COMMENCEMENT EXERCISES.

The eighteenth annual Commencement of the University of Nebraska occured on Wednesday, June 12, at 10 A.M., in the Opera House. A large and interested audience listened to a very enjoyable program.

An overture by the cadet band was the first number, and the boys played well. After an invocation, the University chorus, accompanied by the University orchestra, rendered "The Heavens are Telling—*Haydn*," in a very creditable manner.

Miss Helen Aughey delivered the first oration.

POETIC ELEMENT IN SCIENCE.

The poetry of Nature is voluminous. Every poet sings of flowers and skies, of winds and clouds, of birds and stars. Appreciation of Nature and an insight into her workings is the recognized merit of the distinguished poets. Wordsworth lived with Nature. Burns was her natural interpreter. Shelley talked with her face to face. These men would have been poets if they had never written; for they thought poetry. There is poetry in thought as well as in rythmic expression. Without poetic thought there can be no poetry. Poetry is only the musical, rythmic expression of poetic thought.

But keen as has been the appreciation of Nature shown by the poets, their observation has been superficial and limited. Instructive as their sympathy with her has been, they have not thoroughly known her. Theirs has been the admiration of an acquaintance rather than the affection of a lover. Nature, to be appreciated, must be known. It is not enough simply to see her. She is beautiful even to the most passing glance; but her divine beauty can only be known by those who understand her most secret operations, and are admitted into her inner sanctuary. For this reason the poets have expressed only the superficial poetry of Nature. What they have seen is, to what they have not seen, as a drop to the ocean.

Who can tell what unwritten poems Nature has provided for him who is able to read them? To the scientist, the student of Nature, this vast field of unwritten poetry is open.

Ruskin defines poetry as "the suggestion by the imagination of noble grounds for the noble emotions." But the imagination does not work independently. It must have some stimulus to action. The subject upon which it works must have in it some element of inspiration, of nobility. An algebraic formula cannot furnish food for the poetic imagination. The superficial thinker may regard science as being as dry and prosaic as mathematics. But no field of human investigation furnishes better or more abundant poetic material. Hugh Miller declared that the creation, as unfolded by the rocks, furnished the poetic elements for an epic, greater than the Iliad, the Æneid, or the Paradise Lost; and he regretted that Milton had not lived late enough to have had the aid of geology in producing an heroic poem for all men in all time. No one can go out on a starry night and look up without being filled with an idea of his own littleness, and overcome by a sense of the sublime; but what mind can conceive or what language adequately express what rises before the imagination of the student of science, as he gazes into the infinite star-depths? "Yonder Ursa Major paces slowly around the pole, and imagination faints in traveling across one of his eyelashes." The Milky Way, to the common observer, is a broad band of light extending across the heavens. It is the wonder of childhood; to maturer years it fades to a mere strip of ordinary white light. But Herschel turned his telescope upon it, and brought before the field of vision what he estimated to be 116,000 fixed stars, each of them the central sun of a solar system like our own. What poet can give expression to the noble emotions suggested by such a sight as this? The revelations of the microscope, of the spectroscope, are not less inspiring. To the meteorologist, the dark-browed thunder-cloud is an epic, and the light, fleecy, cirrus-clouds are lyrics. So every field of scientific investigation furnishes abundant material for the poet who has genius enough to express it. God alone is the perfect poet, and his works are an infinite epic. The man who comes nearest to the heart of nature, comes nearest to the thought of God, nearest to reading the unread manuscripts of God.

But while nature furnishes abundant poetic material, this can be apprehended fully, and utilized only by him who has a genuine poetic instinct. The scientist must have eyes that see and ears that hear. Of him it must never be said as Wordsworth said of Peter Bell:

> "A primrose by the river's brim,
> A yellow primrose was to him,
> And it was nothing more."

It is not enough that he name and classify the phenomena of Nature. He must not be satisfied with simply learning what other men have learned. Such a man would be only a clerk in science. He must be an investigator, an original discoverer. He must discover new facts, and from these draw new conclusions. His search begins where other men have stopped. Science is in its infancy. The first letter of its alphabet has scarcely been learned. Before every student lies a vast unknown. It is his work to make a part of this *known*; to find adequate causes for unexplained phenomena; to deduce the laws that govern mysterious forces, and make a better application of them to the common wants of humanity; to help all men in the common struggle for existence. He must ask nature, not only "What?" but "Why?" and compel her to give an answer. To meet this demand, he needs the imagination of the poet. Imagination is the necessary forerunner of discovery, as it is of invention. Only the poet has a perception for the poetic.

The scientist if he is to perceive the surpassing art of Nature, if he is to read her unread poems, to solve her enigmas, to display her marvels, must have the brain, the heart, the imagination of the poet. God has endowed him with all the faculties needed for this work. But the cultivation of them lies with the individual. If he sordidly ignores them, if he neglects to make the most of them, he will become a mere collocation of facts. Nature will not admit him to her temples. But equipped with well trained, fully developed faculties, all possibilities are in his hands. Before him, Nature will be more and more as an open book. Before her unfolding mysteries, his heart will expand with admiration, reverence, and love. To such a devotee, Nature will prove to be full of poetry.

Miss Aughey presented a graceful and attractive appearance. Her delivery was earnest—even enthusiastic—and her articulation excellent. She wore a dress of cream crepe cloth, made with postilion waist and Grecian draped skirt. Dark red roses were her flowers.

The second orator was E. R. Tingley, who spoke of

TWO RADICALS.

In Russia there lives a man that is attracting world-wide attention. His notoriety depends, not on some great deed he has accomplished, or on some exhibition of skill or of wisdom, but on the principles that he teaches and puts into practice in his every day life. For thirty-five years he was a nihilist and a pessimist. Then a great change came over his life. There was a rift in the clouds that overshadowed his mind, and he caught a gleam of the sunlight of truth. This light came from Christianity, and though, he seemed to grasp but a single truth of the great system, he made that the guiding principle of his life. Happiness became to him the aim and end of life; and self-abnegation, the only means to gain this end. He said: "Die to yourself, live for others. Love other men better than yourself, and other men will love you better than they love themselves. Happiness will then be complete. Under this law, wars will cease, courts of justice be abolished, and prisons be needless. Evil will disappear in universal altruism." These are the truths that he impresses upon men to increase their happiness, and these are the maxims by which he governs his own life. The change in his life from pessimism to Christian optimism brought other changes. The popular novelist became the religious and political reformer. Living in humble circumstances among the peasants, he to-day tills the soil, and by working for others, puts into practice the principles that he so earnestly teaches. He is loved and honored by those that he reaches through personal contact, or through his writings. Such is the life of Count Tolstoi, the Russian reformer.

America has developed a counterpart of the Russian radical, an American Tolstoi. He differs from Tolstoi only as an American differs from an Russian. He makes social and political improvement more prominent than religious reform. But he differs only in degree, not in kind. His methods are the same. To him, selfishness is the dominant characteristic of human nature, and the root of all social and political evils. "Behind the problems of social life lies the problem of individual life." To correct social evils, then, the individual must be induced to live, not for his own good, but for the good of the community. Self must be sacrificed for the common good. Self-renunciation is the indispensable pre-requisite to common happiness. Like Tolstoi "he believes that land is the basis of the social relation, and that it should be held in common. Tilling the soil is the God given work for man; and labor with the hands, the only legitimate basis for the division of wealth. The name of the great American radical is Henry George.

How under circumstances so different, ideas so similar, and theories of reform so essentially the same can be developed, is a