



Pasquaney Traditions: A Sermon delivered on Water Sports Sunday, July 29, 1934, by Mr. Teddy

We are in a new era and the order of the day is constantly changing. Each new issue of the daily paper may bring startling news, so that we wonder just where this world restlessness is driving us. Of course, the student of history knows that the old order must give way to new experiments, revolutions, perhaps resulting in better conditions, perhaps chaos – at any rate, the changing of one government for another, the rising of one class to power at the expense of another, war, bloodshed, suffering, laws altering the status of industry, strikes, and constant readjustments to new conditions. So, we are kept on the anxious seat and hardly know what each new day will bring forth.

And while this turmoil is whirling around us in the big world outside, we at Pasquaney are hardly conscious of it. To be sure, we have our everyday problems, but they are mere drop in the bucket in comparison, and we are left to live the same lives as boys have lived at Pasquaney for the last forty years in an environment of peace, untroubled by the cyclone of serious events beyond our Camp boundaries – a happy, healthy, worth-while existence with the same old traditions, ideals that have inspired a thousand of our young men to meet the demands of the life outside with the granite of this old New Hampshire mountainside in their backbones.

I have used the word “traditions.” These are Camp ways of doing things handed down from year to year ever since 1895. Camp Asquam under Dr. Talbot gave the spark to our dear Mr. Ned and for thirty-eight years he kept it blazing in the Pasquaney he founded, and you and I must keep it glowing as it has come to us. Traditions, what do they mean to us? It has been said that in this day of swift changes it is impossible to keep up old traditions, but although we belong to the “new era,” we hold fast to Pasquaney traditions – what we consider fundamentally best for our whole community. Nearly every old boy or counsellor who has lived a season or two here knows there is something about it which “gets” him. It is the appeal to express what is best in us; it is the inspiration that comes from contact with boys and young men “who are living a life that is hardy, who are living a life that is true,” as our old camp song puts it – a friendliness which makes the big boy interested in the youngster and the little fellow look up to and pattern his life according to the leadership of the older boy. It is the delightful feeling of comradeship we have for each other which develops into friendships that carry down the years to come. It is the gathering in Dana Hall night and morning for the simple prayers, the consciousness of our one big family as we sit at the table in Memorial Hall or enjoy the fun and fine arts of the Theatre; it is the repartee of our jolly counsellors; it is the fair play, the high standard of sportsmanship in our sports, for to be unsportsmanlike certainly has no place here.

It is the understood thing to perform a duty not only as a cog in a wheel of the machinery but in many instances with a genuine spirit of service. It is the unusual reverence for this chapel, the sincerity of the service without the questioning of creed, with the accompaniment of the songs of birds instead of the noises of the city. It is the realization that comes to the new boy that he is a more manly, finer type of young manhood as he absorbs Pasquaney tradition and ideals.

The day is filled with a long list of activities, the demands for skill in sports, the exhortation to try something new, for more thoroughness in what is undertaken, the pride in being known as dependable, decent, normal, responsive. It is the honor system, the trust in each other, the willingness to give a helping hand, the interest in the individual and as such to work out his personality on an individual basis.

It is Pasquaney tradition to make these nine short fast-travelling weeks crowd out what is undesirable in our make-up without making life too serious and still keeping the buoyancy of youth. It is the consciousness that our Camp is built on foundations as solid as the ledges of this hillside. We know each other's failings and yet in our Camp song we adhere to the statement:

"Here everyone is a good fellow

We won't stand a cad or a sneak,

Nor a camper who shirks his fair duty,

A liar, a dude, or a freak." We realize the frailties of human nature, our Counsellors have critical mental machinery and eyes which magnify faults, so even what might pass unnoticed elsewhere assumes large importance and is dwelt upon until we understand the need for cutting it out.

It is Pasquaney tradition in Council meeting to set aside those who progress toward the Pasquaney type of man is not plain sailing and delegate specially interested men to bring friendly advice and steering.

It is Pasquaney tradition to dwell occasionally upon the camp motto, "Stop and Think," to try to realize that we have the law of cause and effect, to measure the consequences of an action, to believe that though we are not yet old in life's experience, we can prevent trouble for ourselves and our little community here by stopping long enough to say to ourselves, "If I do this, what will happen? Will it mean good or harm? Is it worthy of a Pasquaney boy to try to put one over on someone else, to be sloppy in the care of our bunks, to do a duty poorly, to be neglectful of the property of others, uncontrolled in temper, a rotten loser, self-centered, selfish, picking faults in others when at fault ourselves, inconsiderate, thoughtless in injuring boats, canoes and other equipment, a bully, ready to quarrel over trivial matters? Such characteristics are unlovely and unworthy of Pasquaney tradition. We do see them here. It is Pasquaney tradition, however, to work everlastingly to weed them out, for they are not a part of the beauty in life. It is this fight against the destructive enemies of Pasquaney tradition that brings about a better young man. As one mother wrote to me: "My boy always returns home filled with high ideals." Idealism is found on the heights. We are all climbers. We can never quite reach the summit, for there has been only one ideal man – Christ. Are there some of us who still have a long way to go? What are we doing about it? Right living is a Fine Art. To some it is almost second nature and fortunate are they. To others it is a campaign, a storming of one fortress after another, an overcoming of this destructive force by substituting something constructive, by learning from our older boys and Counsellors how to put the right foot forward. I don't wish to plant the seeds of conceit in the head and chest of any of our older boys and Counsellors or to become too personal, but I have been asked several times how we assembled boys and men of such splendid caliber. The answer is simply Pasquaney tradition.

Now we all fall down. As I have said before, it is hard to live on the crest of the wave, and we inevitably fall short of what we expect of ourselves and what is expected of us, but the ideal is ever before us. No boy falls so low but we can do much to save him. I beg you not to disgrace in anyway yourselves or our Camp. We see others making good; we can't help feeling that those who do follow according to the dictates of Pasquaney tradition are the type who get the most happiness, success and satisfaction out of each day. They are the ones we like the best, they are the ones we would wish to imitate; in some measure they are our heroes, so our Pasquaney is a thing of beauty; it is red-blooded; it is vibrant; it is an inspiration; it is a miraculous pitcher from which flows the milk of human kindness; it is the wonderful mirror in which we see our better self. We must not spoil the picture; we must remember that there is love in it. We have been told that God is love and we must feel that there is godliness in our Pasquaney. There is play, fun, laughter, nonsense, the happy, healthy, joyful spirit of youth, the sweet innocence of the little boy, the sophistication of the older ones, but the Pasquaney tradition holds out the opportunity for the making of young men, true to all we hold dear here,

prepared to face the life in the hurly-burly world, leaders in school and college, and, grateful, loyal, affectionate sons in the homes to which we are going in the four brief weeks that remain. There is much vitality expended here. We live in a busy hive and are all workers. Drones are not in style, and we have definite purposes: Happiness, Health, Character. Are we appreciative of the love and sacrifice of our parents who have made it possible for us to be here? Shall we show just a little more thankfulness to them? Shall we feel a secret joy in pleasing them a little more than ever before? Shall we see them leave this lovely country happier because we are growing up straight like the magnificent pines that reach heavenward, calm as the surface of our lake, steadfast as the mountains that surround us?

So, though we are busy as can be, let us really pause now and then to “stop and think” and try to pledge ourselves to hold fast to our traditions, to reverence the memory of him who founded Pasquaney in the land of the white birch — our Mr. Ned — and, may I say, make glad the heart of Mr. Teddy, who loves you all?