

Chapel October 29, 1926

President Wright

I read this morning a passage of scripture selected because I wanted to talk to you about a particular subject this morning. David said, "I will take heed to my ways that I sin not with my tongue: I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me."

I have been trying this fall to select some subject when I had an opportunity to talk to you that would be of service to you in making your adjustments in college, and would, in a measure, be of service to you when you left college, and I have planned to talk to you this morning on the subject of Gossip. I don't suppose it is necessary for me to explain what that means. I am not a very good conversationalist with society as I usually find it, because I am not gifted with saying the wonderfully interesting things about people that do not happen, and I find that a great deal of our human conversation is carried on about things that are not so. It is a wonderful opportunity that one has in college to make himself or herself popular by telling all of the wonderful experiences that he has had in his imagination and quite often those experiences are so vivid in his imagination that they are told as actual happenings, and after a while a person believes it. It is like the old story of the person who was sick and vomited three crows and the neighbors were all talking about it. "Had you heard that she vomited three crows?" "No, I hadn't heard it, what a terrible condition she must be in!" There was one person who was not gullible enough to believe that and he decided that he would look into the thing and he finally ran it down and found that the sick person had vomited three small black specks, but it was three crows when it was told. A boy went out hunting and said he had found fifty squirrels in one tree, and some one who didn't believe it began to run it down and finally the boy admitted that he saw a limb shake and he wasn't sure whether it was a squirrel or the wind blowing. That kind of thing is constantly going on. Sometimes these

stories damage people because they are told on other people. Such things ought not to be. The person who has had wonderful experiences, who has truly had wonderful experiences, doesn't say very much about it. I went through a hospital not long ago and I heard a terrible groaning. I turned to the doctor who was with me and I said, "That poor fellow is about to die isn't he?" He said, "No, he isn't sick much, when they are seriously sick they don't make much noise." I got to thinking about that. The person who has really had wonderful experiences doesn't say very much about it. If he wants to talk about anything, he tells something that isn't so as a rule. I heard a political speech last night, a man telling of his experiences travelling all over the world. I know he had had wonderful experiences. He said they were traveling across India and they were traveling in a Ford. One day they noticed the palm trees wave backwards and he said they thought it was the monsoon, but he took out his watch and it wasn't time for the monsoon, so they knew it couldn't be that. He said, "We drove on just a little farther and we turned a curve in the road and there was a tiger as big as some of the small houses in the neighborhood. He was sitting down on his haunches with his mouth open. I turned to my companion and said, 'Well, my friend, we might just as well say goodbye.' But we drove on and the tiger opened his mouth and swallowed the Ford with me and my friend, but he forgot to cut off the motor and the Ford shook the tiger to death and we backed out and went on. If you have had wonderful experiences and want to tell those experiences, tell them so the world will know you are lying. Build the tiger as big as a house, and drive a Ford into him. But these little insinuations that run all through college life and run all through human life after you leave college. Just whispering quietly, "Have you heard, do you know that Miss X went to ride last night between 12:30 and 2!" Miss X was in her bed sound asleep with her conscience at ease so she was not even dreaming. But next day she gets up and finds that kind of lie spreading all through college. That is all wrong. I don't know that any one said such a thing. I am just making this to illustrate what I have in mind. You have no right to cast

that kind of reflection on the good name of your fellow student out in the state, to say nothing of the damage you will do to the institution. Just telling little falsehoods, so little that it doesn't make any difference, and that is the worst kind of falsehood.

When you get into public life people are going to talk about you, and people are going to say things that are not so. Your best answer to that is to keep your mouth shut. Say nothing. It is nothing unusual for me to go down the street and some one will come up to me and say, "Is it true that you have done so and so?" And I say, "No, it isn't so." "Well, I heard that you had done this or said this or that." "All right, it is just another one of those lies they are telling on me." "Well, didn't you do it?" "Do you think I would do a thing of that kind?" Dismiss it, it isn't worth while to try to answer it. The best answer to all such things is to live a right life. Live a life so clean and hold your thoughts so high that your friends and your enemies will deny those reports.

The thing that I want to caution you against is just peddling little lies. If you want to peddle a lie, peddle one as big as the tiger story and put teeth in it like the man did last night. He had tremendous teeth in that tiger, and after he got the story told, he took a Ford automobile and shook it to pieces. If you want to tell one, tell it so every one will know you are just telling a story. Don't peddle these little stories. The good name of your fellow students and the good name of the people in the community where you are going to live is something that you ought to guard. I don't believe for a minute that the average student that comes to this college is anything less than a right minded young woman with high ideals and high purposes and an ambition to make the most of her life and that kind of young woman is not going to be engaged in these little things that have a tendency to besmirch the character of her fellow students, or to hurt the good name of the student body of this institution, much less will that kind

of young woman do the thing that will besmirch her character and hurt the good name of her college.