

"For the Benefit of Mankind"

Extract From Baccalaureate Address Delivered June 1, 1914, Before the University of Louisiana on "The University and The State"

By JOSEPH E. DAVIES

United States Commissioner of Corporations

THE old conception of the university, that it should be a place of secluded and cloistered isolation, where the knowledge of the arts and sciences is conserved, and where culture and the humanities were dispensed as a mental decoration of the student, has changed. It remained for the American State university to a remarkable degree to co-ordinate the practical with the ideal. The humanities were not lost, but practical sciences were added. There is beauty in a Greek ode, but there is beauty and service in a biological experiment that saves the lives of men. To the knowledge of what masters of men have achieved in the past is added the technical ability of the engineer to erect modern miracles of beauty and usefulness. Coincident with the elimination of waste in industry and coincident with the intensive conservation of raw material, labor and capital, there have developed the technical schools that develop the trained chemists, the efficiency engineer, the sanitary expert, and the trained farmer. With the extension of the energies of our business men from a provincial field to a world-wide market, there have come business and administrative departments to give to young men expert knowledge in commercial administration, together with proficiency in the languages of potential customers among the different races of the earth.

ITS FUNCTION did not stop with students who came to its portals. If young men of the commonwealth were unable to come to it, there developed the idea that the university should go to them. It was a wonderful conception that the youth of the factory and the lumber camp should have available, possibilities of education, by reason of the activities of the State, which otherwise he would not have. The University of Wisconsin sends to the young men of the farm and the city courses in all lines of study, by correspondence, ranging from astronomy to business administration, from languages to home economics. It furnishes instructors from the faculty to any classes that might be locally brought together. Lectures courses are furnished to communities; public discussions of public questions are encouraged; all reasonable inquiries by the citizens of the State upon any matters are taken care of by a clearing-house established therefore by the university of the commonwealth. Thus has the university become a potent, potential force in the life of ambitious young men or women unable to attend such an institution, and a power as well in the life of the community.

Not alone in this direct service to its students has the function of the State university kept faith with the conception of the fathers. There has been the idea that such an institution, furnished and sustained by the State, should be available for the use and advantage of its citizens not only trained in knowledge and expert information which a university provides, but also that the State university become a laboratory where the scientific attainments of the servants of the State are tested with these universities should be used for the practical and material advantages of the people of the commonwealth. The money

IN RENDERING that service to the state wherein lies one of their greatest justifications, in the protection of the rights of the public by giving information upon matters of public interest, state universities, in the exercise of their fullest development, incur at times the hostility and enmity of powerful, selfish forces. To the degree that such influence is potent for the public good by reason of lack of bias and prejudice, yet to that degree will hostility and enmity be aroused, and to that degree will these forces seek, as they have sought and even now are seeking, to impair the influence and growth of such an institution.

value of the Babcock test, the increase in the value of the annual production of corn by reason of seed tests, the redemption of waste places by reason of the cultivation of drought-resisting plants and many other contributions of similar kind, cannot be computed in money value, but are all monuments to the practical vision of learned and large-spirited men in the service of the State.

Thus, too, the State university has come to be regarded in some commonwealths as a repository of experience and accurate information, from which facts and the opinions of experts, free from bias and prejudice, are available to legislators in the making of laws for the benefit of the State. It has been demonstrated that the State can legislate better upon great problems of municipal government, taxation, the regulation of public utilities, conservation of natural resources, if it knew what other governments had done and what success had been met therein.

IN THIS MANNER has the development of the State university kept pace with the development of society and with our conception of the uses and functions of government. To the extent to which it serves directly and indirectly as an agent in the function of government for the highest development and protection of the individual in his social and economic relations in society—to that extent does it fulfill and measure its highest purpose. To that extent, too, does it measure the aspirations, character and ideals of the citizenship of the commonwealth in which it is located. This relation of a university to the people and life of a State is indeed one of its great justifications; but therein lies one of its greatest dangers as well.

It is common knowledge that selfish and powerful financial interests have in the past dominated commonwealths. It is to be expected that human selfishness and greed will always be found seeking special privileges from government. Light, which accurate knowledge and information with unbiased opinion and judgment offer public opinion, is always prejudiced to special privilege. "Jokers" are impossible in legislation if it is to be scrutinized by the trained legal expert.

Thus, in rendering that service to the State, wherein lies one of its greatest justifications, in the protection of the rights of the public by giving information upon matters of public interest, State universities, in the exercise of their fullest development,

incur at times the hostility and enmity of powerful, selfish forces. To the degree that such influence is potent for the public good by reason of lack of bias and prejudice, yet to that degree will hostility and enmity be aroused, and to that degree will these forces seek, as they have sought and even now are seeking, to impair the influence and growth of such an institution. The attack will never be direct, nor will the true reasons be assigned therefor. "The expense to the State" is an easy and familiar method commonly resorted to to attract public thought, but in the wisdom of the people and in the fundamental consciousness of what is right and wrong that resides in the people of the commonwealth, a State university that furnishes such a function in a commonwealth will ultimately be sustained, cherished and guarded even as the covenant of their faith.

IN THE experiences typical of this western country, there is none more beautiful than that situation, with which we are all familiar, wherein the simple vigor and strong

virtue of pioneer parents prompts them to self-denial and abstinence, that there may be given to their child with even prodigal lavishness, that which they so much desired, but was denied to them—an education. It is beautiful in its simple nobility; it is indicative of the "stuff" in our people which has made the nation great. In such action there was no thought of self or financial return, but in the inscrutable ways of the Good Father of all Men, there comes to them in their old age a degree of comfort and well-being by reason thereof, such as they themselves could never have achieved. It is so, I believe, with a State. The university is the child of the State. The nobility of a people and their ideals, their character and aspirations, are measured by their devotion to their institutions of learning, and so too, will the future through them bring returns, to the perpetuity of free institutions and the welfare of our children that we now dream not of.

There is no agency in society today more potent than the State university in turning the ideals of men into public service. To have provided that intellectual power and training, which one has, by the generosity of the State, catinats to the right-minded man an obligation of service to the State. It was not accidental that it should have been the president of a State university (Van Hise) who defined the finest purpose of an education: "The least common denominator of acquiring knowledge," he said, "is to apply it to one's own advancement—to achieve worldly success." A higher purpose is to fit one to live the intellectual life. * * * A third and the highest purpose of acquiring knowledge is to utilize it for the benefit of mankind." It was the statement of the spirit of the State university.

A Prayer For Newspaper Men and Writers

By WALTER RAUSCHENBUSCH

(From "The American Magazine")

O THOU great tower of truth and knowledge, we remember before thee the writers of books, the newspaper men, and all whose calling it is to gather and winnow facts and to inform the people. Grant them a determined love for honest work and a staunch hatred for the making of lies, lest they pervert the judgments of our nation and teach us to call light darkness and darkness light. Suffer them not to drag the mind of our people with falsehood and prejudice. Since the sanity and wisdom of a nation are in their charge, may they count it shame to set the baser passions of men on fire for the sake of gain.

GRANT them boldness to turn the unwelcome light on those who love the darkness because their deeds are evil. Put into their hands the shining sword of truth, and make them worthy sons of the champions of the people in the past who held truth to be a holy thing for which men should die. Make them realize that they have a public function in the commonwealth, and that their country may be saved by their courage and undone by their cowardice and silence.

GRANT them the heart of manhood to cast their mighty influence with the forces which make the people strong and free, and if they suffer loss, may they rejoice in that as proof to their own souls that they too have been friends of the common man and servants of the higher law.