



Senator Joseph Very Quarles, '66, LL.D., '03

The Old and the New

ADDRESS DELIVERED AT THE FIFTY-NINTH ANNUAL COMMENCEMENT, BY THE HON.
JOSEPH VERY QUARLES, '66

MR. PRESIDENT, Gentlemen of the Faculty, Members of the Graduating Classes, Ladies and Gentlemen:—

Your cordial reception to-day touches me deeply. The occasion is one that awakens emotions that I can neither control nor suitably express. It recalls vividly another greeting here,—less demonstrative, but not less welcome,—that was extended to a poor boy forty years ago, who with fear and trembling sought the kind offices of this tender foster-mother.

An unexpected sensation of mingled pleasure and pain well nigh overcomes me. Standing here in this modern, spacious temple, reminded on every hand of the growth and grandeur of the present institution, surrounded by a multitude of strange faces, the University of the long ago, though young and feeble, irresistibly rises before my mind. I see other student assemblies, other faces more familiar that once were bright with hope and joy. Their voices in glad shouts and college songs echo through

the deserted halls of memory. The old faculty are before me now, faithful, earnest, kindly men. At their head stands Tappan,—the masterful man,—whose eloquent voice, teaching high ideals and noble aspirations, still thrills the bosoms of gray-haired men who were mere boys when the words were spoken. And now they are gone, all gone. But I am persuaded that their sweet spirits still visit this place to sanctify the spot, where with rarest self-sacrifice, they wore away their precious lives.

Their bones are dust,
Their swords are rust,
Their souls are with the saints, I trust.

And now, after a long and tedious journey through the highways of life, I am summoned again by the same kind mother. She extends a hand which I passionately press to my lips. But why tarry longer with the shades? Words are as inadequate to tell of the enchantment of those early years as to describe the weird melody of the lost chord. Let us therefore proceed to the duty of the day.

My young friends, the hour has struck for which you have been eagerly waiting for years. I can appreciate the keen anxiety you feel to know something of the world into which you are going. I have come from that busy world to bring you a greeting and a warning. If you don't object, let's have the warning first. A graduate is not a finished product. The student who frames his diploma as evidence of a *fait accompli*, is like the man in Arkansas who nailed up the Lord's Prayer at the foot of the bed to facilitate his drowsy devotion. Graduation is a second birth,—not the same that puzzled Nicodemus,—but, phrased in homely terms, the graduate is dumped into the world again, somewhat larger, but every whit as helpless as when he first made his debut. I commend to you all the familiar maxim of Socrates, that the first step toward wisdom is a confession of ignorance. Vain conceit will not long

withstand the searching tests of business. You will promote your comfort and progress if able to discard it in advance.

The world has no use for a man perched on a pedestal. Sooner or later he must either climb down, or fall down. He must get his feet braced against the earth before he will be recognized as a unit of force. The first thing you have to do is to forget the formulae that you have been at such pains to acquire. The mental grasp, the scholarly taste, will survive the athletic processes which you now discard.

You ought not to enter the field until you have surveyed it carefully. The present can be clearly distinguished only in the light of the past. In the first place, you ought to thank God for your ancestors, not only for the noble tendencies that course through your veins with the red drops, but because of the Titanic labor they performed, the hardship they cheerfully endured in your behalf. You are familiar with the great battles that they fought. You know that their blood and tears cemented every stone in the majestic temple of popular government. But you have slight conception of the mighty forests which they laid low, the natural obstacles they overcame, as they slowly pushed the frontier back toward the setting sun. Every church and school-house and chimney stack is a monument to their energy and foresight. They built highways and harbors, railroads and telegraphs. They made constitutions and expounded them. They devised the best types of popular government the world has ever seen.

Behind you are two mighty centuries which will be known in history as the heroic period of the republic,—as the age of iron and muscle, the era of the sword and the axe. Dumas has said that "centuries are the days of nations." The magnitude of the result, and the brevity of the period would suggest an age of miracles, were

not the exceptional energy and ability of your ancestors well understood.

Your obligation is not confined to those two recent centuries. We must not repudiate the debt to primitive periods that witnessed valiant struggles in the thorny path of progress. Civilization has not proceeded steadily, or along straight lines. From time to time it has blazed up and illumined the sky, only to be smothered by barbarism and apparently extinguished forever. It is natural that ancient lights should grow dim under the bright effulgence of this day. Besides it ministers to our pride and national conceit to make extravagant claims for American primacy in science and art; to indulge a kind of Fourth of July spirit of self-complacency, ignoring the patient efforts, the weary toil, the alternate failures and successes which alone made possible the conditions upon which we congratulate ourselves to-day.

Scattered all along the shores of time are derelicts and wreckage that indicate high accomplishment in learning, literature, and science, lofty thought and high ideals. In many instances, this was the work of peoples whose history is either buried with them or obscured by blend with fable and tradition; but their influence, as insensible as the light of the distant star, still abides with us. Some one has said, you know, that "without the light of the fixed stars no crop would ripen." Remote periods have made important contribution to our stock of learning without suitable acknowledgment. We should think more of our debts and less of our achievements, and sometimes insist upon an honest balance sheet with antiquity to see how the account stands. Such a showing would demonstrate that we are chronic borrowers, drawing heavily upon ancient sources. It is often difficult to distinguish the new from the old.

You read in your New Testament of certain Athenian citizens who were

seeking new things. A similar tendency is sometimes imputed to the women of this day, perhaps unjustly. The preacher of the Old Testament declared that—

There is no new thing under the sun. Is there anything whereof it may be said, See this is new? It hath been already of old time, which was before us. There is no remembrance of former things.

There is much pith and wisdom in this old text. What we call new to-day, is likely to be something that had been forgotten. It is said that an English duchess attended a ball at the Tuileries when the French court was yet magnificent. She wore a string of beads taken from the neck of a mummy. It was the universal opinion that her necklace was the newest thing at the ball.

A few months since, a surgical instrument was invented which promised to be useful. Shortly thereafter a similar instrument was exhumed from the ruins of the ancient city of Nippur. We are under obligations to the inventor, because otherwise we should have been at a loss to classify the old trophy.

Our stories and jokes are for the most part venerable friends that have done service in different languages. They have beguiled weary hours for merry groups in camp and court, in many climes. Most of them are older than the mummies,—ancient chestnuts that seem to be endowed with immortality. Our friend, Chauncey Depew, tells a funny story at the Gridiron Club. By prearrangement nobody laughs except the genial Chauncey. Then comes a shout from the Club,

In the days of old Rameses,
That story had paresis.

Having heard many of Chauncey's jokes, I should be inclined to agree with the club, if the dignity of the Senate were not involved.

Wendell Phillips has demonstrated in his lecture on lost arts that the ancients were as expert in making puns

as in making glass, and that our familiar "Irish bulls" are all Greek. Many of our epigrams and aphorisms came from the Orient, and if we may trust the writings of Rawlinson, our games and toys may be traced back to the banks of the Ganges. The "Beast fables" of India were edited and compiled by Æsop. I stumbled onto an ancient book in London whence De Foe got the story of Robinson Crusoe that made him famous.

Shakespeare was a desperate borrower. He seized bodily upon certain Italian romances, and never took the trouble to change the names of the characters. But he tinged them with the glory of his genius and made them his own forever. I have a book wherein he is held up to the world as a literary robber, but the world was in no mood to listen to such carping complaints.

Some one has said of phrenology, "Whatever there is in it that is new is not true, and whatever is true is not new." The same criticism might be made of many modern inventions.

But, you say, our electric light is certainly new. No, my friends, the manifestation is new, but electric light is only sunshine warmed over. This same bright light flooded the earth with tropical glory when the monsters of the saurian race held sway in swamp and fen. It glinted on the leaves and entered the fibre of gigantic tree-ferns of the carboniferous age, when early preparations were being made for the comfort of man. Electric light is a resurrection. After centuries, these rays escape from their dark prison-house to illumine the pathway of progress according to the divine plan that is older than creation.

Here is a crisp, fresh bond just issued by the United States treasury. Is not that new? New only in form. The paper is new, but what it represents is not new. Mere inert matter is not wealth. Labor is the magician that imparts to it actual value. Capital is merely labor long since expend-

ed and crystallized into permanent shape for the purpose of conservation and convenience, just as sunshine is perpetuated in the form of carbon. When labor attacks capital it strikes its own dead hand. What wonder that, in such a contest, it is the living hand that is bruised.

There are many who would be surprised to know that the trust question is not of modern origin. In one form or another it has vexed society since trade and commerce began. Through the centuries there has been an eternal antagonism between two economic forces,—competition and combination. The struggle suggests the irrepressible conflict, yet strangely enough, these forces are so correlated that each stimulates the other. Whenever competition forces prices down so as to destroy profits, combination comes to the rescue by cheapening production. When, under the stimulus of combination, profits become excessive, keen-eyed competition is ready with fresh capital and new men to duplicate facilities to increase and improve production. Thus, in the natural order, each should be the effective antidote of the other. Frequently, however, it has happened that the state has been obliged to reinforce competition.

In the year of our Lord, 483, the Emperor Zeno issued an edict against monopolies in food and clothing whereby forfeiture of property and perpetual exile were imposed as the penalty for violation. Even in Solomon's time monopoly in food products was forbidden, and the king of Israel said, "He that withholdeth corn, the people shall curse him." In this connection it may be remembered that Pharaoh ran a successful corner on corn and had all the "shorts" of his day at his mercy.

Germany had the trust question in an acute stage in the sixteenth century. Merchants were uniting to stifle competition and the government felt called upon to intervene, accord-

ing to the arbitrary methods of that day, to check combinations. The same battle between these two forces is still going on, with varied results. Recently the fifty-seventh congress has been called upon to do practically what the German government did at that early day, except that, instead of employing the mailed fist of absolute power to curb monopoly, resort was had to legal and constitutional measures. Thus history repeats itself, assuming ever the guise of something new.

The pessimist who is now wailing about trusts and other degenerate tendencies, assailing the honor of men and the virtue of women, is not a new creation. Thersites was a bitter pessimist who kept the Greek army in perpetual turmoil by his sour complaints. You remember that Odysseus administered to him a wholesome castigation with satisfactory results. Such men re-appear in every period.

Sydney Smith, speaking to his friend Jeffrey, once said, "Damn the solar system; bad light, planets too distant; pestered with comets; a feeble contrivance; could make a better with ease."

Mr. Tooke in his book on "The History of Prices" thus assails the Bank of England, "The Bank of England is one of the most wanton, ill-advised, pedantic, and rash pieces of legislation that has ever come within my observation."

Victor Hugo anticipated and characterized the whole tribe of pessimists when he made Grantaire ridicule the scheme of creation, denouncing it as a series of mistakes. For instance, God created a rat. He had no sooner let him go than he said, Hello! that's a blunder. The rat will be a nuisance. So repenting himself God straightway created a cat to chase the rat through the world in the vain effort to retrieve the blunder. Victor Hugo also spoke of a toad that not being able to fly himself spit at every

bird that flew by. There are still some of those cheerful toads left over from the old times.

The civil code of Louisiana was something new when it was adopted because the states had generally followed the common law of England. But the Louisiana code was essentially the advance sheets of the Code Napoleon. Did Napoleon and his wise men invent a new system? The claim was made that Napoleon would live as a law-giver after the glory of Austerlitz had been forgotten. But the fact is that, as to the great body of the civil law, they were only compilers of a system that had been many times compiled before. What Napoleon did as a compiler of the civil law in the early years of the nineteenth century, the Emperor Justinian did in the sixth century. There is also a popular impression that the civil code originated with Justinian, who is known in history as the great law-giver. But long before Justinian the twelve tables had constituted the basis of the Roman law and had been inscribed, first on wood and then on brass. Justinian undertook to gather up and compile in one authentic, exclusive collection all the ancient law and the commentaries of the early jurists thereon, and prohibited any reference thereafter to the former sources of law. Centuries before Justinian, and before the twelve tables, this system of law had been in existence. The Romans had borrowed it from the Greeks, and the Greeks from the Egyptians. It may even be traced back to India long before Egypt became the school-mistress of the world.

The Institutes of Menou, a copy of which I have, was written in the early Sanscrit, and contains many of the precepts of the civil code although intermingled with the ceremonials of caste and superstitious rites. Nobody knows when this compilation was promulgated. It follows the Vedas whose antiquity dates back from fifteen to twenty centuries before

Christ. Strange as it may seem, notwithstanding all these mutations of time and manners and government, many of the texts of Menou are literally and identically reproduced in the Pandects of Justinian and the Code Napoleon, and are announced as the law to-day by our own courts in almost the same phraseology in which they were embalmed in original Sanscrit. By aid of literal translations I have laid many of these texts side by side for careful analysis and there can be no doubt of their identity. They are gems of truth that have survived the wreck of empires, the decay of dynasties, and the gloom of the dark ages. They are the essence of human wisdom, whether expressed in Sanscrit, Greek, Latin, or French. They are the same on the Ganges, the Tiber, or the Mississippi,—changeless through the eternal years.

Thus Louisiana, to find a new code, traveled back to France, and Rome, and Greece, and Egypt. She even threaded her way back to the far East,—following the blind, winding trail through battle-scarred India, over ashes and blood, through poverty and degradation,—back to that hoary source of learning where many centuries before Christ, broke the dawn of intellectual development,—back to a people whose history and institutions have been buried for centuries in a nameless tomb.

The literature of every modern nation has been enriched by the aphorisms and epigrams of that early period, Pythagoras went to India to study mathematics and philosophy. Through Aristotle, Bacon, Kant, and Spinoza, modern students have been put in touch with this early source of wisdom. I think it was Cousin who said that the philosophy of India was an abridgment of the philosophy of the world. Every learned cult has drunk at that same spring, and to-day in this new Republic, thriving in a new land especially set apart for its development, our literature, our law,

and science, are reflecting the faint rays of that early sunrise. Forms and ceremonials often change, but essential truths are never new, and never old.

In order to give you an idea of the lofty thought and literary style of these ancient books, perhaps you will allow me to read a single text from the Institutes of Menou, and a short invocation, which may be found in one of the Vedas:—

TEXT FROM MENOUE

As the most obscure soldier of an army may, sometimes, by a fiery arrow, destroy the strongest fortress of the enemy, so may the weakest man, when he makes himself the courageous champion of truth, overthrow the most solid ramparts of superstition and error.

INVOCATION

Lord of the world and of all creatures, receive my humble invocation. Turn from the contemplation of Thy immortal power. Thy single glance shall purify my soul. Come to me, that I may hear Thy voice in the fluttering of the leaves, in the murmuring waters of the sacred river, in the sparkling flame of the consecrated fire.

My soul longs to breathe the air that emanates from the Great Soul. Thy word shall be sweeter to my thirsty soul than the tears of night to the sandy desert. Sweeter than the voice of the young mother who caresses her infant. Come to me, O Thou, by whom the earth blooms into flowers, by whom harvests ripen, by whom all germs develop themselves, by whom sages learn virtue. My soul thirsteth to know Thee and to escape from its mortal envelope to the enjoyment of celestial bliss, absorbed in Thy splendor.

There is nothing further from my purpose than to convey the impression that the world is growing stale. The grand procession of progress is moving steadily. The centuries fit one against another like stones in the finest mosaic. The early triumphs of invention and art do not teach indolence. They rather bring a suggestion of life and energy and hope. By way of corroboration, permit me now to speak of one modern impulse that is essentially new in essence and manifestation.

After untold centuries of envy, strife, and bloodshed, the nations of

the earth are being reconciled like members of an estranged family. The humanizing influence of civilization has touched their eyes and behold, they are not enemies but brothers. The barriers of prejudice and provincialism are breaking down. You will see the day when international councils will be common events. At no distant time there will come a World's Congress, invested by common consent with certain legislative powers to conserve the broad interests of a world-wide civilization. Finally, the great nations will be drawn together by a holy bond of sympathy. Their mighty energies will blend as beautifully as the prismatic colors, and across the heavens will appear, against the background of retiring war clouds, the great rainbow, the pageant of the centuries, over which, inscribed in letters of living light, the sweet sublime ideal of the Great Master shall take visible shape, "On Earth Peace, Good Will Toward Men."

It is a source of just pride that American influence has been and is likely to be so potent a factor in awakening a sense of combined responsibility among the nations,—a world conscience if you please, which will result in broadening the jurisdiction of the *jus gentium*. Public sentiment is the ruling power in the United States, and its trained virile influence is felt in every capital in Europe. Behind this volume of American sentiment are descendants of every European race. These are the strands of influence by which we reach back to the sympathies of the old world. The American spirit must be reckoned with in the council chamber of czar and emperor. It has electrified the torpid diplomacy of the Celestial empire. It furnished fibre for the French republic from the beginning. It has directed and sustained every attempt at popular government in Mexico and South America. It banished Spain from the western

hemisphere, and bundled up and sent back with her all the hated paraphernalia of the sixteenth century. As the fruit of our unselfish love, the Cuban republic was born, whose flag, representing the American spirit, now floats over the most beautiful island ever dedicated to liberty. These are some of the agencies, ancient and modern, that have combined to crown the new century with unfading glory.

With confidence we appeal to the twentieth century. It will savor somewhat of the Augustan age, because of the abundance of wealth, the prevalence of luxury, and the patronage of art. America has no use for Augustus or Mæcenas or Horace. They were the apostles of luxurious effeminacy. The twentieth century will be instinct with energy, but intellect, not muscle, will be the dominating force. Wealth has become too common to hold its place as a distinction. Its favors have been often lavished upon cheap men and sometimes there has seemed to be a strange affinity between the fat purse and the lean soul. Coarse, vulgar men have been thrust into public notice by some lucky stroke of fortune. Money will retain its legitimate influence, but the primacy of the golden calf is over. A colossal fortune will always attract attention. So will a colossal abdomen. The scholar is about to displace the adventurer, and science will destroy the enchantment of luck. Thought will be the touchstone of success, and success will no longer be confused with merit. But now all human effort must be specialized. The all-around man of the frontier days has passed away. Science stands like a presiding genius over every workshop, forge, and factory. Thought vibrates between the continents, disdaining the aid of wires. The clouds give it the right of way and the ocean's stormy protest is ignored.

Even war has become a science. It is the trained brain and not brute muscle that deals out death on land

and sea. Complicated electrical machinery is installed in every fort. Skilled electricians are enlisted in every artillery corps. The modern battleship is a complicated machine-shop. This is the evolution by which brutal war will disappear, and yield to arbitration the exclusive jurisdiction to compose all international disputes.

Agriculture used to be esteemed a dull employment. The farm was the dumping-ground for the failures and cripples of every other vocation. Now farming is a scientific employment worthy of the brightest intellect.

Already the scholar has established himself in politics where he is struggling for higher ideals and cleaner methods. His is the arduous task, and his will be the lasting glory to hasten the day when men will be rated for what they are and not for what they have. His the lofty ambition to bring the best thought of the nation into political service, not only to administer public office but to stand guard at the primaries and conventions and impart a loftier tone throughout American politics.

Whatever may be the ultimate influence of trusts on society, the steady process of consolidation is making every department of business more complicated and superintendence more difficult. Commercialism is being raised to the dignity of a science. This universal tendency will increase the demand for trained men, for executive and organizing ability. Brains never before commanded so high a premium, and the educated man never had so many avenues open to him outside the learned professions. The legal profession,—and I can speak of no other,—offers emoluments greater than ever before to its members who stand in the front. Those in the rear must be satisfied with a precarious existence. The multiplicity of petty grievances incident to a new country have passed away and the pettifogger's occupation is gone. If you are not willing to master the law as a

science, which means willingness to accept a life sentence at hard labor, let me warn you now not to make the acquaintance of Blackstone or Kent.

There is at least some comfort in the fact that intellect can never be organized into a trust. There can be no corner on brains. It is the genius of wisdom to increase her wealth by division and diffusion. "There is that scattereth and yet increaseth." Thus the educated man will become not only independent, but indispensable. What possibilities are open to you! Your ambition will have no limitation, save such as you yourself impose. You will have the peoples of the earth for an audience when you have any worthy message to deliver. Any triumph of invention or skill will make you the benefactor of the entire race. Fortunate, fortunate youth, who with the bright halo of the twentieth century about you are called to enter upon your life work at such an eventful period and under such auspicious omens. The heroic struggles of the centuries, all the virtue, wit, and wisdom of the ages, are combined in the prologue of the drama in which you are chosen to take part.

But lest your imagination may be dazzled by this prospect, let me remind you with all the emphasis at my command, that responsibility is measured by opportunity. Consider seriously what a heavy burden you must assume by a just application of this rule. America has many vexed and vital questions to settle in the near future which call for patience, patriotism, and statesmanship. In a serious crisis, such as some anticipate, society will expect her educated men to serve as her body guard, to make the weak strong, and the strong just, to insist upon the supremacy of law, to inculcate patriotism, and above all to flood the land with the light of education.

Let in the light! I repeat it, Let in the light! This is the gospel of hope and the plan of our salvation.

A look into your earnest faces is

reassuring. What so noble and ingenuous as youth! Unless your appearance belies you, neither your country, your God, nor truth will lack for champions while you live to reflect the inspiration of this great seat of learning.

I am prompted to avail myself of the privilege, accorded to a man of my years, to have a word of confidence with these young women, who have the ability and pluck to maintain their places in this graduating class. Let not your imagination be fascinated by some supposed sequestered spot in the ethereal regions, where, unvexed by domestic cares, the gifted spinster keeps her lonely vigils, and gathers laurels in the field of science. The bright, cold rays of intellect will not stimulate benevolence or incite tenderness, nor ripen the noblest graces of the soul.

A drop of dew is cold and clear and pure while it modestly hangs in some shaded spot. But let it be touched by a ray of sunshine and it flashes like a diamond in the tiara of the blushing dawn. The highest development of womanhood may be expected in the warm currents of human sympathy and affection. Here she attains symmetrical growth. Here her intelligent activity may prove the greatest boon and blessing to the race. The present sphere of women is the whole world. Her horizon is no longer bounded by kitchen walls. Her influence permeates business, gives direction to politics, tinges our literature, and is a dominating force in our civilization.

Let not learning incite rebellion in your hearts against conditions which are more favorable to woman than ever obtained before. Aspire to be a part of, rather than to stay apart from, the active life of this busy world. Let your accomplishments adorn the common walks of life, and thus follow in the lead of the divine intelligence, that once graced the highways and byways of the world.

Now my young friends, your college life is over. Henceforth it will be as a tale that is told. It will be an oasis to whose green verdure and cooling springs the dusty traveler will often turn his longing gaze. Nothing now remains but a ceremony, which properly interpreted, is full of sentiment and beauty. As each takes his diploma, let him consider that therewith Alma Mater commits to his hands her own honor, which she expects him to cherish and defend to the last. Appreciate the fact that she is tenderly bending over you as the Spartan mother used to do when her son went forth to battle. There need be no words spoken. You can catch her parting message, full of hope, solicitude, and love. Let it inspire you to high resolves. Let it abide with you like a precious amulet. Act well your part, and there will be in store for you a reward rather to be desired than the applause of the multitude,—the approving smile and the saintly blessing of your kind Mother.

But beyond the academic field are other incentives and rewards. You are a fresh relay in the great race to advance the standard of progress. The eyes of your contemporaries rest upon you, while antiquity waves you a salute with her withered hand. From the dusty tombs of the Orient, which I have pointed out, radiate mystic influences to inspire you with greater zeal and higher purposes.

In the generous rivalry among the nations to make the twentieth century illustrious you will be impelled by patriotic motives. I predict that you will carry the Stars and Stripes in the forefront of the grand column, and that the people will hail it not alone as a national emblem but as the advancing symbol of a new order of civilization. The English drum-beat follows the sunrise around the world, an inspiring reminder of the majesty of empire, the highest type of the old aristocratic regime. But the flag that you will carry will meet the sunrise,

every star upon it gleaming like a diamond, to flash back to the people of the earth a mission of peace, to kindle

everywhere the fondest hopes for the new dispensation,—the common brotherhood of man.
