

LD 3293

1896

LD 3293

1896

403213 506
1896

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN,
THE SOURCES OF ITS POWER AND ITS SUCCESS

AN ADDRESS

DELIVERED AT THE

ANNUAL COMMENCEMENT

OF THE

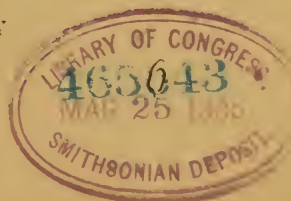
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

JUNE 25, 1896

By CHARLES KENDALL ADAMS, LL.D.

PRESIDENT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN

ANN ARBOR, MICH.
PUBLISHED BY THE UNIVERSITY
1896



1590
1898

1590
1898

COURIER PRINTING AND PUBLISHING HOUSE.
ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN.

1590
1898
1590

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN, The Sources of Its Power and Its Success.

Mr. President, Fellow Graduates, Ladies and Gentlemen:

I know not whether the copious streams of oratory that yesterday gushed out from so many quarters may not have filled you to the point of saturation, and whether, consequently, any speech of mine on the subject of this University may not run the risk of raising the general current into what you will regard as an inundation or a deluge. Upon the speaker who comes last at such an academic celebration, I think the audience is always inclined to invoke the Horatian malediction, "*scabies extremum occupet*," but I beg to remind you that, for what took place here yesterday, I have no responsibility whatever. I could prove an alibi. While on this platform and elsewhere on these grounds the multiform processes of congratulation were going on, I was devoting myself assiduously to other matters in another State. I may perhaps venture to say that I was doing my best to prove, that, if Wisconsin cannot defeat Michigan in one way, she can in another. It gives me pleasure to announce that, as a result of this effort, we have broken one of Michigan's records, and have succeeded in bringing our graduating classes up to Commencement on Wednesday instead of Thursday. If, in the past, you have not had your share of the beneficent discipline of defeat, I have no doubt that, before the hour is past, you will be ready to insist that you have had more than enough. But, however severe your punishment may be, the blame is not altogether mine. After all the words of commendation that were uttered yesterday, it may be a relief to find something in which President Angell has made a mistake. It is said that the Greeks banished one of their greatest men because they were tired of hearing his praises.

Perhaps it is for a kindred reason that in those who are thought to be absolutely perfect, we sometimes enjoy finding a redeeming fault; and perhaps, therefore, you will be pleased to learn that the President declared with irresistible persuasiveness that if I did not arrange to come, he would never again have a twenty-fifth anniversary.

There are certain days that lay their imperial commands upon us; and such days are the ones which we now celebrate. Just twenty-five years ago this very hour, the new President stood before our Commencement audience, much smaller indeed, but still a kind of childhood of the maturity we see here today. Without a scrap of paper or a note, and without having written a word,* he surprised and delighted us with the beauty, the cogency, and the earnestness of his inaugural address. When I recall what he then said and the various phases of advancement the University has made since that day, finding all other subjects crowded out of my mind, I yield to the persuasive influence of these associations, and submit to the risk of repeating much that already may have been said.

What magnificent advancement there has been! The eleven hundred students have so commended the institution that more than three thousand have come back to fill their places; the thirty-five teachers have made room for one hundred and seventy-eight, and the limp little catalogue of eighty-four pages has grown into a stout volume of three hundred and thirty-six. The elms and the maples that now so beautifully shade the grounds were then saplings that had been planted only thirteen years before in a general outburst of enthusiasm for an arbor day engendered by the youthful zeal of Professor Andrew D. White, who had but recently arrived, and who had probably never before seen a campus without trees. There then stood upon the grounds the two wings of University Hall, as separate buildings; the older half of the Law Building, the old Medical College Building, the beginning of the Chemical Laboratory, and the four professors' houses. Since that day, have arisen, one after another, the University Hall, including the rise and fall of the University dome; the Museum, with its sad architectural experiences within and without; the hospitals, destined, it was said, to be burned for sanitary reasons, at least once in ten years; the building for

Mechanical Engineering; the Physical Laboratory; the Anatomical Laboratory; the two buildings for heating plants; the Library Building; the Tappan Hall; the Gymnasium; the enlargement of the Law Building; the enlargement of the Engineering Building; and the repeated enlargements of the Chemical Laboratory. Other Universities have made larger expenditures, but it may safely be said that no one has erected or enlarged so many buildings, or enclosed so much of the space of heaven for the money.

The ingenuity of the dear mother during this period has been sorely taxed. So faithfully has she obeyed the Scriptural injunction to increase and multiply, that she has not only required new clothes for her new children, but she has had to turn over the old garments from one child to another, taking in a tuck here, letting out a seam there, setting a patch on the part that is most worn, and putting in supports where there have been signs of giving way. The result has been an educational wardrobe of great usefulness, even if it has not always been in accord with the latest fashion. But fashion everywhere seems to be the prerogative of small families. The necessities of this very rapid growth remind one of the necessities of Frederick William I. You remember that when some benevolent ladies presented him with a gorgeous dressing gown, the old king stuffed it in the stove, declaring that "he had no use for anything but useful duffel." Surely the University has not been tempted to imitate this royal example by burning any costly gift, but something of his spirit has been an ever present necessity. The State would not have her sons and daughters sent away for want of shelter; nor would she have them packed like sardines in the old boxes. With the means at the disposal of the University, the problem has been the mathematical one of determining how to enclose the largest possible amount of space with the smallest possible amount of money.

But our chief cause of pride in the University is not in the fact that the buildings have been multiplied, or that the number of students has advanced from eleven hundred to three thousand, or that the staff of instruction has increased by more than five fold. Judged by any such standard, the Egyptian University at Cairo might beat us all. The foremost reasons for being proud of any

University are the elevating and inspiring power of its instruction, the character of the men and women it equips for life, and the influence it exerts on society and on other institutions. You will perhaps recall that in saying this, I only echo what was so admirably urged by the President in his inaugural address, twenty-five years ago. The claim of the University upon our respect and admiration today, is to be measured by the standards proclaimed when Dr. Angell was inaugurated. What could be wiser than these words: "As the soul of the nation is in the spirit of the people rather than in the words of their constitution, so the soul of the University is in the men who compose it, rather than in the plan of its organization." "If it is to have the highest success," he continues, "it must be able to command the services of the choicest teachers and to remunerate them so that they can give their best vigor to their professional work." And again, "When will even good men learn that to endow a University with brains and heart, and not alone with bricks and mortar, is the part of true wisdom?" "The ideal teacher," he continues in words which might well be carved upon the walls of every normal school and every pedagogical seminary in the land, "The ideal teacher is a rare man, for whose coming, when he is come, the University and the State should give thanks."

Such a spirit could not fail to exert a moulding and inspiring influence on other institutions. In sending into all parts of this western world thousands of children endowed with some measure of this spirit, these halls have been a kind of *incunabula gentium* from which hundreds of schools and colleges have recruited their ideals and their strength.

It has long been known that all the State Universities west of us have either been modeled after this institution or at least have been very greatly influenced by it. What this influence has been in the East has not been so well understood. Old students will remember that Guizot, in claiming superiority for French civilization over all others, remarked that a new idea, in order to get general currency in Europe, must first pass successfully the ordeal of favor in France. It is certainly not unnatural that the older Universities should look with a similar spirit upon the precocious and perhaps audacious edu-

cational enterprise of the younger members of the family. But natural and justifiable as such a spirit may be, the East will, I am sure, indulge the audacious West in a conjecture that when the western Lowell becomes full grown, he may be tempted to imitate his Eastern name-sake, and write something "On a Certain Condescension towards Western Universities."

Yet the West has no cause to complain. The institutions of the East are willing to take a large share of their best scholars, as well as their best athletes, from the West, and they sometimes even succeed in beguiling a favorite son of a Western University to exile himself to one of their professor's chairs. It would be interesting to know how large a proportion of the best students and the most successful professors of Harvard, and Yale, and Johns Hopkins, and Princeton, are from the region west of the Alleghanies. It is not the old countries that are the countries of invention, nor is it generally the old institutions of learning that are most ready to attempt innovations. One of the normal methods of advance seems to be for the University of Michigan to devise some new educational variation, or to return to some old European standard, and then, after it has demonstrated its success, pass it through Harvard, as civilization is passed through France. It can then be proclaimed as the ripe fruit of the oldest and most renowned of American Universities. We shall have no occasion for surprise when the Michigan diploma system and the Michigan marking system, or rather the Michigan absence of a marking system, founded as they both are upon the best European experiences, are universally adopted by the older colleges and universities. They seem about ready to join the long procession of reforms which have marched from the West to the East, and then, with the benedictions of the East upon them, have been adopted as the right thing for the whole country.

When we ask ourselves what have been the causes of this great success and this great influence, we shall find ourselves compelled to give a variety of answers. It seldom happens that any great institution is the result of less than many powers and influences. The sails of this University have been filled with many of the favoring winds of heaven, and yet it seems to me that we may point out a

few great currents which, moving together, have been strong enough of themselves to bear it forward toward its phenomenal achievements.

I. The first of these was its exceptionally fortunate early organization.

It is not my purpose to repeat what was so admirably described in the President's Memorial Oration in 1887; and yet there were certain features of the early history of the University which must always be regarded as among the most potent causes of all subsequent success. It would be difficult to point out a more interesting example of the power which a great book sometimes exerts, than that which was exerted on the early history of this University by Cousin's Famous Report on the Prussian System of Education. When that remarkable work fell into the hands of Cary, and then of Pierce, it so wrought upon their minds that they not only formulated the ideals, but when Pierce became Superintendent, he set them forth in his first Report with such power that they were adopted as the model after which the educational structure was to be reared. It was of unspeakable advantage to the State that this ideal was adopted at the very first, and was persistently followed throughout the formative period.

Then, too, the State was exceptionally fortunate in the management of its University lands. Of all the states framed from the Northwest Territory, Michigan was the only one that adopted a definite policy of treating the University lands received from Congress, in the interest of the far future, as well as the present. Though we may not say that the management of these lands was faultless, yet it is still true that the income from this source has been far greater than the income from similar lands in the neighboring states. The consequence of this good management was, that the University, for thirty years, was not only independent of legislative appropriations, but was able, very early in its history, to offer inducements that attracted some of the foremost scholars in the land. When the University was fifteen years old its treasury had an independent income of about forty thousand dollars a year. The importance of this condition may be inferred from the fact that when the University of Wisconsin was of the same age, its income was less than six

thousand dollars a year; and this difference existed, notwithstanding the fact that the Congressional University Land Grant to Wisconsin was twice as large as that which had been given to Michigan. What might be called the Michigan method of treating the lands yielded about five times as much per acre as did the Wisconsin method.

But the advantage of Michigan was not merely in the matter of independence. There were also the elements of priority and of good management. It was all these fortunate conditions acting harmoniously together, that were able at once to presage the future, and to lay out and build those broad and strong foundations upon which alone could be reared the great edifice we now so much love and admire. Even then, the true elements of greatness seemed to be understood, for before it was twenty-five years old it had brought together in its faculties such men as Frieze, and Boise, and White, and Winchell, and Brünnow, and Watson, and Ford, and Gunn, and Palmer, and Cooley, and Campbell, and Walker.

Of this proud galaxy, only White and Cooley remain, and we had hoped to have both of them here with us today. One of them—*magnum et clarissimum nomen*—crowned with the honors of learning, and administration, and diplomacy, and recently called to a most delicate commission of international importance, hoped to leave his difficult work, in order to visit once more the scene of his early labors, and enthusiasms, and triumphs. The other, after winning recognition on every bench, and at every bar in the country, as one of the foremost jurists and interpreters of constitutional law of the century, is here, still to inspire the admiration and affection of thousands of pupils and friends.

In how many hundreds of souls have White and Cooley and their colleagues kindled that fire of contagious enthusiasm, which not only modifies the aspirations of the whole being, but also, in going from one to another, benefits and enlightens our institutions and even our civilization.

II. Another element which has contributed very greatly to the success of this University has been the fortunate organization, and the consequent general intelligence, discrimination, and devotion of the Board of Regents. I have no doubt that this element has

played a much greater part in the success of the University, than has sometimes been supposed. Professors, elsewhere, if not here, have been heard facetiously to remark that when they become rich, and endow a University, they will have neither Regents nor Trustees. The threat would be an innocent one, even if it were serious, because they will never become rich. But the humor has reason enough in experience to give it flavor. The common impression that our legislatures everywhere tend toward over-legislation, is not without some justification. If, in the legislative body of some of our universities, the propensity to precipitate action is not less marked, the tendency in this direction is easily accounted for. In some of the states, Regents or Trustees have been appointed or elected without very obvious regard to those peculiar qualifications that are called for by this high and responsible office. Ignorance is always a usurper, and ignorance in power invariably tries to correct errors, real or fancied, by immediate, and consequently, precipitate legislation. So it has often happened, especially in new institutions, that there has been a deplorable lack of that moderate and judicial wisdom which is so absolutely essential to the development of a large educational efficiency. Nothing is more clearly wrought out by the history of education than the fact that there must be as little interference as possible both by the staff of instruction with the business affairs of the institution, and by the Regents with the work of instruction. However profound and comprehensive the knowledge of a professor in his department may be, that knowledge does not necessarily in any way give him the comprehensiveness of view that is called for by the symmetrical development of the University as a whole. Nor is this comprehensiveness likely to be possessed, at first, either by the alumni-regent or the regent chosen chiefly for his business capacity and success. It comes only by observation and familiarity. The alumnus is likely to come to this position with an ardent belief that some particular feature should be established, or that some particular wrong should be corrected, and he sometimes, even when he enters upon his duties, has his mind already made up as to the way in which the reforms he advocates should be brought about. Perhaps it may be said that the most marked difference between the typical

alumni-regent and what may be called the typical business-regent is in the fact that the alumnus comes to his post with a partial, but a very ardent knowledge of his duties, feeling some confidence that he understands them all, while the typical business-regent comes to his position with no knowledge on the subject whatever but fully conscious of his ignorance. The one inevitably is in danger of taking advice of his prejudices, while the other is necessarily obliged to become acquainted with his new vocation by the ordinary waiting method of long study and observation. Sometimes a little knowledge is a more dangerous thing than no knowledge at all. Hence, it is easy to see why the alumnus sometimes disappoints, while the business-regent often becomes one of the most useful members of the Board. In the history of this University one has only to recall the names of those who may be called its business-regents to acknowledge the debt the University owes to that kind of discriminating judgment, which while insisting upon keeping the finances well in hand, leaves the more technical features of education and discipline to the experts employed for strictly educational purposes. Experience shows plainly enough that that University is best managed and administered in which the functions of the Regents are most completely separated from the functions of the staff of instruction.

It ought perhaps to be said that the most dangerous encroachments upon this principle do not consist in open incursions of one body into the domain of the other. For obvious reasons, the members of the faculty seldom encroach upon the financial management of the Regents; nor do the Regents often determine what, or how much of a given subject shall be taught; but there are less open methods that are as mischievous as they are insidious and ingenious. There are, of course, scores of people about every large institution who do not have all they want; and trouble is sure to begin as soon as these people, either aspirants or malcontents, find the open and welcome ear of a Regent into which they may pour their claims and complaints. I have been assured by the distinguished President of Johns Hopkins University that when he was invited to the work of organizing that institution, prompted by his experience in another University, he made it one of the conditions of his

acceptance, that all communications of a professional nature, between the Regents, on the one hand, and the members of the staff of instruction and the students, on the other, should be made through the President of the University. This requirement resulted in the only statute that is annually published in the Johns Hopkins Register. It states in substance that the President of the University is the authorized means of communication between the various officers of instruction and the Trustees. Thus all members of the staff are given to understand that all communications to the Board are to be made through that officer.

This policy is so different from that which sometimes prevails, that it is worthy of very careful note. The mistakes made generally by governing boards arise through hasty consideration and insufficient knowledge. A president is, of course, out of place, if he is not regarded as an educational expert. Professors are experts in their own specialties; but it is no disparagement of their services to say that they are not necessarily experts in that more general work of co-ordinating all the forces of the University. The very fact that a professor's work has to do with only one of the subjects taught in the University, makes his view more or less partial. He should certainly have opportunity to make his wants and his opinions known, and, within the scope of his department, he should have the largest practicable liberty; but all that range of concrete questions as to how much is to be expended on his particular department, affects not that department alone, but all other departments in the University; and therefore all questions of this nature should be acted upon by the Board, only after they have received the careful consideration of that officer who has been chosen to advise and assist the Regents in regard to the interests of the University as a whole.

Disregard of this consideration is not infrequent, but it is always fraught with more or less of danger. This danger—I had almost said this *peril*—is especially serious when the ears of individual Regents are open to the pleas of individual officers. Regents should hear impartially all sides of every important question, before they decide it; and therefore there is a strong analogy between the

attitude of a Regent who has listened to the private advocacy of a cause and that of a judge or juror who has been tampered with before the public hearing. I have often wondered how much of the prosperity of this University is owing to the fact that in the course of the last forty years, only three of its Regents have resided in Ann Arbor. Happy administration of twenty-five years! Why, many a young institution otherwise organized, can wear out the usefulness or the patience of a president in a quarter of that time! What other State University is there that has had only at the rate of three Presidents in the first forty-eight years of its history?

The judicial attitude that is required of a Board of Regents is greatly increased by long terms of service, especially if the method of appointment affords a reasonable guarantee that wise men will reach the position. In many of the newer universities the term is so short that it is impossible for the new Regent to do more than become familiar with the nature of his duties, before his term of office expires. When there is no alternative except either to act in ignorance, or not to act at all, the result is sure to be precipitate, and is almost as likely to be wrong as right. I have known the most important matter brought before a Board of Regents for years, decided by the casting vote of a young alumnus who had just taken his seat, and who had made up his mind in advance, not after a general discussion, but on a strictly *ex parte* presentation of the case.

Now, it has, no doubt, been one of the most fortunate facts in the history of this University that it has been subject to very few inconveniences from the dangers to which I have alluded.

That the University has altogether escaped such dangers will not be claimed by any of those who were here twenty years ago. Those very elements of stability of which I am speaking were enough to prevent what might very easily have been an era of catastrophism in an institution less fortunately organized.

The fact that the Regents are chosen for a term of eight years, and that they have often been re-elected, has given the Board a peculiar stability and strength. Their nomination by the same convention that nominates the Justices of the Supreme Court has had an unmistakable tendency to diminish objectionable political con

siderations, and to secure the right type of man for the position. The fact that they are chosen from the State at large, and not from Congressional or Judicial Districts, has left the convention free to nominate the best men in whatever part of the state they may be found. It has been because of these fortunate peculiarities in the organization of the Board, that the Regents of this University have been able to contribute so much to its success. It is no disparagement of the work of the able and devoted professors by whom the University has been so faithfully served, to call attention to the exceptional services that have been rendered by the long line of wise and faithful Regents that have been brought to the control of its affairs. When one remembers the intelligence, the devotion, and the wisdom, with which Johnson, and Willard, and Baxter, and Grosvenor, and Blair, and Walker, and Gilbert, and others like them, each for sixteen years, gave their discriminating energies to the upbuilding of the University, one cannot hesitate to declare one's belief that, to their services and the services of men like them, has been due a very large part of the prosperity and the success of the University. In any new institution, the method of choosing the Board of Regents is a matter of the very first importance.

III. Another great element of success in the history of this University during the past twenty-five years has been the general policy of the President.

Dr. Angell brought to his new position no love for startling and sensational innovations. His temperament, no less than his training and observations, at home and abroad, had convinced him that the best of what exists today is always but a development of something that existed yesterday. His has been the spirit that was embodied in the maxim of Publius Syrus:

“Discipulus est prioris posterior dies.”

Institutions are successfully developed after the analogies of organic life. As you may bend a tree and so correct its deformities, as you may cut away dead and unpromising branches and thus throw additional vigor and symmetry into other parts, while the plant lives with its nature essentially unchanged, so with institutions formed for the purposes of education, it will generally be found that the most

comprehensively successful have been those which have been developed along the lines that were early projected. The president himself graphically showed in his masterly oration at the celebration nine years ago that the best educational thought of the old world, as well as the new, was placed under contribution, in laying out the plans and devising the general scheme of the University at its very beginning. This was in perfect accord with the thought of President Tappan; for when that great organizer came to the work fifteen years after the University was founded, he said in his inaugural address that the most important and significant part of his labors would be to elaborate and put into concrete form the ideas which had been so striking a feature of the first Report of Superintendent Pierce in 1837. During the administrations of President Haven and Acting-President Frieze, the same policy of development was pursued, and when President Angell came, the plant had already attained such size, and was throwing out such vigorous shoots in every direction, that the most important part of his work was to supply the roots with the proper nourishment, and the branches and leaves and fruit with the air and sunshine of popular appreciation and approval.

In view of these necessities it was peculiarly fortunate that the new President brought to his work no purposes of revolution. It was only four years before his inauguration, that the legislature had made its first appropriation for the University. There were already gathered upon the grounds more than eleven hundred students; but there were neither buildings enough to shelter the classes, nor teachers enough to give them instruction. What was called for, first of all, was the creation and dissemination of an appreciative public opinion that would produce in some way or other the means necessary for the adequate support of the University. He at once gave emphasis to the traditional policy of the University that places its reliance upon the eminence of its men, and the superiority of its equipment, rather than upon the architecture of its buildings. But he evidently did not think that Mr. Garfield's oft quoted remark about the best college was quite complete. Mark Hopkins at one end of a table, and a student at the other, does not quite consti-

tute a good college. It needs in addition, at least a pencil and a slate. Let us be candid, and say that in modern times we can no more have a University with men and shelter alone, however great the men, and however magnificent the shelter, than we can have a railroad made up simply of a track and a supply of engine houses. To say that a large and costly equipment is absolutely indispensable, is now like saying that air and light are necessary to the health of the body. Science lives in the laboratory, and, if it is not insatiable in its appetite, at least it refuses to thrive without large supplies. How can we have even history or literature or philosophy without the books in which the vast materials of these subjects are stored? The most difficult work in the upbuilding of a great university is that which involves the harmonious and satisfactory adjustment of all these conflicting demands; and the success of President Angell's policy has been largely in the fact that he has encouraged the putting of the largest practical amount of the money at hand into men and equipment, and the smallest practical amount into buildings.

This policy has yielded abundant fruit of many kinds. It has contributed much to the content and enthusiasm of the officers of instruction. The average professor will clamor more loudly for an increase of equipment than he will for an increase of salary. Hence President Angell's policy has done much to assist in the establishment of the healthful tradition, in vogue, at least in my day, that nobody ever left the University without wishing himself back again. More and better than all that, it has put an enthusiasm into the class-room that has taken possession of the students and carried them in such numbers into the halls of legislatures, into the seats of judges, into important educational chairs, and into so many positions of great and commanding influence in all parts of the land.

Another feature of the President's policy has been his method of educational leadership. To lead successfully, it is not more necessary to be in advance, than it is to be not too far in advance. President Angell, in all the great and important changes that have occurred, has taken good care not to move, or encourage others to move, until he was sure that the whole institution could be counted

upon for moral support. His course has resembled that of Lincoln, which enabled that great political leader to withstand the "*civium ardor prava jumentum*," and finally made it possible for him to collect and to wield all the forces of the country in the common movement. He has had something of the spirit which Franklin expressed, when he remarked, as they were signing the Declaration of Independence, "Now, we must all hang together, or we shall hang separately." Not only that, but he has understood, perhaps better than any other University President in the country how to keep the wheels of the University in motion, without friction, by the deft use of an inexhaustible fund of conciliatory good nature, which in the wearing motions of human machinery is the best of all materials for lubrication. Under the inspiration of this guiding spirit the forces of the University have been kept well together. If the walls of the President's room, the scene of so many battles royal in Regents' meetings, and Faculty meetings, could give out on this anniversary day, through some Edison process, the educational ideas that have there been promulgated, what a medley of wisdom and folly would be the revelation! In that winnowing room the chaff of educational innovations has been vigorously, but patiently, and discriminately separated from the grain. The treadmill has been patiently trodden by professors for long hours on many a Monday night. A vast amount of dust has been raised, and a vast amount of chaff had to be blown away; but the President always stood it bravely, and the result was beneficial. If mistakes were made, correction followed close upon the heels of error. Tracks leading in the wrong direction were covered with remarkable ingenuity and skill.

Probably the most important innovation made in the department of literature, science, and the arts, during this administration, has been the expansion of the elective system. Up to the time of the important action in 1878 every student in the department was required to survive or perish within the sacred enclosures of his own class. Some of us felt that larger liberties should be allowed, and that the greater freedom of election called for might be safely permitted. I remember, *horresco referens*, that I inflicted on the faculty

in this discussion the longest speech I ever made on these grounds. Perhaps the faculty thought the motion must be passed in self defense, and so adopted it from prudential considerations. Be that as it may, the action taken was far more radical than at first had been contemplated. The reform quite swept away the reformers in the avalanche that followed. It used to be said in this state that Senator Chandler in 1859-60 asked the clergy to pray with all possible fervor that Chief Justice Taney might live through Buchanan's administration, in order that the appointment of a successor might fall to President Lincoln. When Taney threatened to outlive Lincoln the jealous Senator chided the clergymen "because," as he said, "they had overdone the business." Some of us had a kindred feeling in regard to our reform; but the resources of the President and Faculty were adequate to the situation. Though the scheme threw down every barrier between freshmen and seniors, it was found possible so to repair this disastrous innovation, that the student would still believe that he could elect what he pleased, while the faculty knew that he could elect only what the faculty pleased. The skill with which this devastating movement was gradually arrested by quietly slipping up one bar after another, is one of the monuments of educational ingenuity. The University got the credit of throwing down all the bars, and the prospective student beheld the alluring and thrilling possibility of being able to associate with seniors even on his first arrival. The whole movement, which, at first, took away the breath of the original movers, and made them gasp with apprehension, turned out to be as successful as could have been wished.

Not only was the number of students in the department greatly increased, but what was of perhaps greater importance, a new enthusiasm was put into all the classes. If this new door opened somewhat greater possibilities of neglect, even if a somewhat larger proportion of ignorance escaped with a degree, the fact is only another illustration of the characteristic of liberty everywhere. The disadvantages were far more than counterbalanced by the larger incentives and opportunities opened for ability and fidelity. The law of compensation seems to provide that the very liberty which

stimulates effort and opens the possibility of greatness, opens also the door to negligence and weakness. Every such movement must be judged in the light of the great fact that the power and even the reputation of an institution is measured, not by its poorest, but by its best. And it is for this reason that a large amount of liberty is as necessary in higher education as in social and political life. In both spheres alike, liberty is to be judged not by the possibility of the most frequent abuse, but by the possibility of the largest success.

Another characteristic of what may be called the method of the present administration, has been the dominant opinion that its real merit is indicated, not by the numbers in attendance, but by the power, the excellence, and the amount of instruction given. The institution has been remarkably free from factitious methods of attracting public attention. I believe we may say of it, as one of the most famous of the Athenian orators said of Athens, that great as its fame has been, its reputation has been exceeded by its merits. Its history has shown, especially in the development of the professional schools, that the American youth are ready to respond with glad hearts to every reasonable increase of the requirements for graduation. An illustration of this fact is afforded by the growth of the School of Medicine. The whole course of this department has shown, that what the intellectual appetites of the students of this region desire, is the best possible instruction in very large amounts. It is noteworthy, that the various extensions of the course, first from two years of six months each, to two years of nine months, then to three years, and finally to four years, have all received a remarkable justification and approval, by the students, as well as by the public at large. It is one of the especial causes of pride that this school has ever been among the earliest of American medical colleges to push its requirements to the very front of those of its colleagues. The great excellence and the large amount of instruction given have been enough, and more than enough, to insure its uninterrupted prosperity and success.

The same general methods and results have been characteristic of the department of Dentistry; and, if the department of law may at first glance seem to be exceptional, I believe it has been constantly

improving in its methods and efficiency, and that its phenomenal growth has been in consequence of the public confidence in this improvement.

IV. But I must hasten to consider, very briefly, the fourth, and the last, of the great influences that seem to have brought success to the University; I mean the attitude of the State.

It was in consequence of the wise administration of the Land Grant by the early State officials that the University, as I have already pointed out, was able to thrive for thirty years, without aid from taxation, and even to achieve phenomenal success. When in 1867 the first legislative appropriation was made, the University already had 1265 students. The alumni had already proceeded far in that process of colonization which was so soon to yield a powerful and beneficent influence in all the cities and villages of the State. Within a year after the admission of the State to the Union the legislature loaned the University \$100,000 for the erection of the first building, and provided methods by which the payment of the interest and principal of this loan could be made, by the application of credits for salt lands sold, without encroaching upon the normal income of the institution or the treasury of the state. It is now known that, in the year 1852, the debt had been paid; but it is a curious commentary on the spirit of the legislature, that, notwithstanding this liquidation of the debt, it continued regularly, as an act of educational appreciation, to remit the interest until 1859. Neither the legislature nor the Board of Regents seemed to know that the credits provided for in the original act had completely paid both the interest and the principal.

The first grant of \$15,000 in the year 1867 was not immediately available because of a condition which the Regents decided they could not accept without permanent injury to the University. The condition, however, was removed in 1869, when an appropriation was also made for University Hall.

When President Angell's happy administration began in 1871, the entire income of the University, exclusive of that for buildings and improvements, amounted to only \$83,000 a year. President Angell's first appeal to the legislature was one that could not be

resisted. In 1873, two years later, the appropriation was made permanent and increased by the adoption of a one-twentieth of a mill tax. This yielded from the first more than \$31,000 a year. In 1875 the legislature provided \$6,000 a year for the School of Homeopathic Medicine, \$3,000 for the School of Dentistry, and \$26,000 for other specific purposes.

But let us not dwell upon figures in detail, which as Dr. Johnson said of names, 'are non-conductors of thought,' but limit ourselves to the remark that after the grant of 1875 had been made, the income of the University, according to the Treasurer's Report for that year, had been increased to \$118,905.

But even these additional grants can hardly be said to have afforded the much needed relief. The act of 1875 provided chiefly for the establishment of new departments, and not for the adequate support of those already established. The President and the Board had to devote an undue amount of energy to devising how fifty cents could be made to do the work of a dollar. The demand could not be met except by the exercise of rare financial skill. There were some favoring conditions. The State Universities south and west of Michigan had not advanced so far as in any sense to play the part of rivals. The superiority of Michigan was so universally conceded, that all enterprising students in the West wanted to go to Ann Arbor, as the good people of New York and Boston, are said to want, when they die, to go to London and Paris. Advantage was taken of the great influx of students to increase the income of the University by the frequent advances of fees. How far this method succeeded is shown by the fact that while the income from the fees in 1879 was only \$29,000, in 1895 it had increased to \$141,888.

Perhaps attention ought to be called to another source of income, or, perhaps I should say, a particular phase of this same source. The excellence of the instruction and the great reputation of the Law School caused it to be the most numerously attended school of the kind in the country. The fees of the law students were not only enough to support the School, but enough to furnish a very considerable annual surplus for the assistance of the other departments. I suppose it is an unquestionable fact, that but from

the income from this source, it would have been impossible, without much larger legislative appropriations, to have given the other departments the prosperity they have enjoyed.

The legislature has generously made such appropriations as were greatly needed for new buildings. There is nothing for which the American people appropriate money so liberally, as for what they sometimes call "temples of learning." If they have not been equally appreciative of the most approved apparatus, and of the most skillful methods, and the most gifted teachers, it has been because the necessities in these directions have not made so loud or so impressive an appeal. This State has been no exception to the general rule. From 1875 to 1893 occasional appropriations for the Library and for other needed equipment were granted, but until 1893, no provision was made for increasing the general treasury in such a way that moneys could be applied where they were most needed. For all these multitudinous demands, the only source of supply has been the increase from fees of students, and from the slight increment in the proceeds of the Law of 1873.

It would be unjust to say that the State has not been liberal with the University; and yet it can very confidently be asserted that the University has given back to the State a hundred fold for every dollar it has received. At the Semi-Centennial Celebration there was nothing more impressive than the statement made by the President of one of the other large universities, that it was for its University that Michigan was chiefly known in other parts of the country. And so it is to-day. You can boast, with a justifiable pride, of your lumber, of your copper, of your iron, of your salt, of your gypsum, and of your coal, but after all, it is your University that is everywhere recognized as the crown and glory of the State.

But this pre-eminence is not self-sustaining. Palermo, and Bologna, and Cologne, once the glory of Italy and Germany, have been overshadowed by the universities at Rome, at Bonn, and at Berlin. While Oxford, and Cambridge, and Paris, and Vienna, by reason of their abundant resources, continue to extend their influence beyond national boundaries, it is a striking and instructive fact, that the largest and perhaps the most influential University in

Europe has not yet celebrated its centennial anniversary. It is amply demonstrated that age gives no continuing guarantee of pre-eminence. Charlottenburg, founded as a technical university, since the Franco-German War, has already some 4,000 students. The little Swiss canton of Zurich within the last twenty-five years has built and equipped the largest and most costly laboratories in the world. Berlin has outrun the other universities of Germany, for no other reason than because it has been furnished with more abundant means, and consequently has been able to command the services of the ablest men, and the largest material equipment. To a university with such men as Niebuhr, and Ranke, and Virchow, and Helmholz, and Koch, age is in no sense a necessity.

The University is surrounded by institutions that are emulating its successful example. They are supported by people as generous as they are enterprising. They see what you have been able to do, and they will not be satisfied with a smaller accomplishment. The state which is blest with the largest measure of educational generosity will in the end outrun the others. It was recently a significant saying of the Governor of one of the neighboring states, that the University in which he was speaking was endowed with the hearts of two millions of people. Happy indeed is the University that can boast of such an endowment! The educational motto of the time is "Forward." The universities and even the colleges everywhere are no longer content with appointing teachers who have just graduated, but are demanding scholars that have had an elaborate course of graduate study, either in this country, or in Europe. The result has been the most striking feature of modern educational progress. Ten years ago the five most prominent universities in the country had less than four hundred graduate students; but last year the aggregate number was more than two thousand. Thus, for the first time in the history of our country, we are coming to have real universities. Heretofore, even our largest institutions have been hardly more than groups of colleges. But now, university work, in the truest and broadest sense of the term, has to be provided for. This movement carries with it an imperative demand for additional men and for additional equipment. The university which fails to recog-

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 028 344 701 7

nize this necessity, whatever its age, will lose its opportunity while those who see it, and act upon it, however young, will carry the future in their hands.

If the alumni do their part, the State will do its part; and the proud preeminence of the University will be maintained. Whatever happens, the president, like the Roman seaman, may be trusted to hold the rudder true. May all the congratulatory words of these joyful days only gladden his heart, and inspire him for yet many, many years of the same noble work.

LD 3293

1896

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 028 344 701 7

