

“The Traveled Road”

Address to Graduates by

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IT WOULD be pleasant this morning if I could tell you that you are starting out into a world of peaceful days, of easy living, of gratification of all your wants and desires. Such a promise would be untrue and would lead only to disappointment and frustration.

The violence of war has already struck sharply upon your youthful days and sobered them for more serious thought and action, in times to come.

You will find that the traveled road ahead has rough and smooth spaces, hills and valleys, detours and straight paths. Generations before you, and those who will come after you, have and will take it to their destinies and their life's fulfillment. The progress and success of your journey will depend upon your reasoning powers, your resourcefulness, and your acceptance of responsibilities.

Each generation faces an unknown future. Looking backward through the years and reviewing the many commencement days on which I have spoken to departing classes, I still can feel an upsurge of courage, hope, and faith in the future. This confidence I pass on to you young men and young women.

Commencement was set against a background of peaceful days ahead for some classes, days of anxiety and sudden change for others—and days of tragic happenings and devastating war for still others. But life goes on, and you who are looking forward will not be found wanting in the qualities and resources that sustained your fellow alumni in the things they had to meet and overcome.

You have come into a great heritage of freedom of thought and opportunity, to build your own lives as you will, because of those brave men and women of preceding generations who worked hard, suffered much, endured patiently and ever kept faith and courage in their hearts to sustain them throughout fair days and dark ones.

The time has come for you to prove your worth. You can draw upon the past for inspiration, you can keep alert to what is going on around you in the present and you can meet the future with strength and understanding. Your years of study and preparation have made you ready for work to be done. You are mature men and women capable of reasoning, of assuming responsibilities, and of being resourceful enough to improve yourselves even more as time passes.

Too often we become so immersed in our own interests and current happenings that we forget that time is passing quickly; and unless we keep alert and sensitive to the future, we shall find ourselves idle, empty, and forgotten.

The history of our country abounds in examples of men and women who have overcome difficulties and built the structure of their lives so well that they have survived poverty, sickness, infirmities, disasters, and carried on to achievements and successful living. It would be helpful and enlightening for you to read and study such lives, to try and emulate them and find inspiration to go and do likewise.

Abraham Lincoln was unschooled, but not uneducated. His education was achieved by simple methods. He developed a real taste for reading good books and practiced the art of understanding and handling human problems and situations. He built within himself and put order and purpose into his life; influenced the destiny of this nation, and left a lasting memory.

Order and purpose will bring to you peace of mind, a zest for living, and a calm outlook on life in spite of the disturbing forces that rock our present-day world. If creature comforts and pleasures are your objectives, you will get nothing for nothing. The world wants men and women of ability, character, and integrity. Your country needs men and women who are loyal, upright, and fearless. You can express your gratitude to your parents, your college, and your God, not so much by what you do in years to come, but by what you are if disciplined in mind, body, and soul.

These times call forth the highest standards of morals and behavior, if you would share, in part, with those who have been called upon to fight—to suffer and to die. Only by living up to the best that is in you, will you be able to partake of their glory, of preserving our nation's strength and safety.

You, as individuals, will have different degrees of power, of influence and authority in your activities in the business world. Some of you will meet with larger successes and rewards, but no one of you will find greater satisfaction than that of being upright Americans intent on honest work, fair treatment of your associates and employers, and devoted to the traditions, the rights and privileges of free citizens of the United States.

Our fondest hopes and blessings go with you. May you find the satisfactions of life in work well done, in service to others, and in continued growth in knowledge and understanding of human affairs. Take up your burdens, accept your joys and your sorrows with patience, poise and courage, and follow the *traveled road* that countless others have walked to their future.

I wish you Godspeed.

