

## THE NEBRASKAN-HESPERIAN.

## INAUGURAL ADDRESS.

Chancellor Andrews' Speech at the Auditorium, Sept. 22, 1900.

In his inaugural address delivered in the Lincoln auditorium on Saturday morning, September 22, Dr. Elisha Benjamin Andrews said:

Mr. President, Regents of the University, Colleagues, Students and Friends, Ladies and Gentlemen: In common with all the newcomers present, whether instructors or pupils, I thank those of you who have been here before for the welcome you extend to us who now appear for the first time. Already domiciled among you, we shall soon be naturalized in the community and have our vote. May the year now opening be richer than any preceding one in all the university's history! It can be, it should be, I know you all join me in vowing. It shall be.

To be permitted to address you today affords me rare pleasure. For years I have cherished an ambition to become a Nebraskan, laying plans to that end long before I had any expectation of membership in this university. What seemed to me a peculiar solidity of character in the people of the commonwealth powerfully attracted me. If the proverbial enchantment of distance possibly helped originate this liking, the liking has been confirmed by all that I have seen during the weeks since I set foot upon Nebraska soil as a resident.

When the foreman of an educational establishment like this begins his work people more or less naturally expect from him some sort of a pronouncement touching the policy which he would like the institution to pursue. It is impossible for me to announce any such policy in detail. If I had a new university policy bristling with particulars I should not wish to set it forth publicly, for the reason that, provided it contained novel matter enough to be worth enouncing, the publication of it would be thought to threaten a sudden break in university growth. If I wished radical changes, I should wish to introduce them gradually, producing an evolution, not a revolution. But I say frankly that I harbor no plan for any changes in the university save those involved in its natural, rapid and healthy growth. Some things which I think the university ought to hope and strive for will emerge as I proceed, but I have no detailed program. I think so extremely well of what others have placed here for me that I am quite content to let it be, deeming myself happy if I can only add more of the same kind.

If any word escaping me in this address seem like criticism on things that are or have been, on the doings of any of my predecessors or colleagues, I beg to assure you beforehand that it is not so intended. I am impressed by the honorable and useful history of the university, the very high rank it has won among institutions of its class, the sanity of its organization and the careful methods by which it has been administered. The builders have built well. I feel a profound sense of indebtedness toward all my predecessors in the chancellorship, including my esteemed colleague who sat in the chair last year, for the wisdom and the unselfishness with which they have wrought. So far as I can discover, nothing has been overlooked, nothing has been mismanaged. It would have been impossible for the business of the office to be turned over to a successor in more perfect order than when I took it up.

It is fitting on an occasion like this to review the present condition of university life in the United States in the light of current criticisms thereon. Such criticisms, you know, are frequent and various. Many "bogy" men are abroad, whom not a few people believe to hail from the university. The "inbred," the "rake," the "dude," the shaggy athlete, the spectacled pedant, the pale recluse, and many more, are supposed to frequent every university walk and pretty accurately to represent university life. Very sober men and women are of the opinion that we pay too little attention to the moral and the esthetic side of students' development and too much to the physical side, and that in dealing with the mind itself, the part of our work on which they say we lay all the stress, we are guilty of grave faults of aim and method, training our pupils to pedantry, mental pride, mental dependence and a number of other faults.

No doubt these critics greatly exaggerate the evils which they allege, and so far as such evils exist, many-wise wisdom for the friends of university education to ignore those strictures. Probably each of them is more or less deserved of all universities and deserved without much abatement by some. It will be seen that part of the information lodged against us relates to the sphere of general university influences, declaring things done that ought not to be done and things left undone that ought to be done, said defects being connected in a rather remote way, if at all, with any class-room work, and whether part of it to alleged misfeasance in or concerning the university's teaching office. Let us consider first the statements affecting our general walk and conversation.

Regarding the charge that American university life is weak in influences of the moral order, the case is far from being so bad as it is often represented. Irregularity in institutions of learning is rarer than formerly, and is decreasing

rather than increasing. It is certainly less prevalent in university circles than in other large aggregations of youth, and not more prevalent in state universities than in denominational colleges. To read the religious statistics of this university for last year you would think we were the collegium de propaganda fide for the entire western hemisphere. Explain it how you will, the fact is that the religious element in a community is the part which furnishes most of the university and college students. Moreover, owing to a happy change in the spirit of science and in the spirit of religion, the schism between those two vital interests at universities as in the general world of thought is less and less angry as the years pass, science growing devout and religion comprehensive and sweet.

What has been said in regard to religion is nearly as true of morality. It must be admitted that forms of immorality flourish in certain universities. This is due, however, not to any cause intrinsically connected with university life, but to dangerous influences of our time in society at large. The vast fortunes possessed by many families foster aristocratic feeling and other vicious sentiments. When scions of such families enter the university they not only bring with them whatever vices they may already have, but often use the freedom of their new life to nurse those vices into greater vigor. But such manifestations of evil are local. With all due allowance for them where they exist, it will still have to be admitted that the main tendencies at work in the university domain make for morality.

A well known fact shows this. Very few college graduates permanently go wrong. Find a graduate of an American university anywhere and you are nearly sure to find a pillar of society, a man or a woman who is upright, trustworthy, public-spirited, philanthropic, a good example for youth to follow. This fact is explained in part by the large proportion of vice proof characters among the young people who enter upon advanced study, but the generalization could not be so sweeping as it is did not university influences themselves re-ferre morality rather than break it down. Were universities hotbeds of vice, as they are sometimes represented, did they in any degree approach this character, their graduates, however exemplary on entering, would not turn out so well as they actually do in their mature years.

After all, while a youth in a representative American university is subject to no moral strain which he would likely escape elsewhere and is likely to be by his university experience morally strengthened in many vital points, it cannot be denied that most of our educational institutions come short of utilizing fully the advantages which they naturally possess for the creation of noble character in their students. Considering the plastic age during which they have young people in charge, the much which they achieve for them morally is far less than they might achieve. I intensely reprobate the view, said to have been expressed by the head of one university, that we are not responsible for the moral welfare of our pupils, our work for them being purely intellectual. This university president may have had main reference to graduate students engaged in technical and professional study. Even so, I think him wrong. With undergraduates, at any rate, we fail in duty unless to the uttermost of our power we aid them to form right and strong characters. The public expects this of us and has a right to expect it. How quickly and fatally our patronage would fall off should we renounce this part of our task! University authorities do not renounce it; they dare not; they try to fulfill it. I do not underestimate the efforts they are making here, but I feel that they ought to accomplish a great deal more.

The university must be as free from narrowness and partisanship in its moral attitude as in its presentation of scientific truth. No one wishes it turned into a Sunday school or into a Salvation army corps. But there are certain moral resources not objectionable to any, on which universities might draw far more copiously than most have yet drawn.

Instruction in ethics could be made more inspiring, practical and concrete. Professorship could be created for giving instruction, of course in a purely scientific and non-sectarian way, in Old and New Testament literature—that series of ancient tractates rammed with moral life far beyond most else which men have written.

I have often reflected, moreover, on the valuable moral lessons latent in many present courses of university instruction and waiting only to be collected and made patent. I wish that every student were obliged to pass an examination on the chapter entitled "Habit" in William James' Psychology. Political economy likewise has many deep moral bearings, particularly on the subject of temperance. The science abuts upon ethics at various points. The question whether an operation is economically productive or the reverse often turns wholly on the answer you give the other question, whether or not the operation conduces to man's moral well. Certain physiological facts and certain deductions from vital statistics speak eloquently for morality in weighty personal and social particulars. Every now and then occur within the university or near enough to arrest the attention of all students events furnishing impressive texts for momentous lessons in conduct. Such occasions should be utilized. It seems to me, by earnest words from the university rostrum.

Let each member of the teaching force interest himself personally in the pupils whom he instructs or knows and encourage them to resort to him for advice in affairs of conduct. When they come, as most of them will, do not fear to counsel them in detail about right living, sound habits, and solid character—those conditions on which so infinitely more depends than on mere scholarship.

If I dwell on this subject it is because of its general, not because of its local importance. Far from regarding the means of moral grace unusually necessary here, I consider them much less needed here than at most universities. The earnest character of its students draws me to this university as hardly any other consideration could. Our students have throughout the country a high reputation for their zeal and sincerity in pursuit of university aims. Whereas in the more "effete" parts of our land, if I may so speak, many pupils in institutions of this grade have to be coaxed and urged to their tasks, the students of the university of Nebraska are if possible almost too serious in their determination to profit by their residence here. They use the university for genuinely intellectual and moral aims, not for any of those more or less reprehensible side purposes which so attract young people to college in some localities. All have heard of "salt water colleges" and "fresh water colleges." (Unfortunately there are also "cologne water colleges," which many patronize; institutions of learning where devotion to mental growth has far less to do with giving tone to student life than sociality, even conventional sociality and conventional sociality of doubtful character. The social side of life is certainly important, and I should be the last to disparage the proper furtherance of it; still a university career ought not to be primarily dedicated to social development however good, but to interests which are directly mental or moral, or both.)

The evil sociality complained of is not to be put aside by decrying sociality, but by proper attention to sociality of the right sort. Co-education is fulfilling a great function in producing this. Our studies in sociology are helping to the same result by another path. Cultivate the democratic, by which I mean the republican, tendencies in every student body so that no sharp separation of social classes shall ever appear therein. We do not want levelling, but we do want the most perfect possible sympathy among human beings, however variously born into life or circumstanced in life. Attention to music and the fine arts, happily encouraged now in and about all our progressive universities, is valuable both socially and morally. One need not be a virtuoso or a connoisseur in the fine arts to feel the influence of their neighborhood in elevating and enriching his nature.

Critics of university life not seldom sneer at the zeal, now so ardent in most American institutions of learning, for physical education. This enthusiasm for physical training I regard as almost wholly good.

Nothing of course can be more ridiculous than the folly of such students as make gymnastics their main business at the university. If any have come among us with such a purpose let them this very day change it or else buy tickets for home. College sport is good within limits and in its place as a means of physical and mental health and to large life. In this it is like eating; we eat to live, we do not live to eat.

It is a great mistake to suppose the benefits of physical exercise by students confined to the conservation of their health and mental alertness for the time being. These benefits reach incalculably far and are of the most varied value. Systematic bodily exercise in college often cures grave and even congenital ailments. It relieves many complaints which cannot be cured. It wards off physical and mental ills to which persons of a sedentary life are especially prone. It lengthens the active years and the total years of men and women who are free from specific diseases. It lessens in violence, in frequency and in duration such attacks of illness as befall quite strong people. It puts ease and cheer into hard work and good temper into all the relations of human beings. It tends to impart permanent strength, sanity and order to the mind and to develop that firmness of will without which, particularly in the great crises of life, the most gifted of mortals become the sport of fate.

In schools whose pupils are mainly from cities careful physical training is certainly necessary. City youth are very apt to be ill-developed in their vital parts. Even if they romp and play much, which many of them will not do, they rarely engage in the strenuous exercises needed to steel the muscles of heart, lungs and diaphragm. For most farmers' sons and daughters this result is produced by the hard work they do, making that work a blessing for which they ought to be devoutly grateful. Most city young people coming to the university still have time to perfect their physical condition, but not one in a hundred of them will take the proper means to this end save under some sort of university impulse either from a faculty rule or from a student custom.

Let not country youth imagine that they need no prompting of such a nature. The young man or woman from the farm requires to continue and to systematize bodily exercise; else baneful if not fatal weaknesses will occur in special parts, or a general breakdown, recovery proving impossible. I have known many cases of early death on the part of Titans who came to college from rural homes. Strong, they fancied that they must continue so. Sad illusion; they

had been accustomed to taxing exertion and the sudden and total remission of this proved fatal.

Regular drill in the gymnasium is of course to be highly prized. All students should utilize the gymnasium long enough to be taught where they are weak and to obtain the idea of system in schooling the body. But outdoor exercises should always be indulged in as often as possible, partly for the benefit of fresh air and partly to secure the invaluable zest of play. To perfect this zest of play a certain number of match games, duly regulated, are not only admissible, but desirable. I therefore approve of reasonable regulations all the usual forms of college sport—track athletics, tennis, baseball, basket ball, football and rowing—though rowing is not to be specially commended, partly because few can engage in it and partly because it is not a safe sport for matches.

At the risk of being thought queer, I am going to commend, particularly to such as do not play ball or tennis, certain outdoor exercises which perhaps cannot be made very popular, but can be made exceedingly useful. It is not golf or cycling that I have in mind, both these I dare say are praiseworthy, but each requires an outfit of some cost, and also, most seem to think, its own uniform. The exercises which I should like to "boom" are slow running, walking, especially with some object in view aside from mere exercise, and the accurate throwing, either of balls or of pebbles. I wish these exercises might become fashionable like golf. They call for no outfit, no special uniform, no elegantly graded and kept grounds, and they are suitable for well people of either sex, whether older or younger.

As already hinted, the benefit of sound physical education reaches beyond the body. Many sports prevalent in universities are of extraordinary intellectual value. Football excels in this respect. Good play proceeds much more from brain than from muscle. The same is true to a considerable extent of baseball and tennis. Nearly all earnest sport properly carried on also has immense moral value for all participants. It develops independence of action, the sense of individual responsibility and at the same time fits for joint activities, co-operation and obedience to authority. It cultivates the will, particularly the power of instantaneous decision. It trains the sense of fairness. It imparts moral poise, the ability to be fair when under powerful provocation to take advantage.

On the whole, then, while the non-intellectual features of higher education are to some extent out of order in universities, the shortcoming is less serious than many suppose, while the best institutions are rapidly remedying and removing it. Meantime a good part of what is blamed is not blameworthy, but deserving of praise.

There are some criticisms of another stripe which perhaps we cannot quite so successfully meet, those, namely, alleging faults in the mental work done at universities; teachers' halting and wry modes of presenting truth, errors into which pupils are suffered to fall in connection with their choice of studies; and various distempers mental and moral of which it is said pupils are permitted to become the victims through their intellectual pursuits.

There is a widespread belief that university teaching on certain subjects is here and there biased, perverted, dishonest, not reflecting the best results of scientific investigation, but shading, ignoring or suppressing these at the behest of powerful interests, social, monetary or political. That a university may get pus in its blood in this way professors need not be thrust out of their chairs or formally muzzled therein. Pressure so silent that the victim is unconscious of it will suffice, and it is in this quiet way that freedom in teaching is most often destroyed. This evil has not gone far and there is no danger of its becoming general in the United States; but the malady is in its nature so terrible that a single case of it or even the threat of such may well prompt precaution, like the rumor that a cholera ship has cleared for America from a foreign port.

How ineffably important, how vital liberty of teaching is I need not set forth here. Even the most arbitrary governments have sought to guard it in their schools. The argument has been ably gone over point by point hundreds of times. But there are two remarks which I beg to emphasize.

One is that the entire community needs to have university teaching unbiased and cannot but suffer from a gag policy. When shall we learn what all history so clearly teaches, that the real foe of progress is never the innovator—the man wishing to force into belief and practice his mistaken new idea. The quack, the harebrained, gabgilded fellow has little power. Like the wind, he bloweth where he listeth; ye hear the sound thereof, but cannot tell his point of departure or where he will bring up. Why should such a man be tormented before his time? The real foe of progress is the well-meaning, stolid, insightless, leaden-minded conservative, who deems each new idea a crime,—the creature against whom Shakespeare warns us in the passage:

"What custom wills, in all things should we do't.  
The dust of antique time would lie unswept  
And mountainous error be too highly heaped  
For truth to o'erpeer."

The professor's privilege of declaring in a proper manner what he believes to be the teachings of science—this personal prerogative is therefore not the main