

# Essay Contest Winners Display Keen Logic and Vision

## Boys and Girls Who Submitted Many Manuscripts for The New York Herald Prizes Show Promise for the Nation's Future

**The Winners.**  
 Here is the official list of the awards:  
**First Prize, \$100 in Gold—Arnott J. White, Commercial High School, Brooklyn.**  
**Second Prize, \$50 in Gold—Miss Helene Hartung, Evander Childs High School, The Bronx.**  
**Third Prize, \$25 in Gold—Arthur Gobetz, Erasmus Hall High School, Brooklyn.**  
 Honorable mention:  
**Samuel Cherry, Commercial High School, Brooklyn.**  
**Morton Roth, De Witt Clinton High School, Manhattan.**

**A**WARDS in THE NEW YORK HERALD'S Civics Essay Contest have been made from the huge bundle of manuscripts which came in response to the offer of three prizes to the fourth year pupils of the high schools of the city of New York.

The theme, "In View of the Present Industrial Conditions and Social Unrest, What Are the Obligations Incumbent Upon the American Citizen?" was one which threw down the gauntlet to American youth. Both boys and girls took part in the competition, and the essays produced reveal a vision and an understanding on the part of the future voters which augurs well for the Republic.

Among the many manuscripts submitted the judges found it difficult indeed to determine those to which the prizes should be given. The choice finally narrowed down to fourteen, which were subjected to an intensive reading by the three arbiters. Those

upon whose opinion rested the fate of the essayists were former Judge Alton B. Parker, once Democratic candidate for President of the United States and now a distinguished member of the New York bar; William Fellowes Morgan, the president of the New York Merchants Association, and Mrs. Sara A. Conboy, the international secretary-treasurer of the United Textile Workers of America.

In the judgment, therefore, the views of the lawyer, the keen business man and the labor leader, as well as of womankind, were thus ably represented.

As the reading of the manuscripts proceeded the even balance shown in the personnel of the judges became more and more apparent. The final choice, which was made by process of elimination, left five manuscripts. To three of these the formal prizes were awarded, while the other two received honorable mention, which entitles the writers to receive for them the editorial rates when they are published in the columns of THE NEW YORK HERALD.

The announcement of the prizes was coincident with the mid-year commencements of the various schools of the city, and by an interesting coincidence all the winners were graduated in the week ending January 29.

The presentation to Miss Hartung was made at Evander High School by Mrs. Sara A. Conboy, one of the judges.

The three prize winning essays are herewith printed, and the manuscripts to which honorable mention was given will be published in the Sunday Magazine of THE NEW YORK HERALD a week from to-day.

The impression produced in all quarters was most favorable, in that the essays breathed a spirit of fine patriotism and freedom from radical taint and were filled with promise for the safety and the future of the State.



ARNOTT J. WHITE, First Prize Winner, Commercial High School.



HELENE HARTUNG, Second Prize Winner, Evander Childs High School.



ARTHUR GOBETZ, Third Prize Winner, Erasmus Hall High School.

## Brooklyn Boy First Prize Winner

**ARNOTT J. WHITE, the first prize winner, who was graduated a few days ago from Commercial High School in Brooklyn, was considered one of the best all round students in his class. His final examination paper on economics was exceptionally good and his record in English was unusual.**

Young Mr. White has a predilection toward art. He was art editor of the Ledger, the official organ of his high school, and he won a medal for a field day poster. He expects to study illustration and advertising and probably will enter Pratt Institute.

The first prize winner was born in June, 1902, and is in his eighteenth year. His home is at 323 Chestnut street, Richmond Hill, to which locality he moved three years ago from Brooklyn.

By ARNOTT J. WHITE.

**W**E are living in a most critical time, a time which will be marked in history as epoch making. Hostilities have ceased as suddenly as they began, but people still see naught but confusion. The world will not be the same as that with which we were familiar before the war. We are on the threshold of a new era.

The transition from prosperity to depression has come swiftly. This is a very unfortunate condition, for which everybody is to blame. Labor is to blame for its share in raising wages; capital is to blame for demanding increased profits; consumers are to blame for buying carelessly and lavishly when they realized that prices were much more exorbitant than the case should be even in such an emergency as war.

The people have at last come to their senses. They see the injustice of paying twice as much and more for commodities as they did in the days previous to the war. They have decided to save their money, conscious that prices must come down. This cessation of buying causes a decrease in production, which in turn leads to unemployment. We have now reached the unemployment stage and seem to be entering a period of severe business depression. This is bound to cause widespread suffering, an overtaxation of our relief giving agencies, and will leave in its wake lowered standards of vitality and efficiency.

The fair minded employer should make every effort to keep his men employed during this period. He must give his best thoughts to the methods by which new markets may be found for his products or how standard goods may be produced and carried until normal markets result from their present paralysis. Labor must resign itself to a lower standard of living than the abnormal standard set up by the war.

### Production and Consumption Must Be in Balance

The problem before us is to bring production, employment and buying to a level that is sound and enduring. A deflation of prices resulting in greater buying and therefore increased production and employment will accomplish this end. The enormous inflation of currency which maintains high prices must be contracted. This can best be realized by a discontinuance of Government borrowing, economy on the part of consumers and increased production.

Employer and employee must be brought to realize that their own best interests depend not upon mutual distrust and unfriendly attitudes toward each other, but upon hearty cooperation, good faith and a friendly understanding. The labor organization is a great thing, but it must be handled with higher motives than selfish interests and injustice. The basis of membership should be the conviction on the part of the members that the organization truly represents their best interests and that its officers are honestly and efficiently working to promote their best interests and the interests of the community at large.

Its "closed shop" policy is unfair to workers in a trade who are not members of the union. It is unfair in that labor's standard of efficiency is determined by the work of the least efficient worker. This is a great drawback in production. The "open shop" is best not only to employers, but to the public, and in the long run to the employees as well. It is not always conducive to the healthful development of a labor organization to have an arrangement with the employer which constrains employees to affili-

ate themselves with an organization even against their will.

This is no time for vain repining for that which has passed, but for eager planning for that which must take its place. This is a great opportunity for a new and a better civilization which may take the place of that which has been so sadly shattered.

There is a job for every one. We will be ignorant only of those who shirk responsibility and are not frank with us. Every one must work. We cannot exempt men from work. We cannot exempt them from the loads which they must carry. They can only make them light by the spirit in which they carry them. The unheard of mass of men who go about their daily tasks try to be honorable, try to serve the people they love and be worthy members of the community in which they live. These are the breath of the nation's nostrils; these are the sinews of her strength. No nation can long endure if its foundations are not laid deep in the material prosperity resulting from economy and thrift, business enterprise and great initiative in the fields of industrial activity. But no nation was ever truly great that relied on material prosperity alone.

We must develop high morals; we must strive for nobler ideals. We must have a cheerful aspect on life. If people are discouraged they should keep the fact to themselves. They should speak and act cheerfully, because they know that cheerfulness is a power and fretfulness a contagious disease.

**Wastefulness and Extravagance Must Be Well Curbed**

It is faith that is needed to justly settle all the social wrongs and inequalities between men. And the job that is needed to make men build on the foundation of faith the works which tend to make a happy and a prosperous people. Religion is a great source for these virtues. Religion, which stimulates the productive virtues and discourages the waste of human energy, may become one of the most powerful factors in the building of a great nation.

But we must not only endeavor to increase our productive energy. We must learn to conserve the results of our labor. We have been altogether too wasteful and extravagant. We must learn to desire the right things. The character of our wants will determine the character of our industries and our Government. Let us invest our money productively and refrain from consuming it in luxury. For the less luxuries we buy the less labor will be expended in producing them. The taking of labor from productive industries, transferring it to luxury producers unbalances supply and demand which will send prices so high that most people will be unable to purchase even the bare necessities of life. The well to do owe it as a duty therefore to reduce their consumption of luxuries, and thereby reduce the demand on the undermanned industries.

In view of the present industrial crisis there are men who go about preaching that the only remedy for present day evils is Socialism, Bolshevism or some other "ism." But I say to you that what we need is the highest, the purest and the noblest type of Americanism. Turn a deaf ear to those who would revolutionize the Government, destroying private property, the family and religion, foundations without which no nation could long endure.

Close also your ears to the pernicious theory of lessening the birth rate of the nation. Future America needs men, many men. Not a majority of immigrants, but citizens and native born Americans. It is a duty incumbent upon this generation to rear a sturdy, patriotic and educated posterity, fully competent to take hold of the reins of Government and conduct the affairs of this great land of ours.

America must be first in our hearts in patriotism, duty and devotion. We must have no partiality toward any foreign country. Let our objects be our country, our whole country and nothing but our country. Voices have been raised in America which spoke alien sympathies, which came from men who loved other countries better than they loved America, who forget that their chief and only allegiance is to this great Government in which they live. The man who endeavors to trade upon our nationality is no worthy son of the Stars and Stripes. He loves not humanity who seeks to divide humanity into jealous camps. America was created to unite mankind by those passions

which lift, not by those which separate and debase. The man who seeks to divide man from man, group from group, interest from interest in this great land of ours is striking at its very heart. We must not separate our interests from one another. We must pool our interests. We must act as a unit for one common end. Away with all this racial antipathy and prejudice. America has the first mortgage on our hearts. After her we may extend the residue of our affection to the rest of humanity.

But perhaps one of the greatest shortcomings of our people is the great difficulty to induce citizens to give attention to their political duties. If some governmental enactment serves to ruffle the temper of the people who is to blame? None other than the electorate themselves. The citizen, being free, is himself responsible for his government. He is a constituent, not a mere subject of the State. He acts through representatives. It is his government. If it be good he must see that it is preserved and continued; if it be bad he must see that it is reformed or discontinued. Whatever it is he can never justly blame it. He can only blame himself. Americans! Awake to your duty. Your Government will be what you make it. Keep abreast with these momentous times. Extricate the vice and graft from your industrial and governmental institutions. Vote and vote intelligently. Break down the barrier of party lines. Put men in office who will best serve the interests of the country and humanity.

So let our watchword be in these toilsome

but inspiring days of reconstruction, "America First!" First, not in the sense of a dominating primacy over others, but in the sense of leadership, in the safeguarding of human life, in making loftier the heights of human endeavor, in alleviating suffering, in seeing human toll more equably rewarded and making human fraternity more real, more noble and more sincere.

We must be ready as never before to serve ourselves and to serve mankind, ready with our energies, our abundant resources, our forces of production and our means of distribution. We must develop our life and our resources to the end of supplying our own people and the people of the world as their needs arise. We must purify and humanize every process of our common life without weakening or sentimentalizing it. We must respect our neighbor's rights and give to him the protection we expect for ourselves. We must secure the working of capital and labor in harmonious relationship with each other. We must learn to economize both our labor and our production, investing our money in productive industries which add to the strength of the country rather than in producers of luxuries, which may lead to its decay. We must rear an upright posterity, which will mean a greater and a glorious future for our country. We must conscientiously perform the sacred obligations incumbent upon us as citizens of this great republic, and we must show by our life and by our industry what liberty and democracy based on the rights of the people and on justice can do in the interest of democracy and of mankind.

## Girl Takes Second Honors for the Bronx

Who Miss Hartung is may be told best in her own words:

**"I'm just a plain New Yorker and Evanderite at 1244 Tinton Avenue, in a comfortable apartment over my dad's drug store. I first beheld the light of day on September 15, 1902. After that I spent six happy childhood years partly at home, partly in a summer resort on Long Island. Then I began my school career in P. S. 40 of The Bronx. Two years later I entered St. Stephen's Parochial School, but when we moved up to Fordham, in July, 1915, I changed to P. S. 46. In June, 1917, I was graduated from there and in September entered my beloved Evander Childs High School. I am now in my senior year there, and I intend to go to Hunter College after I am graduated. My vacations, since my sixth summer, have been spent on a farm in a dear little Vermont town nestled among the Green Mountains and here the happiest part of my practically care free eighteen years have been spent."**

By MISS HELENE HARTUNG.

**I**n view of the industrial conditions and the social unrest of to-day, the one great obligation of every American to his family, his community, his country and his fellow men the world over is to serve—to serve in a cheerful, independent, loyal spirit that is truly American. Many and varied are the ways and many and varied are the persons or institutions we can help.

But first, o'er we consider ways to serve, let us see just what the situation we face is. The usual slump in business which comes after every unnaturally great activity engaged in during a war is at hand, more and more men are losing their positions daily, credit is scarce, goods bought at high prices have to be sacrificed at below cost prices, and financial stress results, while new, harmful doctrines, contrary to our country's beliefs and institutions, are spreading, and last and most terrible of all, everywhere every one is discontented with himself and others—these are some conditions which need remedying. Here is where your obligation, and my obligation, and every other true American's obligation to serve comes in.

One way to serve is to be really loyal to our country and her laws. This does not only mean shouting "Hurrah!" as a file of soldiers marches by, nor does it only mean singing "The Star Spangled Banner" louder than any one around us at a patriotic mass meeting, but it means by far more, defending with our life if need be, its institutions and customs against all unjust outside attack or criticism, and it means truly cherishing our country, not only with our lips but with our heart, and showing this affection not only by our words but rather by our deeds.

To be truly loyal to her laws does not mean only to refrain from stealing another man's valuables or from hitting some one on the head with a blackjack, but it also means to refrain from constantly complaining about some law which does not happen to please our own insignificant self, but which does a world of good to a great many other people; it means strictly to obey to the letter all laws, not to evade one or two which don't just suit our taste; it means to defend her laws, too, when others criticize, and to remain firm when others try to in-

fluence us to evade them. True loyalty to our native land also means teaching and helping others to respect and love it. Thus by being satisfied and loyal ourselves we will influence others to be so, too, and so will help to establish peace and harmony in our native land. Is it not our duty to render this great service to America?

Another way to serve is to respect and put just a little more trust in those in authority. If only a little more respect and trust in true authority were found in our country, the respect and trust of the children for their parents, of the students for their teachers, of the workmen for their "bosses," and of each and every one of us for our government and laws, would there not be less friction between labor and capital, less dissatisfaction and consequent disaster and trouble? If it is in our power to lessen the terrible discontent in our land, is it not our sacred obligation to do so by respecting, and trusting in those above us just a little more?

A third way to serve is to keep level headed and optimistic if things start getting mixed up. When there is a rumor of a perfectly safe bank going bankrupt it is the duty of every American to carefully investigate before rushing to the bank with the mob and then going absolutely crazy if the bank hasn't enough money on hand to supply every one—which, of course, it won't have at one time.

Then, too, when some excited soap orator preaches some new doctrine not in accordance with our Constitution every American should carefully investigate his words and not be carried away to shout applause by some wonderful sounding "line of talk."

If more of us would coolly consider questions from all angles fewer of us would doubt their Government and go over to new, harmful political doctrines and teachings. Many a disaster, both individual and national, could have been averted had some one not lost his head. Is it not fitting for us to serve the universe in this way if we possibly can?

### Tolerance to Foreigners Must Be Our Watchword

Another, probably the greatest, way in which we can serve is to work. Work as long and as hard as we can. "Idleness is the beginning of all evil"—a truer word was never spoken. A child with nothing to do is bound to get into mischief, and grownups will do the same, for they are really only big children in the last analysis. If all people were busy they would be contented. Of course, "all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy," is also true, but if all of us would work a little harder and then would play a little harder what a happy nation we would be! It's true, though, that many men just now are unable to find work, and so it is our duty to create work, too, if that is in our power. Productive work that is truly beneficial, so that these men, too, may work and be happy. Let us work, then, and serve our country in this truly helpful way.

A fifth way in which every American can and should serve is to become more broadminded. If we are broadminded we will not look down upon another man a rung or two, perhaps, below us on the social ladder—that mechanism made by man which proves the true worth of no one—but we will treat him as the equal that he is and will give him a helping hand in time of stress; we will not look with scorn at the poorly manured but hard working hand of the foreigner, nor will we snicker at his outlandish clothes, but we will help him to understand our

ways and country, and thus encourage him to learn to know, which is to love, our native land. If we would all do this there would be less of a gap between the American foreman and his foreign workers, and there would be better harmony and understanding

## Third Prize Goes to Flatbush Lad

**ARTHUR GOBETZ, the winner of the third prize, a student of Erasmus High School, was born in New York City. When not attending school he sold newspapers and reached the acme of his career as a news dealer when he called the Extras announcing the beginning of the European war. With six comrades he started a newspaper selling agency, which proved profitable.**

He is now 17 years of age and is laying his plans well for a career in journalism. As a poet he contributed to the *Erasmusian*, of which publication he became the school notes editor. "My big aspiration," he declares, "is to become an all round literary man."

It is his present intent to study at the college of arts in Columbia University and then take the course in the school of journalism.

By ARTHUR GOBETZ.

**T**HE greatest of all wars has left behind it the greatest legacy of economic and social ills known in the long and varied history of the civilized world. In every country the struggle that was fought to make the world safe for democracy has been followed by a series of problems that each day assume more gigantic proportions. Efforts, indeed, are being made everywhere to get back to a normal state in every walk of life, but it is very evident that the time when we shall reach an economic equilibrium and social concord is far off.

The obstacles that beset America's path, as she endeavors to reconstruct her business, her Government, and the daily life of her people to meet post-war needs, will be especially difficult to surmount because of the many and diverse races of people that her liberal policy of immigration has drawn to her shores.

These incoming individuals naturally bring with them many different ideas of government and living that must, to a great extent, be weeded out of their minds if we are to have anything like a united, national sentiment. Until the process of Americanization is completed we must expect the labor troubles and general social unrest that the immigrant element never fails to produce, and thus it is the good American citizen's duty to see to it that this is accomplished as speedily as possible.

To-day, as never before, our country needs leaders. The individual American citizen, of course, must think for himself and guide his actions according to the solemn dictates of his conscience. That is liberty. But we stand in need of men and women of executive and administrative ability, who, forging to the front by sheer excellence of mind and diligence of action, will ably direct the forces of their fellow men and women in grappling with those matters, big and small, which are difficult of solution. Every American citizen of both sexes now has the power to obtain such leaders, if he possesses the qualifications of a voter.

### The Ballot Box Best Safeguarded Of American Liberty

In that voting power, if it is used wisely, lies every man's protection. It protects him against the existence of an undesirable Government. It protects him from domestic violence and the evil intents of foreign countries. It is the expression of his free opinion on all governmental problems. To employ that voting power at every opportunity and with infinite care and prudence is, in my estimation, the greatest obligation incumbent upon the American citizen.

The unstable industrial conditions and social unrest of our day are largely due to misunderstandings and ignorance of the truth. As a matter of fact most disputes and unsettled circumstances come from the same source. Dame Rumor flits about spreading false or perverted reports of what is happening. Men hear or read her reports. Prejudices against certain classes of people are thereby formed and become rooted and ingrained in minds.

An example of this misunderstanding and ignorance is found in the situation that exists between capital and labor. In reality the interests of capital and labor do not clash. The employer and the employee are not members of classes resolutely opposed to each other. On the contrary the interests of these two big factors in the present day labor problems are one and the same. They are partners in a great enterprise. The success of one means the success of the other; the failure of the first presages dire consequences for the second. Yet the industrial warfare goes on and on, the laborer seeking, figuratively, to cut the throat of the capitalist, and the latter having, again figuratively, the same designs upon the laborer's jugular organ.

What should be done? Must the public

and consequently more happiness in many districts of our country.

Being broadminded is another way of expressing being truly democratic, and this, of course, is the chief duty of every one of us. There are too many money casters and too many dollar aristocrats in our country, at present. Not only the very rich do I mean by the latter term, but even more the men of comfortable incomes who, because they have a few more dollars or a little more outward polish or clothes that are more stylish, consider themselves vastly superior to a foreigner or some man poorer than they. Whereas, in reality, they are vastly inferior when it comes to morals or honesty or other things that count.

If we were all just a little more broadminded, and therefore democratic, would we not see at once how small and mean such doings are? Would not this world be by far a better place to live in if we were? Is it not our duty to serve ourselves, our country and the whole world in this way, when we are able to do so?

In concluding, I wish to repeat that it is the most sacred obligation of every American to serve by being truly loyal to his country and her laws, by respecting and trusting in those in true authority just a little more by keeping levelheaded and optimistic in times of stress by working hard and by being broadminded and therefore truly democratic. Thus, and thus only, can we help to calm the wild and troubled waves of industrial distress and social unrest through which our "Ship of State" is laboring to-day, and by all serving, only, can we again bring forth the sun of contentment from behind the storm clouds of discontent that have overshadowed our beloved ark, at present. Let us remember that it is more blessed to give than to receive, and let us serve, one for all, and all for one, now and forevermore.

The three great factors in present day education are the public schools, the newspapers and experience. From personal acquaintance, not to say intimacy, with our schools I may state that these institutions are doing invaluable work in turning out well trained future American voters. That the youth of America should attend the public schools to as high a grade as possible in the shortest time, support them heartily and gain everything they can from them in the way of knowledge is a great obligation incumbent upon them. Thus will they be able, when grown, to face the world without prejudice, without misunderstandings or ignorance of facts, and thus will they be in a position to help in bringing to swift solution the problems that may confront the nation of their day.

**How the Press Becomes A Power for Good**

Every one will allow that the press is a power in shaping public opinion. It is only natural that it does, and no one can be intelligent who does not keep abreast of the times by reading the newspapers. It is the duty of the American citizen, for without the press we could never maintain the stability of our Union. It is, further, the duty of the American citizen to read the right paper in the right way—or, better, to read more than one paper. We must cultivate the habit of collecting news reports and editorial and other comments, of ruminating upon them and then forming our own independent opinions.

Finally, experience is the greatest teacher, the greatest factor in education, and hence the most necessary help of all. No citizen is fulfilling his duty to his flag who remains on the sidelines and watches the world busily apply itself to its daily tasks. We should all participate in the steady march of progress, for experience will lead us to the solution of many a social and industrial problem. When people have active dealings and intercourse with one another they gradually discover their common interests, and common interests form the backbone of social harmony.

In addition to all of these obligations which I have considered it the duty of every American citizen to fulfill, in view of present industrial conditions and social unrest, there remains that of public spirit. True public spirit, while a virtue, is an absolute necessity for industrial and social concord. It is found only among a free people, where political power inheres in the governed. It is good will toward other men, coupled with service. It promotes unity of feeling in the society and fosters universal responsibility. It is interest in the general welfare of one's community.

Americans must be public spirited individually if they are to arrive at a solution to their industrial problems. The capitalistic group, the laboring class and the public must each have the interests of all three at heart, or an economic equilibrium and social concord will never be established. They must work together and for each other. They must aim at friendship and agreement, not hostility and dissension. And that friendship and agreement will be attained only by a public spirited regard for the general welfare.

My idea, then, to improve existing industrial conditions and to quiet the turbulent social unrest that manifests itself so often among our people would place the following obligations upon every American citizen: First, the hastening of an economic equilibrium and social concord by a reversion to normal conditions; second, the speeding up of the process of the Americanization of the immigrant; third, the judicious use of the vote to secure able leaders; fourth, the blotting out of class prejudice, ignorance and misunderstandings by education, and, fifth and last, service to fellow men by being public spirited.

Above all, let it be incumbent on the American citizen never to forget these words of the great economist, Adam Smith: "In free countries, where the safety of government depends very much upon the favorable judgment which the people may form of its conduct, it must surely be of the highest importance that they should not be disposed to judge rashly or capriciously concerning it."