

Benedictory

Alphonsus Campbell, '37

Today everything for us is symbolic; the smallest detail or the slightest act is sacred in meaning. We are especially aware that this is the very last day of the month of May, the springtime of the year when the earth is quickening into life and there is everywhere the singing of birds, the daily springing up of new flowers and the manifold leafing of trees—the expectation and half reluctant promise of summer; it is the season of hope, the month of brooding peace when the human heart vibrates to the sweet mysteriousness of life, and each one of us in the contemplation of changing life about him sees the repetition or reads the prophecy of his own.

How fitting it seems to us that on this day we should hold our commencement exercises—symbol of the change from the spring of youth to the summer of manhood, the turning from the years of preparation and promise to the realization of life's destiny.

We are happy to welcome and greet you on this day because you share to some extent in our feelings—but they cannot really be yours, they belong to us alone. For you this scene is but a repetition, another closing. Tomorrow you continue your normal life, tomorrow we enter into a new one. Today we are students resting in the shelter of our college; tomorrow we enter a striving world where we must fight our own way, where our arms and armor will be tested and tried.

As we are grouped here before you, united for the last time as a class, how are we to tell you what are our feelings when we hardly understand them ourselves? Borne up on a wave of changing emotions, how are we to describe them to you? With a divided eye we look back on the past and forward to the future; with a divided heart we feel both sorrow and joy. It is ours today to feel, as Francis Thompson so beautifully said:

*"All the sadness in the sweet,
The sweetness in the sad."*

It is sweet to have finished our journey, to have arrived at our goal; it is sad to leave our college and break off relations that will have for us eternally pleasant associations.

Our joy we share today with our parents. In all our trials and labours we were comforted and borne up by your faith in us, and our consciousness of the joy this day would bring to you. And even today you have hopes and plans for us, dreams lighted by the fire of love, whose magnificence we could not for a moment divine. God grant that we may never fail you or give you reason to reproach us.

In sending us to Saint Dunstan's you have fulfilled and even surpassed your divinely imposed duty of educating us. Here we have received a sound practical training, a knowledge of literature and an insight into philosophy—the whole structure built upon the solid foundation of faith: "Unless the Lord build the house they labor in vain that build it." Well has Saint Dunstan's exemplified her own motto, "from the same source come faith and science." Well has she realized the important truth that he who would be a true scholar must advance on the road of sanctity.

In this atmosphere of tranquil learning we have been happy. Trustingly we have been led in search of truth; we have striven for knowledge not as an end but as a means, not in pride but in humility. We have gathered words of wisdom from the lips of men who, learned, are humble, and who though sacrificing their life for us still consider themselves "unprofitable servants."

As we prepare to leave this sanctuary of tranquility we look out into the world which we soon must enter and seeing there such strife and war, we realize that here we have enjoyed one of the greatest—and today the rarest—of blessings: peace. Here we have enjoyed peace because rulers and ruled both know and observe their proper relations. "There is no power but from God," we have learned; and our superiors have directed us not with harshness but with firm mildness: in all their acts toward us we could read their deep fatherly solicitude. In future years when we are bruised and weary in the strife we shall return in spirit to Saint Dunstan's to take refuge in her arms and receive new courage.

But now we must say farewell; time does not wait: the present moment in a moment has become the past. To you Father Rector and members of the Faculty we say farewell. We know how hard you have worked for us; our welfare has been your constant study, our success your one ambition. We can never adequately repay you;

but if in life we follow your ideals, if we are true to the example you have shown us, then we shall be happy, knowing that we have made you the one recompense you desire.

With you, also fellow students, we must part. Many of you have been our special friends; all of you have been our constant companions. As we leave, we ask you to take advantage of your years at college. All too soon your course will be finished, you will depart as we are departing; your place will be taken by other boys as you are taking ours. Be true to Saint Dunstan's; be proud of your college. This year you have special reason to be proud of her. You witness these imposing commencement exercises; you see your masters arrayed in their robes of distinction; and you realize that this year in the conferring of degrees you see a great event in the history of Saint Dunstan's. Let it be yours to appreciate her worth and bring her the recognition she has so well merited.

My classmates, the hour has come when we must bid each other farewell, when we must break the magic circle of our class, each one to go forth on his chosen path in life—go forth with courage and faith confident that he can not fail. We must not look forward to fame, honour or greatness, but simply to success, which is a much greater thing—the finding of our proper place in life and the faithful performing of its duties. Let, then, our ambitions be high, but let them always be tempered by wisdom. And if we do win distinction, it will be agreeable, perhaps, but not important: what really matters is that we be true to ourselves and to God.

Now as we part our thoughts are not of the future, but of the past; we cast one "longing, lingering look behind," to all the happy days that have been ours together. We are loath to part for we have grown into and become part of each other's life. Constant companions, we have become constant friends. We reflect on the ties that have bound us together, the hearty good-will, the strong spirit of unity. We have played, worked and prayed together—and now we must part. This parting brings to us,

*"The pang of all the partings gone,
The partings yet to be."*

Through the years we will remember these days and their happiness; all their trials and disappointments will disappear: there will remain a treasured memory of all the smiles and jests that have passed between us, the words of understanding and appreciation. Through the years we will hold these memories sacred. Now—a smile, a handclasp—and we are no longer a class. We may meet again; our paths through life may cross; they will all lead to that Goal which shines high over the tallest peak, and clear through the darkest night—there may we find the realization of our hopes and join in a lasting union.

This is my hope—my farewell.



How then is it possible for the rich man to be saved.
By possessing his goods in common with them that are in need.—*Saint John Chrysostom.*

God is the perfect poet,
Who in his person acts his own creations.

—*Browning.*

That low man seeks a little thing to do,
Sees it and does it;
This high man, with a great thing to pursue,
Dies ere he knows it.

—*Browning.*

