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*The Graduating Exercises  
of the New York Military Academy  
Cornwall-on-Hudson, N. Y.*

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Address by  
**Hon. James A. Farley**  
*Former Postmaster General*

and

Introduction by  
**Hon. Charles J. Hardy, Sr.**  
*President, Board of Trustees  
New York Military Academy*

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## The Graduating Exercises of the New York Military Academy, Cornwall-on-Hudson, N. Y.

Mr. GAVAGAN. Mr. Speaker, under leave to extend my remarks in the RECORD, I include the following address of Hon. James A. Farley and introduction by Hon. Charles J. Hardy, Sr., of New York City:

INTRODUCTION BY HON. CHARLES J. HARDY, SR.

Ladies and gentlemen and young men of the graduating class, it is my very pleasant duty to present to you the distinguished gentleman who puts aside for the moment the cares of a busy life and honors us by his presence today.

He needs no introduction from me, so I shall attempt none. His name is a household word throughout the length and breadth of our land, spoken always with admiration and with a depth of affection that testifies most eloquently to the place he holds in the minds and the hearts of our people. He typifies the highest ideal of American citizenship, which is the embodiment of all that our academy stands for—loyalty to the principles upon which our Republic is founded; steadfastness in right doing; square and fair dealing toward all men, the Honorable James A. Farley:

ADDRESS BY THE HONORABLE JAMES A. FARLEY

Mr. Hardy, Colonel Pattillo, honored guests, and members of the graduating class of 1941, it gives me great pleasure to address the graduating class of 1941. I sincerely hope and trust I will have the pleasure of being present on a similar occasion 5 years from now, when I hope my son, Jimmy, who is one of the younger students here, will take his place among the many fine citizens who have been trained for life's work in this famous academy.

I have been personally acquainted with the high standing of the New York Military Academy ever since my boyhood days. It was because I knew intimately about your ideals that I was happy to have one of my own come under the influence of your distinguished faculty and historic traditions. I trust that my remarks today to the class being graduated will contain a few nuggets of worthwhile observation to be helpful to them in the pursuit of their careers.

The most grievous loss to mankind in my time has been a decline in respect for the pledged word, for promises, either our own or the other fellow's, and in mutual good faith. In saying this I am preaching from no dogmatic motto card. I think that what I have to say on this subject is the most realistic doctrine in the world.

The whole structure of civilization was built upon respect for truth and upon honor in keeping promises and discharging obligations. For example, there was no supergovernment in international law, no final force, no force at all except that of good conscience. The peace of the whole world rested on one single concept—reliance on promises in treaties and Christian principles of mutual respect for the smaller and the weaker peoples. When it was demonstrated, by the "scrap of paper" incident in 1914 that a brutal and sinister influence had crept back on humanity from the prehistoric cave man era the principal prop of international peace and security began to fail. There was no reliance left except threat and force counterbalancing force and threat. By that decline of peace through honor and honesty the whole world courts chaos and destruction. There is no peace. The nations are armed camps. Mutual respect has given way to mutual suspicion if not hatred. Spiritually the world has returned to the moral gloom of the Dark Ages—and all this because of the easy error of regarding truth and honor as little more than words in a schoolboy's copy-book.

I do not need to labor this point. You can see it today wherever you look from pole to pole. "Macbeth hath murdered sleep" and international trickery hath murdered the peace of the world without which civilization cannot survive. Christ is crucified again more brutally, more terribly than ever happened at Calvary.

You do not need to look beyond your own daily experience to see another aspect of my point. It is not alone in international relations that civilization rests on truth, honor, good faith and reliance on mutual promises. Our family relations are the basis of our domestic security and peace. They are all that distinguish civilization from savagery. In them there is little eventual effective legal compulsion. They rest on the high moral determination of decent men to fulfill their obligations to their dependents.

Yet I need not ask you to imagine the destruction of everything that is sweet and enjoyable in this life, if those reliances should fail and the sacred institution of family and community life among us should become such a mockery of honor and good faith as has perverted so many international relations that depended on the same kind of truth, good faith, and honor.

To bring this argument into an even more realistic area, does it ever occur to you, that our whole economic life—commercial and industrial—rests absolutely on faith in the promises in contracts, express or implied? Not a wheel could turn in industry or transportation, not an individual would be secure

in his employment for a single day, not a breadwinner for a family, rich or poor, could put his head on his pillow peacefully without some assurance that the engagements of promises, taken and given by him, would be faithfully fulfilled.

Laws can support but they cannot insure this tranquillity. It rests almost wholly in the confidence of each of us in the good faith of all of us. For that reason, every time one of us suffers even a momentary lapse in these vital obligations of truth and fair dealing he, by so much, strikes a little blow—slight perhaps, but of the same nature—as the terrible volcanic blastings that are being struck abroad today at every pillar of human happiness and security.

We are standing here almost within sight of the scene of the treason of Benedict Arnold—a brave soldier, a competent general, but a little man, a petulant man, a selfish man—which may all be compressed in two words—a "disloyal man." The immediate object of his military conspiracy failed, but the effect of his transgression on the minds and spirits and strength of the sorely beset defenders of this Nation and the architects of our future could have been disastrous.

What I am trying to say to you is that the homely, ancient virtues—truth, honor, and loyalty—are never to be taken lightly. They are not merely the basis of civilization in general but of our free American system in particular and of the highest hopes of mankind.

There is abroad in the world a substitute doctrine. It is not new. It is as old as tyranny and oppression. It recognizes that no nation is stronger than the sum of the strength of all its citizens. But it says also that the individual is too weak and untrustworthy to be depended upon to discharge the obligations of which I have spoken and upon which culture and civilization rests. For the moral and mutual responsibility of each of us separately and all of us together as the bulwark of national strength it substitutes the will of a dictator. For the compulsion of conscience and good faith it offers the compulsion of bondage, imprisonment, and the firing squad. For the leaven of good faith in human hearts it offers the whiplash of overwhelming force on human backs.

In other words, it is not only your own peace and security that depends on your faithful adherence to all that has been considered best among us, it is also your freedom. If our beliefs in our ancient virtues do not make us strong enough to resist and overcome this primitive dark and bestial doctrine, it will overcome the world, and civilization will go back to the nothing it set out from.

In this tragic conflict of ideas, perhaps tyranny has one great advantage. It speaks with a single mouth and relies on a single performance. Its millions of minions are puppets. Our system relies solely on the spontaneous and unflinching devotion to our ideals of millions of free men. The duty of keeping us true to them and so preserving our national strength and happiness is on no superior. It

is on each of us separately. In that sense each of you is a sentinel on duty over a key point in the defense of humanity against an ever-present vicious and deadly dangerous enemy. Your military training tells you what that means. Yours is a trusteeship for us all—a responsibility high, direct, and acutely personal, and so is mine, and so is that of every one of us. The general and special orders are simple, but in this crumbling of all old values throughout the world, I cannot overestimate to you the value of their very triteness. "Be honest, truthful, faithful, and loyal and our country will have little to fear, no matter what happens elsewhere on this earth."

There is one more quality as precious as the others I have named. It also may be abstract in statement or sound like another Sunday school maxim, but in the sense of which I speak it is as concrete, practical and necessary as a well-formed brick. Let me say here a word about courage. I don't now refer to any parade of physical fearlessness. I am talking to you about the silent intestinal fortitude that is yours alone in the still watches of the night—4-o'clock-in-the-morning courage—confidence in yourself and in the future of our country that never fails or even wavers.

There has been too much sentimentality recently about the handicap of our present youth, their "gloomy outlook," and the "lost generation." There is no doubt also that you start out under dark skies—that you are born to sacrifice and hardship. But these are precisely the things that forge the metal of men. Especially are they the things that have hammered out the character of America.

Let's skip a generation or two. There is nothing glowering over your skies today that begins to equal the danger and the challenges that met the pioneers in the conquest of this continent and the making and preservation of this Nation.

Tyrannical powers threatening from abroad? Why, in those days they were not even abroad. They were entrenched here in the Western Hemisphere surrounding us—north, south, and west of our beginnings.

Lack of equipment and preparation and dismay at threatening dangers? Why we started out on the edge of a howling wilderness. Savage men, savage coasts, unknown country frowned upon those generations from every side. With little more than their bare hands, the silent courage of their souls, their undoubting confidence in themselves, and the future of their country, they were willing to tackle anything. They did tackle everything and they peopled a continent in the shortest time, with the richest and most powerful civilization ever known in human history. You are confronted with no such task and menace as that. In comparison your lot is easy and your future high.

Dark days alternated with bright ones. Nothing that comforts you remotely resembles

the dangers and dismay that threatened this country much later. For months the flag of an enemy floated within sight of the Capitol at Washington, and those were years when the dissolution of our country seemed inevitable. Then there was the Civil War, and recently the depth of the dreadful depression in 1933.

And let me say this to you also. No generation that has been produced in this country ever faced a desperate crisis as well prepared as you. In our earlier days only a few of the young could be given by their parents and their country even the rudiments of education. Also little was formerly known of proper principles of child health, diet, and culture. With each forward step this condition has been improved. You are the heirs of all the ages in the foremost files of time.

I was pleased and astonished recently to read that the great national cross-section of the draft, last taken in 1917 and 1918, and being repeated again today, revealed that young men selected so short a time as 23 years ago were, on the average, between 1 and 2 inches less tall and about 15 pounds lighter than the present crop. This is in the nature of a scientific miracle.

It is only necessary to sit for a short time and talk to this generation to realize how far they are ahead of the youth of my day in knowledge and education. There is no yardstick to measure this and there may be exceptions. But my contemporaries are unanimous in telling me that the advance in mental equipment is as great as that in physical equipment.

In all that you can take great pride. But never forget this, your elders can take an even greater pride. This didn't just happen. It came because those who went before you and begot you, never lost sight of those spontaneous obligations of family and other relations of which I have told you—the very foundation of American institutions. There is nothing in this regard that you enjoy or shall in the future enjoy that was not handed down to you through the sacrifice and self-denial of elders who loved you from childhood, watched over you from the cradle in a determination that whatever was denied them in youth should not be withheld from you.

I know an old lady who sometimes and truly says: "There was never a pair of clean white hands that came to majority without one or more pairs of hard and sometimes grimy hands behind them to make it so." Never let that thought escape your minds.

You go forth in the pride and the confidence of country and of all American generations that have gone before you. That may and should be a sense of great gratification to you. But it should put in your hearts an even greater sense of duty and responsibility. You are their heirs and the product of their sacrifice. You must be grateful and show your gratitude by works and not mere words. You cannot let your country or your elders down. It is not enough for you to repeat their records and their triumphs. You shall have fallen short if you do not greatly better them. I know you will.

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