

1/25/38  
11)

BACCALAUREATE ADDRESS

TO THE GRADUATING CLASS OF HUNTER COLLEGE

*Dr. Barnum Brown*

Members of the faculty, students, and friends:

When requested to make this address before the graduating class of Hunter College, I long pondered for a theme, nor could I understand why I, whose entire life since college days has been devoted chiefly to exploration and research, should be selected to speak before a graduating class of young ladies.

A friend remarked: "Probably because you are interested in girls as well as dinosaurs. Both pleasant company, I agreed, and most interesting.

But as these young ladies have received an excellent college training and are now entering forth on the sea of life, they are probably surfeited with academic precepts and may like to hear how a "hunter of prehistoric life" has applied his college training. Consequently, I offer few admonitions, but there are some cardinal principles that I have accumulated during a lifetime that are worthy of consideration, and which apply to both men and women. They are simple to understand, and yet not always easy to follow - principles that have contributed largely to any success I may have achieved. These are:

- 1st. The importance of being in earnest.
- 2nd. The diligent pursuit of an objective.
- 3rd. Tolerance.
- 4th. Patience.

On this occasion I am going to depart from the usual formal address to graduates, by relating some personal, interesting incidents that will graphically illustrate the principles I have mentioned.

Many years ago, before most of you were born, I joined the American Museum staff fresh from the University of Kansas, having the thorough conviction that my life work should be devoted to the subject of palaeontology.

Reaching the laboratory one morning, as usual at nine o'clock, I was called in to see the late President Osborn. He informed me that the Princeton University Expedition to Patagonia had agreed that an American Museum representative could accompany them to Patagonia, to collect fossils for the American Museum, and wanted to know if I could go on this Expedition - to be gone for a year and a half. The boat was to sail at eleven o'clock that same day. Although startled, I agreed with the understanding that all members of the department should be placed at my disposal for hurried preparation. Sending men in all directions for necessary supplies, I went home to pack up personal effects. It was a hectic two hours, but I was at the boat at eleven o'clock as agreed, lacking only a few essentials that, as I learned later, could not be purchased in the Strait of Magellan - seven thousand miles away.

Our expedition explored eight hundred miles of previously untravelled pampas and netted a large collection of prehistoric skeletons for our Museum. At the end of a year the Princeton men returned to the States and I, alone with three pack-horses, continued collecting along the Atlantic coast.

Finishing this work, I determined to circumnavigate Tierra Del Fuego, and hired a small six-ton cutter which we lost by shipwreck in Spaniard Harbor. I could not swim, but as the boat went down I grabbed a hatch-board and floated ashore, while my crew of

two men reached shore on barrels. We finally reached a gold-miner's camp which we had passed two days previously, where food and shelter were obtained for three weeks when we were picked up by a coasting schooner, taken around Cape Horn, and eventually were landed in France.

This whole expedition is an example of what can be accomplished under seemingly insurmountable difficulties and serves to illustrate "the importance of being in earnest."

On another occasion in Africa, I was in charge of a large expedition sent out by the Anglo-American Oil Company, to determine the possibility of oil in Ethiopia. This is a land of intrigue and our experience with the government, which at that time was a patriarchal system, sounds like a tale from the Arabian Nights. We carried as gifts a diamond necklace for the Queen, an electric light plant for the palace, and a diamond wrist watch for the Abuna or head of the Coptic Christian Church.

On a broiling hot day, in full evening dress, astride small mules, and sheltered by umbrellas, our party proceeded to the palace like a triumphal procession. The streets were thronged with white-clad natives and our attendants cleared the way by brushing them aside with whips. On reaching the palace our gifts were presented with great ceremony, after which we were told that in a few days we would receive the necessary paper that would permit our caravan to travel over the distant country. The days lengthened into weeks and the weeks into two months of patient and ceaseless daily trips and interviews with the authorities before we could compel them to deliver this important permit, which was, of necessity, our first step in the investigation. This document, by the way, is written in Amharac and starts with:

"By the Grace of God I am well - how are you? etc. Quaint in diction, but, nevertheless, of the utmost importance to us, for on reading it all villagers supplied our every want and made it possible to travel where otherwise travelling would have been impossible.

This is not only an example of "patience," but also of "the diligent pursuit of an objective."

In many countries one is sometimes confronted by situations that are difficult to solve, due basically to the influence of religions. On one of these expeditions to India, Mrs. Brown and I spent several months tenting in the Siwalik Hills, where the inhabitants were chiefly Hindus - a people whose every act is influenced by their religion. It was impossible to employ natives to do our collecting and I must necessarily carry on my geological work in the badlands afoot. But according to their tenets, no one of rank and station should walk or do such menial work, wherefore I lost caste in the eyes of the natives.

One day Mrs. Brown was shopping in a village and had stepped across the threshold of a small shop to better see some of the articles on display. Completely unaware of any transgression, her shadow, as we learned later, had fallen across the food of the devout Hindu owner of the shop, whereupon, according to their belief the food was defiled and must be destroyed. The native pushed Mrs. Brown out of the door so that her shadow would not defile any more food.

The relationship of the white people and the natives, in India, is so distinct that for a native to touch a white woman is such an unforgivable act that it assumes the proportions of Lese-majesty and cannot be permitted. Mrs. Brown was in no way injured, but was

highly indignant. Arriving at the Dak Bungalow where we were staying, she told me of the occurrence and I, equally indignant, went to the village with an interpreter expecting to chastise the shopkeeper. On the way we visited the Tesildar, or head man of the village, where I learned the full significance of the episode - which showed very clearly that the native had been governed by a religious impulse and had no animosity against the white lady, nor had he any intention of doing her violence. However, we went to the shopkeeper who offered apologies and assured us that his act was without malice or premeditation.

These incidents illustrate tolerance and the importance of analyzing another's viewpoint.

A few years ago while looking for dinosaurs out on the Crow Indian Reservation, we found an immense mass of broken bones on a rounded slope. An examination of the specimen determined that here had been an entire skeleton of a rare dinosaur of which there was no complete skeleton known. There were pieces from all parts of the body but they were broken into countless fragments. The surface of the ground showed that none of these pieces could have been washed away and completely lost. I determined to take it and our entire party began the work of recovery. All surface pieces were picked up and wrapped in packages, until we reached the crest of the hill where the animal had lain and where masses of bone were still in association. Then we started at the outer limit of the surface fragments and the earth was screened and re-screened for pieces no larger than one's finger-nail. Literally thousands of pieces were thus secured, wrapped in paper and put in cans and all manner of containers. Where the skeleton was connected in the

center part of the body it was taken up in two large blocks encased in plaster of paris.

After this specimen reached the Museum, the fragments were washed and laid out on huge tables, when it was apparent that between twenty and thirty thousand pieces of this animal had been recovered. First they were sorted as parts of ribs, vertebrae, limb bones, skull and skin plates, then re-sorted as from the right and left sides of the animal, and finally the work of piecing the jig-saw puzzle started - sorely taxing one's patience to reconstruct each element of the body, for in spite of all diligence in our search, some pieces were lost or had disintegrated. Several laboratory men have been working on this skeleton for more than a year. The skeleton has now been two-thirds restored, and eventually it will be completely restored and mounted as a perfect skeleton.

This is a good example of "patience." Even Job's patience would be taxed to follow our laboratory practice.

There are two ways to learn the real character of men and women - camp with them - or marry them. If possible camp with them first. Camp life necessitates a complete change of environment, sometimes bringing out undeveloped phases of character or yellow streaks, as the following experience exemplifies:

During my Junior year in college, seven classmates were chosen to go on an expedition into the badlands of South Dakota, to search for fossils. In our university life we were boon companions and one man of high social standing was a particular favorite of all.

We had an interesting, successful season and after our fossils had been shipped back to the university, and the Professor in charge of the party had returned, we students planned a three weeks hike through the Black Hills to visit gold mines, tin mines, Wind Cave and many scenic spots there.

We were to camp out and sleep in the open and had considerable impediments. With blankets, guns, ammunition, cameras, cooking vessels, and provisions apportioned, each man carried about forty pounds - which toward the end of the day seemed a pack-horse load. Our university favorite endeavored in every way to shirk his share of the burdens and general camp duties, cheating at every opportunity, until he was practically an outcast during the trip. Returning back to college he was again the same man of graces we had formerly known - but none of his erstwhile camp companions cared for his society.

It does not matter what may be your social position, nor your family wealth - it is what you are that counts!

In a graphic way these few instances illustrate basic principles that, in my opinion, make for success in any undertaking. It does not matter particularly what line of endeavor one is engaged in, so long as the job is well done. Your first employment may not be your ultimate goal, but carry on as though the business is your own. Many who have failed have seen only the high spots of the adventure and have not been willing to travel along the uneven dirt-road of daily endeavor.

The field in practically every line of endeavor is open to women, excepting some few occupations requiring physical strength, but I am still old fashioned enough to think that a woman's

greatest opportunity is in the home, and my hope is that some day each of you may decide on a life-partnership that will enable you to build the perfect home that at some time or other you must have thought about.

You will shortly receive your diplomas, which are certificates that you have successfully completed a period of college training. This has been a period of mind-training and character building which will help you to think constructively - but being a college graduate will not help you to solve the important problems of life unless you shoulder your full share of responsibilities and conscientiously strive to give the best that is in you - no matter how small the task.

Women have always been pioneers and explorers, and you are now about to become an explorer of new endeavors, so, as one explorer to another, I would admonish you to bear in mind "the importance of being in earnest," for by being in earnest you inspire confidence - not only in yourself - but in those with whom you come in contact.

Be faithful in "the diligent pursuit of an objective," otherwise you may fail - just when you are about to succeed.

Be tolerant under all conditions, for being tolerant develops broad-mindedness, and not only helps you to understand others, but will help others to understand and respect you.

Above all, be patient, for patience is synonymous with perseverance and "patience" alone will, at times, help you to surmount seemingly impossible obstacles.

\*\*\*\*\*

Dr. Barnum Brown  
American Museum of Natural History  
January 25, 1938.

HUNTER COLLEGE COMMENCEMENT

ARCHIVES  
HUNTER COLLEGE

Address by MARK EISNER - Member of the New York Bar  
Chairman of the Board of  
Higher Education of the  
City of New York.

To be delivered Wednesday morning, January 26th,  
1938, at 10:30 o'clock at the Commencement  
Exercises of Hunter College, held in Carnegie Hall.

- - - - -

At this time of the year and again in June it becomes my pleasant duty to arise at these exercises and to speak a word of advice, encouragement and farewell to the graduating classes of our colleges. It is one of the major compensations that goes with the post of the Chairmanship of the Board of Higher Education of the City of New York. In all the years that I have served as the Chairman of the Board, as I stood before progressively larger graduating classes, I have endeavored, to the best of my ability, to strengthen the members of these classes in their determination, as they are about to go out into the adult world, to strive for high ideals and to make substantial contributions toward the "good life."

To my chagrin I learn from Mr. Stewart Chase that what I spoke was, to use his elegant words, which undoubtedly mean the same to me as they do to him, just so much "blab-blab". His "Tyranny of

Words" just released in book form says that I should have known the science of "semantics" if I really wanted to serve the young men and young women whom I was addressing. Mr. Chase believes that in speaking to you, I should be specific in my advice to each and every graduate about what she should do tomorrow and the next day and the next. He wants my words to reach out to you and he wants them to have the same meaning to you that they have to me when I utter them. He wants all speakers to agree with their audiences upon common points of reference at the outset of their addresses.

Professor Harry Overstreet the head of the Philosophy Department at City College lends support to Mr. Chase in a most enlightening article which appears in the current issue of the Journal of Adult Education. He pledges himself to define the meanings of all the doubtful terms he will use in all his speaking and writing. In his short article entitled "When Words Go Forth to Battle", Professor Overstreet tells us about the confusion caused by fuzzy understanding of word-meanings. He sets down for us a series of definitions of "a liberal" which he elicited from one of his classes.

These he records to demonstrate, as he says, "the emotional diversity that can be contained in a word that is bandied about with the most careless unconcern."

I have held it to be the primary objective of the educative processes, to train and inspire the individual to understand words and the people who utter them. Certainly the purpose of the higher education which is provided in our city colleges, must bring people in our vast metropolis to understand each other and to appreciate the vast interplay of human activities. They cannot do this intelligently and completely without the medium of language. Nor can they do this if their thinking processes are permitted to become fogged with emotion. Clear statement and clear thought are given special attention in our college curriculum.

Each and every one of you is presumed to emerge from the classroom forewarned and forearmed against easy "shibboleths". I speak of this now because of all the things which might be said to you, upon your fateful day of graduating from Hunter College, none can serve you so well to guard you from the shoals of life. We

witness all about us clever and high powered word managers, who divert the thinking of masses of people into emotional traps. New catch phrases and slogans are coined daily and serve to confuse the minds of men. Words may be wicked mercenaries more dangerous than hostile armies. Under the spell of words, people yield their most precious possessions. They divest themselves of hard-won liberties or even entrust the disposition of their persons and their very lives in the hands of ambitious, irresponsible, reckless men. These men are driven by insane cravings to gratify personal vanities and a bestial greed of power, no matter at what the cost to others. They do not hesitate to do grave injury to their fellow-men in their heedless drive to achieve their foul ends. They do not subscribe to the wise words recently enunciated by Bernard Shaw, "that our dislike for certain persons or even for the whole human race does not give us any right to injure our fellow creatures however odious they may be."

However, such is the power of words that they avail alike him who seeks to build and him who seeks to destroy. Words alone often fail to reveal the sinister purposes for which they are employed. It is to this failure that you as graduates of our proud

institution of higher learning must address yourselves. You must be the guides and the lights in our heterogeneous community. You must interpret the words and the motives of those who utter them, in the objective scientific spirit which you have been taught to know in your course of study at Hunter College.

I cannot think of a more pertinent message of farewell to you at this juncture in your own lives and in the affairs of human kind. I have unbounded faith that all that you have been taught here can serve you and the community about you in good stead in every circumstance.

Charles A. Beard concludes his "survey of human limitations" in his important little book "The Discussion of Human Affairs", with what he terms "one truth". He says "it is a truth important for practice. . . to distinguish somewhat effectively between fact and opinion and to have extensive knowledge of the various positions or points of view (tacit or admitted) from which any expression of opinion proceeds or takes direction."

If you have learned this truth and I firmly believe that those of you who will receive your diplomas this morning have learned it, and if you will but put it into practice, the years you have spent here will not have been in vain for you and for our community.

Dr. Caeljan - etc -

It is always a privilege to be included in any program of the College, & we, the Ass. Alumnae, are duly proud of the fact that we are allowed to play even a small part in the life of our Alma Mater.

As President of the Ass. I have been asked to bring you a message to-day, - and a message on a program means a very short expression of a thought.

As I have ever been interested in the meaning of words, I am impatient at the loose bandying of phrases, either divorced from their contexts, or robbed of their original connotation. And this age gives us many such examples, <sup>the use</sup> catch phrases which mean nothing.

Of all words most glibly misquoted are those from the Declaration of Independence -  
"That all men are created Equal."  
Are all men created equal? We know that they are not.  
Are we all equal physically? We know that we are not.  
Some are born crippled, some blind, some dwarfs, some giants.

Are we all equal mentally? We know that we are not! Some are born morose - some idiots. Some with a genius for music, some with an over developed mathematical brain,

2. "Are we all Equal morally? We know that we are not! Some are born without a sense of right or wrong - some with a highly developed Moral sense. —

Then what does the phrase mean - that "all men are created Equal"? It has been divorced from the rest of the sentence, which explains, that men are Endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights: - the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. In the light of this explanation, then, what does the phrase mean?

It means, that no matter how handicapped, no matter what differences of physical, mental or moral development, we all have Equal rights to pursue life, liberty & happiness.

It means that we have Equal opportunity to develop ourselves, & endeavor to reach the goal of the mightiest.

But if we accept the phrase divorced from the text - that all men are created Equal, we will fall by the wayside.

To me it means a challenge; for if we look carefully within ourselves we must note our short-comings & recognizing them shall press forward.

3.

If we have the humility to recognize differences in equipment, if we have the honesty and courage to acknowledge them, and the will to surmount them, we may achieve greatness.

This is my message to you. Don't think yourself equal to the best until you have made yourself equal, then with a humble heart and true pride you will find happiness.

Jim Brandon Drapp.

Leslie Graff – President of the Alumni Association  
Commencement Address  
Hunter College  
January 26, 1938

---PAGE 1---

Dear Colleagues - Etc. -

It is always a privilege to be included in any program of the College, + we, the Ass. Alumnae are duly proud of the fact that we are allowed to play even a small part in the life of our Alma Mater.

As President of the Ass. I have been asked to bring you a message to-day - and a message in a program means a very short expression of a thought.

As I have ever been interested in the meaning of words, I am impatient at the loose bandying of phrases, either divorced from their contexts, or robbed of their original connotation. And this age gives us many such examples, the use catch phrases which mean nothing.

Of all words most glibly???? are those from the Declaration of Independence - "That all men are created equal."

Are all men created equal? We know that they are not. Are we all equal physically? We know that we are not. Some are born crippled, some blind, some dwarfs, some giants.

Are we all equal mentally? We know that we are not! Some are born morons - some idiots - some with a genius for music, some with an over developed mathematical brain.

---PAGE 2---

Are we all equal morally? We know that we are not! Some are born without a sense of right or wrong - some with a highly developed moral sense. -

Then what does the phrase mean - that "all men are created equal?" It has been divorced from the rest of the sentence, which explains, "that men are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights: - the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." In the light of this explanation, then, what does the phrase mean?

It means, that no matter how handicapped, no matter what differences of physical, mental or moral development, we all have equal rights to life, liberty, and happiness. It means that we have equal opportunity to develop ourselves, + endeavor to reach the goal of the mightiest.

But if we accept the phrase divorced from the text - that all men are created equal, we will fall by the wayside.

To me it remains a challenge; for if we look carefully within ourselves we must note our short-comings + recognizing them shall press forward.

---PAGE 3---

If we have the humility to recognize differences in equipment, if we have the honesty and courage to acknowledge them, and the will to surmount them, we may achieve greatness.

This is my message to you. Don't think yourself equal to the best until you have made yourself equal, then with a humble heart and true pride you will find happiness.

Irene Brandon Graff.

131

GREETING TO THE HUNTER COLLEGE GRADUATING CLASS

January 26, 1938

by

Marion R. Mack

Chairman

HUNTER COLLEGE

Administrative Committee

This is an important moment for all of us and each important moment recalls another similar one. In thinking of this occasion, my mind went back to the graduation of last June and I got out the New York Times of June 17. I saw a jolly picture of three Hunter seniors and another very agreeable one of Doctor Colligan and myself, and then I noticed the head lines. What was my astonishment to note that almost everything that one might say to graduates was already on that very page!

Reading from left to right, the captions were: "Mrs. Roosevelt warns on Democracy. . . Mrs. Roosevelt tells John Marshall seniors that democracy is based on the ability to make democracy serve the good of a majority of the people. . . . 'If it cannot do that,' says Mrs. Roosevelt, 'then it should not live.'" This tells you in no uncertain terms that democracy is on trial, and on trial at a time when the alternatives appear to be Fascism or Communism. In the second column, we note that Mrs. Roosevelt sees a woman President. "Before we will have a woman President," she says, "we will have to have more women governors of the states, more women in the Senate and in Congress." In other words, she tells us that there is a political future for women, but that they still have to prove themselves.

In the next column, "Youth is urged to copy the fervor of Fascism," by Doctor Eddy at Adelphi College. They are urged to "use this fervor to rebuild the foundations of freedom."

In the fourth column, "Civilization trend to the Arctic" is seen by Doctor

Steffanson--it isn't as cold as you think, he says--and Mr. Eisner "warns on democracy".

In the fifth column, "a new prosperity era" is seen by Doctor Flanders at the Polytechnic Institute graduation. He tells the class that "the engineer knows that physical conditions are ripe for material comforts for the mass of our population far surpassing the miserable standards of 1929". He tells us of new scientific frontiers, while Doctor Steffanson has shown that geographic frontiers still exist and can be overcome.

Then come ourselves--and yes, every hair is in place--and finally on the last column, "'Big labor a peril,' O'Mahoney warns. 'It follows Big Business and Big Government,' he says, at Catholic University."

And so you see--reading from left to right or from right to left, as you may prefer--the kind of advice that trustees may give.

I said that almost everything I might say was on that page, but I would like to add, if I have not already destroyed your faith in graduation speeches, a plea for liberalism. Liberalism is the foundation stone of democracy. Liberalism concerns itself not only with the physical but, equally important, with the mental and moral welfare of the ~~majority~~ <sup>community</sup>. It is favorable to freedom of thought and speech and it is free from narrowness or bigotry in ideas or doctrines.

While anti-liberalism may benefit a community in the beginning, it inevitably ends in despotism and despair. That argument is too long to take up today, but may I remind you of Nero and Louis XVI, without involving myself in a discussion of the obvious and more dangerous <sup>contemporary</sup> ~~parallels?~~ ~~today?~~

Dorothy Thompson says in a January 1936 issue of the Saturday Evening Post, that "in any civilization, courage, kindness, generosity and a sense of justice" are

the attributes of a good person. "The very essence of liberalism," she says, "is the realization that none of these qualities can develop to their fullest except in a fully responsible individual who is free to act and to choose." And all that I ask, or that any of us can ask of education today, is that it send into the world responsible individuals with a will to be free.

The other evening, I went to see Julius Caesar at the Mercury Theatre. The play, as you know, is given without scenery and the actors are in modern dress. I was struck with how much meaning it holds for us who are concerned with freedom in these times of tyranny and demagoguery. I particularly noticed a speech of Cassius, speaking of Caesar: "And why should Caesar be a tyrant, then? Poor man! I know he would not be a wolf but that he sees the Romans are but sheep."

Perhaps the trouble was that the Romans did not have courses in "propaganda analysis" as I see are now being introduced into the schools. Surely, if they were sheep, they were not educated and fully responsible beings. You, yourselves, in your brief time in college, have seen large numbers of students quite sheepishly inconsistent--determined to take the Oxford Oath one year, and the next, leading a frenzied attack on a nation with which we are at peace.

While our civilization has been far from perfect in the last century, the period in which there has been the greatest development--indeed, almost the only development--of liberalism, that century has seen developments in knowledge, thought, and wealth whose like has never been known before. The notion that man shall not tremble or starve is the great moral development of that liberalism. I urge you not to be spoiled children of that liberalism, always clamoring for something immediate in the way of material reward, but to go out with a realiza-

tion of the responsibility that is yours, that the world shall be a better place to live in because you have been here. I ask you to weigh what you have learned, what you have seen, and what you will see, and I ask you to be leaders against that sheepishness which is at the root of tyranny. I ask that as leaders, you conserve your liberal heritage.

And I hope that not only will you carry the ideals of your liberal Board and of Hunter College into your community life, but also that you will come back to the college as members of the college family.

When you come back in the future, I am confident that you will find that Hunter has made great advances and that it is a part of as thorough a system of education as is available anywhere. The Board has a high ideal of appointment and promotion. Only the best trained teachers available, with high scholastic records and training, as well as with a variety of experience shall be appointed to the teaching staff and promotion shall be based on merit. The Board is in favor of assured continuity of service for those members of the staff who have proved themselves qualified after a reasonable probationary period.

Surely when the new building rises on Park Avenue, you will have an additional reason to be proud of Hunter College. The new building is being given the careful attention of your whole Administrative Committee and of the Chairman of the Board. We meet frequently to advise with Doctor Colligan and the architects. The architects' contract for final plans has been signed and the preliminary plans have been approved by the Art Commission. We had planned to move in the Fall of 1939, and in spite of an unexpected delay due to matters outside our control, we still think that this may be possible.

I hope that this new college, rising from the ashes of a building which housed a great pioneer college for women, will continue to send out true liberals into a less troubled world than we see today.