

3A-8

Commencement Address Delivered by Mr. Robert Gordon Anderson to the
February 1936 Class of Hunter College, January 29th, 1936, at Carnegie Hall

To the Faculty of Hunter College, this large graduating class, the families and relatives, greetings and congratulations on the completion of a long and well-run race that means so much to all gathered in this historic hall.

When invited to speak before you, I hesitated, not from false modesty, but because, in these changeful, stirring times, it is so hard to know just what theme to choose. The conventional commencement message of hope and inspiration will fall dully on ears ringing with a thousand sharp challenges born of conditions undreamt-of a few years back. Time was when commencement suggested sonorous Latin, solemn adjurations to run bravely on what we used to call "Life's Race". Now that race seems without clearly-marked lanes, often without even a visible goal. No dead language can now incite to courage; the old poets with their "Let us then be up and doing, with a heart for any fate" cannot supply the spur. The practical, pragmatic generation of today prefers a graph to a truism, an efficacious recipe to the noblest metaphor. The old rhetorical banners have mouldered, have been laid away with Kipling and royal George in hollow, historic tombs.

Indeed, so far have we swung on the other arc that some would say that cynicism is the note of modern youth. As proof they would select, instead of the old clarion phrases, two from an unwritten, constantly re-edited, but very lively book, the Dictionary of Slang. The first I quote, almost with trepidation here, for it is not used in any course of English A or B. Furthermore, it may sound in your ears very much like burlesque, since the phrase I refer to is the all too common "Oh yeah!" But wait a minute. It is not ridiculous. It is tragic in its implications, as eloquent of world weariness as the bitterest cry of the famous disillusioned from Ecclesiastes to our Dreisers and Lewises down. And for all its slovenly drawl it bristles with defiance, shouts out the challenge, - "Where has your vaunted leadership brought us?" - "See how your phony old gods have crumbled." - "Why have you slain our illusions, killed our faith?" And over it rings the

passionate overtone, - "Oh give us once more something in which to believe!" With old orders crumbling, religions seemingly spent, and myriads of brothers' cannon pointed over brothers' borders, that is from old and young well-nigh a universal cry.

But before we pass on to that other significant bit of slang, let us see. All this is not so new. The upset eras always come between those more stabilized. This is perhaps harder for us to see since our era follows one of the sereneest of all, when wars were infrequent and localized, and Commerce and Religion and Society walked well-ordered ways. But History is a great teacher and consoler. Before the laden ships and locomotives, the pomp and petticoats of Victoria came Napoleon, the guillotine and falling kingdoms, before the splendour of Louis the Grand the religious wars. The thirteenth, most glorious of centuries, was followed by the Hundred Years War and the more horrible Black Death. The great Roman Peace was shattered by the falling Roman Empire and the thunder of the feet and hoofs of the countless migrating tribes. And surely old Noah when he looked over the stock and population of a world loaded on a two-by-four boat, might reasonably have responded if we spoke to him of depressions, "You're telling me!"

And after all these floods and wars and cataclysms, Man, a bear for punishment, a thinking, courageous, fighting animal, still endures. More than that, even in the storms, he has found time to smile and sing and look for the sun. His stocks and bonds at zero, Job found time to write an immortal poem. Faced with torture, Galileo discovered new harmonies in the universe. In the midst of the Napoleonic invasions, Beethoven thundered out his heavenly chords. Lincoln brightened with his gentle humour America's darkest hour.

Then who are we to complain as we count our millions of graduates like you remembering the day when even kings could not write, our billions of books, recalling the dark age when a few monks painfully toiled on a few manuscripts to keep for

us the torch of learning alight, our radios that bring us news simultaneously with the event and their couriers that bore the word of battles that changed the destinies of nations months after the victory, our thousand devices for stilling pain, even the simple ache of a tooth, and all the arms and legs amputated, the ages down, with no assuaging of the pain? When we see how Man has climbed up out of that flood, groped from darkness into light, out of slavery into freedom, and too left us not alone so rich a heritage but his gallantry, his laugh and his song, rather than whimper over our petty misfortunes, we should raise our heads and shout, "Thank God, it is good to be a man!"

But is none of that gallantry left? To see, let us turn again to that unwritten book and another phrase, heard each day from Miami to Nome, - "He can take it." No, it is not ridiculous. It is as valorous in its way as the Invictus of Henley the Victorians loved. You remember - Henley thanked "whatever gods there be for his unconquerable soul," further declaring that "beneath the bludgeonings of chance his head was bloody but unbowed." That "He can take it" refutes the charge that youth today lacks a sense of responsibility, for what does it imply but that a man should endure? "He can take it" matches well the "bloody and unbowed."

That phrase, too, come to think of it, has something of the old cavalier's gay defiance about it; which suggests something else again. The gallant, hard-riding cavalier rode in on the heels of the iron Puritan. So the laughing, hard-driving youth of today speeds in after the equally brave, but more rigid, Victorian. And this should be noted: - As the Bible-thumping, sword-swinging soldier of Cromwell gave his needed iron to England, for all his bigotry, so, for all his excesses, the cavalier rescued an equally needed merriment for England, taught her again to be natural and bravely to laugh. Each met sturdily the terms imposed by evolution, on the life of his day. No era can afford to laugh at another. If the Victorian showed smugness at times, blushed at facts, 1936 has its poses and

license. And the Victorian era was not all blushes, petticoats, and stays. It was, too, iron ships, transcontinental railways, emancipation proclamations. Surely, like Youth and its leaders of today, Darwin, Huxley, Spencer sought truth, Lord Lister and Morton who advanced antiseptis and anaesthesia, Morse with his telegraph, and the immortal Pasteur. Tennyson saw eye to eye with our T. S. Eliots and Clifford Odets when he wrote, "Believe me, there is far more faith in honest doubt than half your creeds." Like our own Faulkners, Kipling, when he wrote of his Tommy Atkins and Fuzzy Wuzzies and Judy O'Gradys, looked at life in the raw. He was no mere imperial brass trombone; Florence Nightingale was more than an acid spinster; Franklin and Scott, dying in the ice floes, better than children's storybook heroes; and Victoria herself more than a widow's cap.

The truth is that no age can disparage another. All are links in the grand sequence and continuity called Evolution or the History of Man. So, too, no age represented here in this hall can do without all the others. Another old Victorian, in his poem, "The Chambered Nautilus" had some light to throw upon that. He was a doctor who worked among the poor, performed many wonderful operations, wrote glorious essays, warmed the world with his humour, and had time to rear the most human of all our Supreme Court Justices. The father's name, like the son's, was Oliver Wendell Holmes. And he says, in that poem, which it would pay us all to reread, that each decade of life, rightly lived, is but another chamber adding to the spaciousness of the soul. And this truth should embarrass those of our flamboyant nineteen twenties who were for throwing into the discard all the statesmen and teachers who had passed the forty year mark, just as though we should chloroform Einstein and Alexis Carrel and most of your faculty here. And in fair turnabout, I know I have learned as much from my son of twenty as ever I have taught to him.

Wherefore it occurred to me, as I thought over what I might say to you that might seem more than what you call mere sentiment or hooey or blah, that it should be possible for us here gathered together, the old, middle-aged and the young, each

contributing his especial quality, his fire, his valour, practicality, dream or ripe wisdom, to arrive at some simple philosophy of life. Or, to put it into the terms of today, we might construct, in the few minutes remaining, a simple sort of platform on which we could stand during the campaign called Life and by which, unlike many politicians, we could abide. And this is not to be my platform but ours, for I feel that I am but the accidental mouthpiece, that you are not silent as you sit there. All your hopes, your fears, your courage, your visions, are swelling up to me here in as beautiful a symphony as ever was echoed by these historic walls.

And first we must start with the preamble suggested by a preceding paragraph, - that Man, for all his sins, is a thinking, courageous animal, that though very often he deplorably takes two steps backward, there follows, as inevitably as day the night, the three steps forward. Occasionally he may give ground, but his history is ultimately a forward march.

With this preamble, then, we come to the first of the planks, which are not, we insist, truisms, but eternal truths, which need reaffirmation in new terms. And the first plank must inevitably be courage, both the flaming valour of youth and the seasoned intrepidity of middle and older years. For there can be no advance, in either peace or war, without courage. And this brings us up against the dangerous, moot question of militarism - no, I will not diplomatically duck it, though perhaps your composite voice will not be so unanimous now. But bear with me for a few seconds, even those of you who may dissent, as we state one point of view, - that a wish, however idealistic and noble, will not always rule the possibility out. While each one of us here should organize and fight to the death against that multiplied death we call war, as we would against cancer, a struggle to the death is preferable to any slavery.

But leaving war of weapons and munitions out, there are two phases of the question on which all can agree, - first, that while we pray for the time when war

will be outmoded, we can pay tribute to those who fought, when war was the only weapon, for the principles in which they believed, and not always for percents and cotton bales, but for the ballot which is still an instrument of freedom, for religious freedom, for that glorious literacy of which you will receive the engraved symbols today. No precious right was ever won without a price, and sometimes that price was precious blood. We may hate and hang a Zaharoff, but we cannot jeer at the Runnymede of Magna Charta nor at Valley Forge.

But the second point on which we can all agree is that courage is needed for the wars of peace whose victories too are purchased by travail and blood. Charles Goodyear, rubber pioneer, fought starvation and poverty. We are his heirs each time we set foot in a car, land on an aviation field, put on protection against the weather, enter a hospital, in a thousand ways. Pasteur, paralyzed, worked forty years to save us from the enemy death. Simple soldiers offered their bodies to the germs of yellow fever that others of us might live. A gallant legion of the great and humble, have given their lives that we might have a more abundant life.

The next plank we should choose is, if you allow us to mix our figures, twin sister of courage, at least its cousin, optimism, - not the unthinking Pollyanna sort, but an adult, grown-up, wise, all-seeing optimism. In the hands of a Voltaire, satire may be galvanic, but the usual cynicism and pessimism is a corrosive acid. A fighting, robust optimism is a spiritual electricity that can energize a world into power and warmth and light.

And remember this, too, that the greatest souls have been able to laugh and sing as they worked. What we perhaps need now is not more singing soldiers of war but singing workers of peace. At least when we solve the question of bread and sustenance for all, there should be singing workers, even in these unsentimental times. I think one of the grandest things that ever happened to this city was the great one-man show of the painter Van Gogh. Handicapped as he was by illness and poverty, he threw himself into his painting with a joyous ferocity, that very optimism that we mean. And that savage joyousness fairly leaps at us today out of the colours and rhythms of those remarkable paintings. It is the same fighting

optimism that David the psalmist and fighter knew, and Saul of Tarsus, Saint Francis, apostle of the birds and sunshine and light, Joan of Arc and Leonardo, Hamilton the debonair, statesman and soldier, and Theodore Roosevelt, and, disagree with him, though many may, Al Smith of our very own sidewalks, and Jane Addams, Inez Mulholland, and Sylvia Pankhurst, too, for that matter.

The next plank is sorely needed in a land today threatened with sectionalism. It is tolerance. I, who by accident am your mouthpiece, carry in my veins many strains. Varying traditions, ideals, concepts cry out in each one of us. The discord can be shattering unless welded into one splendidly forged Americanism and finely tempered by tolerance. And tolerance is not merely a negative virtue. One can concede another man's right to any political or religious creed but grant him no right to reach out from under the cloak of his faith to assail another's. Voltaire, with a twisted body but the straightest of minds, laid down once and for all an eternal plank when he said he might differ violently with another's opinion, but he would defend to the death his right to that opinion. And yet there is no greater fallacy than the belief that you can tolerate intolerance. Pity it you may, and the conditions that brought the blindness, but you must fight the result. And while one may properly have a pride in the land of his forefathers, that should be but a corollary of the love of this land of his choice. It is to go to the very opposite pole of tolerance to uphold, as some do, a culprit because he comes of the same ancestral blood. Paramount, bedrock, should be the loyalty to that America to up-build which Dutch, Swedes, English swung the axe, shoulder to shoulder, Bohemians, Czechs, Irish, and Germans ploughed up the prairies to give us sustenance, Poles, Jews, and Welsh shed their blood to keep intact our precious patrimony.

Which leads us directly to the next plank, - a sense of responsibility to the state, which is nothing more than a civic golden rule, service to one's fellow men. To say that candidates are unworthy straw men, issues mere camouflage, the spoils system an unconquerable cancer, is an unworthy defeatism. Ten righteous men or, better, ten righteous women could have saved Sodom. The day will come,

if you work for it, when America will emerge out of all this welter as what we once considered her to be, the land, not of class, caste, or privilege, but of great opportunities for each of us. And we should not be left out of that glorious renaissance because we did not share in the service.

And to this end, we must put in the plank of preparedness. We Americans chafe at a long apprenticeship. We want to breeze through everything. But he who tries to breeze through everything will never have a strong wind at his back. None of those who ever achieved anything depended on smatterings of knowledge. They did not refuse the apprenticeship in which detail was mastered and the foundations laid.

There are many other important planks which Time will not permit us to select now, so we come to the last of those that are fundamental. This is a twin plank, neatly dovetailed, - honesty of craftsmanship and honesty of intellect. To the prevailing lack of the first, I believe, we can trace much of our present troubles. In the flamboyant nineteen-twenties more thought was given to veneer than to construction, to the label than to the content. Fortunes were given to advertising experts to devise campaigns to hand out gold bricks to the consumer. Large fees were paid to chemists to find new and cheaper adulterants. The game, with big manufacturer and little retailer, with best-selling novelist, banker, carpenter, teacher, was to give as inferior a product as the public could be fooled into taking. In short, one and almost all were getting away with murder. Respect was paid, not to honest product, but to the fortune accruing from it. A furniture manufacturer made a chair, not to last, but to look well. The quicker it crashed, the better; the bigger would be the turnover. Even the preacher or teacher was known, not for the lives he had reconstructed, but for the size of his salary. Now it is sound common sense to look for profit. A reasonable profit, after all, is but the worker's decent wage. But to have one eye glued on the profits, the other but waveringly fixed on the worth of the product, is to grow morally cross-eyed. Only when we take pride in making a shoe, chair, bridge, book, painting or pupil better than the next man will America come into its own. And only in this way can we gain the two glorious by-products of any work, the fun out of living and intellectual honesty.

We have said that it is the rarest of virtues, the ability to face Life straightly, to fool neither others nor oneself, Yet I have seen it as I have gone the rounds of this city of New York. There are three who have it that immediately come to mind. One is a woman, a doctor of seventy-seven, who for fifty years has worked among the poor of New York and now awaits death as she would a promotion, up in the Bronx. Another is a barber, an Austrian Jew, who works without manicure or any of the modern tonsorial trimmings, on Greenwich Street, under the roaring L. I go to him because even there, there is serenity, a clear-eyed intellectual honesty and spaciousness of mind in that barber. As he cuts my hair he trims my soul. The fourth was my mother, of Welsh descent. She learned how to reap joy out of pain, riches out of poverty, triumph out of defeat because she met each vicissitude of life with an honesty complete and unafraid.

You in this hall have come into an age when so many shams have been exploded, hypocrisies punctured, so many ghosts and voodooes laid. You start on the race more nearly unfettered than any of those who have gone before. You are unhampered by the swathings of false old fashions, nearer to the naked strength of truth, if you do not succumb to the chains of newer and more fashionable false gods. You are heirs of a glorious past, sharers in the dividends of a rich present. You can cash in on these, if you heed none of the spurious slogans, the cheap "Get while the getting is good," the unsportsmanlike "Getting away with murder," but rather this old, simple and unalterable truth, - that the race is more than the prize, the struggle more than the crown, the service than the wage. So you will arrive a little nearer to that great good we call God and which we all, Latin, Anglo-Saxon, Oriental and Celt, have striven through the ages, each in his honest way, to apprehend.

Wherefor I, who would rather have heard today from you, for you have so much more to say to me than I ever can to you, would leave with you this final word, which is my profound conviction and faith, - that this is not a minor but a major universe, that Life, for all its defeats, its tyrannies and injustices, is a good, a robust, a tremendously interesting, joyous, and triumphant thing.

W. v. G. G. G. G.
Announcement
1/29/36

**ARCHIVES
HUNTER COLLEGE**

We are happy to again have the privilege of extending to you, graduates of Hunter College, our congratulations and our most earnest wishes for continued success. As time marches on, with many changing problems and conditions, the work of our Colleges continues in accordance with fundamental standards which, measured by the test of time, have demonstrated their soundness and their value. You have received a training which challenges comparison, at the hands of teachers who have dedicated their lives to the conduct of this work and who have no other ambition than to see to it that you are trained and developed in a manner worthy of your highest ambitions and in accordance with established principles.

The reputation of Hunter College for high academic standards and for the dissemination of sound principles has continued steadfast through the many years which make up its history. The tradition of the days of Thomas Hunter is maintained today under the guidance of Eugene Colligan. The ambition, the zeal and the enthusiasm of the teachers who planned the first curriculum of this institution, has continued as a glorious heritage with their successors. No ephemeral influences and no sporadic policies have swerved them from their course. They have continued on, steadily and progressively, toward the goal of true knowledge. As they have carried on, they have been constantly watchful of the changing conditions on the course which required modification or extension of methods of procedure. They have met the real demands of the times. Within the past few years, for example,

Intro

through the initiative, the guidance, direction and undaunted enthusiasm of President Colligan, there has come a broader curriculum, an extended sphere of activity and a closer approach to present day requirements and the highest demands of cultural development.

Intro

These are difficult days for the teacher in the classroom as well as for the administrator responsible for the direction of a large institution such as Hunter College. There are the economic, social and philosophical problems of the day which naturally affect and sometimes interfere with, the conduct of this work. There are the presumptuous offerings of those who demonstrate that a little learning is a dangerous thing. With a full appreciation, however, of their responsibilities of office and with a toleration which is exemplary, your faculty and President continue to successfully carry on the finest purpose of American Government, namely, the coordination of the mind of youth to the highest principles of life, the encouragement of ideals and ambitions towards what is good and noble and the development of a proper appreciation of essentials.

You therefore have been given all of the opportunities and privileges of a sound college education, of which you may well be proud. The training and advantages which you have received, if properly appreciated and applied, must bring success and happiness, as those terms are properly understood. You have every reason, therefore, to look forward with assurance and contentment. If you will only carry into life an appreciation of the things that really count, that are truly worthwhile, you will have very little difficulty. Dollars do

not measure success. Honors are not the test of ability. Position is not the result of knowledge. Your own perspective determines your course and your progress.

These are peculiar days in which we live. Great movements affecting our social structure are under way. Substantial changes have already been made in our method of living and in our concept of life. Other changes undoubtedly will come. We are beginning to have a greater appreciation of our responsibilities as citizens and of our obligations to those about us. I believe that fundamentally we have made progress. At the present time, we are in the midst of a number of problems which require careful study and attention. We will solve them and succeed only insofar as we are able to fully understand and appreciate them. Our biggest difficulty today is to approach these problems with a true appreciation of their real values and purposes. Too often we allow ourselves to be influenced by unimportant details and by biased judgment. We forget the training which we have received which teaches us first, to get to the root of the problem, then to analyze carefully the difficulties confronting the solution and finally, to arrive at a determination based upon a consideration of all of the facts.

While we are in the midst of great questions of social reconstruction, our work in considering these problems is very often handicapped by extraneous influences which spring up and becloud our vision and our understanding of the real questions. Too often we permit ourselves to be influenced by unimportant tangents which are

Quote

thrown in our path by those who either have not developed a proper appreciation of the real questions or who purposely try to take advantage of unsettled conditions to advance their own purposes or their own theories. What we need today as much as anything else is a sound, intelligent, active and appreciative citizenry. We need a keener appreciation of the difference between reality and camouflage. We should learn to approach the questions of our day through the cool and logical processes of reasoning rather than through emotionalism or bias. We should have sense enough to realize our frailties, our limitations and our errors. United in a common bond of loyalty and devotion and resolved to realize the common goal of us all, we should determine upon a constructive solution of our problems. None of us is self sufficient. We all need and want the kindly consideration, the human understanding, the respect and confidence of one another. The trouble is that we do not take time to think of our joint interests and responsibilities. We become self centered and self satisfied, forgetting that united we stand, divided we fall. In your college days you were thrown more closely together with those of your time and age than you probably ever will be again in your lives. As you go out to take up your particular responsibility or activity, you will contact a limited few of your fellow citizens. Those whom you will not meet or know you may fail to understand or appreciate unless you carry into your minds the principles of true knowledge which had been given to you by your teachers. You have been a credit to your college and to the City of New York. You have met the responsibilities of your station in life thus far. May your future life be equally successful.

121
For Release January 29, 1936.

ADDRESS AT THE HUNTER COLLEGE
COMMENCEMENT

BY THE HON. MARK EISENER,
CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF HIGHER
EDUCATION

WEDNESDAY MORNING, JANUARY 29,
1936, AT 10:15 O'CLOCK AT
CARNEGIE HALL

We, in America, have long since recognized the importance of affording our young people a higher education. When in 1870 Hunter College was founded, it opened the way for young women to obtain a free higher education. Since its founding it has kept pace with the advancing and changing times and has grown to be the largest woman's college in all the world. The times have changed in deed. The social, political and economic position of woman has changed, even in the comparatively short span since the founding of Hunter College. Woman has taken her place, by the side of man, and with him is entitled to the advantages of a higher education. She must have these advantages to keep up with the developments of our times. She must benefit from the vast store of new knowledge and information, and must become skilled in the new techniques.

There are more than a million young people in our professional and other schools of higher learning. About forty per cent of these students are women, who are preparing themselves for active and important participation in the life of our community. They attend colleges that are for the most part under public control. The enrollment in all colleges has been increased in the last two years, thanks to help from the Federal Government. By providing needy students with financially re-

ARCHIVES
HUNTER COLLEGE

numerative employment, Washington has kept these boys and girls at their studies. A further interesting development is the changing character of higher education in America. The privately controlled institution is no longer the place for most of our boys and girls who want to study at a college. The long sought goal of democratizing higher education, seems fairly on the way to achievement. In fact privately endowed universities are rapidly adapting their curricula to a more intensive program for a selected student body. While institutions such as Hunter and the other city colleges offer a higher education to all who can make the grade, privately controlled colleges are defending a policy of selective admissions, by making the claim that they aim to provide the country with a so-called intellectual aristocracy. From my knowledge of higher education in our city, I venture the prediction that their efforts are in vain. Our graduates have shown again and again that in intellectual distinction they will not be outdone by any other students. This *is true*, in spite of the limited facilities in equipment, teaching personnel and the many other handicaps of the publically controlled institutions.

I was pleased to read in the recent New York study on unemployment, among young people between the ages of sixteen and twenty five, what I had suspected for a long time, namely, that the graduates of our colleges were the least sufferers from unemployment - and especially that women college graduates had the best employment record of all. These are significant findings, because they demonstrate the practical advantages that derive from a college education, even in a time of extreme economic disturbances.

More than that, I am confident that an intelligent American womanhood, is a guarantee for the continuation of our democratic institutions. You probably know George Bernard Shaw's caustic reply when he was asked if there are any intelligent women in America. "There must be", he answered, "for politically the men there are such futile gossipers that the United States could not possibly carry on unless there were some sort of practical intelligence back of them". It would not be meet for me to agree entirely with this vitriolic cynic, in his opinion about my brothers. It cannot be gainsaid however that democracy can be preserved only where the electorate has, "some sort of practical intelligence back of them". I trust that what you have learned in your classrooms and lecture halls and books will serve to curb us in our "futile gossip". And this too is an important cause for the educated young woman. The wreckage of representative government is strewn all over Europe and Asia. Need I remind you that it was the "futile gossip" of the leaders that enticed the unhappy victims of Nazism, Communism and Fascism into the ranks of the dictators?

Thomas De Quincey tells us in his *Suspensae de Profundis* about an interesting rite practiced by the ancient Romans. They had undoubtedly been taught it by their earliest ancestors. Immediately upon birth a child was taken from its mother and laid on the ground. It was not for long that the new born babe was permitted to grovel in the earth or to be soiled by it. By the grace of the Roman goddess *Levana*, and the hand of her deputy, usually the father of the child, the little being was lifted and held in an upright position. While its tiny feet yet touched the ground, its head was held up to the sky.

The goddess *Levana* derived her name from the Latin

verb, "levare" which means to raise aloft. She was held in high respect and was worshiped for her kindness in guarding the fate of the newly born, and for rescuing them from the degradation of remaining earth-bound.

It may well be, that the entire rite was performed in order to humble the new born creature and the better to demonstrate to young and old that all came from the earth. The symbolic function of the goddess must indeed have been to raise man's hopes and aspirations from the depths to the great heights of the vaulted sky above them.

The rite of the goddess Levana as it was performed by primitive people thousands of years ago - has its counterpart in our day. These commencement exercises are a continuation of the ancient ceremony I have just described. Your Alma Mater has lifted you tenderly from comparative ignorance and darkness and raised your head to the sky of human knowledge and understanding. Hunter College has been your fostering mother, these four years, and we all hope that today on your graduation, you can say truthfully that you have been shown the sky. There is much need now for a clear view of the sky, now that there is such a confused welter on earth. You have been guided by your teachers through a veritable sea of knowledge and learning. They must have charted a course or indicated a way that will help you to navigate through life.

A noted philosopher once referred to formal education as a good sound staff to lean upon throughout one's life. This is not to be interpreted as meaning that a formal education such as we hope you have received in Hunter College will suffice to sustain you for all your days. The education of a really intelligent person in an enlightened democratic society never

really steps. Even though you are soon to be handed your certificates and diplomas testifying to your graduation from this institution, it is not so much proof that you have been graduated out of a college as that you have been graduated into a new school of life.

Here the curriculum is somewhat differently ordered, but you must go on learning just the same if you are to participate in the duties which life imposes, and if you are to derive the benefits and pleasures which an active life can afford you. One thing which I have observed in this new school, at the threshold of which you now stand is that there is much less emphasis on theory and more respect for fact. Another thing I have noted about this school of life is that those whose feet are planted firmly on the ground and whose heads are at the same time in the clouds are the most happy. There is so much misunderstanding about the state of happiness, because people are easily confused by mere theories and fast formulas. The wise know the ephemeral character of easy slogans and understand the subversive purposes which they may serve. I warn you to guard against being easily swept off your feet either into the dust or even into the sky. The light of reason must be your guide, and your understanding must be served by a clear knowledge of the facts. I know that these are the principles which have been taught you by your wise teachers, within the warning, protective walls of Hunter College.

329