

OUR UNIVERSITY.

The University of Illinois has demonstrated its *raison d'être*. Its usefulness and importance are no longer questioned by those most capable of good judgment in educational affairs. Its name is known and honored throughout our land, and never better and more than today. In this great Columbian year the University of Illinois is accorded the first place among all educational institutions the world over, for having made the largest, most varied, and most representative exhibit of its equipments and work at the World's Columbian Exposition. No other similar institution even nearly approached it in this respect; and as the general educational exhibit at Chicago surpassed that of any former world's exposition, so the exhibit of this University stands recorded as the greatest of its kind ever made on the earth.

This does not, neither is it intended to, imply that no other institutions could have made such a display; but the number that could have equaled or surpassed it is not large, however much the older and better known universities of this and foreign lands may surpass ours in their particular specialties. Most of these latter have not the material equipment and products to enable them to enter into such a competition. They have great libraries, but these could not be shown; they have magnificent buildings, but these could not be moved to Jackson Park; they have faculties great both in numerical membership and in individual renown, but these could not be placed in glass cages; they have remarkable and honorable histories, but the pageantry

of events could not be reproduced. With very few exceptions those which could have successfully competed are state institutions, founded and controlled by the public for the public good. These institutions, as a class, are leading all others. They are, and are becoming, advanced and stimulating exemplars for all others whose existence is worth continuing. The state university succeeds not only because funds are furnished, but because of its greater freedom from prejudicial bias and narrowing restraints, and because of the recognized fitness that things for the people should be by the people.

The very pronounced and exceedingly favorable testimony supporting and emphasizing the American state university in general makes conviction doubly convincing that ours is and must be one of the great educational factors of our country and age, predestined to wield a dominating influence in the most important affairs of our empire state, and to some degree in the life and progress of the American people.

The exposition exhibit may serve to give us something of a gauge by which we may ourselves come to a realizing sense of what the University is. We do not half appreciate it. We fail utterly to measure it up to its full worth. I say it with thorough-going conviction of the truth, that not among trustees, faculty, or students does there exist the evidence of any adequate estimation of the real magnitude and value of the just rank and standing of the thriving institution with which we are connected. We have eyes, but see not; ears have we, but hear not. We need waking up. Oh, for some moral power sufficient to rouse us to self-consciousness and to give us a vitalizing realization of the wealth and worth of our chartered possession! It would put new blood into our lives, quickened interest into our daily activities, and redoubled energy into our efforts.

It may now be said without offense, that the citizens of our twin cities little recognize the worth to them of the University. They are indeed conscious that the institution is located here, but hundreds of them have never cared to come within its walls, and thousands of them have never sought to acquaint themselves with its possessions and possibilities. They accept its benefits as among their rights, but how many remembered it a few weeks ago in their exultations of thankfulness, and in their prayers to the Giver of all good gifts to men?

Does this seem like sourness? Is it censorious criticism? Does it imply unjust judgment or hopeless pessimism? The fact is, this condition of things is altogether normal; it is just what true prophecy would have foretold. The sun itself is scarcely perceived without cloud and shadow. Bodily health, the most important of all our possessions, is not appreciated until it is endangered or impaired. We are always slow to recognize great blessings until we are deprived of them.

With all its vacillations, its vigorous ups and impotent downs, the progress of the University has been conspicuously forward. Young and stalwart, the health of the institution has been remarkably sound. Little skin eruptions are noticeable indeed, but only so because they are differentiated and accented upon an otherwise clean body of enviable wholesomeness. The purer the surface the more a little blemish attracts attention. We, all of us, are inclined to make too much of the counter weights and retarding influences in the progress of the University and remain unstirred by its magnificent and triumphant onward march. The former, not the latter, attracts the attention of newspaper editors. Something discreditable occurs in connection with a class banquet and forthwith the air becomes thick with hostile criticisms, while not a word is seen or heard

of the successful efforts put forth to get out of the affair present and perpetual benefits. The criticisms may be just enough, but they do not tell the whole story, nor in reality the chief part of it. The latter may never be told, and indeed its recital would ordinarily attract small attention. It is the criminal of whom men write and read, not the earnest and faithful and effectual worker in the vineyard of the Lord; yet society is vastly a greater debtor to the one than creditor by the other; otherwise human progress would be impossible and human institutions a gloomy failure. The good that men do is not buried with their bones. The seeds of eternal life are in benevolence and we would do well to make more of their planting and culture.

It is not my purpose here to write a history of the triumphs gained in the past, nor to show forth reasons for gratification in the present condition and standing of the University. It ought to suffice, in this respect, to say that there has been, and will be, expended by the institution during the present collegiate year more than a thousand dollars for each one of its working days and that the bills are promptly paid. Should our good friends who have, as citizens, an eye to the financial advantages of the University to the locality, desire to estimate the amount, they may advisedly double this great sum and reliably count \$2,000 a day contributed directly and indirectly (the latter by the students,) to the volume of local trade. Even this large amount falls below the actual account. If growth is to be taken as an index of prosperity it may be said that the income aside from special building funds has gained in five years 78 per cent. For the year ending August 31, 1888, the total income was \$73,226.23 and, omitting the receipts for new buildings, was \$120,048.65 for the year ending May 31, 1893.

Indications of the growing appreciation of the University by the state legislators are exceedingly striking, and of themselves sufficiently denote the rapid progress that has been made. From 1867 to 1890 there was received from the state the total sum of \$449,156, while the two last legislatures gave us \$430,744—a sum for four years almost as great as that for the preceding twenty-three years. During the last five years the number of instructors has increased from 29 to 61, and the number of students from 377 in 1888 to 728* today. During the last two completed years the increase in students was nearly 40 per cent, or from 529 to 714,—the greatest gain per cent made by any established collegiate institution of high rank in the United States for the same time. That growth of quality in instruction has kept pace with increase of funds and with accession of numbers, is very confidently asserted. Graduates of a few years ago come back to find enviable improvements in equipment and facilities and often say: “It makes me want to come back and take my course over again.” Compare the catalogues of recent issue with those of former years. Judged merely by *avoirdupois* they tell a significant tale. Three years ago the postal authorities accepted them in the mails for three cents instead of five cents now required,—an increase of 66 per cent.

These are suggestive illustrations given in the briefest possible way of the really marvelous advance that has been recently made in the development of the institution, and are indications of what the future may be. Could we take home to ourselves the whole story and read it in the true meaning it has for us, no portrayal could be too rosy in coloring or too enthusiastic in statement. Illinois is an empire state. The brightest gem in her crown should be, and may be, the University that bears her name.

* March 26, 740.

The success of the past has come by effort. These things do not grow of themselves. In the achievements up to this time there have been days and nights of clear-headed thinking, of wise planning, of solicitous shaping and guiding, and there has been no lack of self-sacrificing exertion in carrying plans and purposes into execution. There have been united and combined endeavors harmoniously and heroically working in one and the same direction. More thinking, greater wisdom in planning, better directed and better supported energy in execution, stronger unison in effort, are now required for the tasks which so plainly lie before us. It is now my high privilege to endeavor to point out some of the particular lines along which, in my judgment, activity is required to push properly forward the best interests of the University.

The first thing to be mentioned here is the completion of the subscriptions for the Christian Associations' building. The movement started among the students two years ago was a most remarkable one. An exceedingly praiseworthy undertaking was begun under circumstances and in a manner giving high promise of abundant success. The time appeared ripe for it; the completion of the work so auspiciously begun seemed entirely feasible and easily within the reach of parties presumably interested. Looking back upon it now I cannot help but feel that the ten or fifteen thousand dollars asked for should have been subscribed. It was the first movement of any considerable importance, subsequent to the founding of the institution here, in which the financial aid of citizens was ever asked for in its favor. The results of the wonderful effort among the originators of it were warmly applauded and generously advertised. The dawn of a new era in a significant phase of university life seemed breaking, and men and women looked forward with glowing hopefulness to the better con-

ditions and surroundings for the young people who were to have temporary homes here. But wherever the fault lay, for fault there must have been, the bright vision faded away. Dark clouds took the place of the rainbow. The movement stopped short within the walls of the institution. Not a dollar was subscribed outside, if we count former students as still part of the family. A golden opportunity to do good and get good was allowed to slip away between fingers accustomed to the touch of golden coin. There was fault somewhere; it cannot be otherwise. Perhaps it was in the manner of presentation or want of presentation. Failing to make the beginning anticipated, no beginning at all was effected. Day by day passed with nothing but discussion accomplished. Then it was found to be too late for the season, and a forced postponement of effort followed. General financial disturbances in the country seem to prevent further prosecution of the project, and the whole matter, to an outsider, seems dead. But it is not dead. It must not die. I present no bills for payment to the citizens of our twin cities. I herein claim no indebtedness on their part in the matter, but I do beg leave most earnestly to call their attention again to it, and to ask that they will manifest, in the best possible way, their interest in and appreciation of the University when the canvassers call upon them some time, let us hope, in the near future. I am most thoroughly of the opinion that Champaign and Urbana cannot afford to let this building movement suffer for a few thousand dollars; neither can they afford that an appeal of this kind should be made in vain.

My second suggestion comes appropriately here from its connection in part with objects in view in regard to the Christian Associations' building. Reference is made to better boarding accommodations near the University for students, and especially for young women. Students are

far better off scattered about in private houses than in great dormitories. These latter are not desired, but it would be vastly to the best interests here if we had a distinctly university quarter of the towns where students might find suitable homes away, on the one hand, from the injurious temptations and distractions of the commercial centers, and, on the other, near the privileges which they do or might have at the University. A thoroughly good dining hall, properly conducted in this vicinity would undoubtedly be well patronized, and would essentially help, not only the matter of increased attendance, but in the satisfaction and health of those present. Meals can be furnished to large numbers at less cost for the same quality than is possible otherwise, and the objections made to dormitories do not lie against dining rooms. We have this term an enrollment of 662 students of which about one-fourth are women. There are as many girls as boys in Illinois and nearly as many who desire a collegiate education. Our proportions are evidently unnatural. In the part of the University of Michigan corresponding to our institution there were last year 1,491 students of whom 500 were women, or 34 per cent of the whole. I see no reason whatever why we should not have as many women here within two years if proper homes were provided for them and sufficient advertisement made of the fact. Experience elsewhere has shown that cottages, each accommodating from twenty to twenty-five women students, under a good matron, admirably solve the problem with which we have or should have to deal. Why should it not be a good business venture for some one, or for some organized company to undertake both a dining hall and the requisite number of cottages for the accommodation of such as cannot otherwise secure good rooms? The success of the Memorial Hall dining room at Cambridge, and others not so well known, ought to stimulate interest in the proposition.

It may be considered a long jump from boarding facilities to library equipments and advantages, but it is not difficult to show the connection. If there is any one thing of material kind by which the rank and value of a modern university can be determined, that one thing is the library. The last legislature included in the appropriations \$5,000 a year for the purchase of books and periodicals. This is five times as much as was annually allowed by the two previous legislatures and it may seem to be a large amount. But for no other purpose here is there a more urgent call for a half million dollars than for a proper library building and for books. Mere text book recitations or class room lectures are no longer tolerated in instruction of the grade to which we aspire. Students ought to be trained in college to work as they afterward must work when they get out into the world. The scholar must not only know history, but must know where and how the materials of history are found. The scientist must know what others know and what others are doing or he will make poor progress in his specialty. A library should be a veritable work shop with all the accessories at hand for ready and abundant gains. It should be open all day and until late in the evening and every encouragement should be given the students to spend much of their time in it. Here then is the connection between books and boarding. Our present library might be open evenings to advantage were it not for the fact that the distance from the living rooms of students practically prohibits their use of it. Various seminaries and special clubs and societies would be favored by the near residence of students and professors. The work in practical astronomy is night work. Just here let it be said, in parentheses, that some one with \$10,000 to spare can have an admirable opportunity of perpetuating his name and memory by establishing and equipping an astronomical observatory. It can now be excellently

well done for the sum named. What a day of rejoicing there would be if an alumnus should in this way make himself known and read of all men. The chance is too good to be open very long. Surely some one will recognize this and act accordingly.

There are numerous other and very desirable and entirely feasible projects which should engage the attention and energy of those having the welfare of the institution at heart, but which must be passed here with mere mention.

A woman's gymnasium ought to be at once provided, no matter what else is done for women. A building must be had for a museum. An auditorium capable of suitably accommodating twenty-five hundred people, furnished with the facilities for illustrated lectures, containing a good pipe organ, etc., ought to be provided without unreasonable delay. The College of Agriculture needs a building for its own purposes, and a separate building and equipment for the preparatory school is a pressing necessity. A college of law can be and ought to be established here, and a college of medicine should be provided in Chicago in organic affiliation with the University. There are good reasons for making the State Normal Universities departments of the University of Illinois, but at all events there should be established here a school of research in pedagogics which should also offer ample opportunities for students of other specialties to fit themselves thoroughly as teachers of such specialties. All these things and others like them are none too good or too much to hope for. They and more than these are attainable and within the bounds of reasonable effort, if the required effort is wisely directed and unanimously supported. They are for the future no more than have been the things already accomplished for the past.

But beyond anything and everything which money can procure or that friends can contribute, there is one preëmi-

nently essential requisite for the healthful and hopeful growth of our institution. "Seek ye first the kingdom of heaven and all these things shall be added unto you." Let us get this one good part and it can neither be taken from us nor can it be hindered from carrying along with it in a mighty onward sway all things desirable towards the future greatness and power of the University of Illinois. Reference is made to what may be indicated by sufficient emphasis upon the first word in the title of this paper. Not the University, but *Our* University. Ours, not simply by possession and privilege, but ours in enthusiastic pride, ours in consuming devotion, ours in exalted and unbounded love. Against such there is no law, and against such there is no possibility of discouragement or defeat. Let citizens study the institution and seek to understand the meaning and magnitude of the deep-running, onward-moving, burden-bearing current instead of hastening to conclusions by specious observations of the ripples and eddies which are after all only surface indications of resistless momentum beneath.

Grave responsibilities are laid upon the trustees. What they do and what they refrain from doing are always important matters, and wise considerations of the latter may be attended with as fruitful consequences as may those of the former kind. It is a question of success or failure, of life or death, whether or not their acts are interpenetrated and dominated by an impersonal, unselfish, unbiased but well informed, appreciative, and patriotic regard for the highest welfare of the institution. Their's is a most delicate and difficult task, and this should be recognized by all who venture judgment upon them. There is, however, one guiding principle which without hesitancy should be proclaimed here and in all deliberations having for their object the same end, viz.: that the internal educational and discip-

linary affairs must be vested in the faculty without appeal and only under the most general rules and regulations. It is the bounden duty of the trustees to select proper administrative officers. In this their highest responsibility rests, and they must be free in the fullest possible sense to meet the obligations thus imposed upon them; but when these officers are appointed they must be generously and genuinely trusted so long as they retain their places and power.

In a still more important sense devotion springing from inborn sources is essential to the highest work of the teacher. A professor has lost his place already, or never had it to lose, who needs spurring to effort from the fear of failing in reappointment. He only can successfully manage a department of an institution of this kind who has a feeling of more than possession, of more than present proprietorship; it must be that of professional and parental affection, indwelling and outwelling love. Add to the latter suitable adaptation and capacity for the work required, and the possessor may be counted the best part of the most essential elements in the make-up and progress of an institution of learning—a thousand-fold more important than bricks and mortar, or even of libraries and laboratories. Such a man should have a life appointment, if not in form in reliable fact. Indeed no one can become so imbued and self-invested without the most stable tenure of office, and without the heartiest and warmest official support. A faculty made up of men and women so characterized and so conditioned must make lustrous the name of any university, and must make its history magnificently great.

But educational institutions exist for and in the sole behalf of students. It is for them that endowments are raised and for them that the whole organization is made. To know therefore what such an institution is, seek what its students are. What are their present purposes? What

aspirations fill their ideas of the future? What loyalty do they manifest? With what devotion do they discharge imposed duties, and with what interest do they embrace free-chosen opportunities for self-improvement and for the best advancement of Alma Mater? A commendable spirit animating a body of students is absolutely essential to the true accomplishment of the proper work, not only of our own, but of every collegiate organization. Rules of restraint are but poor things at best; heart-felt and brain-stirred appropriation of the word *our* in the connection here used will prove a well-spring not only of order and of delight, but of meritorious and limitless success.

OUR UNIVERSITY is the watchword presented for this organization and the battle-cry for our united forces in a vigorous and valorous campaign.