

# The MICHIGAN ALUMNUS

The Alumni—"In a very just sense and in a very large degree the fortunes of the University are committed to your hands"—Dr. James B. Angell.

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## Diplomas Awarded 1,827 at 81st Commencement

Address Delivered by John Huston Finley, LL. D., Editor of *The New York Times*

UNDER lowering skies which scattered occasional light showers, nearly 13,000 people gathered at Ferry Field on Monday, June 15, 1925, when 1,827 members of the senior classes in the different colleges of the University were presented with their diplomas by Acting President Alfred H. Lloyd and added to the ever-growing alumni body.

In point of numbers the class of 1925 was a little smaller than that of 1924. The number of graduates, listed by colleges, was as follows.

College of Literature, Science, and the Arts .....	781
School of Education .....	90
Colleges of Engineering and Architecture .....	247
Medical School .....	152
Training School for Nurses .....	44
Law School .....	92
College of Pharmacy .....	6
College of Dental Surgery .....	54
Graduate School .....	215
Students graduated in different colleges in the period between January and June .....	146
<b>Total</b> .....	<b>1827</b>

Before 8:00 o'clock in the morning the graduating classes in their caps and gowns began gathering at their appointed places on the Campus, the guard of honor, with the members of the Faculty, the speaker of the occasion, and the recipients of honorary degrees, assembled in the corridors and at the entrance of Alumni Memorial Hall. Led by the Varsity Band the Commencement procession moved down State Street to Ferry Field where the South Stand—save for the section reserved for the graduating classes—was already well filled by a throng of alumni and the parents and friends of the graduating students.

Baccalaureate Address, "Diadems and Fagots," given by the Rev. Lloyd C. Douglas, of Akron, Ohio

Owing to the threatening state of the weather complete preparations had been made for holding the Commencement exercises in the Yost Field House in case the rain made it impossible to conclude them outdoors. Several times during the morning some rain fell and it seemed likely that a move to cover would be forced but the elements relented and not enough moisture fell to damage seriously either costumes or decorations.

THERE was, of course, no departure from the customary simple program which loses no impressiveness after years of repetition even for those who have witnessed it time and again. After the processional march was concluded the invocation was delivered by the Reverend Arthur W. Stalker, D. D., and the Commencement address was given by John Huston Finley, LL. D., Editor of the *New York Times*.

The complete Commencement Address was as follows:

### THE MYSTERY OF THE MIND'S DESIRE

Many years ago, I went to see a friend of mine who was lying mortally ill in the public ward of a hospital—or rather went to attend a dinner of university men, but left that jolly, song-singing company for an hour or more to make the hurried visit upon this friend whose mother had given him the name Robert Burns and who had come to be widely known as a poet and also as an artist, one of whom James Whitcomb Riley once wrote:

What intuitions named thee?—  
Through what thrill  
Of the awed soul came the command divine  
Into the mother heart, foretelling thine  
Should palpitate with his whose raptures will  
Sing on while daisies bloom and rocks trill



Their undulating waves through the fine  
Fair mists of heavenly reaches? Thy pure line  
Falls as the dew of anthems quiring still  
The sweeter since the Scottish singer raised  
His voice therein, and, quit of every stress  
Of earthly ache and longing and despair  
Knew certainly each simple thing he praised  
Was no less worthy, for its lowliness,  
Than any joy of all the glory there.

The brief conversation that I had with this dying poet in the dimly lighted ward was our last. But he in that brief hour, still of sound mind, bequeathed to me a theme which his thought had possessed but never put into written words so far as I know. It is that theme that I have made the subject of my address: "The Mystery of the Mind's Desire."

I have cherished it as one might a precious tangible gift and I have myself at one time or another tried to do what he wished me to do with this theme. I have been impelled by this unusual opportunity in this place, where this mystery has had such notable expression in the life of your noble and eloquent President Burton, to speak of this mystery of that desire for something that is infinitely above and beyond that which is visible and tangible—the mystery of an evolution that moves toward some far-off goal, the mystery of an urge that will not let man rest satisfied with what was or is, however much he may respect the sanctions of the past or be tempted to inertness by the comfort of the present.

In acting as this man's executor (for I also was one of his legal executors, but with no tangible property to care for except a few paintings), I am notifying you of your share in the invisible estate.

There was a memorable dramatic debate on this mystery of the mind's desire following that series of disasters described in the Book of Job—disasters which were world disasters in 1520 B. C., and which left Job's wide-stretching fields out beyond the Jordan (where I was during the latter part of the war) like a bit of "No Man's Land" in France. The chief disputant, Job, sat, covered with sores, on something worse than a garbage heap, amid the ashes of his sorrow, while three friends came with august phrase and condemning philosophy to "bemoan and to comfort him," Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the

Naamathite. In this high debate ("the greatest poem in the world's greatest literature," as it has been called by the highest of critics) there was, despite the fresh economic disasters and the painful distemper, no reference to the cost of living save in Job's remembering longingly other days (we should call them pre-war days) when butter and oil and other necessities of life were abundant and cheap, as is intimated by the figure of his lamentation:

"Oh that I were as in months past—when I washed my steps with butter and the rock poured me out rivers of oil!"

The only economic reference, so far as I can find, was to value of wisdom, the supreme desire of the human mind, as intimated and iterated by Zophar the Naamathite in those jeweled verses, rich in oriental metaphor:

"It cannot be gotten for gold, neither shall silver be weighed for the price thereof.

"It cannot be valued with the gold of Ophir, with the precious onyx or the sapphire.

"No mention shall be made of corals or of pearls, for the price of wisdom is above rubies."

This dramatic debate was primarily of the mystery of life itself and suffering here upon the earth and of the way of finding wisdom in order to bring peace of soul. I do not remember that anything was said as to what would cure the malady that caused boils.

The world is sitting as Job today, covered with sores, shorn of billions upon billions of its possessions, bereft of millions upon millions of its sons—sitting in the ashes of its losses and its sorrows, bewildered as to the meaning of this Satanic visitation, facing again the same ancient mystery. The first and natural practical thought is of economic repair, of rehabilitation, of forced reparation by the Sabeans and the Chaldeans who still dwell in this world. (That is the significance of the Dawes plan.) But it is most encouraging that among those gathered about the earth in its losses and sufferings to "bemoan it and to comfort it," there rises the counsel of Zophar, the glorification of that higher desire of the mind whose value is "above all rubies" and whose path the "birds of prey" and "proud beasts" have not seen or trodden, the path (for the place of wisdom is as a path) leading to the good of the people and to national and to international understanding—to cosmic happiness.

The mystery which those ancients discussed at their meeting out of the farther edge of the desert and of history (a meeting which lasted not a short summer's hour but several days) still broods over every serious-minded assemblage, such as this. If we take the wings of the morning and fly to the uttermost parts of the earth, it is still with us. If we descend into the earth, the mystery still confronts us—this mystery of the desire of everybody for something beyond—even beyond his comfort, fame of power; something beyond that which the advertisements beg us to buy.

In Job's day, man had taken iron out of the earth; he had melted brass from the stone; he had found the dust of gold; he had devised a way of ending darkness (even though he did not know about the electric light and had only a candle); he had made a shaft; he had gotten bread out of the earth; he had swung suspended afar from men; he had hewed at the roots of mountains; he had searched for stones in darkness (in the mines); he had carved the flint for his weapons and utensils; he had cleft the rock; he had bound the stream from overflowing; he had seen every precious thing and he had even searched the shadows of death and brought the hidden to light. And since Job's day, he has solved other mysteries; he has learned to weigh the winds and to weigh the waters by measure; he has parted the light; he had made a decree for the rain; he has learned the way of the lightning; he can look to the ends of the earth and see under the whole heaven. Think what we have done since Job's day—and still the mind's desire is not satisfied.

I looked through a morning's paper picked up at random just to see what one day's news revealed of that desire along with other things.

The Roosevelt boys were going in search of the Golden Fleece.

One nation was weeping at the bier of a saddler who had become a president; another rejoiced in seeing a farmer's boy back among the Vermont hills.

A secretary of state adjusts the boundaries of South American states without bloodshed.

Medals are given to policemen who save the lives of others at the risk of their own.

Thousands of Americans go to Rome on a spiritual pilgrimage.

But the item of greatest significance is one which tells of the application of a fund of a million dollars to promote research. Among the objects: To study the stars in Peru and Cambridge; to study atmospheric pollution; to investigate tonal intervals; to conduct investigations relative to the retina of the eye; to gather material about the Peloponnesian war in the Aegean sea; to make research on trees in Australia and New Zealand; to find the atomic weights of the "noble gases." These are but illustrations of the millions upon millions spent in research in science, in searching out the past and in peering into the future of earth and the destiny of man.

Under the ceaseless compulsion of the mind's desire, he must in some organized way go on and on in that search for the truth which lies in the realm of mystery. It is to keep the borders of man's estate ever pushed out to the very verge of the known and the edge of the mysterious unknown that every man has an instinctive desire not simply to increase in wisdom and stature, but to find the answer to the puzzle of existence.

There is a mystery upon the fields which when I first knew them were covered with prairie flowers, but which produce now an ear of corn, now a turnip, now a grape, and now an apple, now a rose and now an onion and everything in the seasons' round from a potato to an orchid; with the help of the farmer performs in a season that the Vegetable Kingdom would not, unaided, accomplish short of eons, if at all. It was by this mystery that Cain and Abel were awed. Indeed the very first recorded act of the sons of Adam is that they made offerings (upon primitive altars as we imagine) of the fruits of the earth's first cultures.

I have seen, and you, the fruits of these same cultures exhibited at your fairs, state and county, with the flames of man's approving ribbons upon them. But there has seemed to me no consciousness of the mystery which had brooded over the fields and barn and orchard to bring these miracles to pass.

I have wanted a Virgil to pass through the stall and, as he sang long ago in his Georgics, without pedantry, of cattle and sheep and horses and bees while "Caesar was



DR. JOHN H. FINLEY, EDITOR OF THE NEW YORK TIMES,  
DELIVERING THE COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS

At the extreme left is Dr. Arthur R. Cushny, of Edinburgh, formerly Professor of *Materia Medica* in the Medical School, who received the degree of LL. D.

flashing war's thunderbolts over the depths of the Euphrates, and dispensing among willing nations a conqueror's law, and setting his fort on the road to the sky," sing again and with greater scientific agricultural knowledge of the miracles more marvelous, more mighty, than the achievements by man with his arms.

I have wanted Maeterlinck, with his poetical science or scientific poesy, to point out the "incomparable spectacle" of an energy rising from the roots to the full bloom of the flowers in the light, to point to the "prodigious examples of insubmission, courage, perseverance and ingenuity" shown by the plainest plant in perpetuating its species and by the exquisite orchid in bringing the insect to carry its pollen.

I have wanted Henri Fabre, whom one has named the Insects' Homer and whom Maeterlinck called one of the profoundest scholars and finest poets of the country, to tell them how the "cricket chirps."

These poets, naturalists, philosophers could not, of course, have been heard at the Fair but here in these neighboring laboratories, they can be heard and ultimately every farm will know through such places as this not only of the glory that was Greece, but also that is in the very fields of America today (not to speak of the glories which lie beyond our borders) but a glory of the fields more to be appreciated because of the "glory that was Greece."

There is a mystery of the atoms of which Lucretius sang "*Considera opera atomorum*" long before another and a greater Teacher bade men to consider the lilies of the field, and ages before Gassendi and Newton announced the modern atomic theory—a mystery before which an old Princeton professor used to take off his hat, it is said, when about to perform an experiment—a mystery which makes ill-smelling chemical laboratories as sweet as cathedrals filled with incense, and dissecting rooms as sacred as the ground on which the ancient haruspex divined the will of the gods by examining the entrails of animals.

There is a mystery of the ether, which treasures every vibration and enables one of her worshippers to measure the pressure of a star's light that has been traveling, as that of Mira 250,000,000 miles in diameter 165 years to reach the earth; another to feel in Canada the fall of a mass of rock and earth on a mountainside in the Pamir,

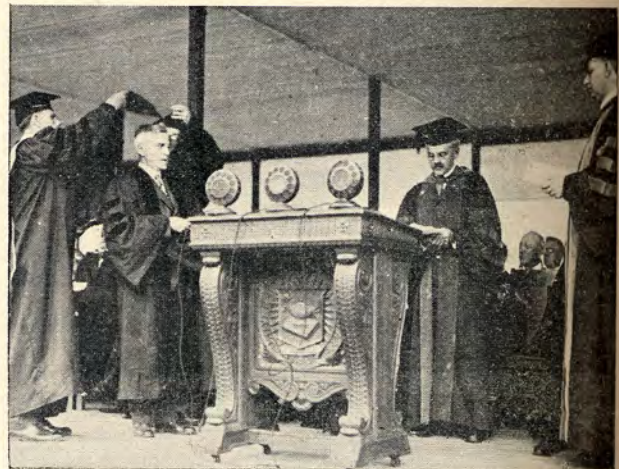
India; another to make voice, which I have with difficulty heard sitting in the car beside him, distinctly audible thousands of miles away and without wires; and still another, sitting among the trees to hear the voices of prime ministers as the ancients heard the will of Jove in the whispering leaves of Dodona's oaks.

And there is a mystery of the hand, which meant at first only a ministry and a craft; that has come to be a real mystery—a mystery that touches a piece of canvas and makes it a Corot or breaks a piece of marble and makes it a "Nike" or touches a string and makes ineffable music, or sews together bits of human tissue and prolongs life.

There are many objective mysteries in these kingdoms which lie about the mind. And no curriculum is uncultural that brings a mind consciously, knowingly, inquiringly, courageously, into the presence of any one of these, however practical the courses by which it is led; there is, after all, but the one objective mystery, for as there are "many faiths and one God," so are there many mysteries yet but one mystery. The many are but as trenches along the great stretch of the battle front marked in red.

On the contrary, even though a curriculum be as full of the classics as that of the scholar of whom Senator Hoar tells in his "Reminiscences"—the Ph. D., who having read Cicero through fifty times had at last found that while *neccesse est* was used indifferently with the accusative and the infinitive or with *ut* and the subjunctive, *neccesse erat* was used only with *ut* and the subjunctive—such a curriculum cannot be called "cultural" (a word for which our civilization must find a substitute) unless it brings one to the burning bush that is not consumed, to a theorem that is eternal (and what joy on earth can be greater than that which a New York state professor has recently experienced in finding a new eternal theorem to add to those of Euclid and all others who have lived in the edge of the mathematical mysteries)—and lead one to a burning bush, to an eternal theorem or even to the mystery of the gnat, for as Fabre is quoted to have said: "Human knowledge will be erased from the world before we possess the last word which this infinitesimal but annoying creature has to say to us."

New disciplines may come into our curricula, disciplines which I have called "synthetic," after the analogy of the synthetic substitutes for accustomed nutrients, and should come if they give shorter, surer, more economical entrance to the mysteries. It is difficult for me to think these new disciplines as efficient as the old, just as it is difficult for me not to think it sacrilegious to use olive-oil made



E. S. CORWIN, '00

Professor of Jurisprudence at Princeton receiving the degree of LL. D. from Acting President Lloyd. Professor John G. Winter, who presented the candidates, at the right

of cotton-seed for the anointing of kings and priests, though I realize that it is only because the association between cotton-seed and olive-oil and coronations and consecrations has not yet been established.

But the supreme mystery is, after all, not the sum of all these objective mysteries toward which our courses run, with the examinations along the way and their credits at the end. The mystery which we here celebrate is the subjective one, the mystery of the mind's desire—the mystery of the finite mind insatiably longing to know infinity, of the mind that endures the hardships or horrors of trench for the sake of the conquest of the objective mystery whether it be in science or letters, philosophy or art—the mind that must know the truth.