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ADDRESS,

BEFORE THE

ASSOCIATION OF THE ALUMNI OF HAMILTON COLLEGE,

Delivered July 27, 1936.

BY

ALBERT BARNES.

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST OF THE ASSOCIATION OF THE ALUMNI.

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L.M. BOTTONI

THE LITERATURE AND SCIENCE OF AMERICA.

BRETHREN OF THE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION—

THE circumstances under which we meet this day are such as deeply to affect the heart. We have come back from the agitating scenes and toils of life to our beloved Alma Mater, not again to take shelter under her wings, but to mingle our feelings and our congratulations, and to express our earnest desire for her continued prosperity. On an occasion like this, we can not but recall the views and feelings which we cherished when members of this College, and our youthful hopes, anticipations, and plans. We can not but ask ourselves, Have those hopes been realized? Has the world been to us as we expected it would be? Have the plans which we then cherished been successful? Or has disappointment met us on our way, and have the heavens then so serene and pure to our view been overcast, and charged with tempests that have beat along our goings?

We come back this day after having traveled partly over the journey of life. We have gone, perhaps, even more than half our way. We have parted forever with many who began the journey with us. While we mingle our congratulations, they sleep in the cold tomb. They were as buoyant with hope, and had formed as high anticipations, as we had ourselves. But the hand that directs all our destiny has arrested them in the midst of their way, and summoned them to the realities of another scene. We, in the mean time, spared by the tender mercy of our heavenly Benefactor, are permitted to assemble here this day, and to separate ourselves for a season from the toils, the cares, and the agitations, of the world. We have been tossed, it

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may be, on the troubled sea of public life. We have mingled in the scenes on which we once looked out in anticipation from the walls of this institution. We have tried that world whose perils and temptations were so often portrayed to us, and we are now ourselves qualified, in some degree, to tell those who follow us of the dangers of the way, and the nature of those scenes in which they must soon be engaged.

First in our feelings on coming back this day from the cares of life, of office, and of our professional callings, will be our joy at the brightening prospects of this institution, and the lifting up of a fervent prayer to the God of heaven that the venerable man at whose feet most of us have been permitted to sit may enjoy the blessings of Heaven to render tranquil and serene the evening of his days ; and that the divine guidance may attend him who now presides over its interests, and his fellow laborers. Next, we naturally cast our eyes abroad upon that country which we love, and to whose interests, in our various professions, we have devoted our lives. We have looked upon that country. Some of us have been in the callings of public life endeavoring to advance its interests. All of us feel a deep solicitude for its welfare. And the question presses itself at once upon our attention, What are its prospects? What is to be its destiny? How are the great interests of learning, liberty, religion, and law, likely to fare in this nation? What is to be its moral character? What its religious and political aspect? What institutions does it need, and how are they to be sustained? What are the dangers which threaten its liberty and its happiness, and how are those dangers to be avoided? Selecting from these, and from a multitude of similar questions which might be proposed, the one that I deem most appropriate to the occasion, I propose to ask your attention to some remarks on **THE LITERATURE AND SCIENCE OF AMERICA.**

I may commence my observations by observing that the progress of science and of truth has everywhere been slow. Nothing in the past would be more interesting than the history of the sciences and arts, and the effects of the various discoveries in the one, and the inventions in the others, on the advancement of society and on the happiness of men. It would be interesting not merely as it would record the development of mind, but because each new discovered

truth in science, and each new improvement in the arts, at once work their way with prodigious power into the very frame-work of society, and produce rapid and permanent changes on the habits, the opinions, and the laws, of a people. It is too late now to recover such a history. The knowledge which would be requisite is buried in the darkness of past times, and has gone forever from the records of the world. A few things strike us in the obscurity of the past, that only serve to deepen our regret that we know so little. One is, that we sometimes see a single truth, stricken out by some splendid genius, that seems long to stand alone, like a solitary star in a night overcast with clouds. It may shed its rays on an entire generation, and be all that shall distinguish the memory of the time or of the man. It may gleam awhile by itself in the darkness of the moral night, and then perhaps, dimmed and obscured, it shall appear to sink away, like the last star that shone through broken clouds, and all shall again be night. The establishment of all truth has cost much. Error gets the advance of it in the human mind, and fastens there with gigantic power. It interests the passions; it incorporates itself with the plans and feelings; it works its way into laws; it pervades the customs of a people. The task of establishing truth in our world in morals, in science, in religion, has not been the easy task of writing down the lessons of wisdom on a *tabula rasa*, but the work first of removing error, of encountering prejudice, of remodeling established customs and laws. It is not, so to speak, the work of setting stars in the clearness and brightness of an Italian sky, but it is the work of fixing those stars when the sky is overcast with clouds, and when the tempest rolls and the lightnings flash through the heavens. Those tempests must be scattered, and the sky made serene, before truth will pour its steady radiance on mankind. Men are wrong before they are right. Society is rude, rough, barbarous, before it is enlightened, civilized, refined. There has been no golden age of knowledge and virtue in this world but in the visions of poetry; there has been no peaceful and innocent Arcadia, except in the day-dreams of romance. In these walls we traversed all those retreats of innocence, for they existed only in the books which we read. Man begins his way in error, and slowly advances to the truth. Society begins its way in ignorance, and slowly rises to intelligence and to rational freedom. It has happened, therefore, that every truth that now sheds its lustre on mankind, has

encountered long opposition, and been established by the slow work of ages, until, either single or in combination, like a star alone or mingling its rays in the constellation, it has become fixed in the heavens of science. Every truth in geography, in astronomy, in chemistry, in religion, in political science, has met with opposition, and perhaps has cost the life of many a martyr. Foreign lands have been visited; desert regions have been traversed; sleepless nights have been passed; opposition has been encountered, until perhaps the single truth that was to give immortality to the man and the age, has shone forth with established lustre. Galileo spent his life to perfect the telescope, and was rewarded in a prison; Harvey in defending the doctrine of the circulation of the blood; Jener in defense of the theory of vaccination; and Columbus in showing that a new world might be reached in the west.

There is one fact, however, that must forever cheer and animate the mind. It is, that when a truth has been discovered of value to society, it is never lost. It seizes upon great elements in human nature, and it will live. The human mind grasps it with a giant's power, and will not let it go. It works its way into the elements of society; incorporates itself with the customs and laws; modifies the morals and religion of a people; ascends the bench of justice; encircles the altar and the fireside. We venerate the memory of Grecian and Roman virtue and learning. Yet we have all that they had that is valuable, and we shall transmit it, improved, to future times. There is not the slightest evidence that a single truth of value, that has ever been known, has been obliterated from the human mind. There is not the least reason to suppose that a single invention in the arts, that was known to the ancients, and that would now be of importance, has been lost. The celebrated Greek fire is the only thing which the ancients possessed of any value, whose nature is now supposed to be unknown. Yet of what value would this be to us, when its loss has been more than compensated by the invention of gunpowder? Society, in its advances, has voluntarily laid aside a multitude of things because they have been superseded by better; but it has lost nothing, nor can it lose anything. How can the knowledge of the telescope ever be destroyed? Each night, from a thousand observatories, it is, and it will be, disclosing the wonders of the heavens to the mind of man. How can the knowledge of the safety lamp be obliterated? Each

day, and each night, it guides ten thousand miners beneath the surface of the earth, and is the protector of their lives. How can the knowledge of the mariner's compass be blotted from the memory of man? Every hour it guides the vessels of all nations with unerring certainty, and conducts the commerce of both hemispheres across the stormy ocean. When can the knowledge of the use of steam be forgotten? Every river and lake, every city and village, every art, and every commercial enterprise, acknowledges its power; and the moving world recognizes its dependence on it. What can obliterate the knowledge of the art of printing? What catastrophe *can* ever happen that shall destroy the last printing-press, and annihilate the last book and newspaper? Not till the

" cloud-capt towers,
The gorgeous palaces, the solemn temples,
The solid globe itself, shall all dissolve,
And like the baseless fabric of a vision
Leave not a wreck behind."

And, I add, what can destroy the Principia of Newton, the Novum Organum of Bacon, the Iliad, the Æneid, the Task, the Paradise Lost? They belong to man as man; to the whole world; and they travel down, amidst all revolutions, to the judgment-day.

It has been said that we have no literature or science, and foreigners have reproached us for our destitution. They have spoken of us as having produced no works of art that will live, and as having made no important discoveries in science, and as having no established literature. It is not my purpose to attempt a vindication of our country; still less to notice the terms in which these accusations have been brought. It might be sufficient to reply to all that foreigners have said of us, that we are an infant people, and that no nation before us has had a task to perform so arduous as we have, or has done it so well. We had a vast, an almost illimitable, territory to occupy, to subdue, to cultivate. Almost interminable forests stretched their shadows over the land, and those forests were to be felled. A most fertile soil, on which the rays of the sun had never shone through the deep and dense wilderness, was to be brought under the dominion of

the plough. Towns were to be built, and cities reared, and a fleet to be constructed whose sails should whiten every ocean. The war of Independence was to be fought with the most potent nation of the old world. Vast rivers, stretching into dense forests, were to be rendered navigable and ascended, and the means invented for braving their currents and reaching their sources. Mountains were to be leveled, and valleys to be exalted, and distant parts of the nation to be connected by facilities for rapid intercommunication. A government was to be formed that should be adapted to a population ultimately of hundreds of millions. This has been done : and we may say, without arrogance, that it has been well done. We may inquire of all past generations when such a work has been before accomplished in a space of time so brief as in our own history.

But there are other remarks to be made on this subject. The complaints that have been made of our want of literature and science have, in a great majority of cases, been made by those who have come among us from our own father-land. We may be permitted to say that there is something peculiarly unreflecting and unkind on the part of our British brethren. Can it have been forgotten by them that we have a common literature and science ? Till within sixty years we were an integral part of their empire, and subject to the same crown. Their laws were our laws ; their language our language ; their ancestors our ancestors. We have a common stock with them in the exhaustless stores of British learning. Their Spensers, and Chaucers, and Miltons, and Shakspeares, and Lockes, and Bacons, and Boyles, were ours. They spoke our language. Our fathers lived in the land where they lived ; their bones are buried there ; and if our British brethren boast of *their* ancestry, why may not we glory in the same ancestry as our own ? When our countrymen tread the solemn aisles of Westminster Abbey, and look upon the monuments of the illustrious dead ; when they walk where princes, and poets, and orators, and philosophers, repose ; who shall forbid them to reflect that they have a part in what those illustrious men have done for liberty, for science, for literature, and for religion ? When we look upon the marble that records the place where Milton, and Locke, and Newton, sleep, shall we be prohibited from remembering that we speak their language ; that their blood flows in our veins ; that they repose in our father-land ; and that the sentiments which they loved, and which they

expressed, are receiving permanency and the widest influence in our own western world? When we visit Olney, or when we tread the banks of the Avon, who shall prohibit us from remembering that we have part in the sweet strains of nature's loveliest poet—Cowper; and part also in the fame that encompasses the name of Shakspeare?

We begin our literary career with a better stock than any other people. The English language which we speak, embosoms, it is believed, more profound learning, more sublime poetry, more masterly argumentation, more lofty eloquence, certainly more profound science, than any other single language of the world. This is said with no disparagement of the vast stores that may be found in the Greek and Roman tongues. It is said that we may do justice to ourselves and our advantages; and that, in our veneration for antiquity, we may not undervalue the rich stores that in our own native tongue are accessible to the mind of the most humble American citizen.

To see what is the proper estimate which we ourselves, and which foreigners, should place upon us, we should be compared with what other infant people have been at the same period of independent existence as ourselves. What was the literature of Egypt sixty years after its foundation was laid as a kingdom? What was the astronomical science of Chaldea compared with that of Rittenhouse? What its philosophy compared with that of Franklin? What was the learning of Greece, what her poetry, what her arts, sixty years after she began her independent existence, compared with that America now possesses? What were the political views of Solon, of Lycurgus, of Draco, what the plans of Romulus, of Numa, of Brutus, compared with those of Hancock, of Washington, of Hamilton, of Madison? What men, during two hundred years of their existence, summoned their countrymen to virtuous freedom in eloquence as spirit-stirring as that which fell from the lips of Patrick Henry? Who among them dispensed public justice, and laid broad and deep the foundations of constitutional law, like John Marshall? Be it not ours to boast. But it may be ours to repel the unkindness of those with whom we wish to be united as brethren; and it may and should be ours to render hearty thanks to the God of our fathers that he has thus blessed this infant country in its commencement, and permitted us to *start* on our career of science, and literature, and political wisdom, where the proudest nations of ancient time have regarded it as sufficient glory to *pause*.

It is no discredit to us to admit, that our literature and science may fall short, in many respects, of the attainments in the old world. No American need be reluctant to confess, that in philology and criticism we may be behind the German ; in chemistry and medicine, we may be inferior to France ; in classical learning and the exact sciences, inferior to England or Scotland. We have not their libraries, their apparatus, or their leisure. We can not, like them, collate ancient manuscripts ; we can not restore to a corrupted classic writer, like them, a correct text ; we have not the apparatus which Davy used, nor the telescope with which Newton or Herschell gazed upon the heavens. It would be the height of national absurdity and vanity to deny that the old world possesses libraries, and philosophical apparatus, and manuscripts, to which we can lay no claim. And it would be the height of folly to suppose, that, in these departments of literature and criticism, our colleges could be able to rival Hallé, or Göttingen, or Edinburgh, or Oxford ; or that our scholars would soon possess the accurate and profound erudition of Scaliger, or Porson, or Parr, or the critical skill of Kennicott or De Rossi, or the knowledge of oriental learning of Gesenius or Sir William Jones.

But let us not be deceived in regard to that which is truly valuable ; nor let us despise or underrate our own advantages. Valuable as are these high attainments, and desirable as it would be could we reach them, yet there is a literature of wider value and more diffusive in the benefits which it shall confer on men, and to this we may and must rise. There is a literature which may be spread with some measure of equality over the intellect of a nation, and which may diffuse its blessings on the common mind, which may be of more real value than that which gives immortality to a few splendid names in the schools. That literature and science pre-eminently may be ours. Besides, in all those departments of literature and science where immortality has been gained in past ages, not from the advantages of manuscripts, and of libraries, and of apparatus, but from profound thinking, from the productions of the imagination, from the abstract sciences, and from the useful arts, a wider field is before us than has ever been before presented to the mind of man, and in that field our gifted sons are invited to revel. We have all the advantages assuredly which nature has furnished anywhere for the discoveries of science. The same heavens are over our heads at night on which Galileo and Herschell gazed ;

the same intellect is here to be investigated which Des Cartes, and Locke, and Stewart, and Brown, profoundly studied ; the air and the water can be subjected to analysis here with the same facility as by Davy ; and the same works of nature—the beautiful specimens of botany, and of physiology—may be found here, which have given immortality to Linnæus or Cuvier. Nay, nature has here exhibited herself in some respects on a broader scale, and in a more magnificent manner, than in the old world. There is a freshness and vastness in her works here which is fitted to expand the mind, and elevate the soul, and fill it with grand conceptions, and to invite to successful investigation. It seems almost as if God, in favor to science and to the enlargement of the human mind, had reserved the knowledge of the western world, until almost the last felicitous investigations that could be made had been made in the old world. It seems almost as if, then, to give a new and a rapid expansion to the powers of thought, he had spread out this *new world*—new in all respects, new in the magnificence of mountain scenery, in the majesty of rolling internal seas and rivers, instinct with new forms of animal life, with hitherto unknown races of animals bounding through vast forests, with richer mineral treasures, and with a new race of men—human nature developed in a new form in the wandering savage, with peculiar habits, customs, and laws, and presenting man and society in a form unseen before. Had the place been sought to give the most sudden and the largest expansion to the mind of man, what place could have been conceived better than to preserve, until science had done its utmost in the old world, the people, the animals, the plants, the fossil remains, the geology, of America, to be investigated in the last periods of the earth's history ?

Nor need we confess inferiority in those fields of literature and science which have conferred in other times immortality on genius and talent. Those fields may not yet be occupied, but they are to be occupied by our sons, and they are spread out for healthy rivalry and competition. A prize is before our sons richer than all the prizes of Isthmian or Nemean games ; more beautiful than all the chaplets which ever adorned the brows of a Grecian historian, orator, or poet—a prize reserved for him who shall successfully avail himself of our advantages, and write our histories, and record the deeds of our fathers in prose or verse, or defend our liberties in the capitol. Our *history*

remains yet to be recorded in a manner that shall be worthy of the theme. It is a history far better fitted to give immortality to the men who shall write it than those which have transmitted to us the names of Herodotus, Thucydides, Livy, or Tacitus. It is more rich in incident, more fruitful in results; presenting more scenes of profound wisdom, and dangers, more magnanimity and patriotism, by far, than the early days of Egypt, of Babylonia, of Greece, and of Rome. We have many more important battles to record than those of Platea and of Marathon; many men who have evinced as high a love of country as was shown at Thermopylæ; many of higher patriotism than Pericles or Scipio. The men whose lives are recorded by Plutarch are not to be compared with those who were concerned in the revolution; and the biography of the Signers of American Independence remains yet to be written in a manner worthy of the theme. The illustrious deeds of our fathers remain yet also to be sung. Nobler themes for the muse have not been presented in this world than in our past history. Around our own hills have been witnessed real events far more illustrious than the fabled doings on mount Ida, Olympus, or Parnassus; and along our streams have been scenes far more thrilling than those along the Meander or the Ilissus. In the high department of eloquence, I need not say that in all that is manly, and pure, and elevated, our country opens a prospect unsurpassed in any ancient history. In the times that tried men's souls in the period of the revolution, and in the establishment and defense of the constitution, powers of oratory have been displayed that succeeding times will compare with the highest efforts of Demosthenes or Cicero; and it needs not prophetic sagacity to foresee that in the defense of liberty in this country, and in defense of sacred rights, there will yet be nobler fields for lofty eloquence than were presented when Philip of Macedon threatened the liberty of Greece, or Cesar that of Rome. We might apply these remarks to the drama and the arts of design. But I will not dwell on this. I will only observe, that there are some *sciences* which our very institutions demand should be pushed to the farthest limit of discovery; and to which the whole course of events here is tending. The science of *morals* here will be better understood than it has been hitherto in the world. Everything here depends on that; and the habits of the people incline them to investigation. The science of government, and of political economy, must and will be

understood. It enters into everything here, and every man has an interest in it ; and every aspirant for office, and for the honors of his country, should expect to succeed just in proportion as he has become master of it. The science of *geology* is destined here probably to be placed on a permanent basis, and to receive its full development. Here, more than anywhere else, there are inducements to pursue such a course as will diffuse a just knowledge of the structure of the earth. We cut down hills to construct canals and rail-roads ; we penetrate the earth for fuel ; we dig into its bowels for gold ; and the same spirit of enterprise which will lead one class of our men to wander to the distant west, and ascend the streams and climb the mountains for game, will lead another to penetrate the solid granite, to go down into the chilly cavern, to torture and investigate the solid rock in pursuit of gold.—And the most profound of all sciences, the science of theology, will probably be better understood here than among any other people. Mind is free here to investigate it, and it will be investigated. The whole subject is to be examined and re-examined. What can be defended, is to be retained. What has come to us from the schools, and not from the Bible, is to be abandoned. Whatever improvement can be given to its form and power, is to be rendered ; and the grand experiment is to be made here, to see whether it can be purified from all that is mere tradition ; whether its principles can be applied to the new forms of society and of thought in this new world ; and whether it can be made to stand forth in its native brightness before the mind of man.—I do not mean that the system, as it fell from the lips of its divine Author, and as it stands in the Bible, is susceptible of improvement. Nor are the sciences of astronomy and botany, as they are presented by the Creator, in the heavens, and in the flowers of the valley, susceptible of advancement. But the ancient system of astronomical science may be corrected, and the errors which have clouded the human vision may be swept away, and man may, to some extent, be left to see the system as it exists in reality. So the truths of the Bible stood forth when first given to men, not to be amended or improved. But there have been erroneous views of these truths. They may have been misunderstood, or attached to false systems of philosophy, and these are to be exploded. The science of mind may be better understood, and that system is to be applied to that science. Besides, the works of God are better understood, and there is a great depart-

ment of theological knowledge which is to occupy the attention of men to the end of time—the analogy of religion, natural and revealed, to the course of nature. He who gave the Bible knew what was to be the course of nature; and the one is not to counteract or cross the path of the other. Every advance which is made in science supposes a correspondent advance in theology, and is in fact a new development which is to throw some light on some obscure part of revelation. The revelations of the Bible do not contradict or contravene those of science, any more than the discoveries of the telescope contradict those of the naked eye. They carry the mind forward, and lay open the wonders of new worlds, but still worlds moving in harmony, under the same laws, and subject to the control of the same infinite mind. And hence a new necessity arises before the theologian in this country, for profound acquaintance with science. Infidelity will endeavor to take advantage of the new developments of knowledge, and to render them tributary to its cause. And infidelity is to be met on its chosen ground, and the contest fought there. And it may be done. Butler has laid the foundation of an argument which is to be followed out to the end of time. Chalmers and Dick have shown that the farthest advances in astronomical science are not inconsistent with the revelations of Christianity; Cuvier, that fossil remains do not contradict the statements in Genesis; Buckland, that the investigations in geology accord with the accounts in revelation, and demonstrate the deluge; and Champollion has found proofs of the historical verity of Moses, in the hieroglyphics of Egypt. Never was there before so inviting a field spread out before the mind of man, in all the departments of science and literature, as in this country. It has all the freshness and glow of the early ages of the world; all the grandeur and sublimity, material and moral, which, in other times, have given immortality to the poet and the historian; all in law, in eloquence, and in morals, that is fitted to call forth the powers, and to make the most of man. It would seem as if God had here opened the field for the most unlimited exertion of power; and it is certain that we shall not be true to ourselves, unless we and our sons enter this field, and take possession of it all for the purposes of morals, of science, of religion.

That there may be departments in literature and the arts in which many nations have excelled, but in which we shall never equal them,

I am not disposed to deny, nor need it be a subject of regret that we are compelled to deny it. The ancient Greek sought immortality, not only by chaste and profound productions in literature and philosophy, but by the chisel also, and the productions of his genius have traveled down to our time, and the breathing marble still excites our wonder. The world will, perhaps, never cease to admire the productions of Phidias and Praxiteles, nor should it. But there was a reason why the Greek sought to excel in this—a reason which does not and which will not exist in our own country. He had a stunted territory, and could enlarge his dominion only by colonies, and the consequence was that there was a vast amount of mind that would have been unoccupied but for the cultivation of these arts. He too was an idolater; and to decorate his temples, and to render them splendid and attractive, to preserve the sense of the national religion, demanded all that art could do. But *our* vast territory will give other employment for mind, and call it forth for more useful purposes, than to teach the marble to breathe. We have no religion that demands that its temples should be crowded with naked and indecent statuary, that corrupts while it allures and charms. It has been said that

“ These polished arts have civilized mankind,
Softened the rude, and calmed the boisterous mind ;”

and it *may* be that they may have had an influence in softening the savage traits of barbarous men, and in recalling them from war and plunder to more mild and gentle purposes. But who would presume to compare the “ lascivious breathing of the lute,” and the influence of unclothed statuary in temples of lust, as at Corinth, with the influence of our schools, and our habits of industry, in perpetuating and extending public morals ?

In like manner the modern Italian has aspired to fame in similar productions of genius, and Italy and France seek the ornaments of painting and statuary. But it is to be remembered that the mind of the Italian has not been free, and can not be free. What production demanding thought, and contemplating freedom, has been allowed under the stern despotism that has reigned over that land that was once the birth-place of freedom ? Can it be forgotten that it was under

the government of that land that Galileo was immured in a dungeon ? It is a land where freedom of thought has not been encouraged or allowed for fifteen hundred years. It is a land where all attempts to emancipate the human mind, and give it freedom of thought, would be repressed alike by the government and the religion. It is a land where the Bible is abstracted from the hands of men, and where mind is fettered, and where thought is imprisoned. And it is a land of luxury, and ease, and licentiousness, and pampered vice. And how can mind be employed there ? It may be by arts congenial with luxury and effeminacy. The marble may be chiseled into all the forms which luxury may demand ; the walls of the palace may be covered with all the decorations of art, and the canvas may be made to present exquisite forms and attractive beauties. The soft sky and air ; the clime, the habits, the arts, nay the religion, may all combine and aid each other in all that is soft, luxurious, effeminate, and sensual. But liberty is dead. There is no manly thought. There is no spirit of enterprise. There is no freedom. So these soft and enervating arts are adapted to luxury and effeminacy everywhere. Are they fitted for our own country ? Here all is manly, vast, free, comparatively pure. Shall naked statuary be exhibited here, or naked figures on the canvas, and our sons and our daughters be pure ? Shall the public taste sustain and demand exhibitions that are adapted only to the seraglio, or to the palace where vice is practiced almost without a blush ? That will be a sad day for our virtue when the walls of our dwellings, or academies of art, shall exhibit what France exhibits without a tinge of shame.

And thus too with the drama. As productions of genius, who will, who *can*, undervalue the immortal productions of Shakspeare ? But when has the drama contributed to public virtue ? In what place has it existed where it has not been patronized by the effeminate, the unprincipled, the licentious ? Where has it left men *better* than it found them ? Where has it met with the slightest opposition from the sensual and the abandoned ?—In regard to all these arts we need only say that our customs, our liberty, our religion, do not demand them. Our young men do not need them. A boundless field is open here for enterprise in all that is manly and noble. Talent is demanded here for *useful* purposes ; and our country demands the aid of her sons to

carry out her great and noble plans of liberty and virtue. Our nation is designed, we trust, by Providence to be great, and pure, and good. Our plans are to be vast and grand. All that which will go to mature and perfect the plans of liberty and virtue, is to be cherished and loved. All that would be effeminate, and luxurious, and sensual, and adapted only to palaces of luxury, and the effeminacy of courts, and to climes where freedom of thought is unknown, let it not reach our shores, but if it must exist, let it be confined amidst the luxuries and the vices of the old world.

It is natural here to inquire what is needful in order that *our* literature and science should assume the shape which our institutions demand, and put forth the vigor and influence which shall give them the widest power in this country ?

And here, one of the first questions that meet us, is, whether, in order to secure the highest eminence, we should abandon the study of the ancient classics, and substitute that of modern languages, and the exact sciences ? It is not proposed to go into an examination of this subject now. Nor perhaps is it needful. I believe that the public sentiment will work itself right. I have so much confidence in the good sense of my countrymen as to believe that they will not, certainly not without good reason, remove the landmarks of other ages. Nay, I should deem it impossible, were the attempt made, utterly to banish classical literature from our schools and from our land. Every man who begins to study a profession, were this species of learning driven from our colleges, would find himself so impeded in his way, and so trammelled ; would find rising in his bosom such an instinctive desire to know what was locked up from him in the ancient tongues that even at advanced life the man who wished to rise high would recommence his education, and at the expense of arduous toil attempt to recover what had been lost. Nor can it be denied that there is so much judgment and severe simplicity in the ancient models, so much fire, and force, and inspiration, in their orators, and poets, and historians, so much that is profound and beautiful, that there will be among our countrymen an inextinguishable desire to become acquainted with the productions of antiquity. I have no fear that classic learning will ever be banished from our schools. I believe that it is too much adapted to mind, and thought, and liberty, and virtue too, to be successfully driven from our seminaries of learning. The man who is

to write our future history, and that is to be the Tacitus or Herodotus of this country, will not be satisfied with an acquaintance with Hume and Gibbon, but will wish to drink from the original fountains, and will give his days and nights to the Greek and Roman models. The man that is to sing the illustrious deeds of our fathers, or that is to soar into the regions of fancy "above the Ionian mount," will not be satisfied with the models which his own language furnishes, pure and sublime as they are, but will drink from those pure fountains beside which Milton and Cowper loved to repose—the loveliest and the purest of our own poets, and yet the most deeply imbued of all with classic learning.

But why, it may still be asked, is it needful, in a land like this, to retain the study of the ancient classics? Does not everything in this country call for action? Is it not a waste of time, and of the powers of mind? May not all that is valuable be gained from a translation? And do not these impure sentiments tend to corrupt the youthful mind? These questions have been often asked. We may reply in few words.

There is a period of life during the time of childhood to which the acquisition of a language seems peculiarly adapted. It is that time when the mind needs some constant discipline, and when we do and should become familiar with our own tongue. To that period the species of discipline to which I refer is fitted; and all the purposes of education demand that the mind then should have discipline. Yet what shall be substituted for the ancient languages? The study of our own tongue, rich and important as it is, can not be made to occupy all that time. The mind is not mature enough for the investigations of the abstract sciences, or for pure mathematics. The rules of education can not be made on the supposition that all minds at nine years of age are like that of Pascal. The researches of geology, of botany, of chemistry, are less adapted to that age than they are to some more advanced period of life. Modern languages might indeed be substituted; but it needs no proof that for the purposes of mental discipline they are not to be compared to the Greek; and I add that in point of real utility a man entering any one of the learned professions, or any other calling of life, would find the Greek and Roman tongues useful to him in ten instances where he would find occasion for the French, the Spanish, or the Italian, once.

Besides, literature and science should flourish in concert. They are necessary helps to each other. The mind is fitted for them. No intellect is fitted at *any* period of life to be constantly taxed with attention to matters of fact, and with the formalities of strict method, and patient induction. The whole moral constitution demands the invigorating warmth and impulse of the creations of genius. Men, young or old, can alternate from one pursuit to another, and in the change find relaxation and repose. But what child can bear the intense exertion required in a course of discipline where the ancient classics should be excluded ?

The acquisition of a new language is like the acquisition of a new mental power. It awakens all the faculties into action ; augments their growth and capacity ; gives them precision and strength ; and fits them pre-eminently for the purposes of analysis. It is to be added also, that the genius and spirit of an author is caught insensibly as he is studied. And if it be true, that the ancients have furnished some of the finest examples of composition ; have expressed some of the purest and noblest sentiments ; have transmitted to us those which are adapted to nature, and which *ought* to live, it is unwise to banish them from the world, and to leave ourselves unaided, to form to ourselves new models, to waste our talents, and exhaust our energies, in *re-creating* that which is already prepared at our hands. That no translation can convey fully their simplicity, their fire, their inspiration, is known to every one. If those beauties are enjoyed to the fullest extent, they must and will be sought on the original page. It may be added, as it has often been said, that an involuntary tribute is often paid to the value of the ancient classics by those who oppose them. The arguments which are urged are those which could not have been used, and are conveyed in language of beauty and strength which could not have been employed, but by those who have been familiar with the very classics which they oppose. Their " weapons are polished with Attic wit, and sharpened by the hand that once 'tuned the Ausonian lyre.' "

Nor is the study of the ancient classics unfavorable, as has been pretended, to the progress or relish of Christian truth. To all that has been said on this subject in opposition to their influence, we can reply, that the most distinguished Christian teachers, and those who have been most eminent for piety, have been the most zealous advo-

cates of classical learning. This was particularly true of the puritans ; and this, in our own country, has been thus far true of their descendants. It might be further added, that it would be difficult to substitute in the place of the ancient classics models of greater purity in the modern languages. Who would prefer, in this respect, to the works of Cicero, Plato, Homer, or Virgil, what can now be found in the French, the Spanish, the Italian, or the German, languages? Nay, can any man be ignorant, that, even in our own beloved English tongue, impurities and errors may be found, that far surpass, in evil influence, what the young man shall find even on the pages of Horace or Ovid?

Why then, we may repeat, need the study of the ancient classics be proscribed and abandoned? It can not be because there is not time and talent in this country to pursue it. For no man can be ignorant that there is in this land a vast amount of ill-directed, unorganized, useless, wasted talent. No man can be ignorant that a vast amount of genius here is thrown away. That talent, if chastened by wholesome discipline ; if it could be collected in our schools ; if the roivings of a licentious imagination, and the designs of unbridled desire, could be bound down to the severe and chaste examples of the past, might be turned to prodigious account in the great purposes of this country. From this extent of badly-expended mind ; this wide waste of intellect ; this ever-active and planning and mighty mass of understanding that now burns and blazes, like the meteor, for nought, can any man doubt that sufficient may be taken for all the purposes of classic learning, and still the great designs of the nation be advanced? Nay, do we not need in this country, amidst all our life, and ardor, and enterprise, and wildness of plan, just that severe mental discipline which is best furnished by classic learning?

It has been said, that a large portion of early life is wasted in these studies, and that by them the young man is retarded in his course to a comparatively late period of life. To those who have felt the force of this observation, we may make a single remark. It is not the length of time that is spent in the active duties of a profession, that accomplishes most ; it is the power of concentration, the energy of action, the skill, the learning, that may be brought to bear on the purpose. Newton had laid the foundation for all his glory when he was thirty ; and nearly all that he did to give immortality to his name

was accomplished before he was thirty-six. Alexander the Great had conquered the world at thirty-three, and then died. The poems of Henry Kirke White were written when he was a youth, and amidst the severities of classic learning, and he died. Brainerd and Martyn died when scarce past the age of thirty, having done more to give permanent celebrity to their names than all that had been done by all the Cesars. The Task of Cowper was written in a single winter; the Treatise on the Will by Edwards in less than half a year; the Paradise Lost during a few years when Milton was thrown beyond the active duties of life. The skill of a moment, in the crisis of a disease, saves the life of the patient, and confirms the skill of a physician; the plan conceived in an instant decided the battles of Austerlitz, of Waterloo, of Princeton. Yet how much study, how many patient years of toil, how many anxious hours, are needful to prepare for such decided and rapid purposes of skill and talent. It is only those who have given themselves to patient study and toil, that can throw off as it were in an instant such works as the Task, or the Treatise on the Will, or that can make a decision at the bed-side of the sick that shall save life, or in battle that shall change the destinies of nations as at Waterloo.

Be it remembered, too, painful as it is, by the young aspirants for professional honors, or for celebrity in the science and arts in this country, that not many years are allowed them in which to gather their laurels. Their race in the career of literature, or in the way to honor, must be soon run, and the goal soon reached, if reached at all. Whatever may be the cause, yet the fact is as true as it is sad, that no young man at the bar, in the pulpit, or in the medical profession, can calculate on more than twenty years of professional life. And will it not be better for him to spend his early years in proper mental discipline, and *prepare* himself for his work, and put forth *efficient* efforts, in the vigor of manhood from thirty to fifty, than, unprepared, undisciplined, inexperienced, to enter that profession at twenty, and pause, exhausted in his course, at forty, just when the mind is maturing, and when one year then is worth five like those when he began his way? Be it long, therefore, before we shall abandon what the world has thought wise and best, and give up our plans of classic learning. Be it ours to defend the utility of that course to which we owe whatever of usefulness and skill in our several professions we may have enjoyed.

From the walls of this institution let not a love for classic learning ever depart : but may we be permitted always to know that this is a spot where the academic grove shall be loved as well as the sweet retreats of piety, and where the heights of Parnassus shall be ascended by those who love also to climb the hills of Zion, and where rich draughts shall be drawn from the Castalian fount as well as from the waters of Siloam.

The demands of our country in the promotion of literature and science do not stop here. Ours is to be a land of freedom of thought, of large and liberal inquiry in all the subjects connected with literature, science, morals, liberty, religion. The great principle is to go forth through this country, and is never to be recalled, that there is no subject pertaining to the common welfare that may not be freely and fully canvassed and examined. I know I have not a right to go into my neighbor's dwelling, and discuss and examine the private matters of his intercourse with his wife and children ; but everything in which he and I have a *common interest* may be the subject of the most free and full investigation. So in the affairs of this nation : all our opinions in literature, all our doctrines in science, in politics, in morals, in religion, pertaining to the common welfare, may be examined, and must and will be examined, to secure the healthful action of the human mind in this country. The main purpose of all our schemes of education is to be to teach mind to bear with the fullest power on all questions that pertain to the public welfare. And whether it be by classical study or the exact sciences, whether by oral instruction or public debate, the great principle is to be inculcated until it is wrought into the very frame-work of the mind, and until it glows and burns with ever-living light around the path of all our young men, that everything may be fully examined. By any man, by any press, in any pulpit, in any legislative hall, in every primary assembly, in every debating room, and before any class of our citizens, this right is to be held sacred, and to be defended by the last drop of the heart's blood. It matters not how many martyrs shed their blood in its defense ; it will be worth all the price, and still be *gain* if it is settled as the grand elementary principle in this republic.

This right is secured to us by the God that made us, and is inwrought into all the elements of freedom and accountable moral agency. God has given us the right to examine all things, and

investigate all opinions in science and in morals. He invites us to it by the original aspirations for truth which he has breathed into our souls, and which are as inextinguishable as the soul itself. He invites us to it in his own word ; and no book ever written is so much the friend of free and ample discussion as the Bible. All his works invite us to it ; the heavens gaze upon us at night, asking us to turn away from the earth, and investigate the laws of their motion. The heaving tides invite us to examine them ; the bud, the opening leaf, the flower of the forest, the insect, and the lion of the desert, the elements around us, nay, the metals, the solid diamond, ask us to subject all to investigation with the utmost freedom, and to learn their nature. Our institutions are all based on this freedom of investigation. It is to be assumed here that all things may be examined and discussed. We have no liberty which does not suppose this ; we know none which does not admit and defend it. Herein is our warfare with the kings and tyrants of the old world ; herein is our contest with those thrones of despotism that have so long tyrannized over man ; herein is the reason why monarchs turn pale in their palaces, and tremble on their seats of power ; herein is the contest of the Protestant religion with the papacy ; herein the struggle between freedom everywhere and arbitrary power. The thrones of despotism in political life, in religion, in science, have stood firm just so long as the maxim could be defended, that there were *some* points that were too sacred to be examined. Let it be maintained that there is one principle in science or in religion, one doctrine of government or maxim of law that may not be examined, that there is one tribunal of a court, be it the inquisition or the star-chamber, that may not be examined, one custom that may not be tested by reason and the Bible, or one mineral that may not be subjected to the crucible or the blow-pipe, and liberty is at an end ; a wedge is entered that may be driven until the entire fabric shall be demolished. This doctrine, that all things may be subjected to free discussion, is the only thing that now spreads alarm over the despotism of the oriental world, and that now threatens to subvert the thrones of Europe. All literature and science, as well as liberty, suppose this. From the time of Bacon, at least, it has been the maxim of the scientific world that all things may be subjected to investigation. The *Novum Organum* settled this point forever ; and until the last copy of that undying work shall be consigned to oblivion, it is to be

the rich inheritance of mankind against all tyranny in science, in government, in religion. Nature, when subjected to the torture, never leads us astray. When examined by the microscope, the telescope, or when under the action of the crucible, she never falsifies, or causes us to err. Through all her seats she utters a clear and unambiguous answer. And so it will be in morals and in religion. Mind is to meet mind; thought conflict with thought; the struggling powers are to come in collision with each other, and truth is to be elicited as the spark glows from the collision of the flint and the steel. And it is to be assumed in this nation, that if there is anything in science, morals, or public sentiment, that can be proved to be wrong, it is to be abandoned forthwith; if any public custom can not be defended, it is to be laid aside; *and if there be anything, in reference to which it is maintained that it may not be investigated, be it in morals, in habits, or in religion, it is to be assumed that that MUST be wrong, and that it is known to be wrong.* If there be any custom which is attempted to be so guarded that we may not know all about it—if there any position, in regard to which men grow angry, and suffer their passions to kindle into a flame, when we propose to examine it—anything in which there are public outbreakings and enormities when it is proposed to inquire into its nature or its moral character—and anything where brute force is resorted to instead of calm and manly argument—it is to be regarded as *prima facie* evidence that that is wrong, and is inconsistent with freedom.

The most appalling danger that threatens our country is the threatened restriction of the right of free discussion. We need not fear foreign armies; we have measured strength with them, and our swords have fought with theirs in deadly strife; and we know that our liberties are safe from any foreign invasion. We need not dread their fleets, for we can build a navy like theirs, and can, if necessary, meet the mistress of the ocean on the "mountain-wave." But how shall we meet this subtle enemy? How, if Austria seeks, not by armies, to destroy us, but by a religion which forbids us to examine all things? How, if one half the nation shall refuse to their brethren the right of the fullest inquiry in all that pertains to the national morals, character, liberty, and welfare? The pulse of freedom beats languid when you diminish this right: it sends vigorous tides of life and health only when it is conceded that everything may be examined.

The most ominous feature in these times, is, that this right has been called in question, and that it has been met with so much timidity, and so much yielding, and so much compromise, by those who should bleed and die rather than for one moment surrender this elementary principle of liberty. Be it where it may, and on whatever subject may be presented, we have a right to know what is proposed for our belief, and to examine it at leisure. And every man should make up his mind to pour out his life's blood like water, rather than admit the doctrine that there is anything in our principles of literature, science, morals, habits, or political economy, pertaining to the public welfare, that may not be made the subject of the fullest investigation. We may examine it at leisure. We may propose our sentiments when and where we please, subject only to the decencies of courteous and civilized life, and the restraints of the laws of the land; we may proclaim them from the press, in the pulpit, in the legislative hall, and on the house-top: nor is there to be any self-constituted tribunal that is to ask us why we do it, or that claims a power to bid us pause; nor any tribunal this side heaven that is to be regarded as having a right to interfere, or to amerce us by fine or imprisonment, by loss of life, or limb, or reputation, for the honest expression of our sentiments.

But it is not only needful that our literature and science should be thorough and profound, and that it should be distinguished by a spirit of large and unfettered inquiry: it is needful that, in its moral and religious aspect, it should partake of the purest character, and be in accordance with the true spirit of all our institutions.—This opens a wide field of remark; but I dare not trespass on the patience of this indulgent audience, by following out the ideas which I had designed to have suggested. You will bear with me while I submit a few remarks.

Every one must have been struck with the tendency, in nearly all the investigations of science, to be satisfied with second causes, and the reluctance to trace all events up to the Great First Cause of all, and in science, as in religion, to make

“Him first, Him midst, and Him without end.”

There has been a strange reluctance, even among philosophic men, to

“Look through nature up to nature's God.”

Now this is as unphilosophical as it is contrary to the spirit of religion. It is as much a departure from the true principles of the inductive philosophy as it is from the spirit of Christianity. Bacon, the father of science, saw this ; and in his hands, and in those of Boyle and Newton, also, the tendency of all investigations was to conduct the mind to large and noble views of the Creator. So it was, probably, in Cuvier, so in Linnaeus, so in Davy. But this has not been the case usually in scientific investigations. The idea has obtained currency, that true philosophy would stop short of the Creator, and would repose in his works, shutting him from his own doings, and leaving us in a forsaken and fatherless world. And this has been, unhappily, the result of no small part of the scientific investigations among men. This is to be corrected ; and this land presents a fine field for the correction of this idea. True science has not one word to say in favor of atheism or skepticism. There is not one star of all the heavenly hosts that responds to the feelings of the skeptic and the atheist, nor one insect, nor the petal of one flower, that does not contradict their feelings, and rebuke the spirit with which they look at the works of God. And the great truth is yet to go forth through all science, never to be recalled,—and why should it not echo through all this land?—that it is not unphilosophical for the creature to recognize the existence of the Creator—not proof of a want of manliness and independence to believe that this vast and wonderful structure of the universe contains *some* demonstration that there *is* an Infinite Mind.

It can not be denied, that, to a melancholy extent, the literature of the English language has been skeptical in its character, and even licentious in its tendency. It contains as many books that we would as reluctantly put into the hands of our children as the classics of antiquity. That there is a vast body of pure morality, of profound reasoning, of elevated sentiment, in the English language, we shall be slow to deny. We shall not cease to render thanks to Heaven that such men as Barrow, and Locke, and Taylor, and Addison, and Johnson, and Bacon, lived. But still how little, after all, is the great mass of English literature imbued with the spirit of Christianity ! How little are the sentiments of perfect purity, and of liberty, and of evangelical feeling, inwrought, like the name of Phidias on the shield of Minerva, into the very texture and vitality of that literature !

Now, a literature that shall be thoroughly imbued with the Christian sentiment is demanded pre-eminently in this nation : for all our institutions are based on the gospel. A man who can not read the Bible, and who does not learn his duty there, is a being that is not contemplated in our institutions. Christianity is a part of the law of the land ; its spirit is supposed to breathe in all our laws, and to influence all our courts of justice. This was the religion of our fathers : and all plans that do not contemplate the existence and the influence of the gospel in the land, make a jar and a discord in our institutions.

The power of an infidel literature has been felt and understood in other times. The authors of the French Encyclopædia understood this power, and through a corrupted literature they undertook the mighty task of revolutionizing a nation, and of overturning the institutions of ages. They put forth that power ; and France was bathed in blood, and its agitations and crimes showed how terrific was that power when the leading literature of a nation had laid aside entirely all reference to Christianity. So it will be in our own country, if the public taste shall demand or tolerate a literature that is unprincipled, that is licentious, that has cast off all moral restraint. So it will be, if fiction shall extensively take the place of truth ; if poetry shall cease to honor God, and be the vehicle of corrupt, licentious, and infidel, sentiments ; if a pure morality is banished from our books of learning. So it will be, if the books which are to guide the young, which are to be placed in our public libraries, which are to constitute our amusement and relaxation in the wearisomeness of our professional toil, shall be those which are licentious in their tendency, and which do not make the heart better while they furnish refreshment from care and relaxation from labor. On the rising generation, soon to be our poets, our orators, our historians, our writers of fiction, our lawgivers and moral instructors, our lawyers, and physicians, and ministers of religion, who are to be the guides in public feeling and sentiment, it depends to determine what is to be the character of our literature. We love our country and its institutions. Heaven grant that all the literature of this nation may be such as to extend a pure morality and a benign spirit of religion ; and that the books which shall be thrown off by a groaning press may be such as may

be safely placed by dying parents in the hands of their sons and their daughters.

To promote these great interests which we have been contemplating, this institution was founded. It contemplated a profound study of the sciences, and an extended and accurate acquaintance with the rich treasures of classic learning. It was established to train the mind for large and liberal and independent investigation. It was designed to connect the interests of science and religion, of literature and piety, and to send forth her sons imbued with both. It was intended to train up men who should in heart and in understanding be prepared to fill the various professions, to defend the interests of justice, to protect the rights of the innocent, to be practitioners of the healing art, to constitute leading men of intelligence and moral worth among the laboring classes of our citizens, and to be the heralds of salvation to a lost world. The founders of this institution never contemplated an organization where classic learning would be undervalued, where thought would be cramped, and the spirit of free inquiry would be repressed ; nor where her sons would go forth with sentiments hostile to the pure spirit of the gospel, or at war with the richly-bought institutions of American freedom. We give thanks to God, this day, that this purpose has not been thwarted. It has met with reverses ; it has been embarrassed ; it has been called to struggle with difficulties : but may we not be permitted to say that it has already sent forth men who would have been an honor to any institution, and men whom their country will delight to honor in all the professions and callings of life ?

Our prayers ascend to Heaven for its success, and why should it not be successful ? It has a location in one of the most beautiful, the most rich, and the most healthy, portions of our land. It is in the bosom of an intelligent community, amply able to sustain it, and which will not be slow to appreciate the advantages of solid learning and moral worth. It is under the instruction of men who deserve the confidence of this community ; and that confidence the community will not be slow to repose in them. It should have all the pecuniary aid which it needs ; for every community is benefited ten-fold to the amount of all its pecuniary sacrifices by an institution of learning, in its augmented intelligence, and in the diffusion of pure morality and the sentiments of religion. It should have the prayers of the friends

of virtue and of religion, for no institution of learning can long flourish without the blessing of Heaven. It should have, and will have, our best wishes and prayers; and our hands and hearts should be ready to aid it.

I take pleasure here in publicly adverting to the fact that a Professorship of Law was established by the munificent legacy of the late Wm. H. MAYNARD, Esq., amounting to \$20,000, thus securing, when the bequest shall be realized, permanent instruction in that important department of our College. I do not deem it inconsistent with delicacy, also, to advert on this occasion to the liberal endowment of the Professorship of Classical Literature, by a member of the present Board of Trustees,* amounting to \$15,000; thus securing this Professorship from future embarrassment. As the Association of the Alumni of the College, our thanks should be thus publicly expressed to him for his liberal donation; our earnest prayer should ascend to Heaven, that he may be permitted long to witness the effects of his beneficence, in the augmented prosperity and usefulness of this institution. Such instances of liberality demand our grateful acknowledgment, and the thanks of all the friends of the College and of literature. Such instances also furnish to us a guarantee that the importance of the College will continue to be appreciated by this community, and that ultimately it will be freed from all pecuniary embarrassment.

Brethren of the Alumni Association!—We separate, in all human probability, not to meet again. We have been permitted to turn aside from the busy scenes of professional toil and care, to visit the place where we sought once to prepare ourselves for usefulness. We have come to congratulate the friends of this institution on its prospects of augmented prosperity. We congratulate him who is called to preside over it, and the community and the friends of the College, that the hand of God hath placed him there. We render praise to God that we have been permitted once more to meet that venerable man at whose feet many of us have delighted to sit, and by whose hand we have received the honors of this institution. We wait, before we go hence, only that we may lift the voice of entreaty to Heaven, that God would make the evening of *his* days tranquil and serene, and prepare

* S. NEWTON DEXTER, Esq.

him abundantly for that rest which awaits him in heaven ; and to pledge ourselves, that, wherever we are, and whatever may be our situation in life, we shall rejoice to be able to advance the interests of our ALMA MATER.



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