

## STUDIES IN INDUSTRIAL PSYCHOLOGY

### I. A POINT OF VIEW

The growth of the Social Sciences has from time to time been marked by important changes in conceptions regarding human relationships. These changes regularly produced effects of practical significance upon the institutions of the day but time usually revealed in them an element of untruth which required that they be supplemented or supplanted. The theory that "all men are born free and equal", for instance, had unquestionable influence in promoting democratic principles but the further attempt to picture society in terms of the "average man" strained this view to the breaking point; the latter was an unreality which did not exist. Similarly the view that man is a rational being stimulated enquiry regarding the principles of proof and argument but the formula was inadequate to explain the patent irrationality which marks so much of human conduct.

During the past few decades two new conceptions have been developed which have largely revolutionized our approach to problems involving the human factor. The first is the scientific study of Individual Differences. This does not mean merely the recognition of broad racial distinctions or of types of abnormality but rather the fact that in any community of normal persons there is to be found a great variety of abilities and of degrees of intellectual power. From the scientific point of view the task here has been to devise precise methods of measuring these differences of native ability and of determining their constancy or variability in the individual. Already sufficient advance has been made along these lines to warrant the belief that such measurements have practical value both in pedagogy and in industry, being one means of conserving our mental assets.