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EDUCATIONAL ENTERPRISES OF THE PILGRIM FATHERS¹

THE mother and model of modern universities—the University of Paris—originated in a group of cathedral schools. These cathedral schools were founded by missions of a religion that made of hope a virtue. And similar missionary enterprises issuing from Rome established and endowed the early schools of England and Scotland, whose influence later extended in turn to the new continent across the seas: from Cambridge through Emmanuel and Magdalene to Harvard; from Edinburgh through the Scottish Presbyterians to Princeton. The same translated ancient Anglo-Saxon influences appear in the eighteenth-century beginnings of King's College, the forerunner of Columbia University in the North, and in the early nineteenth-century history of the University of Virginia, a history that has been subsequently significant to all succeeding institutions in the South; but the seventeenth century, that witnessed the founding of colleges in Williamsburg, Virginia, and Cambridge, Massachusetts, was preëminently the Anglo-Saxon century of America.

PILGRIM TERCENTENARY

THE backgrounds I have just sketched are brought into the foreground of our thinking this autumn by the approaching tercentenary of the Pilgrim Fathers, for it was on December 21, 1620, that John Robinson's flock, after sixty-six

¹ Several paragraphs from the Matriculation Address of the ninth academic year of the Rice Institute, delivered Wednesday morning, September 22, 1920.

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days of storm-bound passage across the Atlantic and a month in the vicinity of Provincetown Harbor, though originally destined for a more congenial southern shore, landed its first scouting-group on Plymouth Rock, which, despite its modest dimensions, must have loomed up literally as "the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." Nor can I ever think of that rock without recalling a revered University of Virginia preceptor of mine, who, contrasting the Cavalier colonists of Virginia with the Puritan pioneers of New England, said, and often said, what a pity it was that when the Pilgrim Fathers landed on Plymouth Rock it had not been a case of Plymouth Rock landing on the Pilgrim Fathers. In anticipation of the formal anniversary celebrations that will be held throughout the country in December of this year, there is coming to America this autumn a mission of Pilgrims, among them Sir Arthur Everett Shipley, Master of Christ's College, Cambridge University. Sir Arthur will, upon our invitation, be delivering at the Rice Institute next month not only a Pilgrim Tercentenary lecture, but also a course of public lectures on several subjects in the history of science. He is pleasantly remembered among us as the Head of the British Educational Mission to the Universities of the United States, which paid the Rice Institute a memorable visit during Thanksgiving week of 1918. That visit has also been happily recalled to us lately by an article in the *New York Evening Post* of July 31st last, in which a member of the party is quoted at length from the *Landmark*, a journal of the English-speaking Union, where, among other things in advocacy of the interchange of students between British and American universities, the writer says: "Americans must come to other British universities (not alone to Oxford and Cambridge)—to Manchester, Dublin, Glasgow, Sheffield, Leeds. And Englishmen must be told more and

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more, he continues, "that it is to their own advantage, and to the advantage of the world, that they should go to America—not only to Harvard and Yale and Princeton, but to Minnesota, Wisconsin, Cornell, California, and the Rice Institute."

PROVISION FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

FOR this institution, founded by a native son of Massachusetts, perhaps the most striking thing to be recalled by the three hundredth anniversary of the founding of Plymouth Colony, is that the immediate concern of the colonists, after making primitive provision for their physical necessities, was the founding of a college. "After God had carried us safe to New England," says a contemporary document, "and we had builded our houses, provided necessaries for our livelihood, reared convenient places for God's worship, and settled the civil government, one of the next things we longed for and looked after was to advance learning and perpetuate it to posterity, dreading to leave an illiterate ministry to the churches, when our present ministers shall lie in the dust. And as we were thinking and consulting how to effect this great work, it pleased God to stir up the heart of one Mr. Harvard (a godly gentleman and a lover of learning, there living amongst us) to give one half of his estate (it being in all about £1700) towards the erecting of a college, and all his library. After him another gave £300, others after him cast in more, and the public hand of the state added the rest." The part contributed by the public hand of the state, to which reference is here made, was authorized by the general court of the colony, which in 1636 passed a resolution agreeing "to give £400 towards a school or college, whereof £200 shall be paid next year, and £200 when the work is finished, and the next court to appoint where and what build-

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ing." The passing of this resolution in 1636 Harvard commemorates as its act of foundation, and such was the beginning of the oldest college on the American continent.

PRINCIPLES UNDERLYING PUBLIC EDUCATION

MOREOVER, by these same Pilgrim pioneers, in the Massachusetts Acts of 1642 and 1647, compulsory education as a righteous demand on the state and on the part of the state was affirmed. In substance they affirmed that "the universal education of youth is essential to the well-being of the state; that the obligation to furnish this education rests primarily upon the parent; that the state has the right to enforce this obligation; that the state may fix a standard which shall determine the kind of education and the minimum amount; that public money raised by general tax may be used to provide such education as the state requires, and the tax may be general though the school attendance is not; that education higher than the rudiments may be supplied by the state, and opportunity must be provided at the public expense for youths who wish to be fitted for college." On these half dozen underlying principles rests the foundation of public school education in the United States as developed from state to state, but it is only within the last fifty years that legislation has been provided in England, first in 1870 and finally in 1918, effective in 1920, for a national system of public education based on such principles as were operative in an American British colony nearly three hundred years ago.

SPIRIT OF PILGRIM MOVEMENT

THIS is neither the time nor the place to commemorate adequately or at length the Puritan movement. It was literally a crusade for righteousness and a Pilgrim's Progress to a promised land. In austere devotion to the duty of life

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it missed a great deal of the joy of life, and to us the joy of life is no less a duty than the duty of life. It had great faith—faith in heaven, faith in man, faith in work. It had great hope, “the hope that hopes till it creates the thing it contemplates.” It had great zeal, sometimes frenzied to the fanaticism of untempered zeal. It had great loyalty, loyalty to law and loyalty to liberty. And to the Puritan liberty meant religious liberty, and law the word of God. To him the great purpose of life was the glory of God and the service of man: to these ends he sought to Christianize and educate the Indian rather than crush and exterminate him. For him philanthropy was synonymous with the salvation of souls, and he began with a passion for saving his own soul. With the Plainsman of a later day, the resolute loyalties of his patriotism were reserved for the freedom of self-government, even in the wilderness, if of his own choosing, and human progress for him meant literally human pilgrimage from this world to a better world to come, eternal in the heavens. These were the enthusiasms of his spirit, these the larger freedoms of his mind. And he entered on them with undoubting assurance of providential guidance.