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ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

PHILOMATHEAN SOCIETY

OF THE

UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA.

BY GEORGE B. WOOD, M.D.
HONORARY MEMBER OF THE SOCIETY.

July 26, 1826.

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ADDRESS.

In most of the colleges of the United States, societies have been formed by the students, which, in some instances, have existed for many years, and have exerted a very favourable influence over the fortunes of the respective establishments with which they have been connected. Of their beneficial effects, when properly regulated, we have satisfactory evidence in the encouragement which they receive from the college officers, who are best qualified to form a correct judgment of their tendency and operation. Nor is it difficult to discover in what their usefulness consists. By fostering a spirit of honorable emulation, they support and invigorate those exertions in the acquisition of knowledge, which, if not properly encouraged, are too apt to yield to the seduction of youthful pleasures, or to languish under the influence of an indolent disposition. They produce a union of feeling and sentiment, which amalgamates their members into one body; which teaches each individual to connect his own honour with that of his community; and excites him to such circumspection of conduct, and diligence in study, as may serve to maintain if not to exalt its reputation. By the independent exercise of thought, and the frequent trials of intellectual attainment and ability, for which they afford occasion, they tend to produce a certain strength and manliness of thinking; while they prevent that overweening opinion of one's own superiority, and that consequent arrogance of manner, which are the natural results of solitary study, and which have not unfrequently subjected the young collegian, on his first entrance into the world, to ridicule or dis-

like. The frequent and intimate association, and the community of feeling to which they give rise, lead to the formation of sincere friendships, which, originating while the heart is glowing with generous emotion, and not yet palsied by the benumbning influence of the world, often continue through life, shedding an uniform lustre over its chequered course, and sometimes brightening even the gloom of its close.

Thus useful in promoting the improvement, in forming the character, in contributing to the lasting happiness of their youthful members, these college associations deserve the attention of all who feel interested in the general subject of education, and more particularly of the relatives and friends of the young men who are exposed to their operation. It cannot, therefore, be deemed presumption, if they occasionally appear before the public, and claim that notice and sympathy, which, to the generous spirit of youth, are the strongest incitements to exertion, and the sweetest reward of success. By thus acting, they place themselves, in some measure, under the guardianship of public opinion, and give a pledge that their conduct shall be regulated by such rules, and their efforts directed to such ends, as may challenge general approbation. An enlightened community will therefore meet their advances with indulgence; and accordingly we find, that on occasion of their anniversary exhibitions and orations, they are generally favoured with the attendance of a numerous and respectable audience, disposed to receive pleasure, and to judge favourably of the efforts made to please them.

The Philomathean Society, by whose invitation we are now met together, was founded by the students in the collegiate department of the Pennsylvania University, soon after the election of the present Provost. A duration of more than twelve years indicates that it was established, and has been con-

ducted, upon correct principles; for institutions of this nature, when badly organized, seldom outlive the first warmth of zeal which created them; and when directed to improper ends, or productive, by mismanagement, of injurious consequences, are liable to be suppressed by the college authorities. Since the period of its origin, the society has, on several occasions, presented itself to the public notice of its friends. Generally, its exhibitions have consisted of essays in oratory by its junior members; but in the past year it was determined that the anniversary should be celebrated by the delivery of an address, by some individual to be appointed for the purpose; and the same plan has been adopted for the present occasion. I need not mention that to professor Keating belongs the honour of having first united the suffrages of the society in his favour; an honour due as well to his literary and scientific attainments, as to the public spirit which he has exhibited in the promotion of objects of general utility. For my own election to the same office, I am indebted, perhaps, to that partiality with which the individuals of any association regard those, who were among its earliest members, and most zealous supporters.

As the subject of this anniversary address, I know of nothing which has stronger claims on the notice of the speaker, or can more appropriately engage the attention of the audience, than the affairs of the college, under the auspices of which the society, whose origin we commemorate, was instituted, and by the favour of which it continues to be fostered and supported. A short history of this seminary, with an account of its present condition and prospects, cannot be unacceptable to those who, as citizens of Philadelphia, must feel a deep interest in whatever affects, even in a remote degree, its welfare and reputation.

The University of Pennsylvania embraces three

distinct departments; those of Medicine, of Natural Science, and the Arts.* It is the last of these to which I wish particularly to direct your attention. The medical department has attained a celebrity, not only in this place, but throughout the United States, and even beyond the Atlantic, which supersedes the necessity of description, and renders eulogy superfluous. The department of natural science, though embracing several professorships, the duties of which have, in some instances, been performed with much credit to their occupants, is yet so imperfectly organized, and has been managed with so little system, as to present no appearance of a regular association.† To the college, therefore, as distinct from the faculties of medicine and natural science, the observations which follow will be confined.‡ To express a hope that they may be the means of directing more atten-

* By the regulations of the university there are two other departments, namely, those of Law and of General Literature:—but at present they are merely nominal. The professorship of law is vacant, and that of general literature, though occupied by a gentleman who has given abundant proof of his qualifications for the office, does not afford sufficient inducement to divert any portion of his attention from more pleasant or profitable occupation.

† In the department of natural science five professorships were instituted, namely, 1st, of Natural Philosophy; 2d, of Botany; 3d, of Natural History, including Geology and Zoology; 4th, of Mineralogy and Chemistry, as applied to the arts; 5th, of Comparative Anatomy. On the subjects of natural philosophy, botany, and chemistry applied to the arts, several courses of lectures have been given, which have attracted much attention. The other subjects have been entirely neglected, at least for many years.

‡ It may be proper to mention that in the department of of the arts,—beside the college, there are included an academy or grammar school, and charity schools in which the children of the poor, both boys and girls, receive gratuitous instruction. But it is to the college alone that attention is now invited.

tion to this important institution, and of exciting a greater interest in its prosperity, might subject me to the imputation of vanity. The spirit of good will, however, in which they are made, and which must find an answering feeling in the breast of every one present, will secure them a kind, perhaps a partial reception.

Our college can boast of no great antiquity. Settled, originally, by members of the religious society of Friends, Philadelphia, and the colony of which it was the capital, remained, for many years, under their exclusive direction. Averse, by principle, from all titles of honour; attaching little importance to those higher studies, which in their estimation, were rather ornamental than useful; and accustomed to view the colleges of Europe as ecclesiastical establishments, which, in whatever shape, were in direct opposition to their religious views, they were content with instructing their youth in seminaries less ambitious in their designation, and less complex in their organization and government. Sensible, however, of the great importance of an elementary education, they directed their attention to the subject very speedily after their first arrival in this country; and, by the the year 1712, a system had been matured and adopted, which has continued in uninterrupted operation down to the present time, and has been found to answer satisfactorily its intended purposes. Funds, supplied by the society out of its public property, were vested in a body of trustees, incorporated by a charter* from William Penn; and to this body, which,

* A charter was granted by William Penn so early as the year 1693; but it was found advisable to alter some of its provisions, and it was not till near the close of the year 1711, that the act of incorporation was obtained, by which the school was permanently organized. The charter of 1693 is the first which was given in this state for literary purposes.

by the right of supplying vacancies, was rendered perpetual, the establishment and direction of the necessary schools were entrusted. These schools, in which were taught the Latin language, the inferior branches of mathematics, and the rudiments of English literature, though under the sole management of Friends, were open to the youth of all sects; and, till the middle of the century, continued to be the only public places of instruction within the city. But the rapid increase of the colony in population and wealth, and the consequent demand for well educated men to fill the learned professions, and the various offices of state, led necessarily to the adoption of a more extended and liberal system of instruction, suited to the wants of a numerous and mixed people.

The subject had frequently engaged the attention of a few individuals, among whom our great Franklin, ever prominent in works of public usefulness, was one of the most conspicuous. Their sentiments having been communicated to several others, excited considerable interest; and the plan of an academy was at length drawn up by Franklin, and submitted to the approval of those who appeared to be concerned for the success of the project.* Twenty-four of the most respectable and influential citizens, without regard to difference of religious opinion, or of professional pursuit, associated themselves together under

* Among the names of these original trustees will be found many which are still well known and highly respected in Philadelphia. They were James Logan, Thomas Lawrence, William Allen, John Inglis, Tench Francis, William Masters, Lloyd Zachary, Samuel M'Call jun., Joseph Turner, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Leech, William Shippen, Robert Strettell, Philip Syng, Charles Willing, Phineas Bond, Richard Peters, Abraham Taylor, Thomas Bond, Thomas Hopkinson, William Plumsted, Joshua Maddox, Thomas White, and William Coleman. Benjamin Franklin was the first president of the board.

the title of "Trustees of the Academy of Philadelphia." The scheme was now laid before the public, and its patronage requested. Such was the spirit of the people, and so obvious the promised advantages, that an adequate sum was speedily subscribed; and, in the commencement of the year 1750, the academy went into operation.* Three schools, one for the Latin, one for the mathematics, and one for the English tongue, were immediately opened; two charity schools were soon added; and so flourishing was the condition of the institution, and so fair its prospects of permanent success, that the trustees determined to apply for a charter of incorporation, which, in the year 1753, they obtained from the proprietary government. The prosperity which continued to attend the undertaking, soon induced them to expand their views beyond the limits of a simple academy. In the year 1755 the charter, at their request, was so altered, as to confer upon them the right of granting degrees, of appointing professors, and of assuming, in all other respects, the character of a collegiate body. They now took the title of "Trustees of

* The building occupied by the school was that at present known by the name of the academy, situated in Fourth, between Arch and Market streets. It was originally erected under the direction of the celebrated Whitfield and others, as a place for the gratuitous instruction of the poor, and for public worship; and was purchased by the trustees, subject to the condition that a charity school should be maintained in it, and that any protestant minister of the Gospel, without regard to sect, who might be willing to sign certain fundamental articles of faith, and in other respects might be judged qualified, should be allowed to preach, on all proper occasions, either in the house itself, or in some place on the premises, which might thereafter be set apart for the purpose: and it was especially stipulated, that the "free and uninterrupted use of the said place of worship should be permitted to the Rev. Mr. George Whitfield, whenever he might happen to be in the city, and desire to preach therein."

the College, Academy, and Charity School of Philadelphia." Reserving to themselves the rights of making laws, of bestowing both the ordinary and honorary degrees, and of exercising a general superintendence over the affairs of the institution, they transferred its immediate government, with all the necessary powers for maintaining order and promoting industry among the students, to a faculty composed of the professors, of whom the principal was denominated provost, and the second in authority vice-provost. The choice of the professors seems to have been made with impartiality and judgment. The Rev. Dr. William Smith, the first provost, was a man of distinguished abilities, and of no mean reputation as a writer. The degree of doctor in divinity, conferred upon him by the university of Oxford, and subsequently by the learned faculties of Aberdeen and Dublin, evinces the esteem in which his station, talents and exertions were held in Europe. The vice-provost, the Rev. Dr. Alison, had long been favourably known in the province, as a private teacher. Mr. Kinnersley, professor of English and oratory, was the associate of Franklin in his investigations into the subject of electricity; and the merit of several discoveries in this science is claimed for him by his cotemporaries. The professor of languages was reputed to be inferior, as a classical scholar, to none on the continent. In the Magazines of the time, we are presented with some of his compositions in Latin, which indicate a cultivated taste, and an accurate acquaintance with that language.

Under such officers, with the zealous co-operation of the most influential men in the colony, and in the midst of an increasing population, eager after improvement, the college could not but partake of that impulse, which, with irrisistible force, was bearing forward the whole country in the career of national

prosperity. Its halls soon became crowded with students, and numerous individuals received its honours, who, by the political, literary, or professional distinction they afterward attained, gave testimony of its practical advantages. A few years after the first organization of the college, the number of scholars at one time under instruction, was not less than one hundred; and, if we include the academy and charity schools, more than three hundred were partaking of the benefits of the institution. When we consider that the amount of the population, from among which these numbers were drawn, was less than one-third of that at present contained within the same limits, we shall have reason to judge favourably, both of the merits of a school which attracted so much patronage, and of the spirit of the colonists, who showed themselves so well aware of the importance of education, and so ready to avail themselves of the offered advantages. Such, indeed, was the confidence inspired by the regulations and management of the college, that a gentleman of considerable celebrity, born and educated in England, declared, in a letter to a friend, that, for the primary education of his own children, he should prefer the school of Philadelphia, not only to any other in the provinces, but even to his favourite Oxford.

The pecuniary resources upon which the trustees relied, were wholly independent of legislative assistance. To the private contributions of the citizens, by which they had originally been enabled to commence their operations, were subsequently added grants of land and money by the proprietaries, and subscriptions to a considerable amount, obtained by the personal application of the provost, from the friends of learning in England.* The funds derived from

* The private contributions within the province amounted, during the first twelve years, to seven thousand pounds ster-

these sources, united with the proceeds of the school itself, were sufficient to maintain it in a prosperous

ling, of which two thousand were subscribed by the twenty-four gentlemen who formed the original board of trustees. Considerable sums were also raised by means of lotteries, charity sermons, and collections at the commencements and other public exhibitions of the college. Three thousand pounds were granted by the proprietaries, Thomas and Richard Penn, who also conveyed to the trustees a portion of their manor of Perkasie, containing between two and three thousand acres of land, to be held forever for the benefit of the institution.

In the year 1761, the trustees, finding that the income of the college was insufficient to defray the necessary expenses, and having exhausted the sources from which money could be obtained in the province, determined to make application to the mother country for assistance. With this view they proposed to the provost, Dr. Smith, to take a voyage to England, where his personal endeavours might be useful in promoting their design. He cheerfully acquiesced, and being provided with the proper credentials, left his family and embarked for Europe. After his arrival, finding that a gentleman had been sent on a similar errand, by the college of New York, he thought it advisable that they should pursue their object in connexion, and divide equally the proceeds of their joint application. Many very influential individuals became interested for their success; and in the course of two or three years a collection had been made in Great Britain and Ireland, of which the share that fell to the college of Philadelphia was more than six thousand pounds sterling. This benefaction having been conferred with the understanding that it should form a permanent fund, the money was invested by the trustees in the best securities, and the interest applied to the purposes of the institution. To the exertions of Dr. Smith this favourable issue of their project was mainly attributable, and their sense of his merits on the occasion is very strongly expressed, in several places, on the minutes of the board. In the account of his reception on his return from abroad, it is stated, that "the president, in the name and by the order of the trustees, delivered him their unanimous thanks, in the warmest and most affectionate manner, for the great zeal, diligence, ability and address which he had shown in the management of this collection, for which all the friends of this institution, as well as of learning in general,

state, till the breaking out of the revolutionary contest. The storm which swept away so many political institutions, and changed, in some measure, the face of civil society, could not be expected to leave untouched an establishment, the influence of which, if improperly exerted, might bear so strongly upon the welfare of the country. A provision of the charter demanded from the officers of the college, before entering upon their duties, an oath of allegiance to the king of Great Britain; and it was suspected that the inclinations of some of the most influential among them, were but too well in accordance with the obligation of their oath. It was alleged, moreover, that by consulting the interests of a particular sect, the trustees had deviated from the declared intention

were under the greatest obligations to him." Not content with thanks alone, they voted him an annual allowance of one hundred pounds, expressly as a consideration for his services in England, and independent of his salary as provost.

About ten years after this splendid contribution from England, it was thought advisable to make further efforts at home. A subscription was set on foot in Pennsylvania, which was attended with some success; and in the province of South Carolina, whither Dr. Smith was sent by the board, more than one thousand pounds sterling were collected. The West Indies also contributed.

But the finances, which by these various means had been brought into a flourishing condition, were thrown into disorder by the troubles of the revolution. The bonds and mortgages held by the trustees, were, in many instances, redeemed in the depreciated currency of the times; the receipts from tuition fell off with the number of students; and while the former resources were thus diminished, the increased prices of the necessaries of life called for increased expenditure. The funds of the college thus became inadequate to its proper support; and this circumstance was urged, among others, as a reason for the interference of the legislature in its affairs. It was undoubtedly an excellent reason for extending assistance; but certainly afforded no excuse for the course which was adopted, of entirely subverting the institution.

of the founders, who had been actuated by the most catholic spirit, as regarded religious opinion.* Accordingly, in the year 1779, it was recommended, by the executive council, that the affairs of the college should be made the subject of examination by the legislature; that whatever, in its charter or management, should be found incompatible with the new order of things, should be abrogated; and the whole remodelled, so as at once to preserve the original objects of the founders, and religiously to guard the best interests of the community. The sentiments of the assembly were in perfect agreement with those of the council; and a law was enacted, by which it was hoped they might attain the end proposed. The oath of allegiance, in the former charter, was transferred to the commonwealth; all the offices of the institution were declared vacant; a new board of trustees was appointed; and the old appellation of College, Academy, and Charity school of Philadelphia, was exchanged for the more highly sounding title of University of Pennsylvania. To show that they were actuated by no hostility to knowledge itself, they not only vested in the new trustees the property of which the college was before possessed, but granted to the university a very considerable endowment out of the

* This accusation of partiality seems to have been wholly destitute of foundation, Among the officers of the college were men of several different religious denominations, and students were admitted indiscriminately without regard to the peculiarity of their tenets. When the collections were made in Great Britain, it was expressly stated, in order that none might give under false impressions, that the establishment was on the most liberal foundation, open alike to persons of every sect; and a declaration to this effect, drawn up and inserted in the minute book of the trustees, was signed by all the gentlemen then members of the board, and subsequently, by all who became members, until the board itself was dissolved by the abrogation of the charter under which it acted.

forfeited estates.* However arbitrary the proceeding might be considered, it accorded with the predominant feeling of the times; and the party who felt themselves aggrieved, having used expostulation in vain, were compelled to yield for the present, and appeal for redress to a period of less political excitement. The new trustees proceeded immediately to the organization of the institution. The Rev. Dr. John Ewing, a member of the board, was appointed to the provostship, and carried into that office a character of great moral excellence, united with extensive acquirements, and indefatigable industry. At the same time, the celebrated Rittenhouse was chosen vice-provost and professor of astronomy.

But the success of the university did not correspond with the lofty pretensions of its title. Whether the unsettled condition of the country, consequent upon a long war, was unfavourable to the cultivation of learning; whether the dissatisfaction with which many respectable citizens regarded the late measure of the legislature, had turned the current of patronage towards the neighbouring colleges; or whatever other cause may have operated, certain it is, that the new school was seldom crowded with students, and its commencements seldom graced with a numerous band of graduates.

It could not be expected that the trustees and faculty of the old college, should acquiesce quietly in what they conceived to be an arbitrary violation of their rights. To take away their charter, without the formality of a trial, without even the allegation of an unlawful act, was a proceeding which could be justified only upon the plea of necessity; but, at the same time, to deprive them of property, entrusted,

* The real estate conveyed to the university, in consequence of this grant, amounted to the yearly value of nearly one thousand four hundred pounds, Pennsylvania currency.

with the full confidence of its former possessors, to their management, and partly acquired by their own individual exertions; upon which, moreover, some of their number were depending for an authorised subsistence, was, in their opinion, a stretch of power more becoming an Eastern despot, than the supporters of a free government. In a clause of the constitution under which the commonwealth was then governed, it was declared, that individuals associated for the promotion of learning, or for religious and charitable purposes, should be left in the undisturbed enjoyment of their former privileges; and the treatment, therefore, which they had received, could be reconciled as little with positive law as with natural justice. Many respectable citizens shared in their sentiments and feelings; memorials, representing their case, were, on several occasions, presented to the legislature; and the tumult of party spirit having at length sufficiently subsided to allow the voice of justice to be heard, in the year 1789, a law was enacted, declaring the abrogation of their charter an unconstitutional act, and restoring to them the possession of their estates, and the full exercise of their former privileges.

The new school, however, retained its charter, and the property with which the legislature had endowed it. There were now, therefore, in Philadelphia, two distinct establishments, each having its own board of trustees, and its own faculty. The college and academy were revived under the superintendence of their former provost; and the university continued in operation, with no other change than such as necessarily resulted from the late decision.

But neither party had reason to be satisfied with this arrangement. The funds, which had barely sufficed for the purposes of a single school, when divided between two, were found wholly inadequate to

their proper support; and distinguished talent was neither so abundant, nor so easily commanded, that in the same city a double faculty of professors could be created, each composed of men eminent in their respective branches, and calculated to exalt the reputation of the school to which they might belong. In the art of teaching, undue opposition, by diminishing the reward of labour, necessarily deteriorates the quality of instruction; for the talents requisite to great success in this art, being in their nature readily transferrible, will be prevented from forsaking it, only by the combined influence of attachment for its duties, and the prospect of a competent recompense. To the common elementary schools this remark is less applicable. As in these the requisite knowledge is of easy acquisition, and the route to be pursued already laid down with accuracy, competent teachers are readily obtained; and the advantages resulting to the community from a wide diffusion of elementary instruction, more than counterbalance the evil of its superficial character. But the multiplication of colleges, beyond the extent necessary for the comfortable accommodation of those students who seek a liberal education, is an evil of a most serious nature. Even should the same eminent ability be secured in their service, it would operate feebly, from its want of concentration. But mediocrity, both of attainment and character, would necessarily be elevated into stations which could lead only to mediocrity of reward; and seminaries, which should be the nurseries of extensive and accurate knowledge, of good feeling, of correct and exalted sentiment, would send forth their graduates superficially instructed, and vain of the semblance, without the substance of learning. The numbers of these pretenders would not compensate for their deficiences; for, in the scale of public benefit and national honour, one who has drunk

deeply at the fountain of knowledge will outweigh a hundred who have only tasted. It may, indeed, be said, that in an equal competition, however numerous may be the competitors, the most deserving will succeed, and thus merit be assured of a sufficient reward. But in the strife of numerous public seminaries, especially in a country like ours, divided into sections, governed by their own laws, jealous of their comparative standing, and subject to frequent and powerful party excitement, such equality of competition is unattainable. Almost every school, however imperfectly managed, will find some support in the prejudices of private friendship, of local attachment, or of party feeling; and though the most deserving may, in the end, obtain the greatest share of patronage, yet the whole stock may be subjected to such minute division, as to render any one portion utterly valueless to those who are able to draw, from other sources, a better subsistence. It is bad policy, therefore, to multiply colleges beyond the demand of the population; at least without at the same time endowing them so largely, as, in this way, to offer a premium for the high qualifications which should characterise their officers. Two institutions of this nature, in the same place, depending mainly on popular support, can never flourish: either the one will sink into comparative insignificance, while the other shall maintain a respectable standing; or both will fall into decay, and some distant establishment reap the harvest of their dissentions.

From the experience or anticipation of such a result, the schools of Philadelphia had been but a short time in separate operation, when the wish was expressed, by both parties, of increasing their strength by a union of interests. Accordingly, in the year 1791, the university and college, in a joint petition to the legislature, requested such alterations in the

acts of incorporation as might be necessary for this purpose. A design so obviously beneficial, could not fail to meet with approval; and the necessary enactments having been obtained, a union on just and satisfactory terms was effected. An equal number of trustees from each institution, formed a new board, of which the governor of the state was *ex officio* president; and which, by the unrestricted right of supplying vacancies, was rendered independent of any other controul, than such as resulted from its obligation to consult the best interest of the seminary entrusted to its charge. In the arrangement of the professorships, the same regard was paid to the claims of the respective parties; and the new faculties in the arts and in medicine, possessed the united strength of those from which they were formed. The more comprehensive title of University of Pennsylvania absorbed, of course, that of the College and Academy, which, after an interrupted duration of nearly forty years, with a fame which the success of numerous graduates had spread over the continent, was now finally extinguished.

Soon after the union of the schools, the edifice in which we are now assembled, erected by the state of Pennsylvania as a residence for the president of the United States, but declined on constitutional grounds by Mr. Adams, who then filled the office, was purchased by the trustees, and applied to the purposes of the university.

Thus newly organized and located, the institution has remained, to the present time, without a rival in the city. Dr. Ewing continued to preside over it till the period of his death, in 1802, since which time his place has been successively occupied by Dr. M'Dowell, the Rev. Dr. Andrews, and the present respected provost. It is needless for me to observe, that among their associates in the office of instruction,

have been men distinguished for their learning and science. Of these, Philadelphia, within a few years, has experienced the loss of one, whose elevation to the presidency of the Philosophical Society, to the chair which had been filled by a Franklin, a Rittenhouse, a Jefferson, and a Wistar, was the merited reward of his talents, and of a long life devoted to the service of his fellow-citizens.

Though the name of the university has been rendered illustrious by the splendid success of its medical school, yet this very circumstance has perhaps tended, in some measure, to obscure the other department; the reputation of which has never been commensurate with the expectations, which the extent of its resources, the talent engaged in its service, and the growing prosperity and high literary character of the city in which it was located, were calculated to excite. An amount of students, seldom, if ever, so high as one hundred, and frequently less than half the number; and an annual list of graduates, varying from five to thirty, though surpassing the success of many colleges in the Union, are yet so unequal, either to the claims of the institution, or to the numbers and wealth of those from whom it has a right to expect support, that Philadelphia must submit to the imputation of unwarrantable apathy in a cause, which is intimately connected with her own interest and honour.

The neglect, however, which the school has encountered, is perhaps attributable, in part, to certain defects in its own arrangements. The plan which was first adopted, and which may have been most accordant with the circumstances of the times, was not allowed to expand with the growth of the country; and became, therefore, disproportionate to the more extensive demands of a later period.

The admission of only three classes, and the conse-

quent limitation of the term of study to the same number of years, produced an impression very unfavourable to the college, which, on this account, was thought to afford fewer opportunities for the acquisition of knowledge, and to place the requisites of graduation lower, than other similar establishments. Other circumstances contributed to strengthen and increase this impression. In the school, as originally instituted, the students of the college had never been sufficiently distinguished from those of the academy; and by a similar error in the arrangements of the university, a grammar school was admitted into the same buildings with the collegiate classes. At one period, the lowest of these classes was associated with the boys of the grammar school, in the same room and under the same teachers; and the confusion thus produced, was increased by the early age at which applications for admittance into the college were received; so that a distinction not preserved by positive regulations, could not be rendered obvious by any marked difference in the appearance of the students. This may seem a trivial observation; but it is by such apparently trifling circumstances, more than by any glaring defects of organization, that the prosperity of an institution is affected; and their injurious operation is often rendered inveterate by our aptness, in searching for the source of any evil, either to overlook them entirely, or, attributing to them an influence corresponding with our notions of their importance, to neglect their timely removal or correction.

From the causes to which I have alluded, the collegiate department of the university obtained the reputation, rather of a primary school, adapted to the instruction of children, than of a learned seminary where young men might complete a liberal education.

Its honours thus came to be less highly esteemed than those of Yale, Harvard, and Nassau; and as the warm imagination of youth, ever apt to convert shadows into substance, is often dazzled more by the distinction of a name, than by the merit which would deserve it, we have no reason to be surprised, that the current of youthful ambition has set strongly in the direction of these latter colleges. The prejudices of parents have concurred with the wishes of their children; and not only from the country of which Philadelphia is the natural metropolis, but from our immediate neighbourhood, from the very centre of the city, the sons of many of the most influential inhabitants have been sent to distant seminaries, the fame of which they have thus contributed to exalt, at the expense of the reputation of their native place.

But the causes which gave rise to this unnatural preference, so far as they were connected with the internal arrangements of the university, have now ceased to exist. The grammar school, which has for many years been distinct in its government and conduct from the college, by a recent determination of the trustees, has been entirely removed from the buildings appropriated to the purposes of the latter. The age of admission into the college has been regulated; so that no student can now enter at a period of life, when the mind is not yet sufficiently expanded for the reception of the higher kinds of knowledge. By the introduction of another class, the whole collegiate term has been extended to four years, a space of time which, in this country, has been found to answer most satisfactorily the opposite demands of business and study. With this increase in the number of classes, the faculty has been augmented by the appointment of a tutor and an additional professor; and an opportunity is thus afforded, both of

extending the field of instruction, and of cultivating, with increased effect, the sciences already taught.*

In these changes, every improvement has been embraced, which was requisite to the permanent establishment of the college on a basis as broad and firm as that of any similar institution within the United States. Whatever food, therefore, was afforded to prejudice by its former regulations, has been entirely removed; and if hereafter the smile of popular favour shall be wanting, we must look for the cause in circumstances wholly extraneous to the college itself, and beyond the controul of those who have the direction of its affairs.

No impediment to its prosperity is so much to be apprehended, as the very general but erroneous opini-

* The following are extracts from the laws of the University:

"In the collegiate department there shall be four professors, *viz:* A professor of Moral Philosophy—a professor of Natural Philosophy and Chemistry—a professor of Languages—and a professor of Mathematics. A tutor to assit in the instruction of Mathematics and the Languages."

"The students shall be distributed into four classes, *viz:* the Senior Class, the Junior Class, the Sophomore Class, and the Freshman Class."

"No applicant shall be admitted into the Freshman Class under the age of fourteen; any special exception shall be decided by the board, upon the application of the professors. His fitness must appear on examination, to be conducted by and in the presence of a majority of the professors, who must concur in opinion that he is qualified in such branches of mathematics, and in such Latin and Greek authors, as shall be prescribed by this board."

"The requisites for entering the Freshman Class, shall be as follows:—Every applicant shall have read Virgil, Sallust, and the Odes of Horace, in the Latin; the New Testament, Lucian's Dialogues, Xenophon's Cyropedia, and the Græca Minora of Dalzel, in the Greek language; and learned quantity and scanning in each. He shall also have been taught Arithmetic, including fractions, and the extraction of roots; English Grammar, and the elements of Geography.

on, that large cities are unsuitable for the seats of the higher seminaries. The students, it is thought, are, in these situations, more exposed to the seductions of pleasure, and therefore less sedulous in the pursuit of knowledge, than when, confined within the small compass of a country town, frequently under the same roof with their instructors, they are either in the way of no temptation, or, by the watchfulness of their superiors, are restrained from injurious indulgence. The opinion, however, will stand the test of neither reason nor experience.

The tenants of a college are generally at an age, when the young feeling of independence has not learned submission to the necessary restraints of civil government; and contempt of merely legal authority is considered honorable, as the sign of a bold and manly spirit. When collected together in great numbers, and not allowed to mingle in general society, they learn to regard the good opinion of their fellow students as their great principle of conduct; and the sentiments, therefore, which the circumstances of their age and situation in life render predominant, acquire all the force of positive laws. To evade or violate the college regulations, and to deceive or defy the teachers whose office it is to enforce them, are acts which are often followed rather by the applause than the disapprobation of those, whose good opinion they most highly value: and thus it happens, that the force of temptation, which is wanting nowhere but in a desert, and certainly not in the vicinity of our great colleges, receives additional strength from those very measures which are designed to repress it. That no vigilance is sufficient to counteract the operation of the irregular propensities of the youthful spirit, thus encouraged by a sense of self respect, and the applause of associates, is sufficiently evinced by the scenes of disorder, which but too frequently disturb

the tranquility both of the rural colleges themselves, and of the neighbouring inhabitants.

In large cities the students, instead of dwelling under one roof, are dispersed in separate families, and meet together only for a few hours in the day, when their regular duties call them into the presence of their instructors. While the advantages of emulation are thus gained, and sufficient opportunities afforded for forming those friendly connexions which are often the charm of their future life, they are prevented from coalescing into a distinct body, actuated by feelings and opinions differing from those of the community, and often hostile to their own true interests. Diffused in the mass of society, they are acted upon by the same causes which influence the ordinary formation of character, and imperceptibly acquire that cast of mind and manner which is best adapted to their future comfort and success in active life. They share the feelings and opinions of the relatives and friends around them; and the fear of causing uneasiness to these, or of encountering their disapprobation, is a more powerful restraint upon their conduct than the most vigilant enforcement of regulations which find no support in their principles or affections.

It might easily be shown that, in other points of view, a city education possesses advantages peculiar to itself; but want of time will not permit me to dwell longer on the subject. There is, however, one consideration which I feel unwilling to omit, the importance of which must form my excuse for pressing it upon your attention. I allude to the influence which female society is calculated to exert in forming the character of youth. It would be superfluous, before an intelligent audience, in a civilized country, either to maintain the general fact, that the most important consequences have resulted to society from the influ-

ence of the softer sex, or to explain particularly in what respects this influence has proved beneficial. In the vast difference between ancient and modern civilization, we are presented with an illustration, at once, of its existence and effects. At present our attention is directed to the subject as it bears upon the important point of education.

Young men, about to enter upon their collegiate course, are generally at an age when the character, though it still submits to the plastic influence of circumstances, has begun, however, to acquire a firmer consistence; and the impressions which are now made, while they are much deeper and more distinct, are not less durable than such as are received by the firmer substance of manhood. At this age, therefore, it is of the utmost moment that the student should be placed in a situation where every favourable cause may have an opportunity to operate: that while he is storing up knowledge, and strengthening his intellectual faculties, his dispositions should not be suffered to run waste; his personal habits to grow up into confirmed awkwardness, or offensive peculiarity; his taste and predilections to be formed upon false models, and directed to unsuitable objects; that, in fine, he should not be allowed to come from college a conceited pedant, filled with notions which subsequent experience of their incorrectness will hardly be able to eradicate, and deformed by manners which no intercourse with the world will be sufficient to smooth down into courtesy, or brighten into polish. Though I by no means design to assert that these effects are the necessary, or, to their full extent, even the very frequent results of the system of education in rural colleges, yet such I conceive, in a greater or less degree, to be the tendency of seclusion from female society; particularly from that familiar intercourse of domestic life, which, by its

unremitting operation, imperceptibly, but powerfully acts upon the character. A residence with parents or friends, during the long period of a collegiate course, must, on this account, be exceedingly desirable; and strong grounds of preference are thus afforded for city colleges.

Could that general prejudice which operates so much to their disadvantage be overcome, we might reasonably hope that our own school would meet with a degree of encouragement, which would render it in prosperity what it already is in desert, the equal of any similar institution on this continent. I have before stated, that whatever might have been conceived defective in its arrangements has been corrected; and the most fastidious could now discover, in this respect, no just ground of disapprobation.*

* The following is the course of instruction prescribed by the laws of the university:

In the Freshman year, *Latin*, Cicero's Orations; Odes and Satires of Horace.—*Greek*, Epictetus; first vol. of the Græca Majora; Greek Exercises.—Roman and Grecian Antiquities; Arithmetic reviewed. Algebra, to quadratic equations. Geometry, the theorems of Euclid.

In the Sophomore year, *Latin*, Cicero, (de officiis et de oratore.) Terence; Horace's Epistles and Art of Poetry.—*Greek*, first vol. of Græca Majora completed; Homer's Iliad. Latin and Greek exercises. Ancient and Modern History. Rhetoric and Criticism. English composition. Elements of Algebra and Geometry completed. Problems of Geometry, (practically.) Application of Algebra to Geometry. Plain Trigonometry. Surveying and Mensuration. Spherical Geometry and Trigonometry. Perspective Geography, including the use of the Globes, and the construction of Maps and Charts.

In the Junior year, *Latin*, Juvenal and Perseus.—*Greek*, second vol. of Græca Majora.—Logic.—Grammar.—Moral Philosophy.—Natural Theology.—Composition.—Forensic Discussions.—Higher Algebra.—Analytical Geometry, (including conic sections.)—Differential Calculus, (Fluxions.)—Natural Philosophy and Chemistry.

In the Senior year, Longinus and former Greek and Latin

Within its scheme of instruction are included all those branches of knowledge which are generally thought to be the proper subjects for a collegiate course; and if, from the nature of his professional views, from peculiarity of taste, or from a general craving after knowledge, the student should think it expedient to add to his regular duties the pursuit of other studies, he will have at his command, within the limits of the city, every assistance which can be necessary to facilitate his labours, and expedite his progress. Philadelphia may indeed claim, among American cities, a proud pre-eminence in the cultivation of the sciences. In every department of nature, from the lowest grade of inanimate matter up to the highest perfection of organized existence, she can boast of citizens who have themselves laboured successfully, and are willing to promote, by their instructions, the efforts of others. Her cabinets enriched with the spoils of the mineral, the vegetable, and the animal kingdoms; her libraries stored with all the wealth of human intellect; her numerous societies, formed to promote knowledge by a combination of resources beyond the means of individuals; these are advantages, which, combined with the numerous courses of instruction by teachers both public and private, lay open the access to the sciences, and render their pursuit a source of pleasure rather than a task.

But it cannot be expected that strangers should be fully sensible of advantages which do not seem to be justly appreciated by our own citizens. So long as our young men resort to distant seminaries, it will naturally be concluded that the means of education at

authors reviewed or completed.—Natural and Political Law.—Metaphysics.—Compositions and Forensics.—Integral Calculus.—Mathematical course reviewed.—Mathematical principles of Natural Philosophy.—Second course of Natural Philosophy.—Chemistry.

home are deficient; and against the force of example, argument and assertion will be of little avail. If the inhabitants of Philadelphia are desirous that their college should flourish, they will most effectually contribute to this result by giving it, what a strict examination will satisfy them it deserves, their own united support. The patronage of a city containing a population so numerous, wealthy, and enlightened as ours, if not of itself sufficient for the prosperity of this one school, will at least communicate to it such an impulse, that in the race of competition, it will be left behind by none even of those which have hitherto scarcely deigned to acknowledge it as a rival. Philadelphians have been accused of deficiency in public spirit, and it must be acknowledged that they have in general been content with accomplishing useful enterprises, without trumpeting forth their exertions and success to all the world. More given to action than to speech, they have done much for which they have received no credit; and the reputation of the city is therefore below its real desert. But I fear that, with regard to the college, we must submit to the justice of the accusation, and confess that we have accomplished much less than was called for by a just sense of the public good and the public honour.

The opportunity, however, yet remains of remedying the consequences of former neglect, and of exercising, in the support of this institution, the same energy which has been displayed in objects of not more vital importance. They whom I now address, by their presence on this occasion, exhibit an interest in the prosperity of the school which needs no extraneous impulse:—but were my voice capable of being extended to the great mass of Philadelphians, I would exhort them to put off that apathy with which they have so long regarded an institution connected most intimately with the reputation of their city. I

would call upon them to examine its regulations, to investigate its management, to estimate, with impartiality, the advantages which it offers; and if, in none of these circumstances, it should prove inferior to other seminaries, I would confidently refer to their own sense of justice its preferable claims to their patronage. I would appeal to their public spirit and pride as citizens; and pointing to the glory which has been thrown around many cities of Europe by the celebrity of their colleges, would endeavour to rouse that honorable emulation, which, while it scorns to detract from the merits of others, can never rest under their superiority. Finally, I would say to them, your school of medicine has risen to a station little inferior to the highest; it has increased your prosperity at home; it has exalted your reputation abroad;—upon yourselves it depends that your school of arts shall attain an equal elevation; that it shall equally contribute to your profit and honour; that in distant countries and in future ages, it shall, in like manner, be cited as the glory not of this city only, but of the United States, and of the American continent.

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