Oil in hell before we will allow any body of men to dictate how we shall conduct our business!" And the fact that "Standard Oil" still does its business in the Elysian fields of success, where is neither sulphur nor the fumes

of sulphur, is additional evidence of whose will it is that sways its destinies.

An impression of the despotic character of the man and of his manner of despatching the infinite details of the multitudinous business he must deal with daily may be gained by a glimpse of Henry H. Rogers at one of the meetings of the long list of giant corporations which number him among their directors. Surrounded though he be by the elite of all financialdom, the very flower of the business brains of America, you will surely hear his sharp, incisive, steel-clicking: " Gentlemen, are we ready for the vote, for I regret to say, I have another important and unavoidable meeting at_____?" You look at your watch. The time he mentions is twelve, or, at the most, fifteen minutes away. There is no chance for further discussion. Cut-and-dried resolutions are promptly put to the vote, and off goes the master to his other engagement which will he disposed of in the same peremptory fashion.

At a meeting of the directors of "financed" Steel, during the brief reign of its late "vacuumized" president, Charlie Schwab, an episode occurred which exhibited the danger of interfering with Mr. Rogers' iron-bound plans. The fact that the steel throne was many sizes too large for Schwab had, about this time, become publicly notorious, but Carnegie and Morgan on the surface, and "Standard Oil" beneath, were so busy preparing their alibis against the crash which even then was overdue that they had neither time nor desire to adjust themselves on the seat.

In advance Mr. Rogers made his invariable plea for quick action on a matter before the board when Schwab, with a tact generated by the wabbling of a misfit Wall Street crown chafing a generous pair of ears, blurted out: "Mr. Rogers will vote on this question after we have talked on it."

In a voice that those who heard it say sounded like a rattlesnake's hiss in a refrigerator, Rogers replied: "All meetings where I sit as director vote first and talk after I am gone."

It is said, and from my knowledge of these and after-events I believe with truth, that this occurrence was the spark that started the terrific explosion in United States Steel, for not long afterward some unknown and mysterious power began that formidable attack on Steel stock which left Wall Street full of the unattached ears, eyes, noses, breastbones, and scalps of hordes of financial potentates and their flambeau carriers. Whether or not Mr. Rogers was the instigator of this movement, of course, no man can positively state, but I can vouch for the fact that about this time he displayed, when talking " Steel" affairs with intimates, a most contemptuous bitterness against "King Charlie " and certain of his associates.

At sixty-five Henry H. Rogers is probably one of the most distinguished looking men of the time; tall and straight and as well-proportioned and supple as one of the beautiful American elms which line the streets of his native town He was born in Fairhaven, a fishing village just over the bridge from the great whaling port, New Bedford. He comes of stalwart New England stock; his father was a sea-captain and his lot, like that of most of the sons of old New England seaport towns, was cast along those hard, brain-and-body developing lines which, beginning in the red village school house, the white meeting-house, and the yellowish-grayish country store, end in unexpected places, often, as in this instance, upon the golden throne of business royalty.

Mr. Rogers' part in the very early days of Standard Oil was that of clerk and bookkeeper. He

makes no secret that when he had risen to the height of $8 a week wages he felt as proud and confident as ever in after-life when for the same number of days' labor it was no uncommon occurrence to find himself credited with a hundred thousand times that amount

All able men have some of God's indelible imprints of greatness. This man's every feature bespeaks strength and distinction. When he walks, the active swing of his figure expresses power-realized, confident power. When at rest or in action his square jaw tells of fighting power, bull-dog, hold-on, never-let-go fighting power, and his high, full fore head of intellectual, mightily intellectual power; and they are re~enforced with cheek-bones and nose which suggest that this fighting power has in it something of the gruff ruthlessness of the North American Indian. The eyes, however, are the crowning characteristic of the man's physical make-up.

One must see Mr. Rogers' eyes in action and in repose to half appreciate their wonders. I can only say they are red, blue, and black, brown, gray, and green; nor do I want my readers to think I put in colors that are not there, for there must be many others than those I have mentioned. I have seen them when they were so restfully blue that I would think they never could be anything but a part of those skies that come with the August and September afternoons when the bees' hum and the locusts' drone blend with the smell of the new-mown hay to help spell the word "Rest."

I have seen them so green that within their depths I was almost sure the fish were lazily resting in the shadows of those sea-plants which grow only on the ocean's bottom; and I have seen them as black as that thundercloud which makes us wonder: "Is He angry?" And then again I have watched them when they were of that fiery red and that glinting yellow which one sees only when at night the doors of a great, roaring furnace are opened.

There is such a kindly good-will in these eyes when they are at rest that the man does not live who would not consider himself favored to be allowed to turn over to Henry H. Rogers his pocketbook without receiving a receipt. They are the eyes of the man you would name in your will to care for your wife's and children's welfare. When their animation is friendly one would rather watch their merry twinkle as they keep time to their owner's inimitable stories and non-duplicatable anecdotes, trying to interpret the rapid and incessant telegraphy of their glances, than sit in a theatre or read an interesting book; but it is when they are active in war that the one privileged to observe them gets his real treat, always provided he can dodge the rain of blazing sparks and the withering hail of wrath that ours out on the offender. To watch them then requires real nerve, for it is only a nimble, stout-hearted, mail-covered individual that can sustain the encounter.

I have seen many forms of human wrath, many men transformed to terrible things by anger, but I have never seen any that were other than jumping-jack imitations of a jungle tiger compared with Henry H. Rogers when he "lets 'er go "-when the instant comes that he realizes some one is balking the accomplishment of his will.

Above all things Henry H. Rogers is a great actor. Had his lot been cast upon the stage, he might easily have eclipsed the fame of Booth or Salvini. He knows the human animal from the soles of his feet to the part in his hair and from his shoulder-blade to his breastbone, and like all great actors is not above getting down to every part he plays. He is likely also so to lose himself in a role that he gives it his own force and identity, and then things happen quite at variance with the

lines. The original Booth would come upon the stage the cool, calculating, polished actor, but when well into his part was so lost in it that it was often with difficulty he could be brought back to himself when the curtain fell. Once while playing Richard III at the old Boston Museum, Richmond, by whom he was to be slain, made, at the ordained moment, the thrust which should have laid him low, but instead, Booth in high frenzy parried it, and with the fiendishness of the original Richard, step by step drove Richmond off the stage and through the wings, and it was not until the police seized the great tragedian, two blocks away, that the terrified duke, who had dropped his sword and was running for dear life, was sure he would ever act again.

When in the midst of his important plays, it is doubtful whether Henry H. Rogers realizes until the guardians of the peace appear where the acting begins and the reality should end. His intimate associates can recall many times when his determination to make a hit in his part has caused other actors cast with him to throw aside their dummy swords and run for their lives.

The entire history of "Standard Oil" is strewn with court scenes, civil and criminal, and in all the important ones Henry H. Rogers, the actor, will be found doing marvellous "stunts." Standard Oil historians are fond of dwelling on the extraordinary testifying abilities of John D. Rockefeller and other members of the hand, but the acrobatic feats of ground and lofty tumbling in the way of truth which they have given when before the blinking foot-lights of the temples of justice are as Punch-and-Judy shows to a Barnum three-ring circus compared to Henry H. Rogers' exhibitions.

His "I will tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help me God," sounds absolutely sincere and honest, but as it rings out in the tone of the third solemnest bell in the chime, this is how it is taken down in the unerring short-hand notes of the recording angel and Bent by special wireless to the typewriter for His Majesty of the Sulphur Trust: "What I tell shall be the truth and the whole truth, and there *shall* be no truth but that I tell, and God help the man or woman who tells truth different from my truth." The recording angel never missed catching Henry H. Rogers' court-oaths in this way, and never missed sending them along to the typewriter at Sulphurville, with this postscript: "Keep your wire open, for there'll be things doing now!"

At the recent but now famous sensational Boston "Gas Trial," Henry H. Rogers in the role of defendant was the principal witness. I was in court five hours and a half each sitting as day after day he testified. I watched, as the brightest lawyers in the land laid their traps for him in direct and cross-examination, to detect a single sign of fiction replacing truth, or going joint-account with her or where truth parted company with fiction; and I was compelled, when he stepped from the witness-stand, to admit I had not found what I had watched for. This, too, when I was equipped with actual knowledge and black-and-white proofs of the facts. Weeks before the trial began Attorney Sherman L. Whipple, one of the great cross-examiners of the time, had made his boast that he would break through the "Standard Oil" magnate's heretofore impenetrable bulwarks, and when H. H. Rogers entered the court-room for the first time and let his eagle eye sweep the lawyers, the lay-men, and the judge until it finally rested on Whipple, the glance was as absolute a challenge and a defiance as ever knights of old exchanged.

I followed Mr. Rogers on the witness-stand and was compelled to give testimony directly opposite to that which he had given, and at one time, as I glanced at the row of lawyers who were m "Standard Oil's" hire, I felt a cold perspiration start at every pore at the thought of what would happen if I even in a slight detail got mixed in my facts. Then I fully realized the magnificence of

Mr. Rogers' acting, for not once in all the hours I had sat and watched him had I detected a single evidence of cold, hot, or lukewarm perspiration coming from his pores.

Yet away from the intoxicating spell of dollar-making this remarkable man is one of the most charming and lovable beings I have ever encountered, a man whom any man or woman would be proud to have for a brother; a man whom any mother or father would give thanks for as a son; a man whom any woman would be happy to know as her husband, and a man whom any boy or girl would rejoice to call father. Once he passes under the baleful influence of "The Machine," however, he becomes a relentless, ravenous creature, pitiless as a shark, knowing no law of God or man in the execution of his purpose. Between him and coveted dollars may come no kindly, humane influence -- all are thrust aside, their claims disregarded, in ministering to this strange, cannibalistic money-hunger, which, in truth, grows by what it feeds on.

In describing one head of "Standard Oil," I have necessarily used many words because nature cast him in a most uncommon and chameleon-like mould. The other two [John D. Rockefeller and William Rockefeller] require less of my space, for neither is unusual nor remarkable.

Lawson, Thomas W. Frenzied Finance: volume I, the Crime of Amalgamated. NY: The Ridgway-Thayer Company, 1905.
