

ADDRESS TO CASE ALUMNI MAY 24, 1947

by  
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Twenty-five years ago I faced the option of remaining in the industrial world with choice associations and attractive prospects, or of returning to the educational world on something of an adventure. It was some wise instinct or guiding angel, I am sure, that prompted me to choose the latter path. In moments of retrospect, I can think of no other career I might have attempted that would have led me to more rewarding experiences or more durable satisfactions. It is not likely that any other career path would have brought me under more favorable formative influences, or have set my home in more pleasant and stimulating communities, or have led to wider travel in North America and Western Europe, or have created so wide and altogether choice a circle of personal associations, or have made such varied demands on versatility, or have evoked a wider range of self-expression, or have offered such rewarding opportunities for civic service and spiritual fellowship.

I even doubt if in any other career I would have acquired any more money, or have enjoyed more creature comforts, or have been able to give my children better advantages. Yes, I am incurably enthusiastic over an educational career, for I have had a swell time and these eighteen years at Case have been its climax.

As colleges go, Case had had long presidencies. The average for the country is scarcely more than five years, but Cady Staley served for sixteen years, Charles Howe for twenty-seven and I have held out for eighteen. It really is a dare-devil sort of career, but some touch of innocence - or is it bravado? - continues to lure men into it. On the whole, I think, Case's long presidencies have paid off. The story is told of a young president who was counselled by the venerable Charles William Eliot of Harvard. "Young man", said the Harvard sage, "do you realize what quality it is that you will most need in this great office?" "Yes, Mr. Eliot", was the confident reply, "energy, boundless energy!" "Ah, young man, you are wrong; quite wrong", Eliot rejoined, "what you will need is patience, boundless patience!" Eliot was right, and it takes time to reap the fruits of patience.

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Dr. Staley, you recall, came to Case after it had been running for five years without a president, to begin his career in the new "technical tabernacle", sumptuous for its day and scarcely a year old, which the Trustees confidently believed would suffice to meet Case's needs for all time to come. College had scarcely opened in the fall of 1886 when a disastrous fire swept the building and its seven teachers and forty-four students had to take refuge in basement rooms on the Reserve campus. Undaunted by disaster, Dr. Staley kept on serving Case for sixteen years and stamped his rugged character on 339 early graduates who won renown for the young college by their splendid careers. He continues to put his stamp on Case men, and we hope it will go on forever, through the foundation for student aid and welfare, now amounting in all to over \$160,000, created through his bequest.

When Dr. Staley retired in 1902, he left a thriving college of 353 students and an outstanding faculty of 21 plus two assistants. Then came Dr. Howe's presidency of twenty-seven years, memorable for its length, its solid material gains and the famous standards of discipline and diligence which he inculcated. The Case which Dr. Howe handed over to me in September of '29 had grown to 653 students and a faculty of 69, with assets of 6½ millions and a budget of \$386,000 a year. It was an excellent college, with distinguished men on its staff, capable students, admirable equipment, sound finances, and a wide reputation for its exacting standards. But in many ways it was a parochial college, drawing its students almost wholly from near-by sources, giving only undergraduate courses, placing its graduates largely in local industries, depending on a small inner circle for direction and support, and - excepting always Dayton Miller, the illustrious - reaching a very restricted clientele by its scientific and professional activities.

In 1929 there was a new President. He was an Ohio boy who had taught at Wisconsin and M.I.T., had taken his fling in the telephone industry, had done war chores in Washington, had directed a study project for the engineering colleges and the Carnegie Corporation, and had visited in the line of duty most of the leading centers of

technological education in the United States, Canada, Great Britain and Western Europe. He came to Case because he believed in it, because he believed that destiny had marked it to become a powerful regional institution in the heart of industrial America, with a national outreach and influence. He believed that the foundations for Case's higher destiny would take a long time to lay; that its public relations would need to be strengthened greatly, first in the Cleveland area, then in widening circles of professional and industrial activity; that its small inner circle of backers would need to be expanded into a commanding group of civic and industrial leaders; that it would be necessary to give Case's alumni larger and more serious responsibilities, together with a new vision of its future; that the faculty must be induced to take a greater share in initiative and planning; that students must be inspired to match their traditional diligence with equal enterprise and imagination; that graduates must be placed more widely and in all the strongest centers of industrial activity; and that advanced work with graduate students and research on a wide scale and not alone in the hands of one or two individuals must be added to Case's solidly built undergraduate program.

Yes, Case needed new buildings and equipment and men and money, but it ought to ask for them as means to great ends and not merely as ends in themselves. The first thing to do was to set up the goals and set them high, then to make them seem real and vivid and not merely desirable, but actually compelling, to those who would have to work together for their fulfillment, so that lesser and transitory goals, good but inadequate, would automatically fall into the background. But alas, just as Cady Staley's high hopes for early progress went up in smoke on October 27, 1886, so mine went down in the great financial avalanche of October 23 in 1929. What with the long depression in the 30's, the New Deal with its economic revolution, the Great War, and these two years of confusing aftermath, there has not been a normal day since, unless instability has become the new normal for mankind.

Time, I am convinced, is not the major dimension of history; in times of crisis and unsettlement its pace is greatly speeded. In this sense, we have lived a full half of Case's history in these past 18 years. The catalog for 1929 listed 653 students and all of them undergraduates; this year our roster included 2811 students of whom over 200 are studying for graduate degrees. Prior to September, 1929, Case had enrolled a total of 7350 students; since that time we have enrolled 6556 in our regular day classes, an additional 7011 in our evening classes and still an additional 10,000 in government sponsored war-time courses. Before September 1929 Case had graduated 2781 men with Bachelor of Science degrees; since then, if we include the class of June 7th, we have graduated 2795, with the added weight of 329 M.S. degrees and 14 Ph. D.'s earned by graduate students.

Half or more of Case's financial history also has fallen in this 18-year period. In 1928-29 it cost \$386,000 to operate the college; this year it is costing close to \$1,500,000. In 48 years prior to 1929-30 Case had spend on its operations, as nearly as I can estimate, somewhat less than \$7,500,000; in these last 18 years the total has been \$12,500,000.

Yes, test it as you will, a full half of Case's history has fallen in these last 18 years and that, I am convinced is as long as any one President should stay on the job. There has been progress, but there have also been some bitter disappointments, in many of which I am sure you have shared. Much more of our progress has been the fruit of patience than of promotion. Most of it we have gained the hard way, by making more use of what we had rather than by a large increase of resources. We have almost quadrupled our budget, while adding only 60 per cent to our capital resources. In 1928-29, for example, operating expenses represented \$1 for every \$17 of capital assets; this year the ratio will be about \$1 to \$7. Frankly, we have been better managers than promoters and I think it is safe to say that we have just about squeezed all possibility of gains from this source dry.

What Case now needs is leadership in a great promotional job that will give this institution the plant, the facilities and the capital funds it needs to do far greater

things. No one will be happier than I to see such a man in the President's chair, but let us entertain no romantic illusions - I am not he. If I have laid foundations on which he can build large, and build soon, I shall be quite content.

It is a curious fact that while colleges train men systematically for nearly every other job, they train their own presidents by a very haphazard process of trial and error. As the poet says, seemingly with the selection of a new president in mind,

"Hope springs eternal in the human breast".

There is usually a honeymoon period of great expectations, then a period of disillusionment with the no-longer God-like president in hot water with either his faculty, his students, his alumni, or his trustees, or perhaps even with all of them at once. If he survives, he learns some valuable lessons. He learns that the right way of doing things is often more important than the right things to do. He learns that colleges are run on a subtle and volatile thing called morale and not on formal authority. As he grows wiser he sets a guard on his drive, so as not to over-reach the authority of the Trustees and not to over-ride the will of the Faculty. He learns not to try persuasion until he has first appealed to imagination and not to employ authority until both suggestions and persuasion have failed; to praise as much as he dares and to criticize only as much as he must; never to be vindictive to those who oppose him, however unenlightened their views or unfair their tactics, but always to expect the best of men who work with him.

He finds himself always trying to get men to play over their heads, always risking disappointment in youngsters to whom he has committed in hope more than their experience has warranted. Every now and then, he is rewarded when one of them comes through in a thrilling way. He learns that talent on a campus is elusive, while mediocrity is tenacious. He spends half of his life in pursuit of reluctant money and seemingly non-existent men. Lucky it is for him if as he grows wiser, he does not grow sadder as well. Who, more than he, needs an unflinching spring of buoyancy and optimism within? Who, less than he, can afford to radiate an atmosphere of pessimism or gloom? His dignity, like his academic costume, needs to be handy for occasions, but had best be kept hanging in the closet most of the time. It is his part never to be formidable, but never to slop over;

never to be prudish or prim, but never to be cheap; never to be rigid in opinion or manner, but never to be pliable in the hands of other; and always to conceal beneath an outer mask of open-mindedness and adaptability, a core of convictions that he will defend with his life.

You men of Case - Trustees, faculty, alumni and students - as well as a host of friends in the civic, educational, professional and industrial world have done your best to educate me, and eighteen years in longer than most men are privileged to go to school, but now commencement day has come. While everyone is being very swell about it, I know that a lot of my grades have been low, that I have flunked some very important courses and have had to repeat them in the summer session, and that there have even been doubts at times whether I should be allowed to stay in Case at all -- but now if you think I might be able to go it alone, without a whole college about me to brace me up, I accept your verdict, become an alumnus, and will try to live up to it.

Case School of Applied Science will soon pass into history, and Case Institute of Technology will soon be born. A few may weep, but many will rejoice. I will be the only man privileged to be president of both institutions, if for only a few fleeting weeks in the new incarnation. Case Institute of Technology is coming into the world at an auspicious hour. Higher education is today in a state of revolution. Revolutions bring to men and institutions a chance to reshape their destinies. You all know that higher education in America is expanding in a manner without precedent. The pre-war enrollment of 1½ millions has swollen to more than 2 millions and is expected to go to 3 millions within the next five to ten years. Did you know that within higher education, our own domain of technology is the most rapidly growing diversion of all? In this revolution, Case must take its part.

The public institutions must ultimately absorb most of this expansion, which is utterly beyond the resources of private philanthropy. Our private institutions will strain for a time to handle the surge, to give the public institutions a breathing spell in which to add to their capacity, then will re-define their goals and cut back their numbers on a much more selective basis. Case, at its next year's peak, will probably be reaching well over 1600 full-time undergraduates, but will be starting to reduce its intake under a more selective policy aiming at a goal of 1250 undergraduates, with a margin of

capacity thus released to be filled up by graduate students and research activities.

To do this, we are convinced is a greater service to higher education than to handle the largest possible numbers, for if education is to remain an intimate discipleship and not become just a mass discipline, and if colleges are not to become as parochial as high schools, but are to be in any sense cosmopolitan in make-up and atmosphere, our private institutions must do that job.

Case dares not be less world-minded than Cleveland in its outreach for men and ideas or in the outflow of its services and influence. Equally, Cleveland and this northern Ohio region where less than 2 per cent of the nation's people produce more than 6 per cent of its industrial products, cannot fulfill their destinies without not just one or two good colleges among many but one of the nation's most outstanding centers of teaching, research and recruitment of talent in the sciences and the technical arts.

And so, as I bid you an affectionate and grateful farewell, I give you two toasts, one to the past and one to the future:-

To Case School of Applied Science - may its memories ever be cherished, its founders and builders and sustainers ever revered, its ideals and standards ever preserved, and its good name ever enshrined in the thousands of lives which it has shaped to worthy patterns, now and forever.

To Case Institute of Technology - may it be born under favoring stars, find a leader worthy of its highest possibilities, be endowed with vision and resources equal to its magnificent task and enjoy a happy immortality in the lives and the loyalties of countless sons such as you, now and forever.

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