



THE
HARVARD GRADUATES' MAGAZINE.

VOL. XXIII. — DECEMBER, 1914. — No. XC.

A WORD FOR THE TIMES.

A HARVARD graduate whom we all honor, Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, once said, in beginning an address on his memories of the Civil War: "I belong to a generation whose lips were touched by fire."

When Judge Holmes used these words, his country's history tells you what he meant. Memorial Hall records what some Harvard men of that generation were ready to do when once the sacred fire-touch had hallowed their lips, and had stirred their souls. The scars that the great jurist who spoke these words bears, — scars won at Ball's Bluff and at Fredericksburg, — these today testify of what the spirit of those times prepared men to endure. The long dark hours that Oliver Wendell Holmes, senior, has described to us in his wonderful narrative entitled "My Search for the Captain," these belonged to the time that followed shortly after Fredericksburg, and these remind us what it then meant to be a father who had given his son to his country's needs. The present services of the son, on the Supreme Bench of the United States, are a living witness of that triumph over the doubts and the tragedies of life which Mr. Justice Holmes himself, speaking out of the fulness of his own experience, once set before us in his address, delivered on Memorial Day in 1895, and entitled: "The Soldier's Faith."

The lesson which Judge Holmes and his comrades were able to learn from the crisis of the Civil War, is much larger and deeper than were any of the more transient conflicts of that time. The special issues of the Civil War have passed away with their generation. But the spirit of what Judge Holmes has called "The Soldier's Faith" has meaning, not only for soldiers, and not only

as the inspirer of patriotism, and of the warlike virtues. Every man needs that spirit who is to learn the lesson which William James expressed in another form: "Do not be afraid of life." Every man needs that spirit who has to work hard and to wait patiently, in the dark, as Holmes the father searched long and sorrowfully for the Captain, as Holmes the son wandered carefully about his dreary duties along the obscure paths during the battle in the Wilderness. What great crises teach all men whom the example and counsel of the brave inspire, is the lesson: Fear not, view all the tasks of life as sacred, have faith in the triumph of the ideal, give daily all that you have to give, be loyal, and rejoice whenever you find yourselves part of a great ideal enterprise.

You, at this moment, as the work of the present college year begins, — you have the honor to belong to a generation whose lips are touched by fire. You live in a land that now enjoys the blessings of peace. But let nothing human be wholly alien to you. The human race now passes through one of its great crises. New ideas, new issues, — a new call for men to carry on the work of righteousness, of charity, of courage, of patience and of loyalty, — all these things have come and are daily coming to you. Wise men and true, men fitted by life to sit in judgment or to give counsel regarding questions that the world has never faced before, — these are what the world in which you are to pass your lives, requires with a call louder, clearer, and coming from more peoples and from more tongues than could ever sound such a call before. When you are old, you will look back to these days. Perhaps, with the strange joy that memory throws, like a sunset glow, over even the most tragic events, when once they are long past, you will some day say of these times of perplexity, of doubt, and of world-wide pain what Wordsworth said, in the well-known words, when he recalled the French Revolution and the hopes of his youth: —

"Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,
And to be young was very heaven."

Perhaps you will say of this time and of this moment what Holmes said of the generation to whose sacrifices Memorial Hall is the monument. But however memory otherwise brings back this moment to your minds, let it be able to say to you: That was a great moment. It was the beginning of a new era. The world was passing to a new life, and was greeting the new life with a loud

call and with a strength of the passions of the nations that was never known before. This world in its crisis, called for volunteers, for men of faith in life, of patience in service, of charity and of insight. I responded to the call however I could. I volunteered to give myself to my master — the cause of humane and brave living. I studied, I loved, I labored, unsparingly and hopefully, to be worthy of my generation.

Josiah Royce, h '10.

RELIGION AND THE UNDERGRADUATE.

THREE types of conventionally religious youth come up autumn by autumn to Harvard College. There is first the boy who identifies religion with subscription to creed, allegiance to formulæ handed down by an elder generation. There are certain classic statements of the Christian faith. They move the imagination, both subdue and elevate the minds of many sensitive and reflective youth by the very prestige of their antiquity. But they are not clearly understood. The boy does not relate them to the remainder of his field of thought; he has no world view into which they fit. He merely accepts them; he is a Churchman; a Conservative or a Liberal; these terms largely sum up his religion. Boys whose undeveloped religious instinct thus expresses itself are on the increase. As the American home becomes more sophisticated and society becomes older, more highly developed and rigid in its customs, allegiance to all established institutions grows among us. This institutional religion on the part of these boys is often intimately, if unconsciously, associated with parallel social and personal traditions.

The second type is the boy who identifies his faith with pious practices. He issues from middle-class American life, from thrifty, democratic, unostentatious households. He has been taught to read the Scriptures, to make his devotions, to attend church. He has been told there are certain things which he may or may not do. He conceives that the expressions of religion are practically unchanging from generation to generation. Wrong and right are mutually exclusive territories, black and white areas separated by clear boundary lines. Faith and character are easily achieved by remaining in the right territory. So he becomes the youthful pietist and though often of first-rate stuff appears very much of a prig. This group