EDITORIAL

WOODROW WILSON’S ADMONITION.

By DANIEL DE LEON

“In the years to come it is to the thoughtful and enlightened men of the country that the people will look for the solution of problems that will arise from time to time. America is calling her sons to service. And America will be great or small as she lives up to the spirit of this year.”

With these words Woodrow Wilson, President of Princeton University and Governor-elect of New Jersey, addressed the demonstration of students who came to congratulate him.

In addressing these words to the young men before him, President Wilson rose to the prophetic heights from which about a hundred years ago another great American, James Madison, addressed posterity.

Too clear-headed to be deceived by the Constitution’s motto “Esto Perpetua”—Forever Thus—Madison realized that economic forces would alter, and, through the alteration, alter institutions along with them. And he boldly uttered the forecast, and expressed his confidence that the serious issues that were bound to arise would bespeak the sober attention of an enlightened posterity.

Economic changes of gigantic import have taken place since Madison spoke. These changes now confront the generation of President Wilson. A member of that generation, President Taft, facing the problems that the changes have wrought, has nothing better to say than: “God knows what the solution must be; I don’t.” And he is a product of our Colleges and Universities.

By his answer President Taft ruled himself out of the ranks of “the thoughtful and enlightened men” from whom the Nation can look for help in the present crisis—and along with himself he ruled out a large number of the College graduates.

It remains to be seen whether President Woodrow Wilson will have proved
himself a better steward of the youth entrusted to his care. It remains to see whether the education and instruction that he imparted to them will have been of the character-builder quality requisite to cause the Princeton youth to tear themselves from their own class interests and, having mastered the economics of the Working Class, strike a posture less abject than that of President Taft. In short, it remains to be seen whether President Woodrow Wilson has contributed more than a phrase towards preventing America from being small, and insuring her being great.

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