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SELF-EXAMINATION FOR SENIORS

THIS morning as I watched the beautiful and impressive ceremony, the "Gowning of the Seniors," by virtue of which you were invested with all the rights and privileges of Seniors, I wondered if you realized the tremendous responsibilities that will be yours in the profession you have chosen. You entered college to learn; you must go forth to serve.

You have had good luck or bad luck in your examinations. Sometimes the questions were in the field of your greatest interest. Sometimes your mind was alert, at other times dull—and the questions seemed to hit upon things you did not know. In a measure, the examination which the world will make of you will be the same. Sometimes the opportunity will come to you to display great strength and will find you qualified to do so. Sometimes the world will call upon you with confidence, and you will disappoint both it and yourself. The only difference between the examinations your college has given you, and will give you, and the examinations the world will give you is that the world will subject you to a continuing examination with no dates set in advance. The world's examinations come at the most unexpected times and in the most unlooked-for situations.

But there is another examination I would ask you to subject yourself to, the most vital and important of all examinations. It must be more searching than any other; and your answers must be full and frank. I suggest that you examine yourself. Perhaps you can afford to fool others about yourself, but you cannot afford to fool yourself about yourself. It is through this examination that you must discover your own strength and your own weakness. Satisfactory results from this self-examination will be essential to your success in your profession.

In this examination of the way you have already gone there are three questions I suggest that you ask yourself:

1. Have you enlarged your knowledge of obligations and increased your capacity to perform them?
2. Have you discovered your mental aptitude?
3. Have you developed your intuitions and made more sensitive your emotions?

Will the answer to the first question show that you have an understanding of your obligations and that you have the capacity to perform them? For instance, do you know your obligations as a citizen of a modern democracy, and do you feel that you can perform them reasonably well? I suggest that you make an examination of what your obligations are and how you intend to perform them. We must all do this, or democracy will fail. The political liberty of the individual will be diminished from necessity. Unless you accept your responsibilities, dictators will arise to perform them for you, and having performed them, they will take their full toll from your liberties.

Let me advise you: Whatever obligation you make, perform. Never neglect it and never default on it. The credit of the nation, our very being, depends upon the sanctity of public and private obligations. Loyalty to our obligations is the basic obligation of all citizens in a civilized society.

America, your America, stands today at the verge. She is faced with a larger number of vital problems than has ever before been presented to one nation. We have

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serious domestic problems. We have important foreign ones. Many of them must be answered soon. You must help with the answers. Are you prepared? What do you know about credit and currency? What of taxes? What of the proposed Social Security legislation? Virginia's Blue Sky Law? and similar Federal legislation? Have these problems been segregated in your mind and studied? Do you feel confident that you can perform reasonably well your obligations as a citizen to solve them? As an educated citizen, what will you do with problems of this kind?

Now let us turn to the second question: Have you discovered your mental aptitude? One of the greatest tragedies in life is the misplacement of human beings. Be careful not to misplace yourself. The tides of new life and experience are demanding expression and interpretation. Into this tide you will be swept. Do not let yourself drift. You must plot your own course and, having plotted it, you must keep your hand at the wheel, and not merely drift at the peril of the waves.

The issues today call for a critical survey of your heritage and an appreciation of that for which your heritage stands. Study the Constitution of the United States; it is the map of our Government. Uncharted obstacles may arise, it is true, but if the path of the Ship of State must be changed, it can be done only by an intelligent, well-informed people. Does your self-examination show that you are qualified to take your place among them?

Many of the underpinnings of faiths, customs, and traditions upon which civilization was supposed to have been built have been knocked away and we know not the end thereof. Up from the ruins rise elements of great value in your heritage. There are memories of a heroic past, sacrifices for home, country, and liberty, discoveries in many fields which bless mankind, a sincere desire for international peace with honor and justice. Nevertheless, if civilization is to be sustained, we must all gird up our loins and determine upon a vigorous course of thought and action. The salvation of a country does not lie in the hands of a few; as Lawrence expressed it in his modest epitaph, "Progress today is not made by a single genius, but by a common effort."

There have been favored periods in the past, creative epochs, when man achieved a unified philosophy of life. But the World War destroyed the faith of the nineteenth century, when life was rationalized and meaningful.

Man individually and socially needs a philosophy of life, a working faith, for it is certain that in the long run a man cannot have force, happiness, the respect of others, or anything but defeat unless he has and is ready to stand by principles. Philosophers, wise or foolish, may argue about the origin of conscience, the sanctions of right and wrong; they may carry us into the mist and leave us there; but we have got to *act* today and tomorrow. Assuming that there is a right and a wrong, we must make our decisions as best we can, based on our intelligence and conscience as we have them. And we must stand by the result. It may sometimes mean standing alone, and this calls for moral courage:

"It is not within the power of man to command success
But we may do more, we can deserve it."

A man can best be understood by the things he fights against. You will constantly be called upon to decide the things against which you will fight. For fight you must; that is the duty every one owes to the society which rears and protects him. In a self-sustaining democracy, every man, woman, and child has his place and his task.

And as you take your place, you will grow in intellectual stature through the mental exercise you will need in deciding on the things against which you will fight. A problem solved, an adjustment made, or a duty performed, will leave its influence.

It has been said that we are two-fifths born and three-fifths made. Today we ex-

press it differently and say that the "traits and trends of the baby's personality depend more on conditioning environment than on specific inheritance." If we accept these statements as true, how great is the responsibility of those into whose hands is intrusted the training of the child, and what a powerful factor environment becomes in his development!

Today by educational legislation and regulations, the "conditioning environment" has become largely the responsibility of the teacher. Regulations decide the age at which a child must enter school, the subjects he must study and the books he must use; the years he must attend school and the number of hours during each year; the number of credits necessary to the attainment of his diploma. But parents have gone even further and have forced upon schools a major part of the moral, social, spiritual, and physical training of the child. Because of all these social changes, it is the teacher who finds herself largely responsible for the "three-fifths" in the making of the child.

We come now to the third and last question: Have you developed your intuitions and cultivated your emotions?

As you approach the end of your training, you must realize that learning has larger responsibilities than those it owes itself. A college course tends to exalt the mere operation of the conscious mind and so in a degree to discourage the use of one's intuitions. Has that been the result with you? The training of the feelings, the emotions, the imagination, is not a mere appendage of education, but one of its central tasks. These thousand and one antennæ unconsciously absorb, especially in our contacts with other human beings, impressions which the mind either cannot take account of or comprehends all too slowly.

Have your emotions been deadened by too much mathematics and science? Examine yourself in your emotional approaches. It will throw your knowledge into better human perspective. Be sure, while making yourself intellectually fit, that you are not becoming socially unfit.

If you use your development only for personal ends, you will be neither socially efficient nor truly moral. The most overt breach of duty of which a teacher can be guilty is wilful blindness to the needs of his time and place, or cynical indifference to the practical bearing of learning upon such needs. The secret of your success as a teacher will lie largely in your relation to your age. As you tread the pathway of life, you will find new values constantly emerging.

The lines, the forms, the colors of the picture are always changing, fast or slowly; and as they change, life itself changes too—its manners, its ideas, its institutions. You cannot ignore these lines; they will be the outlines of the fundamental problems you will have to face.

No teacher can climb beyond the limitations of her own character. You cannot give to a child that which you do not possess. If you are to succeed, you must possess those qualities which make you a person who stands for something in the spiritual life of the community. Your personal life must contribute to the enrichment of your environment. You must be human, with initiative, resourcefulness, industry, tact, intellectual and moral honesty. Does your self-examination show that you possess all these?

And you must have culture. I mean "those achievements, in thought, word, or deed, which constitute a permanent enrichment of the human heritage and add to the meaning of the beauty of the life of man." Or do you prefer Dewey's definition of culture: "the habit of the mind which perceives and estimates all matters with reference to their bearing on social values and aims"? Have you the courage to estimate the bearing of your life on the social values and aims of your home and community?

Though the times call for vigorous, rug-

ged, straight character, they also demand men and women of such grace and consideration that they may win, not drive, others to support their standards.

Have the answers to your self-examination been satisfactory? If not, is it your purpose to make them satisfactory before you go forth from this college? Otherwise, the diploma which is now your goal should be denied you. No degree should be conferred upon those who have not caught the vision of the area of their obligations in life and their need to perform them.

The influence of great teachers outlives that of kings, potentates, military leaders, presidents, or governors of their age. The teacher finds immortality as she blossoms in the lives of those she teaches, than which there is no higher immortality.

Your history will be the history of your spiritual achievement. For here will be found the "ultimate statement in terms of becoming, of the truths of being." That the great University of Life may ultimately confer upon you a satisfactory degree is my wish for you.

ROSE M. MACDONALD

EFFECTIVE METHODS OF GIVING LIBRARY INSTRUCTION

THE newer conception of education that we now hear so much discussed is causing great modifications in school curricula and is indirectly responsible for the new course of study in Virginia. All of you who have examined the new Virginia curriculum have met with such new terms as "center of interest," "correlation," "integration," "units," etc. The unit, one outstanding educator says, may be conceived as "a body of material to be understood rather than merely memorized." In brief, the curriculum-makers say that teachers must emotionalize their subjects; make them living and breathing by introducing the personal and dramatic appeal. To do this calls for every possible use of relative material which will give color and understanding. This ends the use of a single textbook and demands many books and supplementary materials, thus opening the doors to the resources of the library. With this change in method of teaching, the school library comes into its own. Library lessons must be integrated with regular classroom work. These trends play gloriously into the hands of librarians and give us an opportunity to prove that the library is the very heart or center of the progressive school.

We may prove this in two ways: First, we must sell the library idea to the teacher. We should study the new curriculum and observe in the classroom as often as time permits, in order that we may know what units are being taught at a given time. The teacher initiates. The librarian co-operates and suggests library materials that will enrich and give vitality to the teacher's classroom work. Until librarians and teachers get together and supplement each other's work we shall not have an efficient library in the fullest sense. After we have succeeded in getting the teacher to include library resources in her units, then it is our duty to make these materials accessible to the students. As librarians, I dare say, we take the steps that I have just mentioned; but this is where we so often stop, assuming that by assembling a collection of books and exposing the students to them for one or more class periods a week that they will absorb all necessary information. But we are finding that it does not work out that way. Even the brighter and more fortunate children, who come from homes where books are friends, do not get the most out of them; they need to have these books introduced to them by a librarian who knows

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