

SENIOR CLASS ORATION

May 31, 1922

OREGON STATE AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE

The college days of the Class of '22 are nearly over. For four years we have worked and played, planned and executed. When we recall the lessons we have learned, the contests we have fought, the pleasures we have experienced, we feel pangs of regret and sorrow at leaving the college which has been such a potent factor in our lives; but when we look into the future, when we consider what remains to be done, we realize that we have just finished gathering together our tools, and that our work is waiting for us.

The untiring efforts of President Kerr and of the Faculty to help us, their continuous faith in us, give us a sincere feeling of gratitude, and a heartfelt desire to show our appreciation. It is to O.A.C. that we are indebted for our preparation for life. To make ourselves happier and to serve others better are the two chief purposes of living, and the function of education is to help us in fulfilling these ends. Our lives are to stand as testimonials to the efficacy of the work that our college is doing. Education, true education, such as our own college gives us, is preparation both for a life of appreciation of the world and for a life of service to the world.

The Oregon State Agricultural College is a technical institution. Its graduates are scientifically trained, but they also receive the benefits of a cultural education, the importance of which must not be overlooked. The technical instruction and the cultural courses have their own parts to play in the education of a man or woman. The first duty of a man is to live a full, complete and happy life. This is possible only for one who, in addition to having the technical education requisite for the earning of a living, has achieved by means of his cultural training the ability to appreciate the finer things of life. And as for the second aim of existence -- the bettering of the world, the advancement of civilization along all the avenues open for advancement -- this also is dependent on these two types of instruction. Broad, cultural instruction is necessary to point out the path of improvement, and to impress on one the necessity for improvement; and technical education, by giving men the ability to do things, enables them to make the advances which they see should be made.

O.A.C. has contributed in a wonderful way to solving the multitude of problems arising in the state; but the improvements which have been made in the past few years, great as they are, are small compared with those yet to be accomplished. The greatest contribution of our college is its preparation of men to attack these problems. The technical training in agriculture, engineering, mining, commerce and many other fields is pointing the way to a better world by showing men how to disclose the bounties of nature and to adapt them to man's use. The homes of the future will be brighter and the children of the future will be better because of the knowledge and instruction given the young women at O.A.C. And every man and woman trained in this college is being benefitted and broadened by the study of languages, music, science and literature.

"Gradually see what kind of work you individually can do; it is the first of all problems for a man to find out what kind of work he is to do in this universe." This was Thomas Carlyle's advice to the students at Edinborough University, and one of the functions of a college is to assist men and women to follow it. But there is more to the function of a college than that. The college makes it possible for you to find what work you can do, the college gives you the preparation you need for your work, and you owe it to the college to do your work as well as you can. O.A.C. is benefiting the state and the United States inestimably by training men to act, and by showing them the deeds to be done. The technical institutions of the country are the custodians of the legacy bequeathed to each generation by the preceding one -- the legacy of knowledge. We honor our own college for the wonderful way it is using its custodianship; we honor the Faculty for its intensive and unselfish labors in carrying on the work of the institution; we honor President Kerr for his intelligent leadership, his wise directing, his thoughtful planning, his keen foresight. But we must not forget the legacy in honoring its custodians. We can best honor them by utilizing the knowledge that they have worked to give us. May the

members of the senior class of every year go into the world inspired with the recognition of the debt they owe to their Alma Mater, and tense with the resolution to repay that debt by each one accomplishing in the best way his chosen task.

It is not given to every man to be unusually successful, to be extraordinarily talented, or to be exceptionally gifted to render service to the world. We can do no more than we are able, but by doing as much as we are able, by doing our best, we shall be accomplishing our task, and repaying our debt. For our college has given us something which will allow us to do more than we otherwise could; and we must do more than we otherwise would.

Snowden expressed the duties accompanying the gift of education by saying, "The educated man is that much more of a man and should be of that much more use to the world. His eye should be clearer to see human needs and his heart kinder and his hand abler to meet them. His shoulder should be the stronger and the readier to go under the burdens of his fellow men and to help carry the load of the world's need. His presence should be so much wisdom and inspiration and cheer in his own circle and in the community. The wider his education, the stronger and richer his personality, the wider and deeper should be his sympathy and service and sacrifice.

The problems looming up in the development of the state and country are enormous in volume and overwhelming in complexity. Advancement and growth depend upon the discovery and development of the resources of nature, on the mastery and control of the forces of nature, and the investigation and interpretation of the laws of nature. In the course of progress social relations are strained, and industrial, political and educational problems arise. The country is crying for a solution of all these difficulties, and is hopefully looking to the educated man for it.

This, then, is the way we can repay O.A.C. -- by service. Our college is founded on the idea of service, and we, its students, are the representatives of the college. It is upon us that the duty falls of carrying out that basic idea. We are going into the world inspired with the resolution of service, eager to show our love for our college and our appreciation of her work by being of service to our fellow men.

Daniel Webster was challenging us when he said, "Let us develop the resources of our land, call forth its powers, build up its institutions, promote all its great interests, and see whether we also in our day and generation may not perform something worthy to be remembered." We, the members of the Class of Nineteen Twenty-two of the Oregon State Agricultural College, accept the challenge, and pledge ourselves in answer to perform in our day and generation something worthy to be remembered.

-Linus Pauling

(Original typescript by LP in Kerr Library Special Collections Box 140.10.)