

## Our Young People

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### THE C. E. TOPIC—July 3.

BY AMOS R. WELLS.

WAYS OF CONSECRATING OURSELVES TO OUR COUNTRY.

Rom. 13:1-7; I Peter 2:13-17.

The *con* in "consecration" means wholly. When we consecrate ourselves to our country we become wholly hers, our bodies, minds, and hearts, our time, money, ambitions, all at her service.

Does this conflict with the claims of religion? with Christ's requirement that we serve the Lord with all our strength and mind and heart? Not in the least, for our nation is God's. It is made up of God's children. In consecrating ourselves to its service we are going far toward obeying the second of Christ's two inclusive commandments, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

We shall never reach the heart of true patriotism unless we cease to think of our country in personal terms, and begin to identify it with men and women. The dear ones in your house, your neighbor with a sick child, your grocer whose bill you owe, yonder cabman out in the hot sun, these are your country. The street in front of your house, the choked-up gutter yonder, the new town hall, these also are your country. Carry the review outward over as many leagues as your country extends, but never forget that your country begins at home.

Now how can we consecrate ourselves—wholly devote ourselves—to this living, breathing, familiar, majestic country of ours?

First, our bodies. Every drunkard is a traitor, playing false to his country, defrauding it of the manhood, the money, the labor and upbuilding it has a right to expect from him. And in lesser or greater degree, everyone who weakens his body is injuring his country. Firm muscles, steady nerves, good sleep and digestion, a long, health-filled life, these are notable parts of patriotism, as such citizens as Gladstone of England and Roosevelt of America abundantly illustrate.

Second, our minds. There are many things the patriot should know: the history of his country, the character of officials and candidates, the forms of government, the ways of parties, the laws, the rights of citizens, relations to other lands. Patriotism without knowledge is like a banner without a staff, a flabby, flippant thing, carried off on any wind that blows. An ignorant man will be firing at his own capitol the shot he intends in its defence.

Third, our consciences. The *con* here means "with." Knowledge is not

enough: we must know with God. Without a conscience, the stronger your body and the fuller your mind, the worse for you and your country. Conscience, when you know a man is evil, will lead you to vote against him, though he belong to your own party. Conscience will spur your courage to protest against iniquity. Conscience will lead you to stand alone, if need be, on God's side.

Poor Philip Nolan, in Hale's powerful story, is not the only "Man without a country." One may be such a man without being condemned, as Nolan was, to a life at sea, with no hint of native land. The unfaithful citizen is a man without a country, who is wrapped up in his own selfish interests and is heedless of the sorrows and joys of mankind. As Scott painted him in that famous portrait:

The wretch concentrated all in self  
Living, shall forfeit high renown,  
And, doubly dying, shall go down  
To the vile dust, from whence he sprung,  
Unwept, unhonored, and unsung.

### JERUSALEM SOCIETY.

The first Wednesday evening in May our society elected the following officers for the ensuing year: President, Mamie Beckett; vice-presidents, Ray M. Vallis and G. Edwin Inch; secretary, Maggie E. Vallis; treasurer, Lena Short; corresponding secretary, Zella H. E. Harrison.

On the evening of the 24th we held a social at the home of Deacon Machum.

We made no pledge at League last year, but I hope we will soon be able to send to the treasurer an amount equal to our last pledge. COR. SEC.

### WHY SHE CHANGED HER MIND.

I was standing one night at the close of our Young People's meeting near the president of our society when I noticed a young girl (one of our active members) step up to him, and, laying her hand in his arm, said, "Mr. Grant, I see by the blackboard that I am appointed leader of our next meeting. I am very sorry, but I cannot, nor will not, lead a meeting."

"Why, Jennie," said he, "what is the reason you cannot?"

"Because, Mr. Grant, I am willing to do anything else; but I haven't the courage for that. I know I couldn't say a word when I got up there in front of everybody, or my voice would tremble so that no one could understand me."

The president, taking a topic card from his pocket, asked her if she had read the first part of her pledge.

"Yes," she said, "I know it says, 'Trusting in the Lord for strength, I promise him that I will strive to do whatever he would like to have me do,' but I don't think he calls me to lead that meeting, and I won't," and she walked down the aisle.

I saw the president look at the pledge in his hand in a way that seemed to say, "Lord, teach her thy will."

The next Friday night I walked into church expecting to see the president in the chair as leader, but imagine my surprise when I beheld Jennie Earl sitting there herself as calm and serene as if she had never heard of such things as unpleasant duties.

She opened the meeting by a hymn—the words of which were:

I do not ask to choose my path,  
Lord, lead me in thy way;  
Inspire each thought and prompt each word,  
And make me a blessing to-day.

How much those words meant to her that night it is hard to tell, but I know that God did bless her effort, for I believe the meeting was a blessing to every one there. You ask me was it because she proved to be a brilliant speaker? no more so than many of our other members.

But God is always pleased when we decide to do our duty, and he is going to show his approval by blessing our work.

Several months afterwards Miss Earl called at my home to talk over some committee work. Our conversation drifted along until we began to talk about how difficult it was to obtain leaders for our meetings. Then I said, "Jennie, I have often wondered how you came to lead your first meeting. I overheard your conversation with Mr. Grant, and I was surprised to see you in the chair when the time came."

"I haven't a doubt but what you were," she said with a smile, "and I will tell you how it came about."

"All the week preceding that meeting I was determined to keep my word not to lead, although my conscience said plainly that it was my duty to do so. When Friday came I was still of the same mind, and my father, having asked me to drive eight or ten miles out of town to settle some business for him, as he was unable to go, I went. It was just at that time in early spring when you are obliged to use a wagon; yet half of the way you wish it was a sleigh.

"I got along pretty well for about six miles, when all at once my horse stopped still in the road, and no wonder, for there stretching across the entire road was what looked to be a washout in the earth. It looked to my eyes to be four or five feet deep. Oh, I thought if it had only been anywhere else but just here where there is no chance to turn out, or not a horse in sight if anything should happen. What was I to do? I knew I must go on in some way, so with a prayer to God to keep me from harm, I urged my horse to go on, and in some way, I never knew how, I got across safely; but I knew that I must start for home sooner than I had intended, for although I had to get across safely in the light, it would be an impossibility in the dark. I arrived at Mr. Brown's (the gentlemen I went to see) about eleven o'clock. We had dinner, and then we settled our business, and I started for home at five o'clock, I confess, with many misgivings, but can you imagine my surprise when I reached that dreadful place to find it gone—the road lying before me as smooth as any of it was.

"You ask what had happened. Well, simply the sun had been at work for five or six hours. It had melted the snow and crust all away; and what had looked to be solid earth, had only been frozen snow and mud.

"I stopped the horse and sat looking at it, and the thought came to me—how many places in our lives are like that. We stop before some task or trial which to our dimmed sight looks to be too great for our strength, and we cry, Oh, I never can do it, I never can bear it, when if we would but go forth, trusting God for strength, determined to overcome everything for his sake, we would find that when we had reached the place or thing we had dreaded, it was not as difficult as we had expected, or else it had disappeared altogether. God had smoothed it all away.

"Then the question came to me, Jennie Earl, isn't that just what you have been doing, refusing to trust in God for strength to do your duty? and I resolved there and then, that if I got home in time, I would lead the meeting, and I

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did. I had no preparation, excepting a prayer that God would bless the meeting. But do you know that the words just seemed to come right to you when you once get started?"

I said "yes, I heard a young girl make that same remark just a few nights ago, when asked by her friend how she ever managed it."

I write this incident hoping it might encourage some young member when asked for the first time to lead their meeting to say "Yes, trusting in God for strength, I will." And rest assured you will be the stronger and happier for the consciousness of duty done.

G. L. P.

Woodstock, N. B.

### THE POWER OF THE LIFE.

BY REV. WAYLAND HOYT, D. D., LL. D.

"Observe an engineer as he plans and builds his bridge. His entire working belief is there. His theories of statics and dynamics; his convictions about currents and wind-pressures, about leverages, about the properties of the arch and of its thrust on buttresses; his views on the relation of beauty to utility, are all there. He has built them into his bridge. His creed is embedded in his work. And men, when they find the work good, proclaim the creed to be sound."

Certainly the engineer could not have built his bridge without a creed of bridge building. No bridge would ever amount to anything simply slung together. It was because the thought-bridge was at first so clearly seen that the stone or iron bridge became possible. And in proportion to the thoroughness and exactness of the thought-bridge are the strength, utility, beauty, of the actual one. And that which proclaims the value of the engineer's creed for bridge building is the sort of bridge which has taken shape according to his creed.

Is it not precisely thus with life? Every life must be according to the organizing thought behind it—shabby, if that be mean; noble, if that be pure and true. But that which tests the sort of the organizing thought is the sort of life which gets conformed to it. The utmost splendor of confession of a creed can never be excuse for an ignoble life. The grovelling life shows that the creed has