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## Harold Lloyd in "GRANDMA'S BOY"

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### ADDRESS BY K. T. RAYNOR TO 1923 GRADUATING CLASS

In A Masterly Address He Outlines The Possibilities And The Dangers That The Future Holds Forth

The baccalaureate address published below was read by Superintendent K. T. Raynor, of the Ahoskie High School, to the sixteen members of the graduating class of 1923, on the final day of commencement last week:

You have come through four long years of work and study, with the many perplexing problems that have confronted you all solved, and today has at last dawned for you—the day for which you have striven,—the day of which you have dreamed, for which you have longed. A few moments ago you received from my hands the diplomas which set you free from this institution of learning. But before you shall go, before the last link that binds you to us shall be broken, let me burn into your minds and hearts these few thoughts as my final parting message.

Today begins for you a trying time of life. You are standing now upon the threshold of a new world, you are pausing on the shore of an untried sea. You have hitherto been carefully guided all along your journey up through the grades, and up through High School. Perhaps times have come when you have chafed under restraint, and long for freedom from books and school work. That freedom has now come to you, and today perhaps you take hold of it with fear and trembling, wondering what to do next. The world today opens its doors and bids you enter. The stages is all set—many false attractions line your pathway to trap and ensnare you. Real life for you is just beginning. The rosy dawn of youthful life is just breaking. The birds are gaily singing along your way. All is happiness for you. The world is now demanding of you to begin your life. After eleven years of study and preparation, what have you to give to the world that is expecting so much of you? You say you have your life to give. That is quite true. But what is life? Do you know?

On the border of the Lybian Desert, between the barrenness of sand and the fertility of the river, the Egyptian Sphinx has stood for four thousand years. Its looks have been towards the rising sun, and the life-giving Nile. It symbolizes intelligence, strength and imperishability. This immortal monster, though worshipped as the author and giver of life, and the ruler of the upper and lower worlds, has never yet solved one problem of life, for, after all, he is but stone. So, the fabled Grecian Sphinx, propounding his riddle in the highway of Themes, did not solve the problem of his own bread. Life is not a riddle to be guessed at, but a problem to be solved. The immortality of stone or story is but the immortality of death. What is life? This question no man can answer, because no man knows. The farmer can plant a kernel of corn and see from which part of it life springs, but the life itself he cannot see. The chemist can analyze an egg, and can make another like it, but that egg will not produce life. Men will give fortunes to stay the stream of life when it is flowing out of their own veins, to continue the pulse beat, to keep up the respiration, but it flows out despite the will or wish. But the problem of a beating heart, a heart which, like the ocean, swells with hopes and ebbs with fears, sleeps in peace, and breaks in storm, giving for destiny a port or a grave—this is the problem of living. And each one of you must solve it aright for yourself or be dissolved by it. How shall you begin your problem today?

What is your life now? Probably as much as it has been. What you have been doing you are likely to continue doing. Your life is the sum

total of your reactions to the various influences brought to bear upon you. You alone know better today what your real life is than any man can tell you. If you have responded nobly to the wholesome influences thrown around you, and have been mindful of the splendid educational opportunities offered you, you are likely to be alive to them in the future. It seems only right and altogether fitting therefore to congratulate you upon the success thus far attained. You have utilized some of the opportunities placed before you, and not being contented with mere elementary knowledge, you have gone onward and upward, so that today with your diploma in your hands you can leave this old school better equipped for the work of the real life that now calls to you; better equipped to withstand the temptations that lie in wait for you; better equipped for the successful solution of the many, many problems which confront you. What is your life? I answer, it is a part of a divine plan. One person, looks small; but the great is dependent on the small, and both are necessary for final success. The lad with the barley loaves and the two small fishes was far more important in feeding the thousands than were all twelve of the disciples. From all eternity that boy was a part of God's plan. So are you. There is a place for you to fill. The world expects you to do something, your parents and friends are building high hopes in you. God will require something of you in return for his blessings. The State which educated you now expects something from you in return. The hearts of your fathers and mothers will throb with joy as you mount step by step the ladder of fame. May you fulfill the high destiny that divine goodness has made possible for you!

But just here comes the question of fulfilling that destiny, that place for you in the world into which you are now so eager to enter. I am forced to inform you that the struggle will be difficult. The world into which you are now entering is a mass of humanity, more or less discontented, more or less worldly minded, and all too much in love with the dollar. Often the public measures a man's success by his bank account. What a false standard! Such was not always the case. And this money-grabbing, pleasure-loving age is drawing down the high standard of our great Nation. "Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey; where wealth accumulates and men decay." The world today needs more than ever before men and women of high ideals and lofty visions—men who don't enthroned the dollar in the innermost recesses of their minds, but who strive for the higher things, such as knowledge, wisdom, religion, character—qualities so rare that they are above the price of rubies and diamonds,—and yet within the reach of everyone of you boys and girls.

Success, then, should never mean to you the mere accumulation of wealth. Don't let that idea enter your minds. But success is what each one wishes to attain. What is success? To my mind it simply means "making the most of our opportunities." For you, then, members of the Senior Class, success can be attained by doing the best you can with what has been given you in talent and training. But as you draw near the verge of the open world today and put one foot on the brink; as you approach the ladder of life which each must climb, I charge you to keep in mind this fact. That whatever else you may need on your journey through life, three things stand out far above all others. These three things are character and determination and faith. Let us now study these three greatest of all assets to a successful life.

Character, what is it? It is what you really are, not what your friends think you are. Of what is character composed? Of two things, mind and heart. From these two sources emanate all the impulses and reactions that build our character. Is your character complete today? No; you will ever build your character, and never finish it. Every thought though oftentimes unexpressed, every

impression received, every good deed determined upon, all mould and shape our characters day by day. But, since the mind is such an important agent in the formation of character, your character should be at least highly creditable, else your graduation this morning is a farce, and should be stopped now. For eleven years in this school have your minds been undergoing a process in training, not so much for the subject matter you may remember from the text book, but in order that your minds may be able to solve aright the great problems of life for you, and thus add luster and beauty to that indefinable thing called character. In order to succeed further along this line I urge you to continue your training in some college or university. The higher your mind is developed, the better influence it can exert on your character. Don't stop here. Go on, go on.

But, of the two agent in the formation of character, the heart, perhaps, exerts a greater influence. At least that is our general opinion. What training has your heart received? Where can a heart be trained? A heart is first trained in the home. Here are made the first impressions, which so greatly effect all after life. Herein are you blessed, in being brought up in a Christian home. For if there is any place upon this earth supremely blessed, it is the American home. If there be one field of asphalt on this side of the grave, if there be any place over which God's angels of peace may rest for a moment

on their message of mercy and fold their snowy wings, it must be in the Christian homes. If there is any person on whose face beams the very light of heaven itself, it must surely be the face of a Christian mother. The most holy and most consecrated altar from which prayer ever winged its way to heavenly courts, is a mother's knee, and the sweetest word that ever floated out on the still and silent air, carried by angels to the throne of grace are "Now I lay me down to sleep." Happy is the child with such a heritage; happy the heart that has received such training. Such a heritage and such a heart must be yours.

The second place in which your hearts have been trained is the school room. You entered at the age of six years, with minds so eager to learn, so easy to be moulded and fashioned. Your teachers at once began the task. Of all sculptors and painters the world has produced the conscientious, christian teacher stands supreme. The sculptor only beautifies a cold, lifeless piece of stone; a painter only adorns canvas, but a teacher takes a living child of flesh, blood and bone and moulds and shapes a human life in its very budding time, and gives to the world a splendid boy or a splendid girl, buoyant in youth, gracious in bearing, and beaming with the sunlight of happiness—a work of art excelled only by the Master builder and architect of the world. Such a privilege has been yours. This school sets a high standard for its teachers, and is satisfied with only the best.

(Continued on page 6)

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