

Mrs. Walter S. Mack, Jr., Chairman of the
Hunter College Administrative Committee

Hunter College Commencement, February 1941

GREETINGS TO GRADUATES, HUNTER COLLEGE

There is one problem of overwhelming importance in this country today ~~and that~~ ^{is} the question of morale--the mental condition of our citizens as regards courage, zeal, and confidence. *It may sound like*

Colonel Lindbergh says Hitler can't get us; Mr. Stimson says perhaps he can. After reading the papers for the last couple of weeks, one begins to feel that ~~we~~ ^{we're} ~~in~~ ^{at} ~~Harley's~~ debating the eternal "to be--or not to be". Certainly we do not need more words; we need more action, and to act in a useful way, people must feel and show strength of ~~mind~~ ^{their} and sincerity ~~of~~ ^{and} purpose. Without a high morale, you can draft people and they will not fight, you can give jobs to labor and it will not produce, and you can employ capital and it will bog down.

It has been an important step and a wise one, to draft young men and give them military training, even though the likelihood of their using it ~~is~~ ^{is very} slight. But meanwhile, to draft them is not enough; you have to inspire them, you have to make them feel that what they are doing is the most necessary and important thing in the world. ~~But even a high spirit among the draftees is not enough; the rest of the country must be in step.~~ *City Councilman, a capt. in reserve, told me that morale of draftees is not what it should be.*

You can give jobs to labor but unless morale is high, unless they really want to do the work, they will only ask for more pay and shorter hours and they will soon make the cost of defense too high and production insufficient. They must work with a will.

And capital must be encouraged to take its full share of the risks without undue burdens. Leaders in industry--business men--are human too, and they can get discouraged.

What we need is the spirit that will keep our whole people working together with their hearts at rest and their minds concentrated on our common needs.

You may wonder where you come in to all this. You have as fine an education as this country can give. You were chosen for this education because by all known tests, your abilities were well above the average. If you have any sense of gratitude to your country, and I know you have, I call upon you to be leaders in the new spirit which must pervade this land.

The history of the world is the record of one crisis after another, usually associated with an individual, Alexander, Caesar, Napoleon, and now Hitler. Of course, some people would say that in these days, people did not know they had a crisis, but they might, conversely, say today that we invent crises. In any event, we have to make the best of crises in our own lives and we must get adjusted to crises in our public life. We cannot all be St. George fighting the Dragon, but at least we can act as if we thought we were. Let us get some fun out of it, too.

And surely you have learned in College that good work is accomplished only with zeal.

A good piece of work gets you somewhere. Just tagging along is hardly worth the effort. We need to face the defense program with spirit and we need you as leaders in it. You may perhaps go into real defense jobs and perhaps you may go into growing vegetables--or just peeling them--this Summer. But for Goodness' sake, do it with pep, as if you really meant it and let that pep be contagious.

Finally, have confidence in yourselves and confidence in what we are all doing. This country has had a great past, based on the superior morale of its people. We have been inventive and adventurous. Every gentleman is a bit of a gambler, and that willingness to "Stake a chance" has not been lacking in our national history. Our inventions and their perfection, our mass production, all contribute to the huge industrial development for which we in America are famous. No one can beat us at ^{these tasks;} it; they can copy us, but we can keep at the head of the procession if we want to and of course, we want to. Let us make up their minds for that.

I had just entered college when we were trying to make the world safe for democracy and the thing I remember about it all is that we really meant it. We did not just study, we studied and knitted. We went meatless, sugarless, heatless, and we loved it; we got 'flu and sinus trouble and we didn't care and just because we did not succeed in making the world safe

in the world.

If you had seen us then, I think you would have thought us pretty silly. We wore long bloomers and middy blouses and did our hair in buns. We were frightfully shocked when one of the girls rolled her stockings and exposed her knees and we looked down on those who bobbed their hair. But we read Under Fire and had strong convictions and great enthusiasms, or call it "morale" if you want to. We lived hard and some of us died young; we believed with all our hearts that "one crowded hour of glorious life is worth a world without a name." And that is what I ask of you today.

Quentin Reynolds has said that the wounded won't cry. Let us who have not been hurt stop crying over our imaginary damage. Whatever is to come, let it come, and let us all tighten our belts and go out into the uncertain future in high spirits. And to you who are the privileged few, I say that you have a special duty in leading the way.

Marion E. Mack

Using
USING WHAT WE KNOW

Remarks at Hunter College Commencement, February 4, 1941

by

Hon. Ordway Tead, LL. D.
Chairman, Board of Higher Education of the City of New York

I received a month ago a New Year greeting card which read
as follows:

"The failure of the world today is the failure
of the book - of the power of the true word-
of the accumulated experience of mankind. We
do not know how to use what we know.

"The best New Year I can wish for you and yours
is a year in which each of us will find the best
use of his own wisdom for the common good."

My friend's card was saying in thoughtful language what was
said to the country agricultural agent by the old farmer when the agent
was trying to get him to read some new pamphlets on improved farming methods.
The farmer was not impressed. He said, "I don't farm as good as I know how now."

College graduates, I can promise you, are faced with a similar
problem. Are we sure we know how to use what we know?

I have never discovered any simple panacea to meet this dilemma.
But I do know that many of us on occasion ask ourselves-what good has college
been to me? Or-how can I really use my education to best advantage?

The experience is general that for the first few years after
college the work you do if you take a job may require less than your full power.
"What good is a college education if I have to sell tin pans in a department
store?" is a question one often hears.

Also, the experience is all too frequent that the college woman five years out who has married and has a child says to herself, "What good is a college education when I have to spend so much of my time over a washtub?"

The answer to the girl in the department store or on any job is the same as the answer to the young mother. It is this: Too much education is impossible. There is always the chance that there has been the wrong kind of education, in the sense that the kind of experience or subject matter studied may have little relevance to your condition. Or one may have been taught what to think rather than how to think. But education is really capacity to confront new experience and cope with it more satisfactorily because of one's grasp distilled out of past experience.

There is an important sense in which we do in any event bring our total capacity to bear on any problem we face. But that doesn't answer our sense of discrepancy between the power we feel possessed of and the limited nature of the task at hand, or between the amount of our information and the relative ineffectuality of our lives.

If we are going to use what we know right now, whatever the circumscribing limits of the new experience we confront, we must ask ourselves always: What in my past relates to, bears on, throws light upon, is analogous to, this new confronted problem?

This matter of use is a matter of persistent intentional relating of old to new. The college graduate who is selling tin pans surely can make more of her work and amount to more through it than a grammar school graduate. And if she keeps persistently relating what she knows to what she is doing, she is likely to find herself asked to do something more and still more.

And there is surely an argument but that the college girl as a mother does a far more resourceful job than if she had no such training, again assuming her ability to relate Chaucer to children or calculus to ~~the~~ a group.

If she ~~EXPER~~ doesn't relate, doesn't make a meaningful connection, and doesn't find life fuller and richer, the fault may be here or it may be the fault of Hunter College. It is conceivable that as sales girl or as mother she will recall from college little of information or attitude which has any carry-over or transfer value. I beseech you-if you find that the case, come back and tell us. We are like ^{the} advertising slogan, -"If satisfied, tell others; if not, tell us."

But my sole thought for you is this one of relating- you will use what you know, if you try persistently to bring your education to bear on each specific issue in living.

This element of persistence, ~~HEX~~ of confidence, of eagerness in attack, I cannot ignore. You can, for example, go out from here saying, "The world is dying, going into a tailspin. Woe is me." With that attitude you won't use your education, I can assure you.

Or you can go out saying, "A new world is struggling to be born and I propose to help it."

With that eagerness, with that outlook, with persistence in seeking to ~~EXPERIENCE~~ relate the results of your learning to your adventure of living- you will find life your oyster!