

Thesis and Valedictory.

DELIVERED BY MR. GEO. L. CULTER, AT THE
LATE COMMENCEMENT OF CHRISTIAN COL-
LEGE, SANTA ROSA, CAL.

VALEDICTORY.

Gentlemen of the Board of Trustees whenever, in the vicissitudes of life we are called upon to bid farewell to familiar scenes and loved associations, when we linger for the last time about some spot that is the scene of former joys, the shrine of hallowed memories, we feel that pretentious declamation is unfitted for an expansion of the emotions that stir the sound, then it is that the wiles of rhetoric have lost their spell and we would bid adieu to those that we have loved in the silence of sadness that is in keeping with the solemnity of the occasion.

I feel that such are my surroundings to-day. Inspired by a deep and abiding interest in the institution that has been intrusted to your care, you have left your various avocations and assembled here to witness the sixth annual commencement of Christian College. One by one you have seen the several classes acquit themselves with honor upon this rostrum, and retire radiant with hope and happiness, and bearing with them as cherished mementoes of the occasion, the floral offering of love and friendship. It now remains for me in behalf of my class, to bid you gentleman Regents, adieu; to take the last farewell of teachers, friends and school-mates, and the relationship that we have sustained to you as students in this institution is severed forever; six years with their lights and shadows, their joys and sorrows, have sped away, and you have seen the verdant wreaths that garlanded these halls, fade with the blight of time and in turn give place to brighter green, and as often have you seen the fair name of Christian College wreathed, with immortal honors, standing forth to the world as the exponent of truth and wisdom. My interest in her prosperity antedates my introduction to these halls. It had its origin when I knew that you had here dedicated an institution of learning for directing the pliant mind of youth in the onward and upward way, and by association and immediate connection I have learned to love it. I love it for its power for good. I love it because it is an agency in the hands of Almighty God, for the promulgation of his truth, and especially, I love it because here, with my fellow students, I have shared the rich fruition of wisdom and religious teaching. When fortune has given its propitious smiles I have rejoiced in her success, and in the hour of her adversity, my heart has been saddened by the possible prospect of defeated hopes. When the direction of her interests was delegated to you, you assumed an important trust, and nobly have you done your duty. Proudly she has climbed the heights of science, and majestically she has trod the fair fields of literature and classic lore. It is no question of pecuniary interest that engages your attention in your present deliberations, you are taking into solemn consideration, that which very directly concerns the eternal interests of humanity. I feel that it is unnecessary for me to speak to you of my deep solicitude for the future welfare of our beloved *Alma-mater*. Too long I think have you lingered in her benign influence, to now, stand afar off and witness the crucifixion of our brightest hopes. With the full assurance of faith we leave her destiny to your guidances, feeling assured that, in coming years, when weary and worn we would return upon occasions like this, for a brief respite from the cares of life, we will be welcomed here as to the paternal roof.

Members of the faculty—It is not a reverence for established custom, that prompts me address a few words of parting to you. It is an expression of the high esteem which your faith-

fulness has merited. In behalf of my class, and for myself, I would that I were able to give some feeble expression to the sadness and regrets, and the deep sense of gratitude for the past, that fill our hearts. You—gentlemen, have stood as we do to-day, and looked for the last time upon scenes that were very dear to the heart. As teachers and loved associates gathered around with comments of congratulation, and you realized that you were forced to sever the golden chain of happy concord that bound you in little less than fraternal union; you felt that sadness and tears, was the price you paid for the honor you had won. For many the farewell then spoken were the last; and some, wearied with the cares and turmoils of this transitory life, have laid themselves down in the cold embrace of death. To attempt to portray our feelings to you who have felt the pangs of such a parting, is unnecessary. I shall carry with me wherever the vicissitudes of life may cast my lot, a feeling of love and esteem, that shall grow greener with the years. For you, who have at all times and under all circumstances, extended to me your sympathy and assistance, thus making the otherwise tedious routine of study, a summer day of pleasure. Though our honored President, has for a time been called to other scenes of action, we would assure him that his counsel and words of encouragement in days that are gone will ever be cherished and remembered. They have left their impress and inspiration deep down in our hearts, and time nor circumstance cannot remove them. In his absence he has left an able assistant in whom the students of this institution have ever found a friend. It is with varied and peculiar emotions that I allude to-day, to his kindness and zeal. Several years ago professor, we met for the first time in the hallowed relationship that to-day must be severed forever. I know that you have not forgotten those quiet happy days, when you first began to unfold to my untutored vision, the treasures of the good, the beautiful, and encouraged me to higher attainment. Though we meet no more as teacher and pupil, the friendship and affection that ripened in the sunlight of that association will increase with the growth of coming years. Though in the cold and careless world, we miss the hearty grasp of the hand and hear no longer the voice that has cheered us so often when the way seemed dark, their potent influence will not be lost.

Fellow students—by what formula of words, can I say our farewells to you. Happy indeed has been our experience in these College halls; joyous indeed, has been the fraternal union of our school days, and ever bright has been the prospect before us; no storm cloud of discord has appeared upon our bright horizon to dim our joys. But no longer shall the glad concourse of students who have met and mingled here, unite in unbroken concord as of yore. The magic spell of happy communion and fellowship, is broken; to-day for the last time we address you as fellow students, and say our last goodbye.

Some of you will return to take the places that we vacate, and some will be lost in the mazes of busy life. But in whatever ways an all-wise providence may direct our footsteps, we will ever be held together by an indissoluble bond of union, and our thoughts in sweet companionship, will many times revert to this chapel where we have met so often in praise and solemn supplication to the giver of all good.

Ladies of the senior class, as the last duty of this solemn occasion, I turn to you; while together we have bid adieu to teachers, friends and school-mates, we also as class-mates must be separated forever. In common anticipation and with bright hopes, we have looked forward to this day that

should crown our preparatory efforts with success, and fit us for life's realities. Though our hopes have thus far been realized, we but stand to-day upon the shores of life's uncertain and tempestuous sea; and frail indeed, are human hopes and human aspirations. To-day we number with the things that were all those scenes of joy and gladness, that made our school-days so dear to the heart; yes, and in our cup of happiness there may have been, sometimes, something of sorrow which so often embitters the joys of life. But in the mystic future, when time shall work its witcheries upon the dreams of other days, none but the bright and cherished memories will return. All the sorrow and sadness will be lost in the dim view of distant retrospection. Our intercourse as classmates has been the happiest experience of my life, and I shall ever cherish it as a fond day-dream, of life's morning; an oasis ever green that shall cheer the desert prospect of departed joys. Once more, invoking heavens choicest benedictions. I bid you adieu.

The Wise Old World.

AN ESSAY READ BY MISS FROBIE JORY, AT THE
MEETING OF THE ALUMNI OF WILLAMETTE
UNIVERSITY, June, 12, 1878.

The world is old, yes centuries old, but it is not an "old fogy" for all that. It is a little dried up, wiry, Yankee peddler gray eyed, sharp and keen, but behind those piercing eyes there lies the coolest clearest sense that ever measured mortal worth. Call it cold and egotistical if we will; for it values us, each one, man and woman, for what it can get out of us, and, like Stewart, it wants nothing to do with that thriftless individual who calls himself unlucky.

It has dealt with people ever since the creation, it understands humanity perfectly, and it knows better than to expect impossibilities of us, even though we may promise them and vainly suppose ourselves capable of performing them. The wise old world takes nothing for granted, it is a mathematician and won't believe anything just because we say so, but throws its head to one side, shuts one eye and says, "Looks a little likely mister; but demonstrate if you please." And woe to him whose promises are not true, or whose conclusion can not be legitimately drawn, for if there is anything, this shrewd old world, with its head full of facts and its fingers full of figures, holds in supremest contempt it is fine theories that won't work, and great promises that don't amount to anything.

It "guesses," "reckons," and "calculates," and it rarely misses, it has been at it so long; but it won't tolerate anything of the sort from us.

The world is a great political economist and believes even more earnestly than Greeley in keeping everybody thinking and at work, and if there is one thing more than any other which it demands of every man, and every woman too as well, it is that he or she shall be self-supporting, and it has but a partial respect for that poet, philosopher, statesman or genius, in whatever department of life he may labor, who can not earn his own bread and butter.

The world is a great financier, believes in the "hard cash" and plenty of it. Its pet science is arithmetic, and its favorite pursuit dollars; but it believes too that "honesty is the best policy," and it keeps saying to itself ten times 9 won't make 100; no, I've made such experiments before, and they won't work; it isn't for want of trying that I haven't got something for nothing before now, but just because the thing cannot be done. A right jolly fellow is this wise old world, always ready for a frolic and a treat, that is, if somebody else will foot the bills; he doesn't often forget himself and play that part, but O, don't spend too much to amuse him, he's far too long-headed to be pleased

with that; no Yankee ever yet forgot pay-day, and he knows if you can't pay your way, he'll have too; but he won't support you in princely style, and he stoutly insists that he owes no man anything who has not first rendered him an equivalent. He does build free boarding houses, but they are not generally noted for comfort or elegance, and he'll take you at last in a "jolly round trot" to "pauper's corner;" but for every cent he spends he will heave a most doleful sigh, and a new wrinkle will crease his seamy forehead, and not all the dear old ladies in christendom, whose special love is convicts and paupers, can coax one smile to prop the falling corners of his mouth. The world is stingy; just a little so I'm afraid, but then he has a great many to take care of who are utterly unable to help themselves, and it is hardly fair to expect him smilingly to assume the duty of supporting one who should have done that for himself. The world has its "legion of honor," and not a marshal of the great Napoleon ever bore so proud a title as that conferred by the generous world upon its great workers.

And the best of all is, these distinctions are not bestowed for imaginary virtues, none are to the honor born and none excluded, and laurels wither when placed on brows the world itself has not approved. In vain, Victoria, though Queen of England and Empress of the Indies, shall form a roll of honor to which rank alone and not personal merit entitles her noble ladies to a place, the wise old world, the just old world frowns with disapproval, and says it well none of these, one poor little teacher or factory girl who maintains herself and assists in the support of others is worth more than them all, and not the monarch even of that kingdom on which the sun never sets can reverse its judgment.

The busy, wide awake, far-seeing world with all its nameless interests both public and private, casts one eager, penetrating glance as each applicant for a situation approaches, and questions him not as to his rank or station, but as to what he can do. It matters little what that is, those who labor earnestly and intelligently are sure to meet its approval and need feel no uneasiness that their worth will pass unrecognized.

There are too many who speak of conferring dignity on labor. Do they not know that apart from labor, moral, mental, or physical they can never possess true manly or womanly dignity? While only those who labor earnestly with mind, and heart, and hand have any great claim to the world's recognition. And here let me say it, for I cannot help it, and I know it to be true that the feeling that he must be somebody and must not disappoint his friends, who expect so much of him, causes many a graduate of our University and other similar institutions to choose a profession for which he has but little taste, and in which he can achieve but a partial success.

Parents think, and in this they are partly right, only they don't go far enough and recognize the fact that all labor nobly done is in itself ennobling, they think that they have a right to expect their children whom they have been at so great expense to educate, shall be an honor to themselves and reflect credit upon them, in fact, that they shall be and do something far above the ordinary. It is this absurd prejudice, which causes the overcrowding of the professions of which even the successful ones complain, it is this that sets a great two fisted fellow, full of fire and energy, behind a counter to sell pins and needles and bits of calico, on a salary barely sufficient to support himself; it is this that sets him fishing for some petty office, and stooping to all sorts of expedients to secure his object, which causes him to smile and smile

and almost wring his hands off just before election day. It is this that sends our girls teaching when "school-ma'ams" are already as thick as blackberries, or keeps them in enforced idleness at home, for which they are far from thankful, because the profession is already overcrowded, when the kitchen and the dress-maker's shop are calling in vain for help. Of what use the disappointed parents ask is a diploma in the kitchen. Will a knowledge of the modern languages enable one to make a pie? Must one study analytics or calculus to cook vegetables? Or will proficiency on the piano enable one to wield the scrubbing brush with greater dexterity? No; perhaps not, but they will not hinder; and it surely is not a disagreeable thing to find in the cook and housekeeper an intelligent, cultivated, thinking woman. No woman should be compelled to be either an ignorant household drudge, or a useless, though perhaps ornamental burden. That education which is of no use in after-life is worse than useless by all the time spent in its acquirement, and that refinement that avoids all plain and homely duties, and puts all disagreeable burdens on other shoulders, and that ladyhood which forsakes one when brought in contact with the kitchen and the workshop may well be suspected of being ungentle. The wise old world has been teaching us all many a little lesson in common sense, many a lesson not to be found in books, since we in trembling expectation stood on the threshold on commencement day, dreaming it the supreme moment of our lives, and told loving, hopeful friends of all the great things we intended to do in the glorious future, and we can scarcely repress a smile, quickly followed by a tear when we think how different are our lives, and in all reason must ever be from what we dreamed. But while the realization has dimmed many a glorious vision and the rainbow, at whose glittering base the golden treasure lies but lightly buried, is just as far away as ever, we do not regret our breathless eager chase, it has led us to greener fields than else we might have known, and contact with the world, though it strip us one by one of our school-day conceits, will yet leave us the gains, in broader views of life, and warmer, deeper human sympathies.

Doubtless many a one while performing some humble duty questions with pleasant expectations, what would my class say if they could see me doing this, forgetting that the class as well as himself has had time to rid itself of many silly prejudices and romantic notions.

Verde wrote the admiring Italians in bold white characters on the dark walls of church and convent, but it was not of the great composer they were thinking; no; those mystic letters were the initials of their brave king whose name the church had forbidden them to utter. But Victor Emmanuel, their deliverer, though his name was unspoken, was ever present in their thoughts, their idolized, long prayed for, hero king. And so to all time, hearts shall be with him who with courteous, manly, independence performs each task however humble, which duty imposes, his name, though unspoken, shall ever be an inspiration, a symbol of true and dignified manhood.

Reason has long ago given its voice against that cloistered goodness which avoids intercourse with mankind, and hooded monk and black veiled nun can scarcely be called useful citizens of the world. A life of meditation, of dreamy philosophizing, may, and often does possess a negative sort of goodness, but it is far different and very much inferior to that active, living, thinking and aggressive goodness which the world requires.

False ideas of religious duty have in all ages led a portion of mankind