CHARLES FRANKLIN KETTERING

By ROBERT G. DERRENBERGER, '39

His manner is friendly and free from any suggestion of dominance.

His early life was very similar to the average person. He was born on a farm near Loudonville, Ohio, a town located about seventy miles directly north of Columbus. Here Kettering received his high school education. Then he went to Wooster Normal and finally to Ohio State. His passion for mechanical experiments and for chemistry and electricity asserted themselves early in his life. While in college Kettering was seriously handicapped by trouble with his eyes and many of his lessons had to be read to him by his roommates. Even with this trouble confronting him, Kettering determined to finish his education and he did.

Perhaps the most unusual thing about Kettering is his patience and his systematic way of thinking. When a problem is given to him he takes it apart, finds out the cold facts and then works out the solution. He is a thinker who goes straight through prejudice and fog and always ends with a sane conclusion.

Wealth and fame have come to Kettering as a result of his asking "why." When he finally gets the answer he sells it to anyone who has reason to be interested in it. "Boss" Kettering, as he is referred to by Paul De Kruif in a series of articles written for Saturday Evening Post, said, "Invention is forty per cent research and sixty per cent selling, that the invention itself is merely the solution of a problem but the selling consists of converting the public thought to accept the invention.

Whether in the capacity of an inventor or industrialist Kettering's quest for an expedient solution to his problems is foremost in his mind. He seems to know at all times what things he wants accomplished and can see no profit in delay. He works very rapidly and with great precision, accomplishes a vast amount of detail work and still acts in the capacity of president of the Research Department of General Motors Corporation, maintaining constant touch with every phase of his organization. Oddly enough, Mr. Kettering never seems to be pressed or hurried but apparently takes life easily and tranquilly.

Ohio State University is proud of Charles Kettering and this magazine welcomes the opportunity to pay tribute to him whom we all think of as America's second Edison.

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