

## VALEDICTORY

*Read by Leo Doyle at the Commencement Exercises of St. Dunstan's University on May 30, 1923.*

If we were to trace the history of the great sea of humanity from its source at the very feet of the Creator in the Garden of Paradise, we should find that the dominating passion which rules the heart of man in all ages, in every land, and under all circumstances of fortune, is the acquisition of happiness.

There is ever in man a longing desire towards some end, and no sooner is that end acquired than fresh goals open before him. There is always something just beyond his reach; if he could but obtain this, he would in his own imagination be supremely happy. But alas, how transitory, how fleeting is that happiness! If man would but stop and consider that he is not created for this world; that the mighty Builder has planned and fashioned all things for His own glory: he would then realize that in this world of turmoil and strife no perfect happiness is obtainable, that the only true and lasting happiness rests in God Himself.

How distinctly this great truth stands out before us today. For six long years we have striven, having ever before us as our hope, our ambition, our goal, the day when our college course would be completed. That day has at last arrived; the goal is within our reach. But is the cup of happiness filled? are we today free from every trace of sorrow? are there not dark clouds lingering around the horizon at this very moment to dampen our spirits, and to proclaim to us that beyond the mists which hide the future fresh trials and crosses await us.

Today the silent sentinel of a new era in our existence, stands as a dividing page in the volume of our lives. Yesterday we were children under the protecting arm of a watchful guardian. Tomorrow as men we face the world to fight the battle of life. The years which have gone by

were years of peace and tranquility. How carefree were the pleasant days of childhood, when we romped at will under the protecting care of fond parents, how quickly sped the joyous days of boyhood, when all that was to trouble the serenity of our lives were the tasks imposed upon us by our teachers, and oh, how short has seemed our college term! But these days are gone never again to return. We have closed and sealed forever those shining pages upon which it will not be our lot to gaze again. Tomorrow we break the seals of a new volume; tomorrow we begin our ascent upon a new path, a path which stretches far before us, a path whose terminus is concealed behind the dark clouds of eternity, a path whose way leads us through the silent, cold recesses of the grave to the foot of the great white judgment throne of God, where each will receive his final reward or punishment. Is it to be wondered at then when such is the goal we now turn towards, that we should hesitate to be on our way? that we should cast behind us those lingering glances at the peaceful scenes which are no more? Is it to be wondered at that we should stop the wheels of time were it in our power, and drink in the pleasures of the present?

So loth we part from all we love,  
From all the links that bind us;  
So turn our hearts wher'er we rove,  
To those we have left behind us."

But the swift flowing current of time is dashing us onwards, and we are being rapidly thrust upon the storm tossed bosom of the wide ocean of life, whence no man returns.

Year after year as each succeeding Commencement Day drew around, we have watched the graduates go forth to active service, we have watched them pass through the portals of this venerable institution, we have watched them pass down the broad highway of life, we have watched them till they disappeared from our view, as each one turned off



on his chosen pathway. How we longed to join them in their forward march, how we strained at the ties which held us in leash; impatient for the fray. Today the stern call of duty has sounded; our Alma Mater, after years of preliminary training has marshalled us upon the path of duty to set down her final injunctions, to impose her final warnings, and to impart her final benediction. Ere long the curtain will be drawn aside, the stern command of "Forward" will sound from out the intense silence, the booming of the deep toned drum of time will fall like a death knell upon our ears; and you will witness another graduating class go forth from old St. Dunstan's to take their places as soldiers in the warfare of life. How many of this little band will answer the roll call of the great Commander, when He has calmed the troubled waters, and recalled His war stained warriors to bestow upon them the marks of distinction which they have merited by their valiant service.?

Well has our Alma Mater prepared us for the conflict we are about to enter. The armour which she has presented to us is, if applied correctly, impregnable to the attacks of the enemy. Having ever before her those undying truths drawn from the unpolluted springs of knowledge, she has allowed, aye, even encouraged us to imbibe freely of their maxims. The training which we have received from the hands of vigilant instructors has laid a foundation upon which we shall be able to erect any life profession. The education which she imparts is of a three fold nature; physical, intellectual, and moral. The physical welfare of the student is a most important matter. But with the regularity of conditions such as we here enjoyed this difficult problem faded away. Our recreations were looked forward to with pleasure, here it was that we first met strange faces, here it was that we came in contact with companions who held different ideals than we, and very often we were taught to bear our little crosses patiently; here it was that the links of that golden chain of friendship were daily weld-

ed stronger as we learned to know and understand our new found friends. And then we have the sterner sports of college life, the contests of strength and of skill which apart from their physical benefits, tend to foster and nourish that spirit of patriotism which fills the breast of every loyal son, as he beheld time and again the laurel wreath of victory bedeck the fair brow of our Alma Mater.

Diligently have our intellects been trained. St. Dunstan's has ever aimed to send into the world men who from their training would make better citizens. She has implanted in our hearts principles of truth and justice, those principles upon which stand the framework of human society. Correct ideals have always been held aloft so that all work might be performed with them ever before us. The duties which we owe to the state and to our fellow man have been clearly demonstrated to us. That precious gift, respect for lawful authority, the absence of which is becoming the curse of the world today, has been set deep in our hearts. The various branches of study have been the means of broadening our intellectual vision and spreading before us, under various colors, the most sublime truths to which the intellect of man can attain.

But alas, how worthless would become all this physical and mental training were it not tempered with the greatest gift which God has bestowed upon man, namely, the gift of Faith. For without faith we are without a true knowledge of the all ruling Lord of Providence, and hence we would be struggling blindly with no particular end in view. But Alma Mater has placed this precious gem in the very centre of her crown of success, and has arranged around it in proper order the less important, yet indispensable jewels of knowledge. All this can be seen by the stranger from afar, as he beholds rising proudly to the heavens the standard of old St. Dunstan's bearing those undying words, "Ex Eodem Fonte Fides et Scientia." Such is the manner in which St. Dunstan's trains her sons; in which she fits them to receive



their final reward. She places them upon the path of knowledge, illumined by the light of faith, a path which, if we cling closely enough to it, it will lead to that goal so sought after by man, eternal happiness, a path which leads to all the happiness this earth is capable of giving.

But now we must bid farewell to those pleasant scenes surrounding us; we must bid farewell to this land locked harbour where all has been peace and security, and steer our feeble barques for the wind swept sea, where each one will hold the rudder of his destiny in his own hands. Let us hope that the beacon light which our Alma Mater has placed before us may ever retain its brightness, and that our eyes may never be dimmed with the mist of false illusions, so that we shall arrive safely in the port whither all hearts are turned. May the memories of our pleasant days at old St. Dunstan's serve to brighten the dark evening of life, when the shining sun of ambition is slowly setting, and the shades of the approaching night are stealing across our way. Farewell . . . .

Farewell! that word has broken hearts,  
And blinded eyes with tears;  
Farewell! one stays and one departs;  
Between them roll the years.

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Adieu! such is the word for us,  
'Tis more than word,—'tis prayer.  
They do not part, who do part thus,  
For God is everywhere.

*Beloved Rector, Rev. Frs. of the Faculty; Gentlemen Professors:*

Our Lord sending His Apostles forth addressed them in those words, "Going therefore teach ye all nations." Today, you, Rev. Fathers, the representatives of Christ, commission us in a similar manner. You command us to go into the world and teach by word and example those truths which we here learned; to stand as leaders in our

chosen spheres of life. Oh, may we be true to this sacred trust, may we by our works reflect nought but credit upon our Alma Mater and our instructors. If we remain true to the principles you have taught us a lasting crown of glory will be ours.

That your future be crowned with success, and that many years in which to continue your noble work be granted you is the wish of every member of the class of '23. Farewell.

*Classmates:* Would that this painful parting were unnecessary. For six years we journeyed together; have journeyed through the pleasant glades of sunshine, journeyed through windswept plains of darkness, ever assisting one another, sharing our common joys, bearing our common crosses. Now we must go forth alone, in the midst of a cruel world.

But we will not falter. The ties which bound us together in the past will continue to hold us in a lasting union. Though mountains may tower between us, though seas may separate us, the hand of friendships will over reach all obstacles, an indissoluble chain will bind our hearts together. Go forth, classmates, to combat the storms of life, go forth, remembering the truths which you have learned; go forth, every striving to uphold the principles of Truth and Justice so necessary to man in his struggle towards GOD. With these principles before us, we cannot fail; and when the books are opened, when the angel's trumpet shall sound to summon all to that last great convocation, may we stand together again never to be separated; till then, farewell, farewell. . . . .