

not fair weather sailors, and they will go on; but poor Lord Lansdowne—(laughter),—with his creaky old ship and his mutinous crew! There he is; he has got to sail through the narrows with one eye on the weather glass—(laughter)—and the other on the forecastle.—(More laughter.) It does not depend on him. It will depend in the first place probably on the country. The most important gentleman in the business is not Lord Lansdowne with all his adroit management of the House of Lords, not even Mr. Balfour with his invaluable services to his party; the real sailing master is Sir Arthur Acland-Hood, the Chief Whip of the Tory party, and that Ancient Mariner—(laughter)—is engaged at the present moment trying to decide whether it is safe to shoot the albatross.—(More laughter.) He will probably not discover it until too late. But still this is the great Constitutional party, and if there is one thing more than another better established about the British Constitution it is this, that the Commons and the Commons alone have the complete control of supply and ways and means.—(Hear, hear.) And what our fathers established through centuries of struggle and of strife, even of bloodshed, we are not going to be traitors to.—(Loud cheers.)

Who talks about altering and meddling with the Constitution? The constitutional party—the great constitutional party!—(Laughter.) As long as the Constitution gave rank and possession and power it was not to be interfered with; as long as it secured even their sports from intrusion and made interference with them a crime; as long as the Constitution enforced royalties and ground rents, and fees and premiums, and fines, and all the black retinue of exaction; as long as it showed writs, and summonses, and injunctions, and distresses, and warrants to enforce them, then the Constitution was inviolate. It was sacred; it was something that was put in the same category as religion, that no man ought to touch, and something that the chivalry of the nation ought to range in defense of. But the moment the Constitution looks round, the moment the Constitution begins to discover that there are millions of people outside the park gates who need attention—(hear, hear)—then the Constitution is to be torn to pieces.

Let them realize what they are doing.—(Cheers.) They are forcing a revolution.—(Hear, hear, and a voice: "And they will get it.") But the Lords may decree a revolution which the people will direct.—(Cheers.) If they begin, issues will be raised that they little dream of.—(Cheers.) Questions will be asked which are now whispered in humble voices, and answers will be demanded then with authority. The question will be asked why five hundred men, ordinary men—(laughter)—chosen accidentally from among the unemployed—(laughter)—should over-

ride the judgment—the deliberate judgment—of millions of people who are engaged in the industry which makes the wealth of the country.—(Hear, hear.) That is one question.

Another will be, Who ordained that a few should have the land of Britain as a perquisite; who made ten thousand people owners of the soil and the rest of us trespassers in the land of our birth?—(Cheers.) - Who is responsible for the scheme of things whereby one man is engaged through life in grinding labor to win a bare and precarious subsistence for himself, and when at the end of his days he claims at the hands of the community he served a poor pension of eightpence a day, he can only get it through a revolution; and another man who does not toil receives every hour of the day, every hour of the night, whilst he slumbers, more than his poor neighbor receives in a whole year of toil?—(Shame.)

Where did the table of that law come from? Whose finger inscribed it? These are the questions that will be asked. The answers are charged with peril for the order of things the Peers represent, but they are fraught with rare and refreshing fruit for the parched lips of the multitude who have been treading the dusty road along which the people have marched through the dark ages which are now emerging into the light.

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## FRANK PARSONS AS AN IDEALIST AND AS AN APOSTLE OF FUN- DAMENTAL DEMOCRACY.\*

An Address Delivered Before the Frank Parsons Club,  
at the Civic Service House, Salem Street, Boston,  
on the Night of September 26th, by B. O.  
Flower, Editor of the Twentieth  
Century Magazine.

I wish to consider for a few minutes the life of Professor Parsons as an idealist and a fundamental democrat, in counter-distinction to that of a sordid materialist and self-seeking reactionary.

There comes an hour in the life of every man gifted with the splendid mental powers possessed by Professor Parsons, when he must make a destiny-determining choice,—a time when he reaches the parting of the ways. I remember very distinctly some conversations I had with him many years ago. He was then a Professor in the Boston University School of Law and a legal text-book writer for one of the largest legal publishing houses in the country. He had many demands for his services that would have brought him in a large monetary return; while, on the other hand, the cause of pure, free and just government called him to be her champion.

He saw that conditions were rife in city, State and nation, not only destructive to democratic gov-

\*See The Public, vol. xi, pp. 630, 637, 681.

ernment, but, also, which were more and more placing the wealth-creating millions at the complete mercy of privileged classes, and which were tending to snatch the opportunities offered by a republic based on equal rights for all and special privileges for none, from the grasp of ambitious but poor young men and women. I well remember his saying:

"I have an order for five text-books, and other orders that would mean considerable money in my pocket; but if I give up my time to these things, I must give up this other work which we both feel to be so necessary."

Here was the critical moment when he was compelled to decide; here the appeal to the ego. Here were money, the applause of conventionalism, place and power, casting their lure before him and pointing to a flower-strewn highway of ease; while duty, the high demand of freedom, of pure, just and free government, beckoned him up the rugged steeps. He did not hesitate, because to him the voice of duty was ever a divine call. He was above all an idealist, a lover of his fellow-men, and a firm believer in the fundamental principles of democracy.

The thinker who works for the advancement of humanity—the upliftment of his fellowmen—never dies. His influence becomes a part of the heritage of civilization, giving an added momentum to the upward sweep of life. The idealist who is true to the vision leaves behind him a magic spell as eternal as it is inspiring. Of the egoist or the man under the compulsion of the lust for power, the lust for gold or the lust of self-gratification, that is not true, for instead of radiating life and helpfulness, he absorbs something of the sustenance or the sunshine, the hope and the joy that rightfully belong to others. The idealist lives. The egoist may fill a large place in the thought of the world for a year, a decade, a generation, but when he goes he leaves no trailing cloud of glory to light the pathway of oncoming generations.

Now, what were the great ideals that inspired Professor Parsons? What the perils he beheld that were so grave and deadly in character that he unhesitatingly abandoned a career that promised wealth and popularity, to battle for the people and lead the leaderless? What the high interest that made him unreservedly sink all thought of self in service for others?

Briefly, these: The pillar of fire that went before him was the ideal of a perfected democratic society, in which freedom, justice and fraternity should form the web and woof of civic, business and individual life. The peril he saw on every hand was the determined advance of a new and sinister despotism—a despotism that destroyed the hopes, the happiness and the idealism of the people, enslaving their bodies while undermining the moral integrity of the nation.

In the Middle Ages, our Western civilization lay under the mastership of a feudalism of force. There were the earls, the lords and the barons, supported by their retainers, who fought their battles; while the great multitude of serfs nourished, fed and clothed the privileged classes.

Now Professor Parsons—the philosophic student of history and practical political economist—beheld in American society today a repetition of history on another plane. Here great privilege-seeking classes had become organized so as to control the natural monopolies, the nerves and arterial organism of city, State and nation, and the great sources of wealth, so that they were able to subtly enslave the people, exploiting the armies of wealth-creators for their own immense enrichment.

The battle was in essence the same as that which marked the feudalism of force, but the weapons were different. The present feudalism was one in which craft, cunning and corrupt practice were employed as the chief weapons; and the retainers of the new commercial barons were the lawyers, whose brilliant intellect was accompanied by a moral obliquity that made them willing to prostitute their high gifts and talents in the cause of injustice, for the benefit of the privileged few and against the interests of the many. And this new feudalism, finding it necessary to control government, had united with corrupt political bosses, supplied with ample capital from privilege-seeking interests, and was thus able to defeat the ends of pure and just government and further the interests of the real rulers or masters,—the leading spirits in the feudalism of privileged wealth.

Professor Parsons was nothing if not a fundamental thinker. In the presence of these perils he saw the necessity for prompt action which should, in the first place, bring the government back into the hands of the people, and, in the second place, give to the nation or the people at large, the benefits of the enormous revenues yielded by the natural monopolies. He knew that in a democratic republic, the people are supposed to be the sovereigns, the officials merely their servants, appointed to represent them and carry out their wishes and desires; but that under the new order, the political bosses and the commercial magnates, with their aids and retainers, had succeeded in replacing the democratic ideal by the old class ideal, making the government responsive to interested classes instead of to the people, and thus a misrepresentative instead of a representative government.

And Professor Parsons found that in Direct-legislation through the Initiative and Referendum, the people had a simple yet wonderfully efficient means for meeting the changed conditions of the present and making the government again truly representative. He knew that wherever Direct-legislation had been honestly and faithfully intro-

duced, it had not only proved effective in re-establishing a democratic government truly representative of the wishes of the people, but it had also dealt a death blow to the corrupt conditions that were undermining the moral integrity of individual as well as national life. Hence he labored unceasingly, devoting his splendid ability to awakening the people to the importance of this great and fundamental demand of the hour.

His investigations proved to him that the chief immediate source of corruption in government and one of the major bulwarks of monopoly and commercial despotism, was to be found in the private ownership of public utilities. He therefore became one of the leading if not the leading and most authoritative voice in America, in favor of public ownership of all such natural monopolies as the telegraph and telephone, the railways and the municipal utilities.

Knowing that object lessons are of more value than abstract theories, he placed before the American people the most luminous record of the leading progressive democratic state, in his magnificent "Story of New Zealand."

He was at all times a constructive thinker. When he attacked the evil or sought to tear down that which humanity had outgrown, he always strove to replace it with something fairer, nobler and more in harmony with the broadening view of civilization.

He knew that the keynote of our epoch is union, and he felt that if the spirit of co-operation could be made to take the place of the cut-throat competition of the older day, and the even more deadly combinations of the modern feudalism of privileged wealth, whose spirit is essentially that of the competitive age, the interests of humanity could be rapidly and effectively conserved. Hence he spent many months in Great Britain and Europe making a careful study of the wonderful strides that have been made by the co-operators of the Old World, and the results of these researches were laid before our people.

All movements that had for their object the furtherance of the principles of free government, of justice, a higher manhood and a happier civilization, received his earnest and efficient co-operation. He believed in the right of women to the franchise. He threw his splendid enthusiasm and energy into the work of furthering the School City Movement and various efforts to purify politics and foster the idealism of the people.

His heart was ever with the struggling poor, and especially with the young who were making a gallant fight to win a worthy place in life. It was this over-mastering desire to help the young in a practical way that made him the great leading and directing spirit in the founding and pushing forward of the Vocation Bureau work, and which prompted him to help to success numbers of young

persons who through his aid have triumphed in their struggle for victory.

At every step, on every occasion, his influence was thrown on the side of democracy, human rights, and social and individual upliftment. He was a diffuser of light. His influence tended to exalt all who came within its sphere. He was simple, sincere, loving, unselfish and faithful to the vision; an apostle of democracy, a servant of progress, a child of the ideal. His life was an inspiration whose influence for good will never die.

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## BOOKS

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### **GUIDANCE INTO A VOCATION.**

**Choosing a Vocation.** By Frank Parsons. Published by Houghton Mifflin & Co., New York & Boston. 1909. Price, \$1.00 net.

His "vocation bureau" absorbed Professor Parsons during the last year of his life. At his death this book, setting forth the methods and results of that work, was left by him nearly ready for publication. The regret that he could not have lived to carry on his work only deepens with the perusal of its record. A practical, every-day, simple-sounding little volume—yet its pages offer more original thoughts and helpful points of view than are often found grouped.

Its starting point is a new idea: the application of scientific method to the choice of one's life-work. Who ever heard of reserving decision about one's vocation until a thorough self-analysis and the systematic investigation of the world of industry had given ground for preferences? Who ever thought of trusting to psychology and industrial statistics instead of "pull" and chance when it was time "to go to work"? But Prof. Parsons and science once called into council are like all useful innovations: their mere presentment turns all the old ways silly.

The plan is this: With the tactful help of an experienced "vocational counselor"—a man who has made a study of people and industries—the young person is first led to analyze himself—his character and manners, his mentality, his physique. This analysis is to be no haphazard or superficial affair, but careful and honest written answers to printed questions. And, incidentally, that catechism is most self-enlightening to any one for general regenerative purposes. "Do you sleep with your windows open?" "In what were your best and poorest records in school?" "How was each evening last week spent?" "What do you look for first in the newspapers, in a World's Fair?" "What organizations have you been instrumental in forming?" "Are your motions rapid or slow, graceful or not, excessive or not?" "Do you recognize the economic and social value