

THE SEVENTY-SEVENTH COMMENCEMENT

Sir Auckland Geddes, British Ambassador to the United States, delivered the Commencement address to 1294 members of the class of 1921 on Thursday morning, June 30. In addition to these there were listed in the official programme the names of 139 seniors who had received their degrees between January and June.

Though the weather was almost perfect, it was slightly warm, and the large audience welcomed the comparative brevity and conciseness of the speaker's unusually inspiring address, as well as the expedition with which the great number of degrees were conferred. Though the programme did not begin until after ten o'clock and there was an unusual number of degrees granted, the exercises were over before noon.

The extraordinary size of the senior class this year made seating arrangements in the great hall especially difficult. Aside from the 600 seats reserved for the alumni there were almost no seats which were not occupied by the graduating class and their friends, who filled the auditorium to its capacity. The commencement procession was so arranged that the seniors arrived upon the terrace in front of the building in five double lines. The simultaneous entry of these five double lines of seniors was an inspiring sight for those privileged to witness it. The diplomas were presented to the members of the classes as they advanced upon the platform, two at a time, thus materially lessening the time taken for this essential part of the commencement programme.

Sir Auckland Geddes' address was as follows:

I thank you for the welcome you have extended to me as the representative in this republic of the British empire. Through it

you make plain your desire to express friendship for your near neighbor, Canada, and for her partner nations, whether their territories be in Europe, Asia, Africa, Australia or here in this hemisphere. That desire is reciprocated by all the Britons.

Within the last fortnight the prime ministers of the British empire, assembled in London, have proclaimed the aspiration of the peoples they represent, that a spirit of friendly coöperation with this republic should be the basis of the empire's foreign policy. To their chorus of proclamation, which has received so wide, so beneficial a publicity in this country, what can their king's ambassador add, save the word Amen.

I am fortunate in being able to refer you to that volume of expressed good will, for I deem it my duty to speak today upon another matter. Still, I am not unaware that there is some danger of misunderstanding if I do so, for custom demands that whenever an ambassador speaks in public he refers to the good relations which exist and should continue between his country and that to which he is accredited. Similarly, I am not ignorant that if an ambassador fails to make such a reference there is always someone ready to assume that his omission means that neither now nor in the future are or can those nations' relations be good, and to find in such unwarranted assumption material for gloomy forebodings, perhaps for scaring headlines in the daily press. It is possible that what I have just said, added to the weighty words of the prime ministers, will enable me to escape that danger this time, but that there may be no loophole for reasonable misunderstanding, permit me to declare that the relations between our countries appear to me to be excellent and, I have no doubt, will so continue indefinitely into the future. With that I complete what I have to say at this time on the subject of British-American friendship.

Young men and women of the graduating class! Will you permit me to speak to you briefly, not as the ambassador of a foreign power, but as a man who a few short years before you set out upon a journey down the pathway along which you have now to pass? All of us university men and women, regardless of nationality, have special and peculiar

privileges—and special and peculiar responsibilities. We are all members of a great host that sometimes suffers loss through desertion, often gathers recruits from the most unlikely quarters, but which, speaking briefly, is composed of the university men and women of the world. You are a squad of recruits for that host, and year by year squads fundamentally like you have been graduating at universities and colleges in this country, in Canada, throughout the British empire, in all the countries of Europe, and I know not in how many lands besides.

Perhaps you have not thought of yourselves as members of an international body, but consider for a moment. Common thought on a common mental background is the maker of communities. You have spent years studying—what? The thought of Americans expressed in law, science, art, music, literature? To a slight extent, yes; but to a far greater extent the thought of Frenchmen, Germans, Englishmen, Scots, Irishmen, Italians, Arabs, Greeks, and so on throughout the catalogue of the nations.

And what have the young Canadians or British or French or Germans been studying? Exactly the same things that you have devoted your time to. The thought in universities is international thought, mankind's thought based on mankind's knowledge. Long ago, in connection with new knowledge, a practical and effective communism was established. National boundaries impose no limitations on the movement of scientific thought and knowledge, and today in Japan, China, India, Africa, throughout Europe and America, university men and women are thinking similar thoughts based on a similar background of knowledge.

It is a matter of common experience that a university man in his intellectual life often feels himself more akin mentally to the university men of other nations than to the uneducated citizens of his own state and country. When I was a teacher of anatomy and of the group of subjects centered on the anatomical chair I never felt a stranger in any university, for there I could rediscover my own interests in the interests of the men working in the departments that corresponded to my own. So in greater or less degree it is with all of us who have the privilege of university training. I do not mean that because I became an anatomist I became less British; I do not mean that you have become less American as a result of your university training. What hap-

pened to me and what has happened to you is that we are more imbued with a spirit of human comradeship and human understanding. We think of ourselves more easily as part of the army of humanity engaged in a great common adventure against our gaoler, Ignorance.

I remember a spirited argument as to whether it was well to encumber the minds of students with the names of the great discoverers of knowledge, and in my youth and enthusiasm I maintained that knowledge was just knowledge and that the name of the discoverer did not matter. I was profoundly wrong. If there were only one sovereign state in the world the name of the discoverer of a fragment of knowledge would perhaps matter little, but there is more than one state and there has been more than one age, and the names of the discoverers of knowledge are an important part of the fabric of university training. They are the windows through which science and art look out on history and upon the social conditions of ages that have passed, and each great name in itself has associations that are of priceless value to understanding.

Those great names and all that they imply in the world of thought are the rivets in a great world structure now in building.

Even the most prosaic of men who thinks at all dreams of an age in which war shall be no more. Only the most optimistic dream that that age is at its dawn—a stormy dawn, in truth, but still to them the dawn. The optimists are probably wrong in the detail of time, but they are indubitably right; the age will come when war will be no more, when peace will reign all round this spinning globe, for the choice which lies before humanity is between a peace of reason and the peace of death. Either through the establishment of world law or through human extermination there will be peace on earth. Science is moving to the position in which she will be able to say to the peoples: "The choice is yours! Here in my right hand I hold all those gifts of knowledge which, rightly used, will enable you to annihilate distance and make possible the government of the world as one state, at peace within itself for evermore. Here in my left I carry gifts which will enable you to destroy utterly your enemies and those who would oppose your lightest whim. But remember, what I give I give freely to all the world, for science has long been communized."

And humanity, if it happen to be sane at

the moment at which this choice is presented, a stroke of luck which cannot with certainty be assumed, will say: "Give me the gifts that your right hand holds." Then world law will struggle into being and will establish itself, if humanity does not suffer from one of its recurring attacks of mental derangement during the years of its establishment. Of course, I do not for a moment believe that humanity will destroy itself—it will accept the alternative with what grace it can.

How that world law will be established, whether through some league or association of nations or through one nation or people leading the others to it, I do not know. No man knows. But that that era will come in which the world will be ruled by law and not by force is as certain as anything can be.

Man is now conscious of the idea of world peace, though the idea is still vague in many minds because to many men the word peace is vague in its meaning. Think quickly! What do you mean by "peace"? Is it the absence of war that you think of? Is it a state or condition of "not-war"? Does the word in your mind suggest the equation, peace = not war? If it does, you are still, quite unconsciously perhaps, thinking of war, international war, as the normal and peace as the abnormal state of world affairs. Peace is not a negative conception. It is not the absence of war that makes peace. Peace is a very positive thing. In its essence it is "the joyful acceptance of the reign of law." When we say that world peace will come we mean that the day is approaching when mankind will begin to accept the reign of law throughout all the world and that in a little while thereafter, as this old planet counts time, the acceptance of the reign of law by the vast majority will become joyful. Then the age of peace will have dawned. There may be, there probably will be, outlaws then just as there are criminals now, but even today a majority of the people of the world is law-abiding.

On you, young recruits of the army of university men and women, rests a great responsibility; to you comes a great opportunity. Through your enrollment in a great international force of similarly thinking men and women, you have it in your hands as the subordinate thought leaders of your nation to help the less educated to grasp the great conception of peace as the spiritual thing which it is, the joyful acceptance of the reign of law. You

have it in your power to make your fellow-countrymen realize that other nations are not so foreign in reality as they are made to seem in caricature. You can make them understand that throughout the world uncounted men and women know the things that you know, think the thoughts and dream the dreams that you think and dream, that see the world and the world's history, throughout the long ages before there was a nation thinking of itself as America, or even a nation thinking of itself as England, in a manner similar to that in which you see it.

As I reflect upon the history of the world with its amazing drama of kingdoms and republics, of civilizations made and unmade, with its giddy dance, like motes in a ray of light, of Cæsars and kings of kings, of priests and conquerors, I feel as if I were privileged to watch the struggles of two superhuman beings, the one instinct with selfish greed, the other with love, to dominate and control man. At first the devil of selfish greed seems almost all-powerful, but gradually the other gains and gains, though after every gain there is a lapse, but never quite back to the old level.

What we thus externalize and personify is in truth not outside us, but inside, for in his own heart is the battlefield of the brute and god in man.

We have just passed through one of the dark chapters in the history of the world, but in those hours and years of darkness a light was lit that, I believe, will never go out. It may flicker and pale, but it is inextinguishable. Now and for evermore the idea of justice and law among and between all the people of the earth is in the hearts of men, and in its own good time and its own unforeseeable way it will come to fruition.

You can help. By your university you have been led out of your ignorance into some human understanding. As the years go by you will find that understanding growing, deepening and developing. You will live to see miracles, for the age of miracles is not past. Apples will still fall to the ground and will not fly upward. You need not look for miraculous reversals of the laws of gravity, but in the human mind and heart there are still miracles, and the greatest is the way in which knowledge and understanding seize upon men's souls and compel them, whether they will or not, to serve humanity and not themselves. There will come to each of you from some

deep hidden chamber of his own heart urgent orders to serve your fellowmen, and you will be compelled to obey or to murder your inmost self. The reward of knowledge and understanding is not going to be paid to you in dollars, but in service which you will have to render. For a time you may think this bargain a hard one and unfair. At the end you will learn that by a miracle the giving of the service was the great reward and its being given by you as one of a great international company the great inspiration.

These are hard sayings, but, I beg you, suspend judgment for ten years and again for ten years, and you will then find either that your inmost self is dead by your own hand or that you, too, have learned that humanity is a vast brotherhood to serve which is the reward and the inspiration.