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Academic Life and the Great War

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to the Alumni on Commencement Day, last June, he voiced sentiments which should meet with universal approval. We quote:

"So long as national policies were in debate we gave complete freedom, as is our wont and as becomes a university, freedom of assembly, freedom of speech and freedom of publication to all members of the university who in lawful and decent ways might wish to inform and to guide public policy. Wrongheadedness and folly we might deplore, but we are bound to tolerate. So soon, however, as the nation spoke by the Congress and by the President, declaring that it would volunteer as one man for the protection and defense of civil liberty and self-government, conditions sharply changed. What had been tolerated before became intolerable now. What had been wrongheadedness was now sedition. What had been folly was now treason."

At the October meeting of the Board of Regents of the University of Michigan, Professor Karl Eggert, in the Department of German, was dismissed because of his attitude on the war. The evidence heard by the Regents was that more than once this man spent practically the whole class room time praising the German Government and its methods of conducting the war, and belittling the Government and the President of the United States. During the last three years many other colleges and schools have had a similar experience with men who, because of scholarly attainments, were given positions where they were able to poison the minds of students. It is good to know that a purifying process has been generally adopted.

ACADEMIC LIFE AND THE GREAT WAR.—The war is now and will continue to be an absorbing topic for consideration in its relations to all interests of the Nation. At the formal opening of the University year, Dean Henry M. Bates, of the Law School of the University of Michigan, delivered the principal address. His subject was the relationship of academic life with the war. Mr. Bates is known as one of the most progressive and thoughtful experts on legal instruction in the country, and his words on this occasion demonstrated his wise consideration of the problems of today. He asserted that the true course, so far as education is concerned, is for colleges and universities to keep open for those who are not called to the colors, or other national service, "every avenue of mental discipline, every opportunity to search out and make avail-
able the limitless fields of yet undiscovered truths. But in doing
this let no institution, which would not invite from posterity a ver-
dict of shame, oppose any obstacles to the course of any of its sons,
or daughters, students, or instructors, who may offer themselves to
the service of their country in its hour of need. To dampen the
generous ardor, or chill the brave spirits of such as these, would be
shameful indeed.” He ventured the assertion “that a very large
majority of American college students are underworking, rather
than overworking; that many are working incredibly little, and
that the time thus stolen from the primary function of education
is by most of them spent in dawdling, or in the fragmentary, pur-
poseless activities of college side-shows.” He also said:

“War is no longer conducted by armies and fleets alone, for its sci-
entific fiendishness calls for the last available energy and effort and thought
of entire nations. And thoughtful men in and out of government, with
large opportunities for judging, have feared that as a nation we might
fail perhaps to live up to that high measure of achievement to which
potentially we are equal; that we might not have clear vision and endur-
ing moral courage which come only to well trained men and women,
which would enable us to see clearly our goal through the trials and suf-
ferings ahead of us, not confused or misled, or halted, by the clouds of
foggy reasoning and dusty error and falsehood, raised by misguided fa-
natics, or spread with insidious craft by traitors in our midst and enemy
spies from abroad.

“These men remember that in our last war at least we needlessly sac-
rificed hundreds of lives and millions of dollars, by our inefficient meth-
ods, our easygoing tolerance of defects and abuses, which should have
been eliminated long ago. They have known that we have permitted a
prejudice, an irritation growing out of experiences long since past, to
affect the attitude of masses of our countrymen toward a great nation
whose repudiated government, not its people, was once our enemy, a na-
tion which has long generously admitted that its government was wrong
and we were right, a people with whom by reason of community of
language, literature, law and political institutions, we ought to be linked
in close mutual understanding, if not by alliance, to help maintain the
peace and promote the progress of the world. These thoughtful observ-
ers realize that the same easygoing tolerance, the shallow optimism, and
the happy-go-lucky ways of our people have resulted in our admitting,
nay welcoming, men of another nation, brave, brilliant and lovable, to our
liberty and our opportunity, and that a few of these men, as Secretary of
State Lansing showed in startling disclosures through yesterday’s news-
papers, have made our soil the base, and our property, our citizenship,
and our politics the prostituted means of treacherous plots against a
friendly and generous nation of kinsmen. And the same faults of train-
ing, and resultant habits of thought and action have made it possible for
great masses of other nationalities to come to our shores and here found
and maintain colonies foreign in language, habits, aspirations and symp-
pathies, thus effectually preventing the growth among them of a proper
American spirit. But worse than this we have permitted representa-
tives, thousands in number, of one of these foreign nations, now openly,
as formerly in reality, our enemy, to maintain through a long stretch of
years, a systematic, crafty, far-reaching propaganda for the glory and
aggrandizement of the so-called fatherland and at the expense of our
interests and our institutions wherever necessary. So far has this dast-
ardly plan gone that men of this nation, welcome not only to the price-
less opportunities of our land, but received as guests in our homes, in-
cluding even the diplomatic agents of their government (representa-
tives, forsooth, of the 'honor and integrity' of the Empire), have with a
shamelessness, a treachery, which three years ago we would have
branded as absolutely incredible, abused our very hospitality and friend-
ship to plot not only against nations with whom we were at peace, but
to embroil us in wars with such nations, to destroy our factories and rail-
roads, and murder our workmen. How could we have believed that such
shamelessness possible, except for the proof over their own signatures
so recently brought to light through our Secretary of State.

"But again you ask what has all this to do with education? If the diag-
nosis is correct the connection is vital. I have endeavored merely to
indicate a few of the defects in our national attitude and life as brought
to light by the searching test of this war. If those defects proceed, as
I believe they do, largely from refusal or at least failure to look facts in
the face, to think below the surface and to meet obligations and disa-
grееable situations as they arise promptly and fearlessly, then the rem-
edy lies in a better education. Certainly I am not alone in believing that
the undeniably superficial training in many at least of our colleges and
universities has bred up a class of men naturally our leaders who lack
the disposition and the habit rather than the ability to grapple promptly
and thoroughly with the problems of both individual and national life.
This war is by no means the last, and probably not the greatest, of our
tests. Conditions following the declaration of peace are sure to call for
a careful examination of all of our institutions and for greater construc-
tive ability in readjusting them to the new world into which we shall
pass. Our industries, our business and commerce, our law and our polit-
ical and social institutions are certain to be powerfully affected by the
changed conditions, and wisely to mould them to the new needs will call
for men of the highest ability and severest training."

INTEREST OF BANKRUPT IN LIFE INSURANCE POLICIES.—On
November 5th last the Supreme Court of the United States handed
down an important decision in the case of Cohen v. Samuels,