



NORMAL COLLEGE

Essays.

COMMENCEMENT.

1878.

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1878.



SALUTATORY.

Carrie L. Smith.

President of the Normal College, Gentlemen of the Board of Education, and Friends :

The days and weeks of this "our last school-year," have flown rapidly away, and now we have reached the goal for which we have been striving for three years, and look back upon the past few months of hard work and self-denial, not with regret, but with a feeling akin to pleasure, because to-day we reap the reward of our labors.

Last September the path of our Senior year was obscured by our doubts, fears, and uncertainty as to results, but by the patience of our instructors, and by our own perseverance, all these have passed.

From the wily plots of Ulysses and the valor of the Greeks, we turned to Rome; here we found Cicero denouncing in eloquent but scathing terms the machinations of Catiline again pleading earnestly for his early friend and instructor, digressing into a defense so noble for the study of the most liberal arts, and for the highest culture, that the appeal, though spoken hundreds of years ago, would to-day overcome all opposition to higher education.

We next turned our attention to the lives and characters of those immortal men "who live again in minds made better by their presence;" we have passed from "Chaucer, the father of

English poetry," along through the centuries, each new author presenting traits in his individual character, the impress of which we see on all his works.

If, in the study of Physiology, on finding our bodies the most perfect of all machines, "fearfully and wonderfully made," we begin to feel our greatness, we have only to turn to the grand truths of Astronomy to realize our own insignificance in the universe, in whose calendar a million of years, beyond our comprehension, is but as a day.

Through the many changes of our lives, we have always had this our "Commencement Day" before us, and we forget all the trials of the past, and the uncertainty with which the future is enveloped, that we may the more fully enjoy it. We trust we have so prepared ourselves during these years, that we may perform faithfully the duties assigned us, and may bear with fortitude the disappointment and trials, it may be, that await us.

To honor the profession we have chosen, to improve the talents given us, and not only to make our lives better, but to gladden and sweeten the lives of others, will be our highest motive.

ONE VIEW OF THE TEACHER'S WORK.

Minnie Woodle.

There is something more in all true teaching than the teaching of the studies, reading, writing and arithmetic, and instruction in statistical facts. Perhaps there is nothing which so tends to degrade the teacher's profession, as limiting education, a vast and comprehensive term, to these studies, to a mere feeble intellectual development. Education ought to give full play to all the powers of the mind, moral as well as intellectual. Do we say of a man that he is physically well developed, if all the muscles of his body are not developed harmoniously? Yet there are people who call a man educated, whose mind may be a store-house of facts, but whose moral muscles, so to speak, are weak—who cannot cope with evil, who cannot judge between right and wrong, whose honesty is constantly wavering. Who will deny that, in the long run, sterling virtue, unswerving truthfulness, always pay better than weakness and instability?

If education be worth anything, while it makes learned men, it ought to make honest and courageous men. The primary teacher, to a great extent, decides the future of the young children committed to her care. They come to her with impressionable minds. The effects of her treatment can never be effaced.

Therefore the wise teacher will note the characters of her pupils, and will carefully endeavor to adapt herself to this or

that character. Here and there, some moral truth, acceptable to the character and temper of the class, will be spoken, but always with tact, and the child will be the stronger and healthier for it.

Some teachers complain of want of time to teach morals. They say that the time allotted for school-work is so limited, that they cannot take from it for this purpose. In a certain school district, a part of the regular school day is now used for this kind of instruction. But may not the advisability of setting apart a stated time for instruction in morals be questioned? May not the children, quite naturally, acquire a dislike for this hour? Opportunities will offer themselves during the lesson hours, and at such times the truths should be inculcated. The teacher may employ such tact, that instead of wearying the children by some abstract truth, she instructs and pleases them in its application. Nor will the lesson be the less effective, because of the interest which it evokes, and the informality with which it is given.

Then, your true teacher, who is making impressions for life upon the characters of the children, will interest herself in them, in their games. Nothing gives one so great a hold upon children, as the manifestation of an interest in them personally, over and above the hearing of lessons, and nothing, too, inspires the children with more respect. Dignity need not be sacrificed, but stiffness should be. Let us bend to the height of the children, and look at things from their point of view, and our teaching will gain in worth.

The teacher has inestimable privileges as well as sacred duties. Where the pupils are of an age when they will seek books to read, and will devour reading matter greedily, let the talk at odd moments turn upon books. The teacher may encourage

the children to speak of what they read, and thus ascertain their tastes. She may take advantage of this opportunity to cultivate a desire for only the best and purest reading.

As every one who comes in contact with the child, leaves his impression upon the child's character, if the character of the instructor be weak, the weakness will communicate itself; if strong, the strength will be imparted. Care ought to be taken, in all cases, to preserve the child's individuality, a right of which he ought not to be dēprived, a right much in danger of destruction from the necessary routine work of our public schools.

WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT A MAN?

Adelaide Reynolds.

1. The opinion is held by many people, that the study of the dead languages, and of the histories of Greece and Rome, is useless. They say, "What shall it profit a man to study Latin and Greek when they are of no use to him?" Profit? Use? Yes, these are the questions; and in this mercenary age, unless the profit be real and tangible, it is not visible to their superficial minds.

2. If no other argument could be used in favor of classical education, this, at least, should carry with it weight: That Latin and Greek may be studied with the high motive of cultivating the mind, rather than with the lower, meaner motive of pecuniary gain. And some such higher and purer aim is needed in the studies of the young, as an incentive to nobler things.

3. Yes, after all, there is much to be said on the question of profit. Let us first see if there is really no class to which these studies are of value in after life. Look at the future scientific men: to them a knowledge of Latin and Greek is invaluable, a necessity, because the nomenclatures of the natural sciences are based upon those languages.

4. To the future statesman they are important. They broaden his views; they bring him face to face with the nations of the past, making him familiar with their governments and political economy; their mistakes and misrule, that he may

strive to avoid them ; their wisdom, that he may strive to emulate it. To the future literary man, their use is apparent.

5. But there remains a great class to which their use is not so apparent ; the merchant, banker, broker, and the business men of all kinds, the workers, those who are the " back-bone of a nation," how is it with them ? Its profit, to them, is more impalpable, but it nevertheless exists. And the narrow-minded man, the opponent of classical education, says, " Ah ! these are the very men to whom I refer when I say that they spend their best energies in studies which they throw aside, and never again use." It is true they may never use them again, but when they throw aside the studies, they do not also discard their effect ; that is lasting.

6. Like the athlete in training, who uses the dumb-bells, the clubs, and the gloves, not for the sake of continuing their use in the business of life, but for the muscle which they develop, and when his object is consummated, he throws them aside. So with the future merchant, who uses the Latin and Greek as " intellectual dumb-bells," and when the required effect is attained, puts them aside.

7. The effects, good or bad, of a classical education, depend largely upon the method of teaching it ; and while there are those who teach in that worthless manner, allowing parrot-learned rules, and mechanical translations ; slipping easily over difficult places, and leaving abstruse points veiled in mist and vagueness ; while this method of teaching is employed, we cannot blame those who say that time thus spent, is ill spent, if not wasted.

8. But let the teacher start the student with space enough to stand on, and then leave him to work his way up, grappling with difficulties and conquering them by the force of his own

intellect ; let him lead the student to criticise, discover, observe, analyze and distinguish ; and it will be found, after such a course, that the student will come forth with a strong, vigorous, acute mind ; one quick to observe, and with great powers of concentration.

9. If to this we add the liberal, broad views, the comprehensiveness of tastes and ideas, which are imparted by the study of Grecian and Roman History, we have a mind fitted to enter upon any sphere of action, with benefit to itself and to humanity.

DECLARATION OF REFORM.

Bertha J. Eisig.

When, in the course of educational events, it becomes necessary for one class of teachers to dissolve the conventional bands which have connected them with others, and to assume a system to which their liberal and normal education entitles them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all children are *not* created equal; that they are, however, endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are separate and distinct individuality, activity, and the pursuit of knowledge; that, to secure these rights, schools are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the efficacy of their teachings; that whenever any course of instruction becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of efficient teachers to alter or abolish it and to institute a new form, laying its foundation on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to affect the welfare and happiness of their pupils.

Prudence, indeed, will dictate that systems long established should not be changed for light and transient causes, and accordingly all experience hath shown that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when

a long system of machine-teaching has stunted and retarded the youthful mind, completely destroying its individuality, it is the right, it is the *duty*, of more advanced minds to set aside such teachings, and to provide new systems for future generations.

The history of the present system of teaching is a history of much that is wrong and injurious, imperfectly recognizing one of the main ends of education, the development of original and independent thinking.

To prove this, let facts be submitted to a candid world :

It has constrained the children, under severe physical pressure, to keep their eyes fixed on one object for a length of time.

It has made use of words entirely unfamiliar to the child without explanation, thus confusing the willing mind.

It has affected to make so-called good order independent of and superior to the happiness of the child.

It has developed the child's faculties, one at the expense of others.

It has proceeded from the complex to the simple, from the difficult to the easy, from the concrete to the abstract, pursuing a faulty course.

It lacks thoroughness.

Its measures of instruction is what the teacher can give, *not* what the child is able to receive.

It has given knowledge, instead of leading the learner to discover it for himself.

It takes up first analysis, then synthesis,—thus, as it were, pulling down an edifice brick by brick, only to rebuild it.

A system, the character of which is thus marked by acts which may define inefficiency, is unfit for the children of a free people. We must, therefore, acquiesce in the necessity which demands our separation, and hold it as we hold all other systems of injustice—our enemy forever.

We, therefore, the graduates of '78, at this our out-going, do solemnly publish and declare that all connection between us and machine teaching is and ought to be totally dissolved; and that as we go forth to bear our part in the cause of public instruction, we will reflect credit on our Alma Mater by endeavoring to further a harmonious developemnt of the minds entrusted to our care.

And for the support of this declaration, with a firm reliance on all those who are of our view, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our efforts, and our sacred honor.

PATIENT GRISELDA AND MODERN EDUCATION.

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Jeanie Ruggles.

“The story of Griselda,” says the admiring Leigh Hunt, “has been dwelt upon by the greatest and tenderest geniuses—Boccaccio, Petrarch and Chaucer.” Men have always admired her, and since the days when Boccaccio gave her to the world, have held her up to women as the ideal of womanly patience, resignation, confidence and affection. The dark ages originated many principles of life full of false sentiment, superstition, and defective morals. These have, for the most part, been left behind, as the world has attained better and truer views, but this one story seems to be fast rooted in the hearts of mankind.

It is the story of a poor Italian peasant girl unexpectedly sought in marriage by her feudal lord. She takes upon herself the duties of her high position without a word of self-congratulation, and assumes toward the marquis, her husband, an attitude of the meekest submission. Surprised at her humility, he doubts its reality, and resolving to put it to test, he takes away her children, first a daughter, and four years afterward a son, intimating that he intends killing them. She gives them up quietly, and for twelve long years goes on fulfilling her duties, and becoming literally “Patience on a monument smiling at grief.” Her husband’s next step is to obtain a divorce, dismissing her, still loyal and submissive, to her father’s house. After an ingenious study, the marquis sends for her to assist in

the preparations for his second wedding. He calls upon her to praise the new marchioness. She does so unreservedly, and wishes the marquis many years of health and prosperity. Our philosopher then informs her that his experiments are ended; that his new wife is her daughter; that her old position can be filled by no other than herself. Hereupon she faints away—the first sign of emotion that she has shown for fourteen years.

The crowning absurdity of this mediæval legend is, that Lord Walter should have thought that in restoring Griselda to her former position he wholly recompensed her for twelve years of suffering. It brings to mind the reply of the Princess Elizabeth of Hungary to the tyrannical and overbearing Count Louis. At her entreaty he gave back to his tenants the cattle and land he had taken from them for a tax.

“Are you satisfied now?” he inquired. “I have restored to them all that I took away.”

“Ah, my lord,” said the high-spirited woman, “who can restore them their tears?”

We are not told of Griselda's after life, but we have a right to suppose that with her time and patience continued to be convertible terms.

Griselda, considered as the abstract idea of what patience can do, is too impractical a person for “this working-day world.” Looking at her, with Leigh Hunt, as the embodiment of the principle of duty, we see that she fulfills but one small part of her duty—that toward the marquis, as she understood it. Her duties toward her Creator, her children and herself are forgotten. Does she deserve a place among the examples that history preserves to help educate the world?

The object of education is not to fill the head with knowledge, or to train the intellect, but to form the character, to

train the judgment, to establish a just independence of thought and action. In this all wise and thoughtful teachers have agreed since Solomon wrote, "Train up a child in the way he *should go*," not in the way other people would persuade or drive him. Modern education is intended to fit one to stand alone. The world has become an immense field of labor for both men and women. The number is so vast that not to be trodden down or pushed to the wall, one must exert every power to the utmost. Open eyes and ears, keen observation and reasoning, with the ability to make good use of the aid furnished to all, these are the requisites to success. This many-sided life requires a many-sided character, and as the powers are developed to meet these demands, just so far will the individual succeed in becoming a *whole* person. It is toward this that modern education works. American society, "as unstable as water," fluctuates between prosperity and adversity, and the emergencies that arise from its vicissitudes are constantly to be met. It is he who is readiest that keeps at the top of the wave. And him I reckon the most learned scholar, not who can unearth for me the buried dynasties of Sesostris and Ptolemy, the Lothiac era, the Olympiads and Consulships, but who can unfold the theory of this particular day.

"Grisel is dead, and eke her patience," says Chaucer. It is to be hoped that for a quality so overstrained there may be no resurrection. Let us remember that if the patience in which we are to possess our souls is strong to bear, it is also swift to do, and spirited at all times, and in all relations; that self-reliance, energy and loving generosity form a loftier ideal than mere passive non-resistance.

THE IMAGINATION AS A PRACTICAL FACULTY.

Eva Palmer.

Many even amongst educated and cultured people, oppose the idea that the imagination is a practical power. They have seen its action in weak persons, and therefore would regard it as a faculty to be feared and avoided. Why not as well point to wrecked ships, as an argument against ships? They would then have observed only the disasters attending ships, as they have observed only the evil results of the imagination; whereas the majority of ships are of great benefit to mankind, and so also is the imagination when rightly trained and used.

We must not fall into the common error of regarding the imagination as a faculty, existing in the mind distinct and apart from every other faculty. On the contrary, it is not only a part of, but it is the mind itself. It is the whole mind that remembers, wills and imagines, and the faculties are only the different ways in which it exerts itself.

Addison says that our manner of considering the faculties is for the better, enabling us to express ourselves in such abstract subjects of speculation, and not because there is any such division in the mind itself.

In order that I may not be misunderstood, I will define my idea of this faculty. Imagination is the action of the mind in holding up to its own view what it wishes to represent, and also in modifying and uniting old ideas so as to form new wholes of

its own creation. In other words, it is the making, in the mind, of pictures new and old.

There are as many different kinds of imagination as there are different mental activities. There is the imagination of abstraction; the imagination of wit; the imagination of judgment and of reasoning; the imagination of passion and of feeling; and the imagination of the poet.

There is also a peculiar state of the mind, called the imagination of association. Somnambulism, Dreaming and Reverie come under this head. Acknowledging all the harm growing out of repeated indulgence in these last mentioned states; that they weaken the activities of the mind, and are full of seductive danger, especially to the young and unemployed, we still affirm that these powers, rightly trained, are of great practical use to mankind.

In the minor affairs of every day life the imagination is of untold value. The mother invents pleasures for her children, and ornaments and devices for her home; husband and wife picture to their minds that which would delight the other; the friend, clearly imagining one's trouble, with quiet tact comforts and helps one; and the man of business, imagining all the emergencies that might grow out of his venture, devises ways of meeting them.

But in the teacher's hands this faculty is a mighty instrument of good. It is as important as the memory, reason, or judgment. With it, she can give life and reality to her lessons, awaken interest and animation in her pupils, and fasten in their minds the knowledge which she has imparted. Without this faculty, the lessons, unless interesting in themselves, become a tedious recitation of facts. Her class will regard her as one who simply imparts and hears, and not as one who thinks, feels and works with them.

Suppose a teacher is intending to give a lesson in United States history. Knowing how uninteresting such a collection of events and dates usually is to the young, she must endeavor to give reality to the events by calling upon their imagination, giving them vivid pictures out of her own, embellished with familiar facts and anecdotes. Here, also, the teacher can aid the memory of her class by making use of the laws of association which govern the imagination. By means of these she can fasten important facts in their minds by pinning them to some facts which they know. For instance, she can point out that the new date immediately follows, or resembles, in the collocation of its figures, some known date; and that the new event bears a resemblance, or is a contrast to some other event, or that it is the result of some well known cause.

Suppose that she intends to teach to two little children that a straight line is the shortest distance between two points; and that she should give the simple statement to one without any use of the imagination; and with the other, she should take a slate and pencils, and imagine, with the child, that one pencil on one side of the slate wants to visit the other pencil on the other side, and wishes to take the shortest road there. Here, illustrate to the child that the shortest road is a straight road, and from that fact that a straight line is the shortest distance between two points. Which child, other things being equal, will have the clearer understanding of this fact, and will remember it?

The proper training of the imagination is also of great importance to the scholar, both in his studies and in his relations with society. How could he grasp the hidden basis of light and sound without imagination? His knowledge of nature would be limited to co-existences and sequences. His relations with others would be cold and estranged; at heart perhaps kind

and unselfish, he would yet appear directly the opposite, because he would not have the power of imagining the effect of his speech and actions upon others.

I must not neglect to speak of the great inventors who achieved their fame through the high cultivation of their imagination. Fulton evolved the steamboat, and Morse the telegraph from out of their imagination; and Harvey's discovery of the circulation of the blood, begun in a conjecture founded upon theory, was prophesied by the great practical imagination of the poet when he puts these words into the mouth of the ghost, describing his murder to his son Hamlet. "That the leprous distilment poured into the porches of his ear, did, swift as quicksilver, course its way through all the natural gates and alleys of the body."

Bounded and conditioned by reason, imagination becomes one of the highest, strongest powers of the mind.

VALEDICTORY.

Sophie Tuska.

From the earliest ages the necessity of education has always been properly considered and duly appreciated by the ruling classes. But the general dissemination of knowledge has never, until the present century, been thoroughly acknowledged as the proper means for bettering the condition of society.

What was the property of the select few is now the possession of the many, exercising its benign and elevating influence upon their condition and character.

When we look upon the institutions for the higher education of their sons and daughters, which the people have caused to spring up and blossom in so many parts of our land, we need not farther emphasize their dearness to their hearts.

The sacred trust of preserving these institutions and perfecting their usefulness, has been reposed in Boards of Education, School Committees, and the great army of teachers.

Among those who have nobly responded to this trust, by his untiring, intelligent, sustained and loving service, our grateful hearts would recognize the President of the Board of Education.

Dear friend, even now, while the brightness of our school days is upon us, we see and feel through you the blessing which the culture of our youth will bestow upon our lives. May time touch us gently, as it has you, and make our lives as sweet,

noble and sunny in their influences on others, as yours has been on us. To you, this is our best farewell.

To the good Chairman of the Normal College Committee, who so carefully and kindly has made a portion of *our* daily way green and blossoming, we tender our good-byes with every wish that the verdure and brightness of life may not be all ours.

To the other gentlemen of the Board of Education, we feel that our present farewell is merely nominal, as we hope soon to meet them, where, by action rather than by word, we may tell them how we have appreciated the work they have done, not only for us, but for all the children of the people.

A noble ship is treading the waters of our beautiful bay. From stem to stern there is not one ungraceful line. Her spars and masts are decked in colors and streamers, and her freight is rich with the toil and thought, hopes and desires of her well-wishers on the shore.

But it is neither current nor gale, nor fond wishes, nor hopes that send her forward. A force, strong and intermittent, is within her, and, amid gale and tempest, false lights and sunlight, dense fog and treacherous mist, night and day, it is pushing her on, "bringing her unto her desired haven," and to the realization of the hopes, the desires, that were with her in the beginning, that have accompanied her progress.

In you, President Hunter, we feel and see the force that has sustained and carried forward our Alma Mater from the beginning. For her you have labored and wrought, and upon you may the sun of gratitude, loyalty and affection, which is in all our hearts, shine with an influence that will bless your years of noble, continuous toil.

Instructors, teachers, whatever our lips may utter to you, our hearts and lives can never say farewell. In our homes, in our

schools, your influence will speak in our speech, act in our deeds, live in our thoughts.

Acts of patience, words of cheer, motions and looks of sympathy, will, we trust, repeat themselves in our daily intercourse with others; and may the ray of knowledge, which you have kindled, grow brighter and brighter within us, till it illuminates all the dark places of our lives.

Dear fellow graduates, let me express the fond hope that the mutual feelings of love and friendship, which have been engendered among us by the many and pleasant associations which cluster around these honored walls, will never become extinct, but rather that our common aim and purpose in life will further stimulate and nourish them.

CLASS SONG OF 1878.

All.—O ALMA MATER, here to-day,
We reach the goal at last,
And pause an instant on the step
Twixt Future and the Past.

A. & B.—We bring to thee the rightful meed
Of all our better thought—
The praise of earnest work, with which
The Future shall be fraught.

C. & D.—And if success our efforts crown,
Or patience win the race,
It is through thee, oh Mother dear,
We win and keep our place.

E. & F.—In leaving thee, we leave behind
Thy present help and stay ;
We take thy gifts, out-lasting Time,
Out living Life's brief day.

G. & H.—So life with thee a truth remains,
Abiding in each heart,
The brightest of our early years,
The best as years depart.

All.—And when, with grateful thoughts and hopes,
Returning to thy face,
Keep for us, Alma Mater dear,
Within thine arms a place.