

The Young Man, and His Responsibility.

The young man of today enters upon his life work with extraordinary possibilities. On every hand are positions of responsibility. Positions of trust greater than has before been assumed by mankind are extended in every direction in search of persons competent to take them. The accumulations of past ages: advances in science, art, literature, and economic statesmanship, have contributed a responsibility of such magnitude that it is with no small feeling of anxiety that he assumes the duties of citizenship.

There was a time when the son was not expected to be greater than the father; when he was compelled by necessity to wear in peaceful submission the paternal shoe, without questioning the fit, size, or the humiliating influence it might impose. But, thanks to a rebellious, unsatisfied, energetic spirit, filled with a desire to better man's condition, the boy becomes father of the man—leading, instructing, and elevating those of declining days.

As a matter of personal sentiment and family pride, it is pleasing to look back upon a noble ancestry; to trace our lineage even to the landing of the pilgrim fathers. But in so doing, do we admit that we have in the least degree lowered the high standard which we conceive as belonging to them?

While society has continued to advance, intellectually and morally, have we fallen behind in the grand march of progress? And have we brought reproach upon the honored name that has been handed down through these successive generations? No; the young man of today is not willing to admit such an accusation. He detests any tendency towards retrogression, and spurns with derision the pessimistic grumbler who sees nothing bright in store for the future.

The one great question before him today is what is the training that will best fit the young man to meet the obligations that are thrust upon him? Is he expected to go into the battle with neither

saber nor carbine? Can he perform duties of which he has not the slightest conception? Or should he equip himself with the arms of warfare within his reach—his natural abilities enhanced by acquired understanding? He recognizes the urgent need of a thorough preparation before attempting a work that may result disastrously if ignorantly handled.

A noted priest once said: "Let me have control of the children until they reach the age of ten years, and I will have no fear that they will wander from my faith." In that statement is contained the secret of all success. Well did he recognize the urgent necessity of early training. In youth is the mind fixed for all life. The firm molding of early years is not turned aside at young manhood at will; neither is it at middle life; and much less in declining years.

It is perhaps well, as a matter of apology for parents to allow their unruly children to "sow their wild oats," as they call it; but let them bear in mind

that by and by comes the harvest; and of what may that harvest consist? Will you expect to sow thorns and thistles and reap figs? Nature, vegetable or human, must follow nature's laws, reproducing its kind. Show me a boy who violates the rules of home - the authority of parents - and I will show you the very material for a felon. But show me him who in youth reverences the word of father or mother - who delights in carrying out their wishes - and then you will find the center from which true citizenship springs, obeying and enforcing the laws of the Statutes. It has been well said "Take care of the little things, and the great things will take care of themselves." Yes, take care of the babies and the men the women - will take care of themselves, developing into grand and noble humanity: the bone and sinew of the nation, emblematic of the highest civilization.

With the addition of social and moral advancement comes a necessary increase in responsibility. The facilities for acquiring an education have within the

past few decades put within the reach of everyone a common-school - yes, a college education; and he who carelessly throws aside these golden opportunities is little above the criminal who furthurs his own interest at the expense of those about him. It is as much one's duty to know what is required of him as a citizen as it is for a sovereignty to be governed by the laws of nations.

Before our people today are questions of a national and social nature of far greater importance than have confronted society in any previous age. Conflicts between labor and capital, the employer and the employed, relations of foreigners to our government, socialistic and anarichistic demonstrations - all these tend to shake the very foundations of our seemingly almost indistructible commonwealth. They demand our undivided attention. On the peaceful harmonizing of these immense forces depends the future of our prosperity. Let these forces continue and the fertilized germ of discord, growing larger and larger with the rapidity

of geometrical progression, will confront this republic with a greater danger of dissolution than has occurred since her immortal founders threw off the yoke of tyrannical bondage which made us a nation cherishing those most sacred of human ties: freedom of thought and liberty of action.

But upon whom rests the responsibility of righting these wrongs? I answer the young man of today. Living as he does, in the vigor of manhood, filled with the ambitions of a noble and useful life, with ample opportunity to study the causes of the evils which are pauperizing a large class of our citizens and endangering the nation insecure from internal strife, and jealousies, who is better qualified to solve the problem of human welfare than he?

In his hand is placed the ballot—the greatest weapon of modern welfare. Does he know how to use it? If every voter possessed that knowledge which would enable him to cast his ballot intelligently much of the crime, the hardships, and the poverty prevalent today

would be averted. Not a small proportion of our voters are ignorant of the very principles of a free government, knowing little or nothing of the effect of the ballot which they hold and wield so powerfully for good or ill. What right have they to dictate to the intelligent voter? It is well enough as an argument that an ignorant voter is as much a citizen as the intelligent one, but the facts are that his inability to vote intelligently unfits him for a safe exercise of the powers of enfranchisement. The great majority of our street rabble and ward politicians look upon the ballot merely as a means of obtaining office; and many can be bought, body and soul, for the merest pittance. They hold themselves in readiness to be sold, as a commodity, to the highest bidder. In politics they see nothing but the mercenary interests, little realizing that in their hands rests the destiny of a nation. It is against this class that the intelligent voters must ^{be} arrayed. Yes, here is our great duty. What is the nation's welfare is our welfare: if it falls we must be crushed beneath the

ruins.

Will we allow this state of affairs to exist while we make no attempt to stay the tide? No; young America must take his stand for freedom; assert his power and influence towards the crushing of the political demagogues, the anarchist, and the philosophical hypocrisy of a mercenary interest. Peace demands the annihilation of ignorance, superstition, and corruption. And the young man of today shall accept no peace but through the agency of a higher intellectual development, at the expense of illiteracy, bribery, and personal aggrandisement. Let our motto be "progress"; "freedom" be the watchword, and let our goal—the ultimate aim of our lives—be the banishment to the archives of a barbarous past, of corruption, political chicanery, and bombastic personality.

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