

THE SEVENTY-SECOND ANNUAL COMMENCEMENT EXERCISES

Degrees to the number of 910 were granted members of the class of 1916 in the various departments and in the Graduate School on June 29. In addition to these, thirteen honorary degrees as previously voted by the Regents were conferred. The usual order of the Commencement exercises was followed, beginning with the ceremony of raising the flag at 8:30 to the accompaniment of the Reveille. The various senior classes gathered at their respective posts about the Campus and fell into line in the proper order, lining the walks down which the Faculties, Regents and recipients of honorary degrees marched between the chosen seniors who formed the guard of honor. Practically the whole of the lower floor of Hill Auditorium with the exception of two side sections of seats were reserved for the graduates. Friends and relatives of the seniors formed a large portion of the audience, though there were plenty of seats for alumni, who formed in line at Memorial Hall and were admitted to the building by virtue of their alumni badges and their place in the procession.

After the organ prelude and the prayer by the Reverend Lloyd C. Douglas, pastor of the First Congregational Church of Ann Arbor, President Albert Ross Hill, LL.D., of the University of Missouri, gave the Commencement address.

UNIVERSITY AIMS AND IDEALS.—COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS BY PRESIDENT A. ROSS HILL, LL.D., OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI

Such an occasion as this furnishes an opportunity for the discussion of some university problems that demand the careful consideration of alumni and intelligent citizens of a state as well as of the faculty of a state university. However completely a faculty may seem to control the policies of a university, the attitude of leading citizens and especially of former students and graduates will always be a potent factor in shaping the policies of any university and especially of a public university. Life and work in the institution will reflect the ideals or judgments of value held by those directly responsible for its management, but these ideals are in part the product of social suggestion and reflect the attitude of the public and especially of the university-trained portion of the public toward higher education. I therefore make bold to use the privilege granted me today in discussing university aims and ideals.

One of the oldest of these ideals is that of culture, the notion that a university should aim to produce the cultivated man. As in the case of many a social conception we are indebted to the Greeks for the ideal of a liberal education. They were the first to conceive of education as a means to the development of a free personality, a love of knowledge for its own sake, and an appreciation of the things in this life worth living for. They defined, perhaps for all time, the most worthy objects of a man's life—intellectual and æsthetic enjoyment, political and moral freedom, social and personal excellence—which we may take as the content of the conception of culture. The fruits of such social and educational aims may be seen in the products of Greek civilization in the Age of Pericles. Such statesmen as Themistocles and Pericles controlled the destinies of Greece; Herodotus and Thucydides were her historians; the tragic drama was represented by Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, and comedy by Aristophanes; and in art the work of Phidias and Myron and the construction of the Parthenon bear evidence of the taste and the achievements of the Greek mind. No wonder that through education at a later time "captive Greece took captive her rude conqueror."

To the Renaissance we owe the revival of the ideal of a liberal education as formulated by the Greeks and partially adapted to Roman civilization by Cicero, Quintilian, Tacitus, and others. In fact, on the educational side this revival is just what the Renaissance was. The medieval conception of education which found no worthy aims or interests in this life except as connected with the life to come, and which looked upon university training as a mere discipline in a few restricted mental activities or as a preparation for the professions of law, medicine and theology, yielded gradually to the conception of a liberal education, aimed at the development of the free man, with individuality of his own and power of participation in every-day life, based upon a knowledge of life in the past and appreciation of opportunities of present-day life. This revived conception of education opened up especially three new worlds to the student of that time: first, the real life of the past, the life of the ancient Greeks and Romans with their more varied interests and their wider knowledge of



THE HEAD OF THE COMMENCEMENT PROCESSION
ENTERING HILL AUDITORIUM

life and of its possibilities; second, the inner life of the individual with its intellectual or contemplative pleasures and satisfactions, its appreciation of the beautiful, its human interest in the activities of the time; and third, the realm of nature around him, something that to the medieval mind had been considered debasing in its influence on men. An insight into *man*, *humanity* and *nature* became the leading aim of some universities and was represented in all the universities of Europe. Here is a clear recognition of culture as a university ideal, and we may not today overlook the essential soundness of the conception as it furnished motive for study and instruction in European universities four centuries ago.

The chief educational instrument for the realization of this aim was found in the classical literature of Greece and Rome. In this recovered literature the three phases of culture above mentioned found their basis and through it they first worked themselves out. The mistake should not be made, however, of confusing this means of education with either the cause or the purpose of the prevailing educational point of view. Its causes lay deeper and more remote in the whole movement of history and thought, and its aim was culture, that knowledge and breadth of view and that experience which develop "the highest gifts of body and mind, which ennoble men and which are rightly judged to rank next in dignity to virtue only." The interest was in "the pursuits, the activities proper to mankind" ("humanitas") and Greek and Latin literature was merely a means to an insight into these.

Soon, however, that which was at first merely a means came to be considered as an end in itself; the term "humanities" came to indicate the language and literature

of the ancients; and the aim of education came to be thought of in terms of language and literature instead of in terms of life. Furthermore, the formal instead of the content or literary side of these writers became of greater importance, and thus a type of education developed that was decidedly narrower than the liberal education out of which it grew, and inferior to it. Then, too, the religious-doctrinal interests occasioned by the Reformation began to exert a powerful influence on higher education and the aims of the universities again became disciplinary and ecclesiastical.

Now the first colleges in America were direct outgrowths of the Reformation spirit. They were established to train up young men "for the service of God in church and commonwealth." Contrary to the common opinion the early established colleges of this country did not aim at culture in the Greek or early Renaissance sense, but they were semi-professional in character and were meant primarily as institutions for the training of an educated ministry. But as they used the same instruments of education, their apologists came later to assert as their claim to distinction that their chief purpose and their distinguishing trait were to be found in the production of the cultivated man. The American Revolution brought with it a growing sense of the value of education for its own sake and the idea of culture took strong hold in the academies that came into being during the first half century of our national life. Partly at least through the influence of the academies upon the colleges this idea became dominant in American higher education during the greater part of the nineteenth century; education came to be regarded as a good thing in itself.

The rapid development of professional and technical schools in connection with universities, the gradual encroachment of the sciences and modern culture subjects upon the domain of the classics in our colleges of arts, and other influences led to the adoption of the elective system; and the multiplication of courses and freedom of election, while not inconsistent at all with the ideal of culture, have tended to take away all content from the conception. People generally and even educators had so long associated the conception of cultural education with its older instruments, the classics, that finding no longer any unanimity regarding the curriculum, no clear-cut notion of what a liberal education is or how it is to be secured, have shown some tendency to discredit the unknown object as an "elegant superfluity or useless ornament." There seems, therefore, to be need of a restatement of the significance and meaning of culture and a reassertion of its claims as a university ideal.

For one thing culture must mean enlightenment, a catholic intellectual sympathy, a social orientation which reveals to the individual his relation to other persons and forces. The cultivated man has come out of his provincial intellectual habit and knows something of what the world at large is thinking and doing and what the impulses are that are moving it. A university should give men and women the freedom of the modern world, as it were, so that they shall stand high enough to survey the field of human interests and activities and see where the tides move. It should generalize each generation of students as they come on and give them a view of the stage as a whole and the plot of the drama of life, before they take up their several parts in the play.

As educational instruments for realizing this aim there are, in the first place, the social sciences. If culture is the rise of the individual into the life of the race, a social character must always have belonged to studies that yielded real culture. Why were the classics once the chief instruments of culture? Because they were the ark in which was preserved so much of the higher life of the race, because a knowledge of them gave the individual student fuller membership in the life of mankind. And the classics have ceased to hold the place they once did in educational programs, not because they are incapable of revealing to us as much as or even more than they did to the students in the universities of the sixteenth century, but because of the rise of modern humanities which, however deficient in form and disciplinary quality they may be, do really aim to explore human life and to reveal to the student his social world, to broaden his sympathies and to quicken and give direction to his moral impulses. And this is culture: to be possessed of insight into modern civilization and to be responsive to its claims upon one.

Then there are the natural sciences, so characteristic a phase of human thinking in modern times. As culture demands insight, and science has since the middle of the nineteenth century transformed the world as the scene of the human drama, and the scientific method has become the universal method of human inquiry, the method of thinking that has proved most fruitful, no one today can lay claim to cultivation who

is ignorant alike of the achievements and the method of modern science. Especially it would seem that the scientific habit and attitude of mind are essential elements in a liberal education today and that in large measure the future of our civilization depends upon the widening spread and deepening hold of this attitude. How to mature it and make it effective is one of the great problems of a university. Some insight, too, into the essential unity of nature and its laws is important in a liberal education and scientific study cannot fully prosper or have its best effects in isolation, for every science is indissolubly related to others. Furthermore the natural sciences exist only as an historical process, a bit of historical life; they have had their own heroes and martyrs, their struggles with prejudice and superstition and their glorious triumphs; and they should have something to do with shaping the social and moral ideals for the sake of which they are used, whether this is accomplished in the science courses themselves or in those offered in the department of philosophy.

But culture is not merely insight, it is also appreciation; and a university should aim to bring its students to an appreciation of the great values of life, to an attitude of mind from which a sane criticism of life and life's values is possible. All values go back ultimately to personal worth, and all educational effort must justify itself finally in its ability to further better living. Culture then should not be conceived as an element that inheres in some particular subject-matter but as based upon the mode of approach to any kind of educational material. It is an attitude of mind and heart and as such it is not so much the direct aim of a student as it is a by-product of properly conducted educational processes. But freed from all cant and pedantry it must be regarded as one of the fundamental and ultimate aims of a university.

Closely associated historically with the ideal of culture has been the notion that a university should aim at mental discipline. This association is not due to inherent connections between the two conceptions but to the fact that in the course of changes in university curricula the old and established subjects, with their product in trained minds to point to and often with loss of appreciation of their own intrinsic value for life, found it easy to base their claims to treatment as "protected industries" in education upon the doctrine of formal discipline. The extent to which this doctrine has been applied is apparent from the most cursory study of educational literature and of the traditional curricula of higher educational institutions. In its extreme form it assumed that certain subjects, if properly pursued, could develop general habits of thinking and tendencies to reaction that could be counted on in the pursuit of all other studies and would insure a definite response to situations of different types. This justified to many minds the making of drudgery an end in itself, and instead of the ideal of discipline was set up in many a university department the idol of pedantry.

This led to well-founded attacks upon the notion of discipline, and many who have not examined the conception for themselves assume that it has been proved by modern psychology that there is nothing at all in discipline. This has encouraged a certain slovenliness in educational practice, amounting in the case of our use of English almost to general illiteracy. This is not a hall-mark exclusively reserved to the undergraduate student body. As Professor Gayley remarks, "Our Ph.D.'s are lamentably prone to error in the use of their own tongue. Of the later crop of instructors in universities, some say 'he don't', 'hos-pit-able', 'ex-qui-site', 'minerology'—confessing that 'they hadn't ought to'; others never fail, they 'fall down'; they never win, they 'win out'; they are never at a loss, though they are frequently 'up against it.'" We are certainly suffering today from the collapse of discipline.

Now the truth in the conception of discipline seems to be based on the fact mentioned by Herbart that however slow man may be to put his ideals into practice he is always ready to translate his habits into maxims of conduct and ideals, a view expressed earlier by Aristotle in his Ethics. If no generalized habits of work and thought are carried over from the study of one subject to that of another, the ideals of work and thinking can be; and I therefore prefer to speak of the ideal of discipline, and this ideal needs to be revived at this time and consciously developed. Personally, I believe that one outcome for America of the present world war will be a renewed appreciation of the significance of discipline in education.

But culture and discipline are not the oldest university conceptions. Naturally not, for as an institution the university is a product of the Middle Ages. The oldest universities were originally professional schools. That of Salerno was a school for the training of physicians, that of Bologna was exclusively a school of law, and the

University of Paris, the common mother of all northern European and American universities, was originally a school of theology and scholastic philosophy. The popular notion, then, that a university is any educational institution in which all the branches of knowledge are represented has no warrant in history. But Paulsen's assertion is justified that "all public institutions of learning are called into existence by social needs, and first of all by technical-practical necessities. Theoretical interests may lead to the founding of private associations, such as the Greek philosophers' schools; public schools owe their origin to the social need for professional training."

The idea of vocational training in universities received a new impetus and a wider application in America by the passage of the Land Grant Act of 1862 in the Congress of the United States. This act provided that the sciences that underlie the industrial pursuits of men shall be placed on an equal footing with those which underlie the practice of law, medicine, and theology, and thus tended to break down the distinction between professions that are "learned" and others that are not. We now consider it legitimate for a university to undertake the study of the problems of any calling so far as science can be brought to bear upon them and to offer training in preparation for any profession so far as an organized body of scientific data and principles can be made to contribute to the solution of its practical needs.

The demand for vocational training and the dominance of the vocational motive among university students are not in themselves bad. There is no conflict between vocational aims and the ideal of culture, and the introduction of vocational courses into our university programs has done much to restore and maintain the ideal of discipline. Furthermore the vocational motive for study is an entirely worthy one, easily capable of being given important social significance, though it must be confessed that up to date the movement for vocational education at all levels has been too individualistic. Perhaps this is one reason why a demand is sometimes made upon universities for vocational courses that have no place in higher education. A university is not the place in which to teach people to plow or cook or sew or make hats or keep books or sell shoes or automobiles; but a university should study the scientific principles underlying the practice of farming, home-making, and business of all kinds, if such principles are probably ascertainable, and it should offer enough instruction in the application of these principles to develop in its students the habit of bringing science to bear upon the solution of their daily tasks. Fortunately the longest established professional schools in our universities, those of medicine and law, are displaying a striking tendency to make their courses scientific in character with a gain in practical vocational efficiency at the same time. So while I sound a warning, it contains no pessimistic note.

Another university aim that found positive expression for the first time in the foundation of the University of Berlin is that of research. At that time, when Prussia was prostrated after the wars with Napoleon I, there came to the headship of her school system Wilhelm von Humboldt, who was a great scholar animated by a profound faith in science. Succeeding an educator who had held the view that the state should provide in its universities only for professional schools of law, medicine, etc., he wished to make the universities institutions at which both instruction and research should be maintained. He regarded it as the chief function of professors and students to co-operate in the promotion of knowledge. He furthermore believed that scientific investigation could be carried on more effectively by university professors surrounded by students than by investigators in separate academies. The establishment of the University of Berlin on this basis a little more than a century ago officially recognized research as a fundamental aim of a university. The first specific recognition of this aim in American university education was the foundation of the Johns Hopkins University, and the conception has become the possession of all our foremost universities, though our practice can scarcely be said to be in keeping with our professions in this connection.

In some quarters one hears the fear expressed that our leading state universities are giving too much attention to research and that more emphasis should be placed upon good teaching. Now I should be the last person to disparage good teaching, but what is its essential quality in the conduct of university classes? Is it not just the spirit of enquiry and discovery that is also the promise of vital research? In some cases this may not go farther than an attitude of mind, but no university teacher can be great who is without this attitude. Instead, then, of abandoning or lessening the emphasis upon research, our state universities should seek to encourage the promotion

of knowledge-making on the part of their teachers and in their students the development of knowledge-making power. The great value of the old education in classics, mathematics, and philosophy consisted in the fact that students were constantly engaged in solving problems that put their intellectual powers to the test, and we can get similar training from other subjects more recently introduced into our educational programs only when instead of a factual treatment of subject matter we inspire students with the spirit of enquiry. The product of any individual professor's investigations may not be of astounding significance, but the total outcome of the co-operation between students and professors and of professors with one another will have large educational and social significance.

Another university ideal which is closely associated with the aim of research and to which von Humboldt gave equal emphasis in the establishment of the University of Berlin, is that of freedom. Freedom and independence were among the fundamental principles of that state university. "Science is the fundamental thing and solitude and freedom are the principles prevailing in her realm." This conception of freedom has two applications—freedom of enquiry for both students and professors and freedom to give expression to truth as discovered by the investigator. Both are of great importance and both can easily be misunderstood and misdirected.

Essentially sound is the notion underlying the system of election of studies, viz., that when a university student has discovered to himself and his educational guides the direction of his permanent interests he should be allowed freedom to follow their lead. But how can he know whether he is or is not interested in the problems of biological science or philosophy, if he is absolutely ignorant of these subjects? How can a secondary education such as we have in this country with its only four years of "go as you please" prepare a student to select wisely a university curriculum suitable to his fundamental tastes and capacities? And supposing he does already understand himself well enough and have sufficient familiarity with the great realms of human thinking to select his line of specialization, how can he be expected to select wisely the individual courses that will guarantee co-ordinated and cumulative effort toward the goal of his ambition? The organized curricula of our professional and technical schools may well serve as suggestions to academic faculties in working out a reconciliation of the ideals of freedom and efficiency.

And the professor, too, must be free. He must not be forced to give his time and energy to working out the applications of his science to the problems of advertising or of suggestive therapeutics when his soul is aflame with the desire to settle some more strictly intellectual problem which may have great significance for his science itself and ultimately bear practical fruit in applications to education and other phases of social science. Nor should he be forced in obedience to temporary expediency of any kind to withhold from the world scientific truth that he has discovered and subjected to adequate scientific tests. But when a professor of pedagogy essays to publish his ideas on a system of taxation which he has not studied scientifically, or a professor of any subject appeals to the ideal of freedom to justify him for drawing a full salary while he spends only two or three hours a week in university instruction and contributes practically nothing to the literature of his science while he spends his time in maligning the educational leader of his university or in denouncing the whole machinery of university administration in the country, one is tempted to question the value and the legitimacy of this sort of university freedom. After all, is it not true that in our best state universities the faculties and the individual professors have almost as much freedom as is consistent with sound educational and social progress? It seems to me that we are nearer the ideal in this respect than we are to that other ideal of von Humboldt that in a university students and professors should cooperate in the promotion of knowledge. And we shall probably get our public more quickly to the point of accepting the opinions of true university experts, when it is fully understood that a university professor should not use his position as a means of giving weight to his opinions in fields where he has no special warrant to be heard. This is not inconsistent with the ideal of freedom and democracy, and a state university should be not only the greatest organ of democratic society but the highest and truest expression of democracy itself.

Perhaps in our public universities in the Middle West the ideal most frequently mentioned in these days is that of service. During the last quarter of a century we have witnessed a change of educational emphasis in public schools of all grades. The gaze of these institutions is now turned outward and they regard themselves as in-

struments in the service of society. And so far as the people who support public education are conscious of their reasons for doing so, they will probably not be found so ready as they were formerly to declare that they wish to give the poor boy or girl equal chances with the rich for a higher education. They want to know what service the institution is rendering to the state. Often they want to know what direct benefit the state university is rendering the people generally.

Now the aim and final goal of public education may be said to be the uplifting of the whole people. It is not in the interest of citizenship for scholars to lose touch with the life of the people. Scientific research must be the work of a few, but science exists for the service of mankind. A state university may well aim to reach the whole people by extension lectures, by systematic correspondence study, by conducting co-operative scientific experiments which will help to bring the light of science to the aid of the people in their daily tasks. But the work done should be of a kind and grade that can be done better by the university than by any other agency in the state; it should be done in a way that will enable the public to share in its benefits instead of resulting only in commercial advantage to an individual citizen. Extra-mural instruction and service in the interest of public health, in developing the state's economic resources, in serving some department of state government or some municipality would seem to fall within the legitimate functions of a state university. But a university cannot well attempt to solve the personal business problems of a manufacturer or retail merchant or farmer or analyze the drinking water to be found in every individual's spring without neglect of its proper scientific functions and its work of making leaders out of students who spend the time and money to get the benefits of its residence instruction and its research spirit.

For, after all, the essential work of a university must be done on its campus. It is there that students and professors meet face to face, and personal contact is the vital part of all education. The service of institutions of higher learning is found primarily in lives enriched, ennobled and blessed; in great thoughts and aspirations, and ideals that stir men's minds and rouse their souls to nobler and vaster issues; in scientific discoveries and inventions that create a new heaven and a new earth and help the people in the solution of their daily problems; in improved educational and social conditions that result from the work of its former students in every calling and in every portion of the state. A state university should aim to graduate men and women of cultivated and disciplined minds, whose judgment has been sobered by the lessons of the past and by the method and spirit of modern science, who have acquired intellectual toleration and social sympathy, who to the spirit of enquiry add the motive of service, who have taste, insight and capacity for devotion to great causes. And its former students should be, of all citizens, especially helpful in preserving its high ideals and in protecting it in the discharge of its proper functions. They should plan for it, in the first place, wisely and, after that, plan for it and teach others to plan for it generously and even abundantly as the crowning glory of the commonwealth.