

**HVERFORD COLLEGE,  
THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR  
IN PROFESSIONAL LIFE,  
ANNUAL ADDRESS**

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Haverford College, The American Scholar in Professional Life, Annual Address by George  
Gluyas Mercer

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**GEORGE GLUYAS MERCER**

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BY

GEORGE GLUYAS MERCER, LL.M., J.C.D.

*1889.*



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President's Office.

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## The American Scholar in Professional Life.

" . . . . . Fungar vice cotis, acutum  
Reddere quæ ferrum valet, exors ipsa secandi."

*Hor. de Arte Poet., 304-5.*

The holiest of all the Isles of Greece was the Isle of Delos, sacred to Apollo, the god of light and poetry and prophecy, the protector of the Muses, the ideal representative of the Hellenic people. The holiest place to the scholar is the temple of his Alma Mater, the home of light and poetry and prophecy, the protector of the Muses, the ideal representative of Humane Learning. As the Greeks held great festivals in summer on the Isle of Delos in honor of their god, so the sons of Haverford come together each summer to renew their youth within her sacred halls. And as the Greeks of old performed their part in life before the marble eyes of the statues of their gods which they had ever before them, so the Alumnus of to-day should discharge his daily duties mindful of the watchful eyes of that benign Mother who sent him forth with earnest hope. Happy is he who, upon his return, can stand erect and say, "*Spem bonam certamque domum reporto.*"

Let us briefly consider this evening how faithfully those of us who have chosen pursuits in life to which scholarship is an implied necessity have fulfilled the expectations of the College of our youth.

On Sunday next, throughout the length and breadth of our country, millions of people will come together to be addressed by learned men upon the truths of a religion distinguished alike by its simplicity and its grandeur. From Maine to Oregon, and from the Lakes to the Gulf, there is scarcely a village so small or so poor as not to contain at least one upward-pointing spire "to speak the soul's eternal want of God, the inmost friend." The pulpit, as Carlyle says in "Past and Present," is a vantage ground whose greatness even its occupants do not appreciate. Its theme is the loftiest: "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise; think on these things." Its promise is the most beneficent: "He that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live, and whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die." Its truths strengthen and save States, for "Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people."

Reasoning *a priori* would not one suppose that a theme so inspiring, an audience so large, a hope so lofty,—that these would train up a class of scholars for the pulpit

the overwhelming effect of whose eloquence would make the efforts of other men on other themes seem small and weak? And yet is it not true that the majority of the sermons to be preached on Sunday next will fail to make a lasting impression?

Time was, in the early days of England, when not only matters spiritual but also the knowledge and administration of her laws were chiefly confined to the clergy, and most of the judges, at least until the time of Henry III., were supplied from that body. Time was, even in our own country and in this century, when the clergymen were the scholars of the land. But now, when the tendency of the age is towards a broader culture for professional men, we are told that the number of theological students who have had no college training whatever is increasing. And this we are ready to believe after listening to the weary, dreary stuff that passes for preaching with the average pulpit orator. Many of you doubtless remember the description of his boyish experiences at church as related by that prince of story-tellers, John B. Gough: how his father always demanded his attendance at church until he grew so weary of it that he hated it; how he sat on a hard bench with his feet dangling over until his poor little legs would get "pins and needles" and would go to sleep; how he did not dare to rub his legs or to follow their example and go to sleep because his father sat beside him; and how, after thus suffering in every