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MESSAGE TO THE CLASS*

FROM the first Rice commencement on, in the name of the founder, and for the trustees, faculty, students, graduates, and friends of the institution, I have had the privilege of expressing good wishes to the outgoing graduates of the session. I am glad the date returns on my dial once more.

From time to time I have reminded Rice undergraduates that Oxford, Cambridge, and early American colleges have a good deal in common with the Academy of Athens, founded by Plato, the Lyceum of Athens, founded by his pupil, Aristotle, and the Museum of Alexandria, founded by Alexander the Great, Aristotle's pupil. Plato's Academy in Athens and Ptolemy's Museum in Alexandria were to flourish for almost a thousand years, that is to say, for a period considerably longer than has been attained by any modern institution. Aristotle's immediate successor as head of the Lyceum was Theophrastus, who carried on for nearly forty years. In the words of the late George S. Gordon of Oxford, the Lyceum of Athens under Aristotle and Theophrastus had "its chapel, its cloisters, its hall, its garden, its library, its walks, and its president's lodgings; the students lived close by, and held gaudies from time to time, according to rules laid down by Aristotle."

Now if Plato were present today, he would wish you wisdom, courage, temperance, justice. To him these were the virtues or excellences of the good life. Aristotle agreed with

*By Edgar O. Lovett, retiring President.

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him. And if Aristotle were present today, he would commend to you not only the excellences of Plato, but other virtues, and in the following order: intelligence, moral insight, liberality, munificence, high-mindedness, right ambition, good temper, friendliness, truth, just resentment, modesty.

With modesty I take over where Aristotle left off. I make you three wishes, by way of three brief but authentic episodes.

In the first place, Elihu Root, American, John Morley, Englishman, and Richard Haldane, Scotsman, once were walking through St. James Park, London, on their way to Haldane's house, and as they walked they fell to discussing the chief qualities of public life. "Eloquence," said one; "Courage," said another; but they finally agreed that Elihu Root had made out his case for "Patience," as an indispensable quality. In the light of that understanding I commend to you patience of mind—patience of mind for the thinking of things through, and always under the restraint of righteous fear until action will no longer wait. I wish you patience of mind.

In the next place, Lord Acton, a Roman Catholic in religion, a Gladstonian Liberal in politics, Regius Professor of Modern History in the University of Cambridge, and one of the most erudite men of his generation, told the following story at a dinner of the Historical Society which he founded at Trinity College, Cambridge: "I was once with two eminent men, the late Bishop of Oxford, Stubbs, and the present Bishop of London, Creighton. On another occasion I was with two even more eminent men, the two most learned men in the world—I need hardly tell you their names—they were Mommsen and Harnack. On each occasion the question arose, who was the greatest historian

the world ever produced. On each occasion the name first mentioned, and on each occasion the name finally agreed upon, was that of Macaulay." Now Macaulay himself thought and said that Thucydides was the greatest historian that ever lived. In the spirit of those utterances I commend to you generosity of mind—generosity of mind in estimating the merits of men and movements. And when thinking or talking of people it is a good rule to seek out and dwell on the good in all men. I wish you patience of mind, and generosity of mind.

In the third place, I would recall an evening spent before the study fire of Sir J. J. Thomson at the Master's Lodge of Trinity College, Cambridge. Offering me a chair, he said: "This was Porson's chair, and I'll sit in one that belonged to Clerk-Maxwell." Now, as you know, Porson was an eighteenth-century scholar of prodigious learning in Greek, secure of a permanent place in the history of the classical humanities, while Clerk-Maxwell was a profound physicist of the nineteenth century, assured of a permanent place in the history of modern science. We passed the evening, however, discussing, not Greek, of which I knew little, nor mathematical or experimental physics, of which he knew all, but games, English and American games, physical fitness for intellectual work, sound mind in sound body, and the like. It is pleasant to remember that experience of a keen, gentle, kindly, versatile mind. And the recollection of it leads me to wish you flexibility of mind—flexibility of mind enabling the mind by turns to concentrate, relax, recover in another subject, or rest. "The spirit also must sleep," said the Norwegian geometer, Sophus Lie, time and time again. These three wishes, patience of mind, generosity of mind, flexibility of mind, readily fuse into tolerance of mind. And tolerance of mind is a fundamental condition of mind as-

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siduously to be cultivated in these times, because tolerance of mind, though not always adequate, is certainly essential alike to individual hope, coöperative effort, advancement of human welfare, and the maintenance of good will among men and nations, great and small.

Finally, you have been engaged with us in building a temple of truth. Of the invisible spirit of that temple you are the visible presence. The meaning of the temple, like the kingdom of heaven, is within you. And to my mind it is singularly appropriate that the last words you carry away with you in imperishable memory when packing up tomorrow should have fallen yesterday from the lips of a minister of religion, the new President of the Union Theological Seminary, and have been borne today on the voice of a man of science, the new President of the Rice Institute.

From our first commencement in June, 1916, on down to the commencements of June, '43, February, '44, October, '44, and June, '45, we have sent our sons and daughters of Rice forward in peace, in war, in peace, and again in war, to realize their highest capacity in any field where that capacity should be most urgently needed. Even so today, in March, 1946, on the occasion of our thirty-second commencement, with every hope and all the solicitude of affection, we send you forth on the peaceful enterprises and adventures of civilization, to live, to work, and to triumph, for God, for country, and for truth.

EDGAR ODELL LOVETT.



