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THE SOLEMN PUBLIC OBLIGATION WHICH NOW RESTS UPON THE TEACHER

A Message from President Wilson to the Teachers of America



HAVING myself been a teacher for twenty-five years, I am glad to avail myself of this occasion to greet my fellow teachers, to congratulate you on your opportunities for public service, and to address a few words to you with regard to the peculiarly solemn public obligation which now rests upon you.

May I not earnestly suggest to you the necessity that you should, by study and reflection, acquire a deep spiritual understanding of the fundamental principles of our government, whereof our constitution is only a single thought the chief expression, in order that you may be the better able to communicate the spirit of our institutions to your pupils. The country must rely chiefly upon you to interpret America to the children of the new generation, to make them under-

stand that it was by the law of its own nature that this nation was led into the world war, in order that for all time to come the principles which brought about its own birth should be made secure; that it was no new or strange doctrine which drew our country into association with European nations in this supreme enterprise, but rather a fulfillment and extension of the principles for which Washington fought, a necessary application, indeed, of those principles to new conditions and to an age wherein it is no longer possible for one nation to live apart and to itself.

Under your instruction the children should come to see that it was the high logic of events and the providence of God that the United States and Germany, the one the most consistent practitioner of the new creed of mankind, and the other the most consistent practitioner of the old should thus

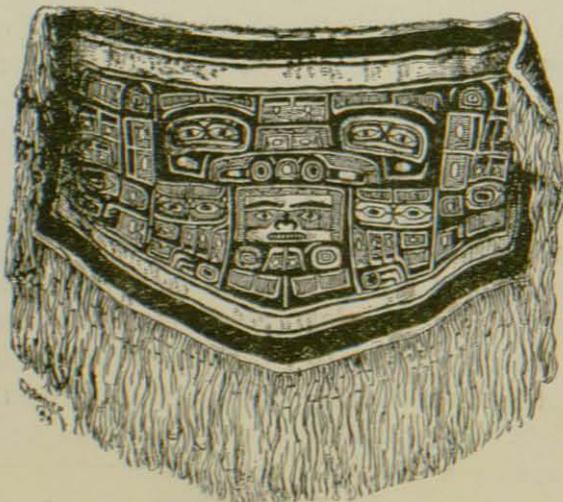
meet in battle to determine whether the new democracy or the old autocracy should govern the world, and under your instruction the children should be made to understand the stern duty and the supreme privilege which belong to the United States of being interpreter to the world of those democratic principles which we believe to constitute the only force which can rid the world of injustice and bring peace and happiness to mankind. The objects for which this war is being waged with indescribable pain and sacrifice cannot be kept secure in the future unless the children of this new generation, for whose sake the war is in fact prosecuted, themselves understand democracy, not as a mere word but as a living and vital thing. It is for them that the sacrifice is made, and by them that the fruits of the sacrifice must be gathered and safeguarded.

You who are in daily contact with young minds have a unique opportunity to instruct them in the true meaning of such words as LIBERTY and DEMOCRACY, to interpret phrases too often used lightly or thoughtlessly, and convert them into realities which

shall quicken the understanding of your pupils and thereby make them more valiant and determined defenders of the faith.

Instruction in patriotism has always been a duty in American schools. It is now more than ever a duty to teach a burning, uncompromising patriotism which will admit of no divided allegiance but demands all that the heart and energy of the citizen can give, and at the same time a patriotism so pure and enlightened, so free from sham and subterfuge, that it leaves room for intelligent sympathy with other peoples living under flags. A due regard for the rights of other nations is as necessary to enlightened patriotism as an insistence upon the rights of our own nation. The meaning of this war and of America's part in it is not fully comprehended unless we understand the claims of humanity as well as of our own country upon us. It is our present glory that we are battling for oppressed humanity everywhere as well as for our own rights, and that America seeks no selfish ends.

(SIGNED) WOODROW WILSON



IF I WERE TWENTY-ONE

By W. W. MAXWELL

THOMAS Carlyle said once that time spent in vain regret and remorse is time pitifully wasted. All the same, it is worth while sometimes to ask yourself what you would do if you had a certain decision to make over, a certain period to live through again. And that is just what W. W. Maxwell, veteran business man of New York, has done in the breezy little volume, "If I Were Twenty-One," (J. B. Lippincott Company, Philadelphia), from which the following extracts are taken:—*St. Louis Post Dispatch.*

NOT long ago I went through the automobile factory of Mr. Henry Ford. It was wonderful. It was also sad. I suppose those men are the champions of the world at their respective "stunts." I wonder, though, what happens when one of them has to seek a job in some other

factory, where his particular stunt is not required. For how much counts his extraordinary skill in doing one certain thing, if that one thing chance to be something nobody wants done?

Nowadays the word specialist is much admired. There is said to be a physician in Oklahoma who modestly advertises himself as a "Specialist in All Known Diseases." There is a lesson for us in this doctor's sign if we can interpret it correctly.

Wiser and more successful men than I believe in specialization. But oddly enough, the men who profess to believe most thoroughly in it are men who are not specialists. The specialists are usually working on a salary for men who have never specialized. And almost always before a specialist can get in action it is necessary for a lot of nonspecialists to go out and get the money for him to specialize with. If I were 21 again, I'm quite sure that I would not try to be a business specialist. Also, I'd keep as far away

as possible from the engineering schools. Years ago, the finest thing one could say of a business man was that he was an "all-round man." At present this is rarely said of anyone except the grizzled survivor of those days, who now holds down the job of president or general manager of some big corporation. If I were 21 again, I should try to train myself to be a common-sense business executive. There seems at present less competition in that field than in any other.

I think I should go to college, but I would not take my college course too seriously; at least I'd not take my degree very seriously. The outside world is lying in wait (with a club) for college men who let it be known that they believe they learned something at college.

Whether I went through college or not, I would study law. Here is the reason why I think two or three years' study of the law are of great value in a young man's business training. The most valuable gift a business man can cultivate is the faculty of reasoning from the mob's standpoint. The practice of law consists largely in presenting to Judge, jury and press that interpretation of an individual's acts which will square his conduct with public opinion as expressed in such laws as the public desires to have enforced.

To study the practice of law is to become familiar with the kind of logic

most likely to impress the slowworking mind. The deliberations of a body of men must usually wait upon the intelligence of its least intelligent member, and the final result of such deliberations will ordinarily be closer to the mentality of the stupidest member of the conference than to that of the most intelligent. The law imposes that fact upon us and teaches us how to deal with both stupidity and bigotry.

I think a moderate study of the law is helpful to the young man who desires to become a broad-visioned, yet hard-headed, business man. My meaning will be clearer if I say that the study of law aids a young man to look upon the world with disillusioned eyes. And disillusionment is important. Most of the broken men I have known have believed a little too much in themselves and greatly too much in others.

The best moral mentor I ever had was a wicked old man who was familiar with every vice and no doubt had practiced many. Some of his doctrine I am still able to recall:

"A bad woman is sure to get a man in bad sooner or later."

"Nobody but a chucklehead would try to make folks think he's smart. A real smart man is always under cover."

"Is honesty the best policy? Well, did you ever know a cheater that had half a much as he would 'a' had if he'd been on the level? Of course, you understand, different kinds of business calls for different kinds of squareness. But the most successful men are always square according to the standards of their line of business."

If I were twenty-one again, I should take much council of men who had

made failures of their lives. A drunkard's opinion of drunkenness is more valuable than the temperance views of an abstemious man. When you are 21 it is less important to decide what to do than it is to make up your mind what not to do.

If I were 21 again, I would not seek a salaried position of any sort until I was 25. I would become a salesman or a canvasser on a commission basis, and I would do so before I left college. I can conceive of no better way to develop business backbone and stamina. The articles that inexperienced young men can obtain for sale are usually rather difficult to sell, and success with them tends to mark a youngster as above the average in ability and industry.

The young man who shrinks from testing himself as a commission salesman and prefers that his maiden job be at a stated salary needs to take stock of himself. It is this cowardice that consigns so many men to lives of hopeless and small salaried drudgery.

Recently we wanted to hire a financial man. Not one of the applicants could tell the price of spot cotton or wheat. We have not yet hired a man for the position, and I am wondering when we shall find one who is an all-round financial man and not merely a financial specialist. Each knew his own particular little stunt, and nothing else. They were merely croupiers in a game wherein they were able to chalk up the score, but the principles of which they had not even tried to understand.

If I were 21 again, I should read many books. Six hours of serious reading each week is not much; but it may mean the difference between a \$20,000-a-year executive and a \$25

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