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Our Normal School.

The Proceedings of the 23rd Annual Commencement Week Briefly Told.

The Baccalaureate Sermon—The Splendid Junior Entertainment—A Most Helpful Lecture—Former Class Reunions—Most Interesting Class—Day Exercises—Commencement Day—Alumni Meeting—Splendid Banquet.

BACCALAUREATE SERMON.

The Sabbath of June 26th, was one of those perfect days when everything in nature is in happy accord with the buoyant spirits of expectant, joyous youth. It was a day, which, even apart from its sacredness, was intended to make everyone happy.

Under such inspiring influences the Senior class of '92 assembled at 2:30 P. M. in the beautiful new chapel of Institute Hall to hear the Baccalaureate sermon addressed to them by Rev. P. A. Heilmann of the Lutheran church of Bloomsburg, Pa.

Finding his text in St. Luke 10:42, Rev. Heilmann took as the basis of a most thoroughly practical sermon—"The One Thing Needful."

But one thing is needful; and Mary hath chosen that good part which shall not be taken away from her. Theme—The one thing needful.

I have chosen these words from the lips of Jesus, because I thought you would want to hear some one speak to-day who could not guide you wrong.

You may hear many other sermons finer and better, no doubt, but never again such a one as this, addressed to you as a class. Your preparatory work now done and you about ready to go out into the world and make your record and combat its opposition. But before going you come for a message from God. I am glad to bring you one direct from His Son.

You may forget everything I say, and I trust you will, if I can only lead your hearts and minds to see the importance of these words of Jesus, and you remember them, I shall be happy indeed.

You have made many sacrifices in coming to this place of learning, some of you very great ones, and you begin to comprehend how much your education is worth, and as you go out into this world of competition you will realize more and more the value of a trained mind and a skilled hand, when your sacrifices all will be forgotten in the possession of your prize. Then will you feel that you would not have missed this course of training for many, many times its cost. Then will your gratitude go out to those who made it possible for you to enjoy this great privilege, and you will regard them as your permanent benefactors and never cease to be grateful. Then will you remember the very great kindness of your instructors, and their patience with you, and will bless them for their strict discipline when you wanted so much to have your own way and they cruelly said "No." Because now, you have something worth many times all their efforts and though you had to be driven, perhaps with the threat of expulsion, to strive for it, you would not have missed it had you been compelled to endure solitary confinement through all the years of preparation. So rich is the treasure you have gained and I would magnify it many times looking back through 15 years of practical experience.

But over and above all this the Lord Jesus says to you "But one thing is needful." We would not stop to listen to an uninspired man or speech. After passing through the splendid curriculum you have, the combined wisdom of all the past and present education, to have some one say to you there is something better to be learned than all that has been taught you, would be presumption indeed. But when the Son of God speaks, he who is the source of all wisdom, saying, there is something better than all these, our attention is arrested, we set about the inquiry, What can it be? Let us search for the answer. You have been so impressed with the importance of that which you have labored so hard for during these years that you think nothing could be of more consequence.

Now to hear some one say, that there is one thing so far superior to all the rest, that it is called "The one thing needful" as compared to everything else, our curiosity is naturally aroused to know what that is, and if possible secure it. May God help me to make it clear to you to-day the importance of these words of Jesus that you will bend every energy to first secure that and his promise is that all other things shall be added to you.

There are very many things you have been considering necessary for your success. Education you have naturally placed first, but how many thousand as good, and some better than you will have to get along through life without this great boon. Some not even able to read or write and yet they have been successful. Your parents have not had your advantages but they have made a splendid record, some of them perhaps will outshine you.

We think we could not live without books and papers, but many wise and great ones have had but one or two books and some none at all. We could make books if there were none, or we could, like the shepherds of old times, go out and study the great unwritten book of Nature and gather inspiration and even know God.

Money is a great luxury, because it commands luxuries; and that is what every one of you are after. It may be unkind for me to say it, but I am sure if the school teachers of the next 20 years were to teach without pay there would not be two members in the graduating class. And yet we can live without money. Some of the greatest and best men of sacred and profane history have had none. What was money to Elijah or John on Patmos, or Robison Crusoe or Napoleon Bonaparte.

When you cross this threshold to return no more your anxiety will be for a position. Whenever you hear of a vacancy you will be trying for it and if you could know to-day that there was no position for you for ten years the courage would all go out of your hearts and you would see nothing before you but starvation and the poor-house. I am afraid you would be driven to suicide.

And yet more than half the human race are without positions. You will think nine-tenths of them are when you put in an application for a school and find that you are, maybe, the twenty-fifth applicant.

Let even a pulpit be vacant, and if it is of any prominence at all, the Church officials will be overwhelmed with men who want to preach a trial sermon. And yet position is not necessary for our success, else the army of martyrs for the cause of Christ and men who, like St. Paul or John Bunyon, were imprisoned for years at a time, were a failure.

You have come from good homes and perhaps the sweetest flavor in your graduation is the thought of the home-going and the precious days of rest and recreation at home after this long siege of study. But many of the best and noblest this earth has ever known had not the luxury of a home. John Howard Payne who wrote most delightfully about home had none. Perhaps that is the reason he wrote so well. He knew it from its loss. Home is not necessary to our success in life, else were the career of Jesus of Nazareth a failure for he had not where to lay his head. And yet we are concerned and anxious about all these things, sometimes even to the extent of fretting, while we neglect or treat lightly the one thing of which He who spake as never man spake said, it is "The one thing needful." You can get along without all of these but without this you cannot. Oh, what is it then and how may it be obtained?

It is that which Mary chose and Jesus said shall not be taken away from her,—a woman sitting at the feet of Jesus and hearing his word. A little thing apparently, but the Son of God commended it as above everything else. Christ's word and a proper understanding of it, or *The Religion of Jesus Christ, this is the one thing needful.* This it is, which if sought first, He has said "All these things shall be added unto you"—all necessary things—food, clothing, homes, friends, position. This found and your life cannot be a failure. What is success? The amount of money you can make, or the honor you can command, or the positions you can fill? Oh no. But the amount of good you can do, the people you can bless, the elevation of the standard of morality, the bettering of society, leading the thoughts of men into purer and higher channels, by precept and example enforcing the Golden Rule, by being a light in a dark place.

Some of these things may be accomplished by education and training, but nothing can so effectually do this great work of life as the word and mind of Jesus Christ. He is the one who if lifted up will draw all men unto him. And he can be lifted up only in human lives. It is when men see that we have been with Christ and learned of him, The Great Teacher, that they take knowledge of us. It is therefore a most fatal step to begin life's work without choosing first *this one thing needful.* Fatal to your

success. I know you will think of men who have been very successful who were not Christians, even infidels and skeptics. They may have made a great stir, shone very bright among the galaxy of literary stars, loosened the faith of many Christians but what have they given to the world of permanent and exalting benefit? Where are the asylums builded for relief of suffering, or the hospitals for the care of the sick, or benevolent schools for the education of the poor? What have they done to benefit humanity? "By their fruits ye shall know them." Would you call the tearing down of our national and religious bulwarks success. The overturning of Seminaries and Colleges and the introducing of heresy into young minds and side tracking them as to their usefulness? If you could cut a wide swath here would that be success? Until those who oppose our Christian faith can give us something better in its place they are more than criminals to slay the hopes of the heart and dash their cup of joy to the earth.

The Son of God has said there is only one thing needful, and that we ought to seek that one thing first. Is it not very great presumption in any man, however learned to place other things above that, and neglect it entirely? I do not know a man who is not a Christian can be a teacher either in the public school or the college. He must place his wisdom above the wisdom of God, and, by his example at least, teach others to do the will of God, how can he succeed?

But more needful to us is this one thing because of our individual necessities. Every life has its trials and yours more especially. You will come in contact very frequently with unreasonable people. Prejudiced parents who will think you are mistreating their children if you discipline them or do not show them the deference they think their little ones are entitled to. You will be obliged to meet angry fathers and furious mothers who are almost ripe for lynch law, and as steel striking the flint makes fire, so will an angry heart if it meets an obdurate will, but with this "one thing needful" tempering the heart, soft words will turn away strife and you will be greater than he that taketh a city. Instead of fighting you as an angry foe they will become your best friends, for the wise man says "When a man's ways please the Lord he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him." You need this one thing to quiet your hearts and still your anxiety. You will be much exercised about position and influence, and the pleasing of this director and that trustee, and this large pupil and that mischievous boy and you will be in constant fear if you have the spirit of the true teachers. And you will often worry yourself almost to desperation because one and another finds fault and you will very soon learn that the way to please nobody is to try to please everybody. But with the needful thing, this spirit of the Great Teacher revealed in his word and imparted in answer to prayer and study of his word, and your effort only to please Him, it will not be long until even your foes will kneel at your foot-stool.

This life is one great whole. We will not be judged even of men by individual actions, but by the ruling spirit of our life. The World is generous even to a fault toward those who have the spirit of God in them. Joseph made mistakes, some grievous ones, yet even Pharaoh said, "Can we find such an one as this in whom the spirit of God is?" And he made him ruler over all his people and over his own house, foreigner though he was. The same was true of Daniel. He was preferred above the presidents and princes because "an excellent spirit was in him and the king determined to set him over the whole Realm."

You need *this one thing* to give you patience. You will be greatly tired by unruly children. Some who have had no training at all, many worse than none, not a few sent to you to get them out of the way at home, some indeed because they cannot be ruled at home and with 40 or 50 or perhaps a hundred, good, bad and indifferent, it is a strong mind that can keep its poise and not break away into a fit of passion or worse into a fit of tears, and your power is all gone. But with this one thing needful, the spirit of Jesus Christ, you shall prevail. He was buffeted and scorned and even spit upon yet kept a calm spirit under it all, because he was aiming only to please God, and when it was all over, He was the victor because of the Spirit that was in him.

You must have *this one thing* because of its wisdom. Learning is excellent. It is the saw and plane and hammer of the carpenter. Books, you will need for reference and study.

Books will be necessary for correction but the wisdom and the tact that shows you how and when to use these, and to avoid the circumstances that makes their use a necessity, or that can wisely use the occasion to teach a moral lesson and lift the soul of the child up to the Great Judge and thus teach him to fear God rather than man is the wisdom you need. That wisdom comes only from above and is first pure, then peaceable. That wisdom, David said, has made me wiser than mine enemies, and St. Paul has said "The foolishness of God is wiser than men, and yet there are those who seek the position you are striving for, where so much wisdom and tact are necessary, without that wisdom that comes from above.

But another and greater reason still for your seeking the *one thing needful* now is the uncertainty of time. You are on the very threshold of your life work. A few more suns and you will step out into your responsible calling, but you are not sure you will reach it even now. A few months ago one of your number was called away from earth when almost ready for life's work. Last week a young man of next year's class whose promise was the brightest suddenly lost his life by drowning. None of us have promise of to-morrow,—only to-day. To pass away with this one thing unsought is never to find it at all.

No one ever needed more "The one thing needful" than the young men and young women just graduating. It ought to have been sought before your education. God says so. But if not then, surely before you begin your life work. Do not start wrong.

Do not face an uncertain future with God's opposition. It is enough to meet the opposition of men but who can stand fighting against God. I entreat you *dear young friends*, make the wisdom of God your first choice. Yes choice. It can be had for the choosing. But one thing is needful and Mary hath chosen that good part which shall not be taken away from her. If it were sold at a high figure there might be some excuse for neglecting it and get the one thing needful it would be cheap at any price. But Blessed be God it is free for the choosing. You may have it before you get your Diploma. You can get it this very day yet, your last Sabbath in the school, without money and without price. Jesus Christ who is made unto us wisdom says "Ye shall find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart," and to find him is to find the one altogether lovely, the chiefest among 10,000. Even so the wisest man said.

One more reason for choosing this. "It shall not be taken away from her," Jesus said. It is the only thing with such a promise. Everything else may be swept away. The floods may come and sweep away your home as it has so many recently. Fire may burn up your books and clothing. Thousands have suffered loss from fire. After the great fire in Chicago, some one met Mr. Moody who had lost everything, tabernacle, home, property, goods and said to him, Mr. Moody you are a poor man now. "Poor," he said, "No! I have my Bible and my religion left; I'm the child of a king."

Death will come to each one of you perhaps in the shape of a tornado, or an earthquake and even your life will be swept away but if you have chosen that good part "the one thing needful," it shall never be taken from you, neither in time nor in eternity. A thing of beauty here, is a joy forever yonder.

Monday Evening, June 27th.

Junior Entertainment.

AN EVENING WITH WHITTIER.

The Program.

- Farewell to the Forest, Mendelssohn. Semi-Chorus.
- Address by the President, Wm. R. Bray.
- The Two Rabbits, Whittier.
- Whittier, a Typical American Poet, Martha Powell.
- May Long, Maud I. Burns.
- Mary Garvin, Fishcer.
- Barbara Freitchie, Semi-Chorus.
- Kathleen, Whittier.
- Effie Fahringer, Carrie Redeker.
- Massachusetts to Virginia, Whittier.
- Hymn of Peace, Clem C. Weiss.
- What Whittier has seen of America's Progress, Wm. E. Jones.
- Skipper Ireson's Ride, Whittier.
- Maggie Thomas.

Lustpiel.—Overture, Keler Beler.
Four Hands, Maud L. Burns, Prof. W. H. Butts.
THE CHILDREN OF THE POET'S BRAIN.
(Composed for the occasion.)

CHARACTERS.
Mr. Whittier, Wm. R. Ray.
Mary Garvin, Lizzie Fister.
Barbara Freitchie, Edna Lantie.
Mabel Martin, Una E. Titus.
Esek Harden, Wm. H. Leuder.
Little girl and boy, Lela M. Stroud.
in 'In School Days,' Jacob Krout.
Cobbler Keezer, Daniel Connor.
Maud Muller, May Learn.
Judge, Clyde Hirlman.
Barefoot Boy, Harry G. Dechant.
Reader, Mary A. Horn.

The class of '93 this year made a departure from their usual program on the evening set apart for their exercises. They invited their friends to spend "An Evening with Whittier." The President's address as given by Mr. Bray, explains the invitation.

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN: An "evening with Whittier" may seem to you inappropriate for a class-day exercise; but to the class of '93 it is pleasantly suggestive and most fitting. To us the name Whittier calls up pleasant memories. We have for the past five months, been studying this great poet and his work and especially his poem Snow-bound and as a result our minds are filled with beautiful thoughts and we have formed a taste for good poetry.

Inspired by the knowledge we have derived from our study, and desiring to impress upon the minds of all, the culture to be gained from the study of literature, we feel that an evening could not be spent more profitably than in the contemplation of Whittier and his works.

Has it ever occurred to you how woefully ignorant the youth of our land are as regards our standard literature and our great literary men? And have you not looked with alarm upon the literature they seem to delight in?

The evil effect of such literature, upon the minds can hardly be over-estimated. It acts as a mind poisoner, and instead of being filled with beautiful thoughts and susceptible to good influences, the readers of vulgar literature become morally depraved and their minds are so vitiated that they will not readily yield to the influences of education.

The minds of the young when once awakened need something to stimulate them to greater activity. Nothing will do this better than good literature. This literature should be chosen by a person with knowledge superior to that of the child, because as the child is not capable of distinguishing between the good and bad, the result might be, if left to himself, that he would choose something that would be hurtful to him.

Let the parents and teachers of our great land, choose for the youth his reading matter and as a result we would see an improvement in the moral and intellectual development of future generations.

Thanking you all for your presence and the interest you have shown us, in the name of the Class of '93, I bid you a hearty welcome.

Then followed recitations, chosen as representative production of the different veins in which Whittier has so happily expressed himself.

A religious poem "The Two Rabbits" was simple and beautiful given by Miss Martha Powell; "Mary Garvin" a story of the early settlers experience with the Indians, was graphically recited by Miss Eva Dintinger.

The spirited anti-slavery poem "Massachusetts to Virginia" was given in good style by Mr. Clem Weiss, and Skipper Ireson's Ride" one of the legends of early New England, was presented by Miss Maggie Thomas. Miss Thomas has no little ability in recitation and did herself full justice in her rendering of the poem.

A very common remark by way of comment on the evening entertainment, was that every performer was so easy and natural in the rendering of their respective parts.

There was no great gesticulating, no affected, unnatural tones of voice, no apish efforts to assume impossible roles, but a simple, easy, and yet withal a most pleasing and graceful rendering that at once elicited closest attention and warmest sympathy of the entire audience.

This was simply the natural outcome of the careful class drill given these young people in their Junior literary work.

When a teacher works with a view to getting the thought of any selection, and with a firm purpose of having that thought express in natural easy tones then all the old time stage struck nonsense that so harrows ones very

soul disappears, and it becomes a pleasure to hear a body of delightful young people render a selection of poetry or prose or perform a cast of character that may be assigned them.

JUNIOR ESSAY—MISS MAUD L. BURNS.

The only essay on the Junior evening program was read by Miss Maud L. Burns, subject, "Whittier a typical American Poet." It was a beautifully written essay and we regret that limited space forbids giving it entire. Miss Burns showed most conclusively that J. G. Whittier is the typical poet of America, and we bespeak for her in this line of work a brilliant future, if she will but bend her efforts to that line of work.

JUNIOR ORATION.

Mr. Will E. James of Scranton, Pa., had the Junior Evening oration, and he certainly treated it with such credit as would have brought no shame to a much older head, "What Whittier has seen of American Progress." It was indeed, a thoughtful, well written, and well delivered production, and showed very clearly Mr. Whittier's large experience in, and broad comprehension of America's wonderful progress.

The last feature of the evening's program, and which was quite unique in its character, was composed expressly for the occasion by Mrs. Welsh. It was a poem with pantomimic illustrations.

The poet, Whittier, was represented as sitting at his fireside in the twilight musing upon the various experiences of his life.

"Memory leads him slowly back
Over many a winding, devious track
To the hopes and joys of youth's bright day.
The pathway not unclouded lay.
Here a battle-note sounds high:
And here a poor slave's wailing cry
T'cross his honest soul; and here
A quiet grave he lingers near.

But he recalls happy memories too,
and as he stuns up his life he feels that the Divine Hand has crowned his lip with blessings, and that he has true cause for gratitude and content. In spite of it all through, as he muses in the twilight, he says:

To-night a sadness strangely steals
Upon me, as on one who feels
Himself alone; dear friends have I,
And willing hands are always by
To gratify my least desire;
But yet for me no home hearth-fire
Has ever burned; no gentle hand
Was ever placed in mine to stand
Or fall with me; till death no one
Has named me Father; no dear son
Nor daughter dear has ever taught
To me the lessons deepest fraught
With God's sweet fatherhood. No word
From child of mine will ever be heard
To help the world in hour of need.
I am alone, alone, indeed.

Tears gather at the thought and his head sinks upon his breast. He falls asleep, and as he sleeps he dreams that he is sitting beside the old hearth which he has made familiar to his readers in his poem, "Snow Bound." There gather around him, not the forms that he was want to see there in his childhood days, but "A goodly train, the children of his heart and brain."

They call him "Father" and say they have come to cheer him with "loving words and smiles of cheer." One gentle daughter assures him that they are now busy in the world speaking the messages that he through them has spoken "And we shall speak, long after thou art laid to sleep, in quiet rest." Then they gather about him: Mary Garvin with her sweet face; Barbara Freitchie with her flag; Mabel Martin, the witch's daughter, now happy in Esek Harden's love; the little boy and girl in Whittier's poem in "In School Days," where the little girl says to the boy with childish innocence.

"I'm sorry that I spelt the word,
I hate to go above you,
Because—the brown eyes lower fell—
Because, you see, I love you."

Cobbler Keezer comes too, with his magic lapstone; Maud Muller, rake in hand, with the Judge; and last the Barefoot Boy. They each speak some characteristic part of the poem in which they are found and as they turn to go, leave beside the poet a flower in Whittier's hand and so wakens him. As he starts from the dream, he looks around still expecting to see the forms which had seemed so real. But although the words each spoke are ringing in his ear, he does not see his children. He glances down, however, and sees the blossom in his hand, the flowers beside him, and then he gathers them into his hand and says:

"Sweet flowers, God's messengers are you;
And ever henceforth while flowers blow,
I shall remember, I shall know
That he can never be alone,
Who hears you speak in sweetest tone
Or God's abiding faithful love."

He then rises and with outstretched hands, and uplifted eyes, continues:

"Father, I thank thee that thou dost always bless
The good thy children try to do,
Thy weakness pity and their sin forget;
Father, I give no self to thee anew,
—and the curtain falls.

The conception was a pretty one and the spirit with which each character presented his part, as the poem was read, in clear distinct tones easily heard even in the most pathetic parts, all over the room, made the scene appear most real.

CONTINUED ON SECOND PAGE.