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SCIENCE AND SOCIETY

I PROPOSE to-day to compare very briefly the problems of the college graduate of my own time thirty-two years ago and those of the present, and then to point out what seems to me to be the most vital elements which must enter into the solution of the problems which to-day's graduating class will be called upon to face.

I have a very vivid picture of one of America's most constructive statesmen, Senator John Sherman, addressing my own class upon its graduation, and wishing with all his soul that he might be in our shoes.

My generation, said he (and his constructive work covered the fifty years from 1845 to 1895), has had for its great task the preservation of the Union, the assuring to posterity of one unified representative government extending over the whole vast area embraced within the limits of our states and territories, the problem—new in the world's history—of creating the conditions which make it possible to try out democracy on a huge scale. That problem we have solved at an awful expense of money and of human lives. The war for the preservation of the Union is passed, and the process of recovery and reconstruction has been in the main completed. Your problem, young graduates, is to show how well, during the next half-century, you can make that kind of government work in a country three thousand miles one way by two thousand the other.

The half-century since 1891 is now two thirds past, and, if it were fair to shut our eyes to the rest of the world and to take the present situation in the United States as an index of how well we have carried out that task, my generation in America might perhaps look back with a certain complacency upon what it has done so far. Certainly, gauged by the standard of the material prosperity of the average citizen alone, I suppose that it will be generally agreed that in this June, 1923, the United States finds itself better off than any country has ever been at any time in the world's history—considerably better off than it itself was in 1891. Wages have more than doubled since that year, and costs have not yet doubled. The condition of the man at the bottom, whether you consider that man to be the unskilled laborer or the young Ph.D. seeking a job, is better now than it was then, and it is probably immensely better than it has ever been in any preceding period of the world's history. In 1896, after a four-year college course, three years

[1] An address delivered at the Commencement of Stanford University, June 18, 1923.