

An Address to The Valdezia Students Association - By J.C. Mariani
Valdezia 29th March 1931.

8.22

My dear students,

I am very pleased today to have this opportunity of seeing you once more & of addressing you this afternoon. I wish you to understand ^{at the outset} that I do not regard you as my school children today, but as my comrades & friends, as my brothers and sisters, as a class of Valdezia Educated children, as a class of people who want to improve themselves in Education, as a class of uplifters of Valdezia Village, as leaders of the Bantu people in South Africa.

I know that today you do not quite understand what we are aiming at or what we are doing for you. I know it because I have been a student myself. A student is a child who is ^{only} very fond of eating, he is very fond of clothes, ^{very fond} he likes bicycles, he likes shoes, he likes sweets, he likes monkeynuts, he likes fruit, he likes sweet Cakes, he likes ^{green} cobs, he likes meat of a fowl, he likes home and in some cases he does not like to go back to school. The holidays are always too short. He never gets tired of visiting. I am not saying this to despise a student who ^{likes} these things. In fact he is a dead student who does not enjoy ^{all} these things what I have said. If you like eating, this shows that you are healthy, if you like clothes this shows that you like to keep ~~your~~ an agreeable appearance. If you like bicycles this shows that you are full of life & you want exercise. If you like visiting, this shows that you are not a dull child.

But there is something more that we should think ~~about~~ of and that is "How to make the best of our opportunities" and "How to make ourselves prominent" while at the Institution or out into the world. There are no rules that I should lay down for you to follow very definitely. You know that at the institution there are students who are very rough & mean and low. There are others who are always noisy. Whenever they are you'll hear them singing whistling or disputing very loudly. Others are too quarrelsome & they have very few friends, because they easily get offended and begin to put on sulky faces. Some are thieves and others are liars. Some are neat and tidy in their dress, others are very dirty and untidy. ^{Some have bad talks specially when we go to bed. They are very dangerous.} ~~Some~~ Some are dull in lessons and others, if not all, hate manual work. Some are clowns and they always make others laugh in meetings ~~at~~ at play or at school. Some are very bright in lessons others are just in the middle. ~~Some~~

Some are very good pupils & are liked by their teachers
 others are very good pupils but are not liked by their teachers.
 Some are such, that all the students, ^{teachers} honour & respect them.
 They never speak senseless things neither do they indulge in low
 talks. Once they stand up to say a thing the whole school
 thinks it is right. The teachers always trust their word. They
 are always moderate in all things.

Now our question is: "How are Valdezia students can become
 prominent students at the institution". My advice is a very simple
 one; it does not need cleverness or too much thought. Just be
Natural, Simple, or plain. Don't say a thing that you do not know much
 of. Don't pretend to be very clever, but work privately to be clever. Try
 to know a thing thoroughly. Don't take the top surface of a thing but
 take pains & go down so that when you say a thing you are quite sure
 of its origin & meaning. Don't be superficial. A superficial fellow
 is a man who puts on bright clothes, tries to impress people with
 his outward appearance, is too showy, tries to look wise & yet he
 knows very very little. — Long words — showy, conducting etc.

To be a prominent man you must not try to put yourself
 forward but at the same time you must not allow yourself to be
 despised by others. Never try to be unpleasant by being quarrelsome.
 Always be happy & try to make others happy. Be cheerful & ready
 to help. Your teacher must trust you. If he does not, try to find
 out the cause, if it is your own weakness in character, change it.
 Never associate with a low class student because the teachers
 judge you according to your friends. Always try to be a better man
 or girl, never be discouraged & never think too long over the
 wrong that you have done, if you stick too long in it you will go down.

I think of a story of a man who tried to swim right round the
 ship. In the middle he got tired, he began to think much of his
 tiredness, others shouted to him Oh! ho! you are drowning, indeed he was
 finished, but soon he took heart, he forced himself to forget his
 troubles, he thought of other things, he forgot the sea, his courage
 came back, he was strong again; he swam without knowing it &
 he reached the shore again. Those of you who ride bicycles know very
 well that once you say I am tired when you are climbing a hill it's
 finished you'll never reach the top, you'll get down. I think of a story
 of one man who undertook to climb a very long pole which was fixed
 in a very deep ocean, he climbed & climbed & climbed. In the
 middle he began to say I am tired, ho! I am dizzy. Yo! I am
 falling. He gave up & he fell into the deep sea & got lost, So
 never think much of your own weakness or of the wrongs that you
 have done. Say I'll never do it. Let them laugh but they'll never get me in
 that again.

In fact you only suggest to yourself that you are tired. There is no tiredness. You only make yourself believe what is not there. For example - you hear a man say "Hina a hi naveli nyawa or sila 'sā murli". You ask yourself: "What causes this man to say these words?" you'll find that in many cases that man really wants to have the meat. He is ~~un~~ ^{un} ~~convincing~~ ^{convincing} his own heart which really would be too pleased to get the meat.

Auto suggestion can help to encourage or discourage a man at once. Now I would advise you to use it to encourage yourself in times of tests or difficulties. Say I am a friend of all. Say I am a hard worker. Say I am not weak. When you get up in the morning, say I am better today than any other day. Say I am strong in lessons. Say I love my teachers.

As a student you should try to join everything that is done at the school such as Debating Societies, P.F. W.P., S.C.A. I.O.T.T. Football, Tennis or Tennis, Basket Ball, Hockey & sports.

You cannot all be prominent by doing the same thing. "The Lord never made two leaves alike, nor two people alike". Specialise in what you think you are able to do & do it well & thoroughly. That's how you can be prominent. Tshangla was very prominent at Lovedale only because he was a very swift runner. The Principal knew that if Tshangla ~~was~~ there no school would beat Lovedale in 100 yds race. Leburne in $\frac{1}{4}$ mile only. Raditladi in Hurdles, High jump & Tennis. Zora in Cramming. Marivati in Teaching. Patricia in loving dress & in sweetness of tone & in sense. arose in reasoning. Mdatyulwa in Preaching & in the S.C.A. Nthoba in tanning horses. ~~Wade~~ ^{Wade} ~~you~~ ^{you} Thema in 1 mile race. These things plus good character cannot let you down as an ordinary student.

Never tell lies whether with friends or with teachers. Never be untidy in your dress. Wash & be clean & neat. The tidiness of dress has something to do with the tidiness & orderliness of your mind & sometimes you can know a person simply by looking at the way in which he puts on his dress. (When I say dress I do not mean new & shining things) Oh! no! far from that I mean dresses, khakhi or german print or any old clothes well washed well patched & well dressed.

above all keep a kind & good heart.

Valdezia Students, never disgrace us by bad character, bad names, bad behaviour, unnecessary pride, quarrels with teachers & Principals & other students. Show that you are real Valdezia Students. In fact, one who is not able to keep up as a Valdezia Student should keep away from our company. I hope you'll have a nice rest at home this holiday, but remember you are leaders, don't let foolish people drag you down.