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ALFRED UNIVERSITY

College Opening Addresses

by

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This week Alfred University enters upon the fourth quarter of its first century of work. Seventy-five years of educational work, of history and tradition are behind us and all the future lies before us. For a college, not a quarter of a century to complete the first, but century upon century of growth, progress and achievement, must be reckoned upon. For individuals, time is measured by years; or at most by decades; but for colleges and universities, it is measured by centuries. What the college student builds into his life he uses and enjoys for three or four or five decades, but what he builds into his college will have its influence after a thousand years.

A college opening address has two points of view. It has the near look and the far look. It sees the college whose life is young when the first century is passed. College life begins in the student in the near look. It ends, if it ends well, by expanding to include the far look.

No freshman can say with much consciousness of its meaning "My Alma Mater." But the senior who can utter that word without a swelling heart and feelings of endearment, has not fulfilled the possibilities of college life.

I would make this opening address more than a welcome though I wish it to be all that a welcome can be. Personally and as representing the teaching staff, I welcome with great joy the returning students. I congratulate you upon all progress and achievements of the past. I commend you for the beginning you have made and for the evident purpose now shown by your presence here to continue the good work already begun. I trust, my young friends, you will permit no severity of tasks imposed upon you, no self-denial or sacrifice you may be called upon to endure to chill your enthusiasm for a college education or to deflect you from the program of life which you have mapped out in your entrance upon a college education. Your continuance of this work brings to you new visions of truth, new powers to

see and grasp and utilize the truth. We welcome you back to college because we know you and love you as friends and students, but we welcome you also because of the new fields which still lie before you, rich in unexplored treasures of knowledge and power..

Then also we have a hearty welcome for you who are here for the first time, you who are beginning a college course.

The college family is unique in its annual outgoings and incomings. Last spring a class graduated and went forth from us. They had been with us four years. They had become greatly endeared to us by personal interest and friendship and services rendered.

But the end of a college education is not to remain always in college. It is rather to be strengthened and fitted by four years of study to be better and more useful citizens in the great world into which you are so soon graduated and sent forth. So as senior classes leave the Alma Mater, their places must be filled by promotions and the ranks of the promoted must be filled up by new recruits. Fresh-

men are the new recruits in the college family and upon them depends the continuance of the family and the perpetuation of the college. It is not strange therefore that we who remain and labor from year to year have a very keen sense of pleasure and welcome as new faces come among us and new freshmen take up the work of college life. To you, then, we give a most hearty and cordial welcome also.

A recent writer in "Success" was asking "Does it pay to labor to acquire a college education?" "Success" answered, "Does it pay to make life a glory instead of a grind? Does it pay to open a little wider the door of a narrow life? Does it pay to add power to the lens of the microscope or the telescope? Does it pay to know how to take the dry, dreary drudgery out of life? Does it pay to taste the exhilaration of feeling one's powers unfold? Does it pay to push one's horizon farther out in order to get a wider outlook or a clearer vision?"

No one of those answers or questions mention money or financial reward, but they speak rather of manhood, of character and of power to be and do. It is such a view of the value of education that I would have you all possess. Young people sometimes ask me which course in college will furnish the largest income. Which will be the quickest road to a good salary? Such inquiries are wide of the mark! They fall far short of the true estimate of the worth of a college education. Does it pay to be more a man, more a true a wise and a worthy woman? Will a college education help to accomplish these results? If so, it will pay; if not, it will not pay.

Character is the chief asset of life. Character-building processes are the most important processes of education and the college course that is most worth while is the college course that is largest in the character-building elements.

It is not impossible to acquire an education and nobility of character without the aids of college, but such achievements made are in spite of

the handicaps and not because of them. College and college life multiply many-fold the facilities for acquiring such culture. Without them, the process is long and tedious and often baffling. Colleges are institutions founded by philanthropy to make such education available to any who will seek it.

Large investments of wealth in buildings, equipments and endowments are essential to a college, but more than this, the presence of cultivated men and women as teachers is indispensable. Alfred is liberally blessed with these essentials. The third requisite for a successful college is a student-body of earnest, capable and well-disposed young men and women. I flatter myself that Alfred is also blessed with this essential.

These three elements, property, teachers and students, make up what I like to think of as a miniature democracy. It is a group of individuals of differing ages and attainments associated together in the enjoyment of temporary ownership of property, in some sense held in trust for others, but at the

present used to its full capacity for the purposes of culture and character-building; a democracy in which the individuals are not anarchists and iconoclasts but are law-abiding citizens, though living and working together with large liberty in individual thought and initiative. Property rights are respected, not so much because of police regulations as because of the sense of common ownership and a sense of common responsibility for the preservation and conservation of all these material instruments of instruction and culture. Regulations are respected and conformed to, not so much in the fear of punishment for violation as in consciousness of the desirability of constitutional government and in the wish to promote unity, order and proficiency. Merit is respected and rewarded because meritorious conduct, attainment and character are the primary purposes for which this democracy exists and which has caused its individuals to voluntarily assume membership and to take upon themselves the oath of citizenship.



If any persons do not wish so to conform to this government of the democracy, whether its constitution be codified law or, like the constitution of England, traditional, then such individuals do not belong in the democracy and should at once betake themselves to more congenial climes where they can be anarchists in fact as well as in spirit or where they can feel the heel of autocracy hold in place spirits too small and turbulent to enjoy the institutions of democracy.

A distinguished authority on constitutional law recently said of the King of England: "He is a constitutional monarch. As such, he has three rights: namely, the right to be consulted, the right to encourage and the right to warn." If the English people have the true spirit of democracy, these are the essential prerogatives of a sovereign and tranquility and unity of government are assured. If the people are unworthy of such a government, danger lies ahead.

I hope you have not missed the point of this discussion; namely, that the ideal college democracy is dependent solely upon the intelligence and goodwill of the individuals composing it. When intelligent and well-disposed members of a college community live up to the true spirit of a democracy, public sentiment is on a high plane and anything derogatory to this high public sentiment meets prompt and hearty condemnation by all the members.

Alfred has made commendable progress in recent years in the spirit and practice of self-government, and the ideals of democracy which I have set forth would still further promote that progress.

The honor system in examinations is perhaps the most important step in this direction. It has had a salutary influence upon all college life and work, and all that is needed to perfect it is the hearty and loyal co-operation of the student body in carrying out the regulations adopted by the students and approved by the faculty.

The student senate is serving a valuable purpose in the college and merits the dignified regard of all students of the college, including the members themselves.

The organization of clubs among the students for boarding accommodations and better home life is along right lines. As the student-body increases in Alfred, it is less and less possible for all students to be welcomed into the homes of the village of Alfred, however anxious our citizens may be to welcome our students and promote their home life. It will be more and more necessary for students to organize and work together to make their college home life aesthetic and refining as well as ethical. I believe there are large possibilities in better club organizations, where, under approved regulations, groups of students of the same sex shall be housed and homed together. This applies to both men and women. Beginnings have been made in Burdick Hall and other clubs; but much remains that might be done and that I hope will be done in the near future. A little more expenditure

for the sake of aesthetic culture and congenial home life is money well expended.

The self-government program of the young ladies in the Hall is most commendable and I hope it will be more and more perfected along the most approved lines. I would like to venture the hope that some day Ladies Hall will be constituted a club or society controlling its own boarding department as well as its own dormitory homes. What a fine ambition to be achieved, to make Ladies Hall a club of fifty or more young women, running their own boarding department and maintaining their own home life, as directed by good taste and conforming to aesthetic and refined ideals, the most popular home in the college for our young ladies! Self-government is a beginning which, wisely administered, can lead to this result. How much better if the young women, now rooming in private homes, sometimes at much social disadvantage, could be grouped together in a home owned and controlled by the group as a club of society, where the boarding as well as the rooming could be under

the direction of the members and all conducted in good form, contributing to the social and aesthetic life of the members as well as to their physical comfort and welfare !

Closely related to the home life of students is their religious welfare. In speaking of this subject I do not refer to any particular church, creed or denomination. I am thinking of Protestant, Catholic and Hebrew alike. The faculty for religion is a faculty with which all men are more or less endowed. Its cultivation is a recognized blessing to all.

It is a misfortune for any individual to be deprived, in the days of his childhood and youth, of religious instruction and guidance. It is a still greater misfortune for any individual to come to manhood and womanhood with no conscious experience of religious emotions, hopes and purposes. Scarcely less a misfortune is it for any young person who has had religious training in childhood to throw it aside on entering college or while in college and thereby starve and stultify his own spiritual nature by de-

priving it, while in the most important period of moral development, of the conscious experiences of religion.

While opening its doors to all students on a board non-sectarian basis, Alfred has always stood and will continue to stand for a religious life on the part of its teachers and students and all reasonable encouragement will be given to religious thought and activity without restriction of creed or denomination.

The Christian associations represent the organized inter-denominational activity of the students and the work of the associations is commended to all. Also the Sunday services of the college are provided for all who do not prefer to worship with the village church which cordially invites any who so desire to unite in the worship of the Sabbath.

I commend systematic Bible study either through college or seminary classes for Bible study, through the Bible Schools of the church or the College Sunday Congregation, or through the Bible classes of

the Christian Associations. I bespeak your sympathetic presence in the daily morning prayers of the College.

In this address I have dwelt at length upon the social, aesthetic and religious side of our college life, because I believe that, of all the good things that college life brings, these are the best and the most important. Some other phases of progress planned in our college life and work may be mentioned in passing.

A distinct advance is made this year in the employment of a trained expert in Physical Training to give his entire time to this work. Required Physical Training work has also been extended to include sophomores as well as freshmen. It is hoped that a more general benefit than ever before will be felt by the entire student body through a more general participation in athletic activities.

It is also hoped that such inter-collegiate athletics as are undertaken may be more carefully organized and protected and more successfully pro-

secuted. The elimination of inter-collegiate basketball last year by the students was a step in the direction of the recommendation of the faculty; namely, that only one inter-collegiate sport be undertaken, and that such funds as we can raise and our best effort be concentrated on that one sport to make it a real success. Since the student-body voted to continue foot-ball for this season, it seems to me that a system of financing it well should be determined upon before the schedule is adopted, and then that the game be tried out for all that it is worth, putting all our resources for the year into it to make it worth the playing.

Of course, it is not the desire of the faculty to eliminate intra-mural, inter-class or inter-department games of other sports. Possibly, something can be done among ourselves with basket-ball, even with outdoor courts. Certainly something can be done among ourselves in baseball, even though no intercollegiate games are scheduled for the present. The President believes that we are now prepared to



make a wiser and better adjustment of these problems than ever before.

In the department of Physics a very considerable purchase of apparatus has been added to the equipment, and the courses are taught by a specialist whose training and ability give promise of a very substantial growth in the efficiency of the department. I hope a large number of students will avail themselves of the advantages offered in these courses.

I will not delay to enumerate other minor evidences of progress which you will discover for yourselves. Our faculty are a little better paid than last year and I hope you will find them happier and even more inspiring than ever before.

You have been handed a compilation of faculty regulations, important to students, which are not new but are merely assembled from several years of faculty meeting records. We hope these will prove convenient and helpful to you in familiarizing yourselves with the crystalized experience and decisions of many years.

Your registration this week is the largest in the enrollment of college students ever assembled at the beginning of any year in the history of Alfred. It is a prophecy of the larger and better future upon which we are entering.

Nature has blessed Alfred hillsides with possibilities of beauty rarely equaled. The gifts of generous friends of youth and of education and the labor of many hands have enriched the landscape and erected these buildings and equipped them. Hundreds of thousands of dollars, given as endowments, pay the all too meager salaries of the professors and instructors. The nominal charges made for tuition and incidentals do not more than pay the annual expenses of the care and upkeep of the buildings in which you meet. Education at Alfred is almost wholly the gift of others to you. Doubly is this true when you enjoy scholarship assistance. You are the beneficiaries of the love, the sacrifice, the philanthropy and the labors of those men and women who have made our Alma Mater possible. The debt of a college man to his

Alma Mater is one which he can never fully pay, no matter how gratefully and generously he may contribute to her needs in after years. But the best beginning he can make toward repaying that debt is to build something of value into her life while he is building character into his own during his college days.