

# Valedictory

(Read by Patrick Walsh at the Commencement Exercises  
of St. Dunstan's University on May, 31, 1920.)

*My Lord, Rev. Rector, Your Honor, Your Worship, Rev. Fathers  
and Gentlemen of the Faculty, Fellow students, Ladies and Gentlemen:*

Another collegiate year is at its close. Another class of graduates have completed their course,—and about to leave St. Dunstan's, have now assembled to say farewell to the pleasant yet profitable days, spent under the guidance, instruction and protection of Alma Mater.

The parting word arouses the keenest feelings. It is ever so. At all times and in every land, it has stirred the souls of even the most stoic and has furnished the poet with sentiments for the most beautiful productions. In early years did this natural tendency of the human heart reveal itself, and oftentimes vent in childish flowing tears. How many partings since then have we experienced. Indeed we have found that life is a series of meetings and partings. Yet the same emotions, unabated by time, and the same regrets, unchanged by experience, remain when parting with that we cherish and love.

As travellers oft look back at eve.  
When eastward darkly going,  
To gaze upon that light they leave  
Still faint behind them glowing.—

Yes, for us the sun of college life has set, the twilight is gathering and we must hasten on elsewhere. Yet we tarry awhile and fondly look back to gaze once more upon dear familiar scenes,—find it hard to break the ties that bind us to our Alma Mater and are loath to leave her tender care. Her light has truly guided us over many shoals and beyond many jutting rocks that often prove disastrous to the youthful voyager. She has at the same time made more luminous that internal light of the intellect, conscience, destined by our Maker to guide us to our final haven.

In the fitting of men for the various occupations of life, lies the chief work of St. Dunstan's and her greatest endeavors are for that purpose. But the graduate, betaking himself from her sacred precincts does not fully realize the intellectual, moral, and other numerous benefits conferred upon him. At any rate, his parting thoughts dwell not upon these bounteous treasures. Like a youth relinquishing his happy home, to seek a livelihood elsewhere

neither the sacrifices undergone in his rearing and education, nor the value of these, cause the grief of that farewell taking. Nay, rather, at that moment, the love of parents, of brothers and sisters, the happy times spent together, crowd in upon the memory and overflow the soul, and only in after years when the buffets of the world are hardest will the wealth of that early treasure be known.

The mention of the name of St. Dunstan's among those, who have had the privilege of partaking in her beneficence, brings back pleasant recollections, and there comes before the mind's eye a scene of happiness greater than any other. No sooner, do they engage in conversation about her, than all become oblivious of their present troubles and live again in fancy those dear days gone by. They all behold in her a true Alma Mater, a loving mother, knowing her children one by one, ever solicitous for their welfare and ever striving to promote that happiness which is the light of every youth, and which is sure to follow the dutiful and obedient. Such is the idea her Alumni form, to themselves, of Alma Mater, and it is so deeply engraved that none other can well take its place.

To us who are going forth to join the ranks of her Alumni, those college days of friendship, love and happiness are, and will ever be dear, and can only be remembered as :

Dear scenes! where oft my spirit quaffed  
Life's social joy from genial springs,  
Sweet time! where pleasure round us laughed  
And freely waved his golden wings.

The methods and dispositions with which Alma Mater accomplishes her ends have a characteristic charm and grace all their own. Amusement, exercise and study are so well blended, and so thoroughly disciplined that social physical and intellectual requirements are supplied, while the dangers of excesses and abuses are avoided. That energetic, healthful, cheerful spirit which every youth seeks and admires is attained, difficult tasks become agreeable and their mastery brings real delight. Gentle punishments and endearing rewards, according to merit and demerit, exhibit the beauty of justice and the deformity of injustice. Frivolity and selfishness are dispelled by the refining influence of society, or eradicated by the vigorous games of the campus.

Apart from study, and books, Alma Mater finds many opportunities for moulding the lives of her subjects. Even those leisure hours when the formalities of class-work are suspended and individual tendencies exhibit themselves, are made important factors in the development of the student. The emulative contests and altercations of rec. hall and debating room have frequently disclosed new



vistas, fraught with aspirations, to many who perhaps heretofore felt their endeavors in every pursuit fruitless. The role athletics play in the formation of character and in the elicitation of dormant qualities, is fully recognized. This department of our college life is so well adapted to that purpose that admirable results are obtained. In our own experience, how many a sluggish and indifferent fellow, with no very apparent signs of ambition, have we seen aroused from his inactivity and fired with zeal under the spell of football, hockey or some other campus game. What hope and confidence in his abilities, was inspired by the realization that he assisted in bringing victory to his team! What determination and enthusiasm, after having suffered defeat, accompanied his succeeding efforts!

For him a brighter horizon dawned, for the contagion of industry and diligence spread, and soon animated his work in every phase of his college career.

But it is in the class-room and during study hours that the seal of fitness is pre-eminently imprinted. For there and then is supplied that intellectual training and enlightenment, necessary not only for the proper cultivation of the faculties of the mind, but for enabling the recipient of such to give to his labors in after years the fulness of his talents. Aided by the influence of class-mates, guided by the precepts and examples of teachers and superiors, error and vice, the spontaneous growth of the mental soil are checked and uprooted. Truth in the various branches of knowledge and of science, goodness in action and behaviour, are sought and the student in the words of the poet may well exclaim,—

For rigorous teachers seized my youth  
And purged its faith, and trimmed its fire,  
Show'd me the high, white star of Truth,  
There bade me gaze, and there aspire.

Throughout all her teachings, Christian principles are made the foundation upon which the educational structure is built. Her ideal of education is expressed in her motto, "*Ex eodem fonte, fides et scientia.*" She constantly insists that, "The just man liveth by faith," and his every action is modeled by his belief. Mere intellectual training cannot even satisfy the natural cravings of man, and of itself is utterly incapable of guiding him to good or evil. We are so surrounded by deception, so much influenced by our senses and such slaves of example, that reason unaided by this divine illumination cannot attain its true goal. Accordingly St. Dunstan's combines with enlightenment of understanding, that necessary moral training whereby the will is strengthened and

developed. She ever impresses her students with that deep sense of religion, which is the only sure preserver of the purity of morals, the brightest ornament of our nature and the greatest comfort of our existence. May we always with the eye of faith pierce the veil that screens the future world from corporal vision and contemplate Him, the comforter of earthly exiles and the glory of the blest.

What encouragement, then, even the consideration of Alma Mater's labors in our behalf should give us to enter upon our advancing future! Embarked on that course, whatever it may be, what plenitude of assistance should be derived from those principles imbibed and those qualities with which she so solicitously strove to imbue us! What joy and delight will the recollections of the pleasant association of our college years bring in trouble and perplexities!

If we remain true to her teachings we shall not only fulfil the duties of filial devotion to her by observing the trust she confides in us, but by our virtuous and honorable deeds will be an aid to our fellow-man along life's highway and shall finally reap our eternal reward.

With most affectionate gratitude for her devotedness and faithfulness, in our behalf, and with the most benevolent wishes for her growth and success we now go forth and bid farewell to Old St. Dunstan's.

Beloved and esteemed Rector, Fathers and Gentlemen of the Faculty: You have most zealously striven to prepare us for life's battles, your kindness and forbearance, even in most trying circumstances, surely manifested your unselfish efforts for our betterment. We appreciate your endeavors as only those can who have lived in the presence of your gentle and ennobling influence. We fervently hope your good work may long continue. To you who have thus devoted yourselves heart and soul to our welfare, to our fellow students with whom we have been in daily companionship during our course and who have been as brothers to us, and to all who have in any way contributed to make the name St. Dunstan's redolent of joy and happiness we bid a fond Adieu.



A good conscience is a continual Christmas.

—Franklin.