

VALEDICTORY

Read by John Gillis at the Commencement
Exercises on May 27, 1930

Even a brief survey of the modern world must convince one of the necessity of education. We have but to cast a glance around us to discover that education is not only an advantage, but in most cases, even a necessity. This is the age of the specialist, and, without the training which true education gives, man is finding it increasingly difficult to attain success in the spiritual order or to compete with his fellow-men in the realms of science and industry.

Seventy-five years ago St. Dunstan's was founded for the sole purpose of teaching men to live; and how well she has been fulfilling her mission is clearly seen from the long list of her successful sons who have taken their places in Church and State and have held high the name of their Alma Mater. "And what," you may ask, "is the secret of her success?" It is epitomized in her motto: "Ex eodem fonte Fides et Scientia,"—"From the same source, Faith and Science flow"—and it is due to the fact that she has always followed this motto in practice that St. Dunstan's has been successful in attaining the end for which she was founded. For three quarters of a century, amid all the changes that have taken place in the world around her, she has ever remained faithful to her motto, for she realizes that it contains a truth that can never grow old, founded as it is in nature itself and on the fundamental order of things.

The education which St. Dunstan's imparts to her students is two-fold. She teaches them how to attain their ultimate end, and also how to be successful in temporal affairs; for she recognizes that, although man was created for the one great purpose of saving his soul, he has also duties towards himself as a member of Society and towards that Society of which he is a member. Hence he must strive for success in worldly affairs and use his talents to promote not only his own good, but also that of his fellow-man.

There are, then, two chief parts to education, and, although these parts are really distinct, yet, in a true education, they must go hand in hand. One is not complete

without the other, and the training which enables man to reach his ultimate end must also help him to attain a measure of success in temporal affairs.

True education trains a man to rule himself; without this, all other education is not only futile, but even harmful. A man may be extraordinarily brilliant, he may have acquired an immense store of knowledge, but, if he does not exercise self-control, all his ability and learning will be useless. He will be a ship without a rudder, buffeted to and fro on the sea of life, and carried in whatsoever direction his passions may lead. And so it is that St. Dunstan's considers of prime importance the training of the will; this she effects by fostering manly sports, by enforcing a sound discipline, and by continually stressing its importance by word and example.

But, although the training of the will is necessary, there is another phase of education which is also essential—the training of the intellect. For man, though endowed with wonderful powers of intellect, is, nevertheless, apt to be led astray. Because of the manifold forms of error which infest the modern world, he is liable to see things in a false light and is thus unable to value them at their true worth. It is the duty, then, of education to train men to distinguish the real from the apparent good and to recognize the true merit of the things worth while. St. Dunstan's fulfils her obligations in this respect by teaching her students the great truths of religion and of science, and by a sound course of Christian philosophy.

This, then, is the training we have received at St. Dunstan's. For the past number of years she has been endeavoring to instil these great truths into our minds, and now she calls us together for the last time, to send us forth to face the world, to fight the battle of life, and to put into practice the principles which she has striven to implant in our minds.

By most men the twenty-seventh of May, 1930, will not be considered of very great significance, but to us who are now before you, it is and will always remain one of the most important days of our lives. It is the one to which we have been looking forward for many years, and which will remain with us in memory as long as we live. Years ago we read, perhaps, of the commencement exercises at St. Dunstan's, and hoped that one day we would be numbered among the graduates. And what fond

hopes they were! We thought that then we would surely have reached the zenith of our happiness. Then came the day when we saw that our desire might be realized. We entered St. Dunstan's. We were among the chosen few. And, year after year, as we saw other graduating classes stand upon this platform to receive a parting blessing from their Alma Mater, we rejoiced that our day was ever approaching nearer. It has come today; and, though our happiness is great, we find that it is tinged with sorrow. We realize that this is not our happiest day, but that our most pleasant hours were those which we spent here at College preparing ourselves for Graduation and for the life to follow it. We are leaving St. Dunstan's; we are gathered together as a class for the last time; in a brief space we shall have ceased to be students of St. Dunstan's and will be numbered among her Alumni. It is but natural, then, that on such an occasion our mind should turn back to the days that are gone, and we should be permitted to cast one longing, lingering glance behind and live over in retrospect those happy, peaceful, carefree days we have spent at Old St. Dunstan's.

We are carried back in spirit to our first day at college. Everything is new and strange. The thoughts of loved ones at home make us rather sad and lonesome. We miss our boyhood companions. The faces around us are strange and appear to us somewhat hostile. College life is not as bright as we had anticipated, and we are tempted to give it all up and return home; but the thought of graduation day comes to our minds and we determine to fight the battle like men. We are awakened the next morning by the sound of a bell—the first signal of college routine—and we have entered on what proves to be the happiest period of our lives. Our companions seem friendlier today. The world is beginning to look brighter. And so, as the days pass by, we become inspired more and more with the college spirit, and we begin to form those friendships that have meant so much to us, and whose memories will be an ever-living light to brighten our darkest hours. Day after day the links of friendship grow stronger. We participate in the college activities, attend class where we receive those instructions that will prove so valuable to us in after years, take part in college games, play pranks on one another, and pay our visits to the chapel, where we carry all our difficulties and open

our hearts to the Eucharistic God Whom we receive daily into our souls. And so the months and the years pass swiftly by and we do not realize how happy we have been until Graduation comes and we must say farewell.

Reverend Fathers and Gentlemen of the Faculty! Ever since the day on which we first entered St. Dunstan's you have devoted your time and energy to train us so that we might be able to play our parts in the great drama of life. You have always endeavoured by word and example to make us model Christian gentlemen. We realize that we can never repay you for all that you have done for us, but our prayer will ever be that God may bless you and reward you for the sacrifices that you have made in our behalf. Farewell!

Fellow-students!—In a short time—shorter indeed than you may perhaps realize—you will be standing where we stand today. Our parting words to you are: "Make the best possible use of the time that remains for you at St. Dunstan's. Be proud of your college and live so that she may be proud of you. Try to appreciate the sacrifices that she is making for you, and finally, in whatever circumstances you may be placed, always remember that you are students of St. Dunstan's." Farewell!

Fellow-classmates!—During the past few years we have had much in common. We have grown to manhood together. We have striven together many times for the honor of our class and of Alma Mater, and now our paths diverge; but let us, wherever we may be, continue to uphold the honor of our class and of St. Dunstan's. Let us always hold sacred the trust which Alma Mater has placed in us and ever live up to her teachings. The past is gone; we can live it only in memory. The future lies with God and with us. God will do *His* share if we but do ours. We have received the training; it remains for us to guide our lives by it.

"Our lives are songs; God writes the words;
And we set them to music at pleasure;
And the song grows sad, or merry and glad,
As we choose to fashion the measure.

We must write the music, whatever the song,
Whatever its rhyme or meter;
And if it be sad, we can make it glad;
And if sweet, we can make it sweeter."

Farewell!