

**ADDRESS AT THE HARVARD COMMENCEMENT
EXERCISES.**

Delivered June 24, 1920.

MR. CHAIRMAN, MR. PRESIDENT, GUESTS AND MEMBERS OF THE ALUMNI OF HARVARD UNIVERSITY:— Certainly every one everywhere rejoices at the prosperity which the past year has brought to this University, and it is pre-eminently fitting that all residents of the Commonwealth should join in the rejoicing. This is a university that has had and performed a great mission. Its work is not done. It is but beginning. And it is of the utmost satisfaction to know that it is appreciated and supported and is about to continue with increasing activities.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts itself has not been without a mission. No institution that has any history has been without a mission, and the Commonwealth has been able to make a considerable accomplishment in the working out of what seems to me to be its particular mission, and that has been to lead the world into a larger liberty,—an important undertaking, and important now, as in the past, because of the process that it has adopted for that purpose, a lesson that we may apply to some of our present needs. What has been that process? It began in the cabin of the "Mayflower," where there was a renunciation, on the part of those about to found our Commonwealth, of their smaller personal freedom in order that they and the State which they founded might enjoy a larger liberty, and that lesson there begun, was carried into a revolution.

The American Revolution was not a lawless enterprise. It was rather an assertion by the men of that day of the

supremacy of the law, and it is in memory of that principle that we have made certain the memory of a son of Harvard of 1743, James Otis, by painting his picture on the walls of the State House, where he was engaged in the great enterprise of asserting the rights of his fellow citizens before a British court, against the exactions and the impositions of those who were attempting to detract from our legal liberty. And it is to the everlasting glory of that great Senator from Massachusetts, Daniel Webster, after the Federal Constitution had been adopted, that he took, not a narrow view of it, but a broad and a liberal view, and defended it from those who were attempting to claim that it was not a great treasure of human liberty, creating as it did a Nation, not merely providing for a confederation of those who had a right to treat it at all times as they might choose for their own particular delight. It was not a lawless Revolution, for in the midst of it, and after two attempts, we adopted that Constitution of Massachusetts that has remained from that day unto this.

And just after the Revolution came the Constitution of America, and the great issue of that conquest was not the setting up of an independent government. It was the establishment of a Constitution that provided for liberty under the law, and it provided for it by a remission on the part of individuals of some of their smaller ideas and their smaller freedom.

I think that is a lesson that we may think over and apply to some of the questions of the present day, some of our economic and commercial problems. The great central theme of it was touched upon by the president when he spoke of the duty of men to make the best of themselves.

We have changed from the conditions under which we lived in the past, when a man and his family undertook to provide themselves with food and shelter and clothing, and we have adopted a division of labor. That has laid upon those who are engaged in our enterprises a new duty, in the performance of which they have the power not only to supply themselves with the necessaries of life, but to lay under tribute all the resources of the earth in a way that

never was possible before. By a surrender of their smaller freedoms they have come into a new and greater industrial liberty. The great question now is how to enforce that great duty.

The general answer to questions of that kind is the suggestion of legislation. I have a great and an abiding confidence in the law, but I have signed and approved too many acts of the Legislature to feel confident that they always bring the results that they have promised to bring.

I doubt very much whether legislation would be sufficient to solve this problem. There are one or two difficulties, and one of them is the right of the individual, for each individual among us has a right that no power of government can take from him. He is under no compulsion to be prosperous. He is under no compulsion to work more than may be necessary for his own support. He can choose his mode of life, whether it be like those who dwell under the equator, or those who live under the Arctic Circle, or those who live like Americans; and I know of no law that could be framed that would force on him the choice that others might make for him. Nevertheless, there is a difference which must be recognized and must be met. If it cannot be done by legislation, it can be done by an instructed public opinion and by an increasing activity in education.

That is why I rejoice especially in the strength, the new and added strength, that has come to this University, because it will give an added power in the Commonwealth for the instruction of its citizens in the way in which they should go. There is a hope. It is the hope of history. We can rely upon that same motive that developed our government and our governing institutions also, to develop our industrial and commercial institutions. And there is a hope greater, perhaps, than this, in the very nature of things. It is co-operation that we are asking for. This universe in which we live is not a multiverse; it is not even a duoverse. It is a universe, and ultimately there must be complete co-operation on the part of these different elements. It is in that especially that we may look for hope in the future.

That is the foundation of our faith in our industrial relations and of our faith in man. We need to teach our people to think and think nationally. We need to teach them to think American. When that has been done there will be no doubt about the acceptance of the duty that they owe one to another, and the march, the triumphant march, of the great progress that lies before us.

For further information see "The Harvard Graduates Magazine," September, 1920.