

dividuality of even the youngest of you, the conviction that your school life is the probation of a probation that is destiny itself. All the possibilities of a full grown oak are said to be in the acorn, the environment being what it ought to be; and you in your heyday of youth have in you all the possibilities of a successful after-life, if you will now only give the forces of your environment fair play. And how this is to be done is the very heart of my theme this evening.

There are but few of the students listening to me whose being is matured enough to make much of the glimpse they have yet had of what the life beyond the school life may have in store for them. And yet the older you are, the nearer you have come to the final examination agony, you must not forget that the life beyond your school period has a mission for you. You may call it destiny, if you will, and be prepared to take things as they come. But let me tell you that a policy of a *laissez faire* has never made much of an excellence out of any of God's creatures. Indeed, however inexorable fate may be from the poet's standpoint, the practical man refuses to see much of an unalterable fatality in such phrases as "Let well enough alone," or "Whatever is, is right." And, as a practical man, too practical as some may say, I would have none of you pin your faith to any such lackadaisical propositions. Some of you may have heard, not a hundred miles from this platform, the phrase "All education is self-education, beginning with self-examination and ending in self-control." And I would rather be laughed at for repeating such an aphorism—and you all know what pain there is in being laughed at—than that any of you should suffer shipwreck on an excuse which has in it

no element of logical insight or self-confidence, in an excuse, however orthodox, which the *laissez faire* phrases above quoted so barefacedly embody.

In speaking, thereof, of the work you intend to do for yourselves while here. I would have you all lay down a definite plan for your guidance, even if you have not yet come to look far beyond the horizon of your final examinations. Oh, what a narrowing of our horizon these examinations produce! What a blinding effect they have even on the best of us! "I made a mistake about the course of study at the beginning of the year," said a teacher lately, "and I did not discover my folly until within a month of the examination. Dear me, how I had lost all that time." "I enjoyed the study of botany amazingly well," said a pupil, "but, do you know, I was told a week before the examination that I had been studying the wrong book, and thus I had only my labor for my pains." The old story of the figure or sign taken for the number, the name for the thing itself, the symbol for the reality, the shadow for the substance, and who is there to save us from the fashion of the times, of either making too much of the examinations or of denouncing them unmeaningly!

Yes, you may well say, "Oh, these examinations!" And yet for the present we have no quarrel with the examinations. They have been called "necessary evils," and if we can only keep them in their place they are no worse than other necessary evils, that need not be mentioned. The object of education is not to pass an examination. You have been told this often enough, and many of you may be convinced of it. Some of you must have been brought to recognize the elements in your own being with