

# Swami Vivekananda's meeting with John D Rockefeller

If you are associated with the Ramakrishna Math, there are a lot of stories about Swami Vivekanand during his stay in America.

His meeting with John D Rockefeller is one such story. Other than Swami Vivekanand's followers writings, it never finds mention in any text Western or Eastern.

The complete works of Swami Vivekananda are given for free at the Ramakrishna Math website.

**FIRST MEETING WITH JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER :** (An excerpt from Madame Verdier's journal quoted in the New Discoveries, Vol. 1, pp. 487-88.) [As told by Madame Emma Calvé, to Madame Drinette Verdier]

Mr. X, in whose home Swamiji was staying in Chicago , was a partner or an associate in some business with John D. Rockefeller.

Many times John D. heard his friends talking about this extraordinary and wonderful Hindu monk who was staying with them, and many times he had been invited to meet Swamiji, but, for one reason or another, always refused.

At that time Rockefeller was not yet at the peak of his fortune, but was already powerful and strong-willed, very difficult to handle and a hard man to advise.

But one day, although he did not want to meet Swamiji, he was pushed to it by an impulse and went directly to the house of his friend, brushing aside the butler who opened the door and saying that he wanted to see the Hindu monk.

The butler ushered him into the living room, and, not waiting

to be announced, Rockefeller entered into Swami's adjoining study and was much surprised, I presume, to see Swamiji behind his writing table not even lifting his eyes to see who had entered.

After a while, as with Calve, Swamiji told Rockefeller much of his past that was not known to any but himself, and made him understand that the money he had already accumulated was not his, that he was only a channel and that his duty was to do good to the world-that God had given him all his wealth in order that he might have an opportunity to help and do good to people.

Rockefeller was annoyed that anyone dared to talk to him that way and tell him what to do. He left the room in irritation, not even saying goodbye.

But about a week after, again without being announced, he entered Swamiji's study and, finding him the same as before, threw on his desk a paper which told of his plans to donate an enormous sum of money toward the financing of a public institution.

"Well, there you are," he said. "You must be satisfied now, and you can thank me for it."

Swamiji didn't even lift his eyes, did not move.

Then taking the paper, he quietly read it, saying: "It is for you to thank me."

That was all.

This was Rockefeller's first large donation to the public welfare.