It has been our duty and our practice to be quite open with you and to tell what we are sure we know and to confess that many things are beyond our knowledge. Each one of you according to your several tastes and abilities has learned to do some one thing well and intends to go out from here and practice his art; but what is of more value to you, you have been introduced, if only on the threshold, to new regions of scientific thought by men who have been your teachers and companions, who have gone farther than yourselves but have made no mystery about their methods and have taught you at least some of the basic principles by which for the first time in the history of the world continuous and unchecked progress has been made.

If I have been successful in describing some of the leading features of the education which you have received here, let me say a word regarding their bearing upon the much longer and more important task which will fill the years before you. All our records of graduates show that you are likely to remain more faithful to your training than the graduates of any other kind of professional school, be it law, medicine or divinity. More than nine-tenths of you will do some scientific work. You perhaps could not come back here at any given time and pass over again any of the test examinations which the diplomas handed to you to-day testify that you have passed successfully. You will have forgotten most of the dry facts which you have imbibed or crammed, but what will remain will be habits and methods of work and general principles. Some men of genius teach them to themselves or seem to get on without them; but you have done well to come to a school to learn them for the world in general made very little progress until they were taught and well taught in schools. The day when Liebig opened his laboratory at Giesen and taught students how to make original researches marked a new era in the history of thought. The art of assembling things together and making them do the right thing for you in order to solve some given problem is a most fascinating art.

He who has once mastered it and learned to love it will have a happy occupation for the rest of his life.

If I have explained rightly these scientific methods, you will agree that they also nurture the highest qualities of faith and imagination and subject them to tests more immediate and sure than any other kind of training.

These claims for science are not empty words, as you will find when you join the great army of experts, some twenty to thirty thousand strong, in this country, the integrity of whose lives is shown by the integrity of their works; and none have done more than the graduates of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology to maintain a high standard of professional honor in this country.

And now in conclusion, let me speak for your teachers and say that you are a satisfactory set of men to teach. You made up your minds before you came here what you wanted to do and did it earnestly; you have been willing to take the work we gave you and have sometimes asked for more. You have recognized that we have your interests at heart and that our purpose was the same as yours, namely, to do all we could and do it in the right way. Most of you have come from homes where you have been taught to believe that the earnest responsibilities of life begin at the age of eighteen or earlier and not at twenty-two or later. It is not a bad thing to be born into circumstances that give you the advantage of good training but which do not permit idleness. The knowledge which is now your capital in business is a safe security. Opulence is not always hereditary in this country, and the Daughter of Fortune is too often named Misfortune, and so you are going away from us to scatter north and south, east and west in our great country, or perhaps South Africa and the Eastern Islands and you bear with you a reputation to sustain, that of the best type of American citizens and of the most honorable of our professions.

You know that you do not get away from our examinations when you leave this place, and that there is a book of record in our archives which I hope you will help us to keep well filled with the events of your lives. And I may say that there is no feature so satisfactory in our school work as turning to that book and finding evidences there that you have built up some substantial structure upon the basis of education which was solidly laid down here. Come back to us, then, as often as you can individually or by reports of your alumni meetings. Keep this school in your remembrance and help in after years to do for others any good thing which you feel it may have done for you.