

Haledictory

E. Somerled Trainor, '39

Once again St. Dunstan's has opened wide her doors, inviting the public to attend the Annual Commencement Exercises. For the past few years we, the class of '39, have been present at similar graduation ceremonies as members of the audience, members who, at times, listened attentively to what was being said, yet who often skipped blithely into the fanciful realms of imagination, and pictured ourselves as the principles in these closing acts of the scholastic year. We have seen graduating classes pass from St. Dunstan's, and our gaze followed them till they became mere specks on the sea of life. How we longed to slash those fetters of time which kept us from sailing with them!

Now, at last, it is our turn. Today is our day, a day on which, with the burning enthusiasm of youth, and with hope born of confidence, we eagerly look forward to taking our places and making our presence felt in the outside world. Yet it is also a time of retrospect, when memories of past scenes flood the mind, making stronger and more sacred those bonds which unite us with St. Dunstan's.

We recall vividly the first few months of our introduction to St. Dunstan's. Here, indeed, was an atmosphere, a background, a life itself which was new. At first we disliked the discipline, the orderly routine, the calm and tranquility of our daily lives. Why had we been sent here? Could the benefits of education be worth our present discomforture and the sorrow of home-leaving?

We clearly realize today, as our parents realized from the beginning, that such was the proper course for us. Knowing full well their duty to provide us with a Christian education, they never for a moment faltered or wavered in their purpose. No sacrifice, no toil or hardship on their part was so great that it could not be overcome by the love they bore us. In the love we bear them may they find a reward for their self-denial, for their prudence in the choice of those who were to mould our characters, and cradle our thoughts.

Living as we do at St. Dunstan's, in a small compact society, our daily existence is a training for the life we must henceforth lead in the outside world. Year after year we come in contact with new faces, new opinions and new ideals. We discover that, for the harmonious and concordant func-

tioning of our little society, there exists duly established authority to whose regulations, born of mature experience and keen observation, we must conform. We are taught by daily contact with one another, and especially with our professors, that oftentimes individual pleasures and gains must be sacrificed for the common good. This same spirit is infused into all our actions, in work or in play, where it is not so much victory that counts, as how we play the game.

In order that they may be more than merely passive citizens, Alma Mater thoroughly trains her sons in those qualities so necessary for leadership. Day after day the intellect is fed and nourished with works from the great masters of all climes and ages. We are diligently instructed in those rules to which reason must conform in order that it be right, in order that we may think straight. At the same time we are encouraged to form personal judgments, to think for ourselves. St. Dunstan's does not train her charges to be mere blotting papers, absorbing and accumulating facts. Rather it is her constant care and daily concern to guide, direct, and so influence the student that he may, of himself, mould his intellectual faculties in accordance with those norms of reasoning which are the channels of truth. Her aim and her hope is that she will send forth into the world, not students who have been intellectually tied to her apron strings, or who are the products of six years mental spoon feeding, but rather students who have become accustomed to dig expertly for the sources of truth, to filter out and discard those elements, which, poisonous in themselves, present a false and momentary lustre, and, finally, students who know how to drink wisely from the clear and unpolluted springs of knowledge.

Yet how futile and fruitless would all this development be, if knowing the proper course we failed to follow it. Truly, there will be numerous occasions when a firm adherence to our principles will arouse opposition, and demand no small sacrifices on our part. Life is a battle, and if we are to be warriors worthy of our training we must always line up with the forces of truth. A truly great man is he who is not only intellectually powerful, but also strong in will.

St. Dunstan's has never lost sight of the importance of training the will as a factor in character formation. Just as it is necessary that we be courageous in doing what we know is right, so also is it necessary that we submit and

prostrate our imperfect intellects before that Supreme Mind who fashioned them. Truly, the use of pure reason can lift us to great heights of knowledge, but there are points above which we cannot rise without some supernatural aid. This truth forms the very core, the nucleus on which St. Dunstan's constructs her system of education. "Ex eodem fonte fides et scientia." Science of those truths which can be grasped by the mind; faith in the truths which exceed the powers of the human intellect. How important, then, and how necessary is the development of this gift of gifts, this precious jewel of faith. Here in the calm and peace of our little chapel we may commune with the Author of Truth itself; here we may find light, guidance, and consolation; here we may nourish that seed of faith already sown within us by daily receiving the Bread of Life.

Today St. Dunstan's invites parents and friends to be present at the graduation exercises that they too may share in our cup of happiness. By conferring degrees, Alma Mater publicly proclaims that once again she is sending out on the sea of life a band of well-trained and full-fledged sailors. It is now the time for lifting anchor, and there but remains the parting word, — farewell !

To you, Rev. Rector, and members of the Faculty we wish to express our gratitude. We are not simply observing conventional politeness, or a traditional propriety when we say warmly and sincerely "thank you for all you have done for us, and may God crown your future efforts with the success which has accompanied those of the past."

Fellow Classmates: We have come to the parting of the ways. Henceforth we must take our places in the world. With intellects trained in the fundamentals of straight thinking, and with wills disciplined in the art of conduct befitting rational beings, we must henceforth, on our own responsibility, translate into actual practice the high ideals with which we have been inspired in this atmosphere of truth. We must be thinking men, and our thoughts must find outward expression in efficacious action. Armed with truth, then, we go our several ways. Until we meet again — farewell.



What sculpture is to a block of marble, education is to the human soul. — Addison.