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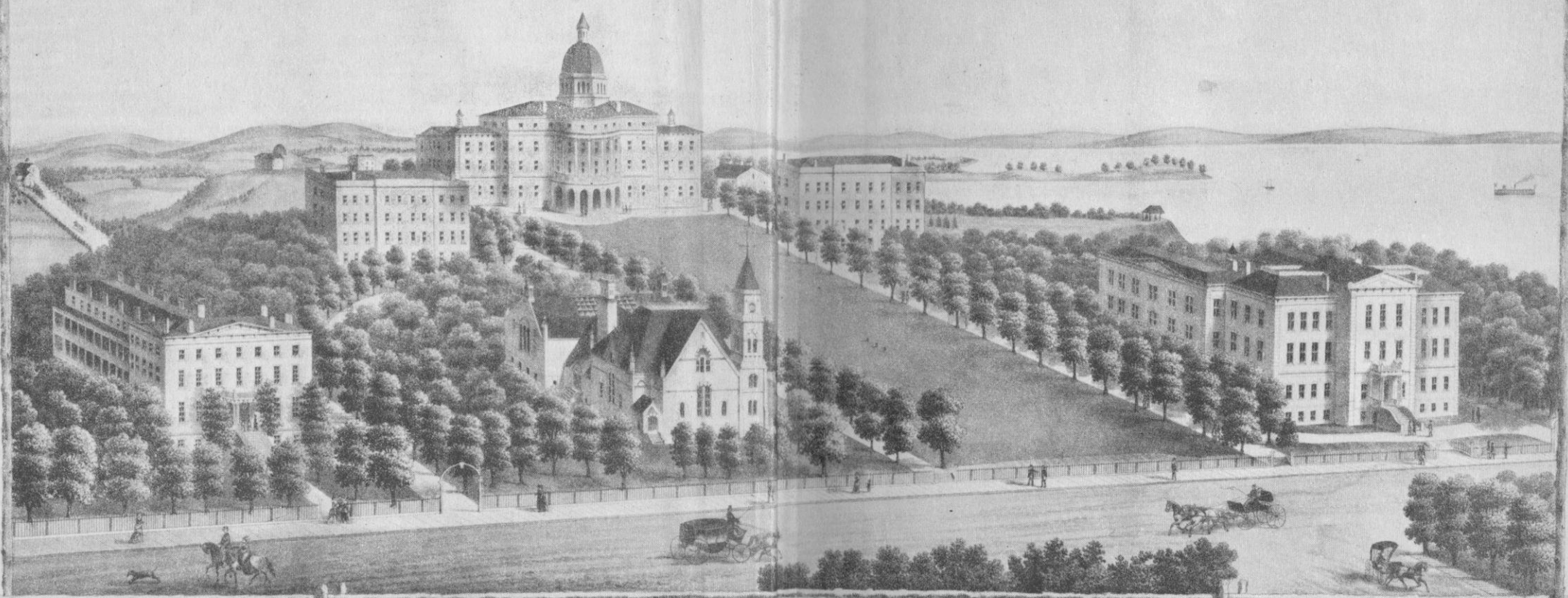
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-Wm. Day
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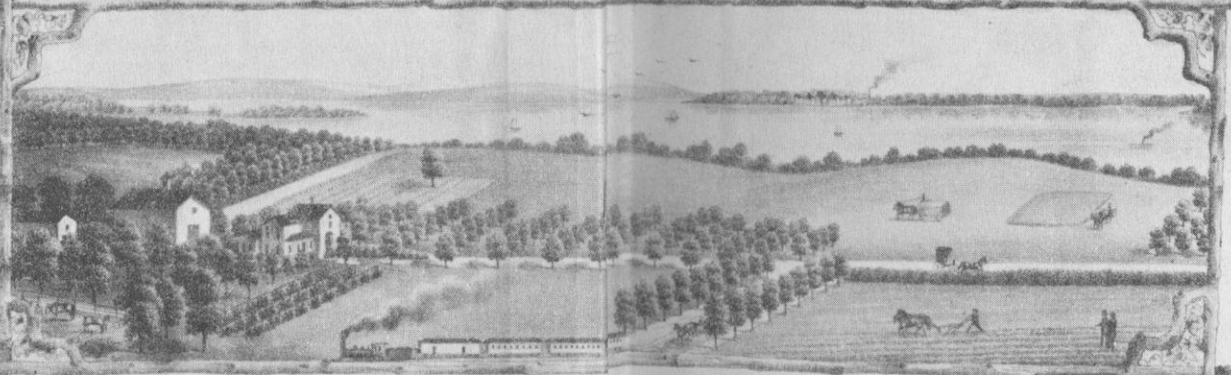
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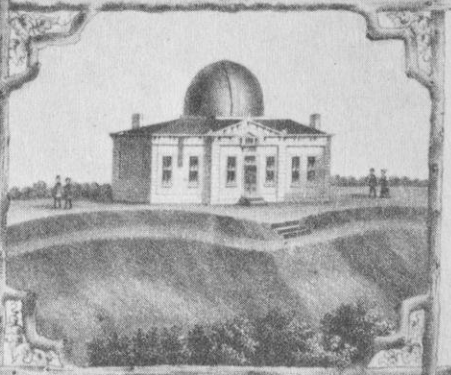
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THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN

A History, 1848-1925

Volume I



These Volumes Are Published in Commemoration of the
HUNDRETH ANNIVERSARY
of the Founding of the University of Wisconsin

at Bill to Establish The University of
Wisconsin

The People of The State of Wisconsin
Represented in Senate and Assembly
do Enact as follows

Sec. 2. The government of the university shall be vested in a board of regents to consist of a President to be elected in the manner herein after provided, and twelve members who shall be nominated by the Governor and appointed by and with the advice and consent of the Senate and who shall enter upon the duties of their office as soon as ~~appointed~~ Elected

Sec. 3. The members of the board at their first meeting shall be divided, in such manner as they shall determine, into classes numbered one, two and three. Class numbered one shall hold their office for two years, class numbered two for four years, and class numbered three for six ~~years~~ from the first Monday of January 1849. Thereafter those ^{Elected} ~~appointed~~ biennially to supply the vacancies made by the provisions of this section, and in the manner provided for in the second section, shall hold their office for six years respectively.

Sec. 4. The chancellor of the University elected as hereinafter mentioned shall be ex officio president of the board of regents, and until elected or when absent the board may appoint a president pro tem.

The University Charter

Page 1 of the original draft, first introduced June 14, 1848
(Section 1 was omitted in the first draft.)

The University of
WISCONSIN

1848 *A HISTORY* 1925

Merle Curti &
Vernon Carstensen

Two Volumes · I

Madison · 1949

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN PRESS

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THE REGENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

This Book is Dedicated To

that staunch Board of Regents of 1894
and to their predecessors and successors
who have held:

*We cannot . . . believe that knowl-
edge has reached its final goal, or
that the present condition of society
is perfect. . . . In all lines of academic
investigation it is of the utmost im-
portance that the investigator should
be absolutely free to follow the indi-
cations of truth wherever they may
lead . . . we believe the great state
University of Wisconsin should ever
encourage that continual and fear-
less sifting and winnowing by which
alone the truth can be found. S*

Preface

THE American state university is many things, and its history has many facets. It shares with privately supported and controlled institutions of higher learning many common characteristics and problems; and both owe a great debt to the European university. But the American state university is a public institution and—like a state prison, a state hospital, or a highway system—its success or failure in winning appropriate authority or procuring adequate funds from the legislature has seldom rested exclusively on its merits. A host of politically pertinent but often educationally irrelevant elements have usually helped to determine the success or failure of the university with the legislature and the state. Moreover, as a new type of educational enterprise, subject to direct and indirect pressures from without and within its walls, its courses of study have come to reflect not so much a clearly defined educational philosophy as a vast repository of often conflicting and contradictory functions imposed upon it by individuals and groups who at one time or another have stood in a position of power.

It is the story of the development of one of these state universities that we have tried to tell. We have sought to understand and describe what happened at the University of Wisconsin and, in greater degree than has been customary in writing the history of academic institutions, to relate the story to the social and intellectual movements of the Middle West and the

country as a whole. Although the history of American state universities has been only inadequately explored, it is obvious that the development of the University of Wisconsin has been in many ways typical of the development of Middle Western state universities: it sprang from the same roots and was nourished by the same high hopes and aspirations. It encountered many of the same obstacles. We have organized this account along topical lines within a chronological framework. Although this method has led to a certain amount of repetition it seemed to us the most satisfactory means of examining and discussing the processes and factors in the creation and development of the University of Wisconsin.

In a very real sense the preparation of these volumes has been a venture in cooperative research. During the four years that this history has been in preparation we have been assisted each year by a group of from two to six graduate research assistants. These students, Irvin G. Wyllie, Virginia Goodwin, Douglas R. Kennedy, Maurice M. Vance, Stanley Rolnick, Anna Lou Riesch, Don Lillibridge, Estelle Fisher, David A. Shannon, Gertrude Wright, and Elizabeth Twaddell Pope, have helped to examine the vast and scattered records on which this account is based. They have studied with us the history of the University and many of their judgments have been carried into the narrative. Dr. Wilbur H. Glover, formerly research associate in the department of agricultural economics, has also made a substantial contribution to this work. He gave us the use of the manuscript of his history of the College of Agriculture and has assisted us in many other ways.

We have received assistance and support from so many quarters that it is impossible to give appropriate acknowledgment for all such aid and encouragement. The staffs of the University Library and the State Historical Society, the secretaries and others in the offices of the regents, the president, the deans, and the several departments of the University have been uniformly generous in making available to us the documents and records in their custody. Many individuals not directly connected with the University have made valuable documents available to us. Although the use of such material has been indicated in the footnotes, acknowledgment should be made here to Clyde B.

Aitchison of the Interstate Commerce Commission for the use of his brother's letters to his father; to Mrs. C. I. Brigham of Blue Mounds for the use of the Brigham papers; to Solon J. Buck, former archivist of the United States, for the use of the letters that he, as a student, wrote to his parents; to Thomas Le Duc of Oberlin College for material from the University of Michigan archives; to Mrs. W. L. Haight of Racine for use of her father's diary; to Granville Hicks of Grafton, New York, for supplying copies of President Van Hise's letters to Lincoln Steffens; to Theodore Herfurth of Madison for the use of his study of the incidents surrounding the gift of the famous plaque to the University in 1910; to Agnes Peabody of Madison for the use of her husband's journal; to R. K. Richardson for material from the Beloit College archives; to Richard E. Thurstfield of the University of Rochester for microfilm copies of the Henry Barnard papers in New York University; and to Richard T. Hantke of Lake Forest College for the material which he has collected on Elisha W. Keyes.

In the study of the several departments and colleges, we are indebted for data and assistance, including many specially prepared sketches, to Erwin H. Ackerknecht of the department of the history of medicine, Walter R. Agard of classics, George S. Bryan of botany, Helen I. Clarke of social work, Leland A. Coon of the School of Music, Richard C. Emmons of geology, Einar I. Haugen of Scandinavian languages, A. R. Hohlfield of German, Merritt Y. Hughes of English, Leonard R. Ingersoll of physics, Mark H. Ingraham and Rudolph E. Langer of mathematics, Thomas C. McCormick of sociology, Lowell E. Noland of zoology, Albert G. Ramsperger of philosophy, Henry A. Schuette of chemistry, Andrew T. Weaver of speech, Casimir D. Zdanowicz of French, Otto L. Kowalke of chemical engineering, James W. Watson of electrical engineering, Patrick H. Hyland, R. A. Rose, and W. J. Feiereisen of mechanical engineering, Edwin R. Shorey of mining engineering, and the late M. E. McCaffrey, secretary of the Board of Regents.

We are also indebted to many who have given their time freely in discussion and interviews or who have written to us in answer to inquiries: the late Dean Charles S. Slichter, the late Professors Edward R. Mauer and Joseph S. Evans, Presi-

dent Emeritus Edward A. Birge, Dean Emeritus Frederick E. Turneure, Professors Emeriti Max C. Otto, Charles Leith, Edward A. Ross, A. R. Hohlfeld, and Evander B. McGilvary, and to Mrs. Burr Jones, Henry C. Taylor, H. J. Thorkelson, Laurence Whittet, Arthur W. Locke, and Leland Hall. We wish to express an especial indebtedness to Dean Emeritus George C. Sellery, whose wit, remarkable knowledge of the University, and generosity have added much to our own pleasure in this work.

Several colleagues and scholars have read and criticized sections of the manuscript, and to all these we extend thanks: to Professors Gaines Post, Paul Farmer, Merrill Jensen, Thomas Le Duc, Arthur E. Bestor, Jr., Harry H. Clark, and John W. Higham, for reading and criticizing the section on the origins of the idea of the state university; to H. J. Thorkelson, formerly professor of engineering and business manager of the University, for reading a large part of the entire manuscript and for giving us the benefit of his long and wide experience; to George C. Sellery for reading the sections on Van Hise, Birge, and the College of Letters and Science; to Dean M. O. Withey and his colleagues for reading the sections on engineering education; to Vice-President Ira L. Baldwin and his colleagues for reading the sections on agricultural education; to Dean Oliver S. Rundell and his colleagues for reading the sections on the Law School; to Dean Emeritus C. J. Anderson for reading the sections on the relations of the University to the high schools; and to L. H. Adolfson, director of Extension, Chester Allen, and Louis W. Bridgman for reading the sections on the University Extension; and to Livia Appel for her advice on many sections of the manuscript. All have been generous with their time and helpful in their suggestions and criticisms. But we must take full responsibility for any errors of fact or judgment which may appear in the following pages.

This undertaking would obviously have been impossible without the encouragement and financial support of the University. Former President Clarence A. Dykstra took a special interest in the project in the preliminary planning, and President E. B. Fred has throughout given his enthusiastic encouragement and support. Dean Mark Ingraham and the depart-

ment of history released some of our time from teaching in order that we might work more effectively on this study. We are deeply indebted to the Research Committee, and especially to its chairmen, Professor E. B. Hart and Dean Conrad A. Elvehjem, for generous financial support; and to the University Centennial Committee and its chairman, Professor W. H. Kieckhofer, for the publication of the manuscript. We wish especially to express our deepest appreciation to Professor Paul Knaplund. He has shared with us his wide and deep knowledge of the University and given us constant encouragement and invaluable support as a member of the Research Committee and as chairman of the University Centennial History Committee, which has sponsored this study.

Finally, we are grateful to the University of Wisconsin Press for painstaking and intelligent cooperation in the editing and publishing of the manuscript.

M.C.

V.C.

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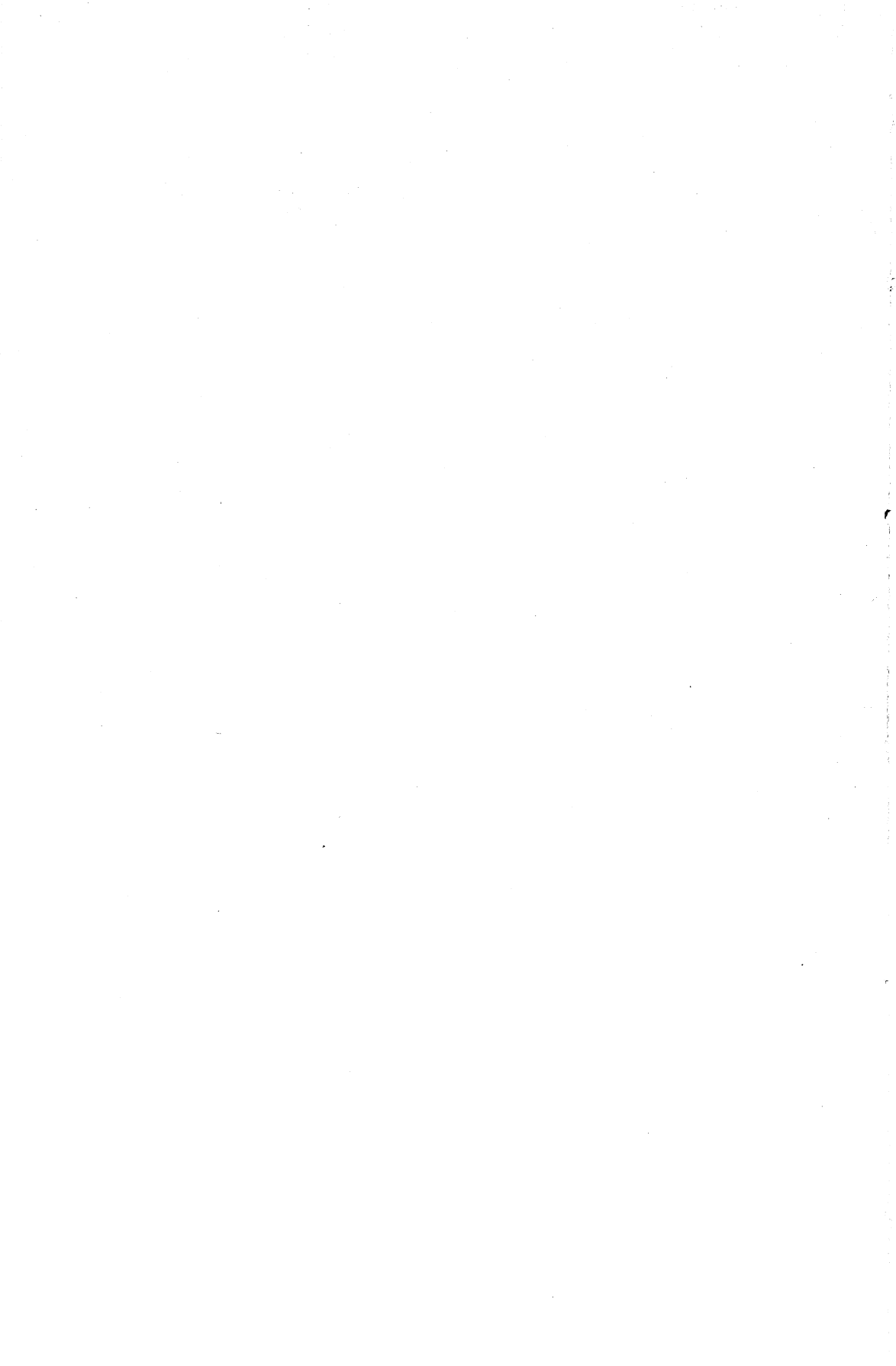
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ORIGINS OF THE STATE UNIVERSITY IDEA

Part One



1.

Origins of the State University Idea

WHEN Wisconsin planted the seeds of learning on the shores of Lake Mendota it was the eleventh state to found an institution of higher learning under state patronage. Despite the fact that the oldest of the eleven, the University of Georgia, was approaching the sixty-third anniversary of its charter, that the University of North Carolina was rounding off half a century of actual functioning, and that the University of Virginia had already been well conceived and built, no one of these institutions embodied *all* the concepts associated in the mid-nineteenth century with the term "state university."

In briefest compass, the term implied that providing for higher education was a vital function of society; that the most suitable agency in the United States to perform this function was the state, independent of religious and of private bodies; that the state university should crown the whole system of public education with which it was to be closely integrated; that the recipients of higher education in a democratic civilization should be not an intellectual elite, but all citizens capable of benefiting from such training; and that the curriculum of a state-supported institution of higher education should embody not only the scholarly purposes of traditional institutions but the professional and practical needs of the citizenry, individually and collectively. The state university idea, embracing these concepts, did not yet include one important concept on the

immediate horizon, the conviction that a publicly supported university should not only transmit but increase man's fund of knowledge.

From the point of view of background and experience, the men who laid the foundations of the University of Wisconsin were ill-equipped for their task. Indeed, many who worked for the University in the constitutional conventions, in the legislature, and in the first Board of Regents had no college education. Those who did have the advantage of a higher education had been trained in private colleges. No one of them had engaged in the making of any of the ten existing state universities. Like most of Wisconsin's American-born population, they too had migrated largely from New England and New York, a section virtually without experience with state universities. One, indeed, had tarried in Virginia while en route to Wisconsin, and there he had interested himself in institutions of higher education, including Jefferson's University of Virginia. But it is fair to say that neither the founders themselves nor, far less, the rank and file of the still small and scattered population envisioned a fully developed blueprint for a secular, state-supported, and state-managed institution in which any qualified youth might equip himself for a richer life.

Yet the founders of Wisconsin did have at least the glimmerings of the state university idea which even then was still being shaped in the older states engaged in the experiment. No single document and no one statement by any of the founders of the University of Wisconsin embraced all the concepts associated at the time with the term "state university." But it is possible to identify in the constitutional provisions for the University, in the earliest legislation providing for its establishment, and in the first reports of the regents, almost all the ideas then associated with the name.

No doubt the founders were quite unaware of the sources of these ideas. None were really new. Some had been exemplified in the American colonial colleges as well as in the state-patronized foundations born in the Revolutionary period and in later decades. The founders knew that they might learn from the experience of these institutions. The first regents reported that before they adopted any plan for the permanent organiza-

tion of the University, they "were anxious to avail themselves of all the light, which they might be able to derive from the wisdom and experience of others, and they are now engaged in a correspondence with many eminent men, connected with other literary institutions, to secure that object."¹ Many of the ideas which guided them had their roots not merely in the older institutions from which they sought to learn, but in the remote history of Western civilization. Thus when the founders established the University they were reflecting ideas and values inherited from the Old World and modified on American soil. Without these there could have been no university. These ideas must therefore be explored if we are to understand the full meaning of the state university idea which guided the founders at Madison a hundred years ago.

The founders assumed in the first place that provision for higher education is a vital function of society necessary for its preservation and development. In their earliest report the regents expressed their conviction that "there is no public interest of greater magnitude than that of education." In giving the University the highest place in the educational system of the state, continued the regents, the Constitution and the laws fully recognized the intimate connection between higher education and "the social prosperity and happiness and the perpetuity of our free institutions."²

In these phrases the founders testified to the vitality of an idea deeply rooted in Western civilization. In the academies at Athens and in the rhetorical and literary schools of Rome, society had made some sort of provision for higher education. In the Middle Ages permanent institutions for the transmission of higher learning resulted from the steadily rising level of education among churchmen; from the reception (in the

¹ [First] *Annual Report of the Regents of the University of the State of Wisconsin Made to the Legislative Assembly January 30, 1849* (Madison, 1849), 4. This series of reports, the title of which varies slightly from year to year, appeared annually until 1882, and biennially from 1883 on. They will be cited hereafter as *Regents' Annual Report* and *Regents' Biennial Report*. The reports for the years 1848 through 1856 cover the calendar year, the first three being dated in January of the subsequent year and the rest in December of the year covered. Hence two reports were dated 1851. The remaining reports cover the school year beginning October 1.

² *Ibid.*, 3-4.

twelfth century) of Arabic learning, which enhanced the range of knowledge and intellectual curiosity; from the rise of commerce and cities; and from the corporate form of medieval social organization. The medieval university exemplified the Aristotelian-Thomistic conception of the categories of knowledge—a conception bequeathed to the first American colleges in the colonial era and destined to exert an influence on Wisconsin in its early period. The university of the Middle Ages valued the search for knowledge apart from utilitarian interests as a high vocation, an idea which American institutions embodied and with which some of the founders of the University of Wisconsin were familiar. The institutional form of the medieval university, together with its degrees and customs, likewise influenced American experiments in higher education. As the Middle Ages shaded into the Renaissance, zeal for the humanities and the natural sciences developed chiefly outside university cloisters, but within at least some of these institutions there was a response to the new movements of thought. The first American colonial colleges likewise reflected that response. It was part of the heritage of their successors.³

Another concept basic to the state university idea was that the agency in society which should assume the responsibility of providing for higher education is the commonwealth. The founders of Wisconsin were explicit in their recognition of this idea. The Constitution of 1848 provided for “the establishment of a state university, at or near the seat of state government, and for connecting with the same, from time to time, such colleges in different parts of the state, as the interests of education” might require.⁴ This concept, too, was deeply rooted in Western civilization. Plato taught that it was the duty of the

³ The best account is Stephen d'Irsay's *Histoire des universités françaises et étrangères des origines à nos jours* (2 vols., Paris, 1933, 1935). President Thomas C. Chamberlin of the University of Wisconsin, in a Charter Day address given at the University of Nebraska in 1890, pointed out the continuity between the medieval and early modern universities of Europe and the state institutions of higher learning in the United States. *The Coming of Age of State Universities* (n. p., 1890).

⁴ *Journal of the Convention to Form a Constitution for the State of Wisconsin, 1847-48* (Madison, 1848), 616.

state to educate men for public service, and the Roman sages insisted that it was the duty of the state to inculcate civic virtue. In the later Roman Empire higher education tended to be both patronized by the state and functional to the interests of the ruler. With the growth of secular power in the later Middle Ages, responsibility for higher education was shouldered by many rulers who followed the example set by Frederick II in 1220 when he established the University of Naples. When religious rivalries became bitter during the Reformation, universities sided with either the Catholics or the Protestants, and since rulers generally determined the official religion to which all in patriotic duty were bound to conform, the universities came more closely under secular influence. Although the Reformation sowed the seeds for the later separation of church and state, it provided little immediate nourishment for its growth. For the time the universities thus reflected the division of authority between the still closely related dual elements of society—church and state.

In providing for higher education colonial society paid tribute to a value deeply rooted in the civilization from which it sprang. Almost from the beginning the colonies began selecting university precedents and molding them to American needs. Nine of the thirteen colonies established colleges—one, some-one said, for each of the Muses. These colleges were, naturally enough, modeled on those at Cambridge and Oxford, with some slight borrowings from Geneva and Edinburgh.⁵ All these colonial foundations were strongly religious in origin and character. Yet, in view of the union of church and state in all but two of the colonies with colleges, there was an admixture of civil agency and purpose in these infant institutions. In the provinces where church and state were joined, the colleges were founded not by the church alone, but by the church and state acting together. The over-all purpose was to meet the needs of the public interest in which, of course, religion was a large factor. The public interest was deemed to include not only the indispensable training of young men for the ministry

⁵ See Samuel E. Morison, *Harvard College in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1936), *passim*.

and the instruction of youth, but also the preservation of knowledge, which alone differentiated civilized man from the savage, and the ensuing maintenance of the moral values of society. Thus the colleges were conceived and managed with the intent of so enlarging slender resources that the public interest might be served the better. In other words, since religion was a fundamental public interest, the colonial colleges were public institutions because of, rather than in spite of, their religious purposes and nature.

Gradually, secular, as opposed to religious, values came to play an ever greater part in colonial life and inevitably affected the character of the colleges. Cotton Mather complained bitterly, for instance, of the secularism he believed the Harvard of the late seventeenth century had come to show. As the new science was more generally received and appreciated, and as commercial and other material interests developed, the colleges broadened their offerings to include a larger measure of scientific instruction. Harvard's astronomer not only taught his subject in such a way as to glorify the Creator; he also calculated data useful in the making of almanacs which guided mariners and farmers alike. The College of Philadelphia did not completely realize Franklin's secular ideal, so well expressed in his insistence that "the great aim and end of all learning" is to "serve mankind, one's country, friends, and family."⁶ But despite the fact that the College gave a key place to the traditional classical subjects and came to be dominated by Anglicans, it was never a purely sectarian institution and it did favor the modern languages and the sciences deemed useful to a commercial society. King's College, an Anglican foundation presided over by the Reverend Samuel Johnson, a disciple of Bishop Berkeley's philosophical idealism, taught surveying, mechanics, and agriculture. At the College of New Jersey, President John Witherspoon emphasized the training of young men for public service. As the colleges responded little by little to the rising secular needs of colonial life, their quasi-public character grew.

⁶ Benjamin Franklin, *Proposals Relating to the Education of Youth in Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia, 1749), in *The Writings of Benjamin Franklin*, edited by A. H. Smyth, 2:386 (New York, 1905).

Let us glance for a moment at still other ways in which the public nature of the colonial colleges was reflected. The English precedent of incorporation was followed. Many colleges were chartered by the colonial assemblies themselves. The British example of endowing educational institutions with land was likewise imitated; almost all the colleges received grants of land. Most of the institutions also received appropriations or gifts from colonial assemblies. The officers of Harvard, in the words of President Quincy, were dependent "for daily bread upon the bounty of the General Court"⁷ during its first seventy years. Even as late as 1849 Harvard joined the other Massachusetts colleges in trying to obtain support from the legislature. President Dwight of Yale likewise admitted that, from the time of its foundation until the early nineteenth century, the college was chiefly indebted to the legislature for its prosperity and advancement. Nor was the public support given Harvard and Yale exceptional. King's College received excise money, Pennsylvania accepted grants from the City of Philadelphia and the proprietors of the colony, Dartmouth welcomed land grants and an appropriation for a building. William and Mary took many gifts from the House of Burgesses. Just as royalty in the Middle Ages bestowed bounties on institutions of learning, so the crown and the colonial governments nurtured the provincial colleges.⁸ This deeply embedded habit influenced the later idea that the states, including Wisconsin, should support higher learning.

Public support, however, involved a measure of public control. In England some authority outside the college, often a bishop or other dignitary of church or state, was vested by the founder or his successor with the right and duty of making official visitations. This was to insure the proper use of the endowments and to protect the public interest in the foundation.

⁷ Josiah Quincy, *History of Harvard University* (2 vols., Boston, 1860), 1:40.

⁸ One of the first American scholars to emphasize the idea that such support made the colonial colleges quasi-public institutions was Charles Kendall Adams, seventh president of the University of Wisconsin. See his review of Andrew Ten Brook's *American State Universities* (Cincinnati, 1875) in the *North American Review*, 121:365-408 (October, 1875). President George F. Magoun of Iowa College undertook to refute Adams in an essay in *The New Englander*, 36:445-486 (July, 1877).

In the colonies much experimentation, confusion, and complication resulted from attempts to adapt this principle to colonial institutions. By and large, the governing boards of the colleges looked with disfavor on the right of visitation; with the rise of dissenting sects and of partisan politics, it was feared that warring factions might disturb the cherished freedom of the institutions. As ~~became~~ a society which gave increasing prominence to commercial interests, these close corporations concentrated on harboring and expanding the resources at hand; the fellows and other teachers came to exercise less and less control.

Time, in other words, was revealing certain inadequacies in the traditional way in which colonial society provided for higher education. Since they were largely under sectarian control, the colonial colleges could not be true providers of higher education for the society as a whole. Each college, in being dominated by a single religious group, failed to represent the entire public. This feeling became more marked as the number of competing denominations increased and as demands for the separation of church and state began to be heard. The problem was made more serious by the fact that as religious homogeneity waned and as worldly interests waxed, the influence of the secular authority on the colleges declined. Of less immediate importance, but not entirely negligible, was the growing feeling that the kind of support given the English universities and the colonial colleges resulted in the education of an intellectual aristocracy. This feeling was in accord with the traditional social philosophy of the time, but as democratic concepts gained strength, it was to become more and more objectionable in many quarters.

One possible solution of these problems was to broaden the public interest in the existing institutions. But most efforts to enlarge the public representation in the governing boards of Harvard and Yale were unsuccessful. Although the general interest was represented, at least in theory, by the continued inclusion of provincial officers in the corporations, situations arose in which this proximate solution of the issue was altogether unsatisfactory. The alternative was to establish new foundations,

frankly secular in nature and public in control. This responsibility became a political issue when the growing strength of religious bodies other than the one dominating a college could no longer be ignored. These dissenting groups protested the union of church and state and challenged the established church's control of institutions vested with a public interest and enjoying public support.

It was such a situation, based on expediency and on theory alike, which lay back of one of the most heated controversies in provincial New York in the mid-eighteenth century. In 1754 the governor issued, in the name of the king, a charter for a college for which funds had already been gathered from excise revenues and from lotteries authorized by the legislative assembly. The charter stipulated that the governing board was to consist of civil and ecclesiastical members, the latter being Anglicans.⁹ Moreover, the ritual of the established Anglican church was to be followed in college worship. William Livingston was the leader of the group which opposed the charter. Livingston was of Presbyterian background but was without denominational ties; he had, in fact, come under the spell of deism. Supported by William Smith, William Smith, Jr., and others, Livingston, though failing to keep the legislature from ratifying the charter, succeeded both in diverting to other public institutions half the funds that had been raised for the college and in cogently formulating, perhaps for the first time in colonial America, something like the modern state university idea.

In a series of essays published in the New York press Livingston developed an essentially new educational philosophy. "I would first establish it as a truth," he wrote, "that societies have an indisputable right to direct the education of their youthful members." Opposed to the union of church and state and sympathetic with the civic ideas of the Enlightenment, Livingston thought of education as a means of qualifying men for the several employments of life, for the improvement of minds and spirits, and for the development of public morals and love

⁹ See Theodore Sedgwick, *A Memoir of the Life of William Livingston, Member of Congress... Delegate to the Federal Convention... and Governor of the State of New Jersey* (New York, 1833), 79.

of country, including a "fervent zeal for liberty, and a diffusive benevolence for mankind." Since education inevitably affected the commonwealth, no sort of higher education could be regarded merely as a private concern. "The consequences of a liberal education," he wrote, "will soon be visible throughout the whole Province. They will appear on the bench, at the bar, in the pulpit, and in the senate, and unavoidably affect our civil and religious principles." There could be no justification, then, in setting up an institution in which the creed of a single religious body was inculcated. A college founded in the interest of any one party must inevitably menace the public interest. Livingston outlined his scheme for a college controlled by representatives of the people and operating in their interest. The Assembly was to name trustees. It was to act without regard for sectarian affiliations so long as the candidates were Protestant in faith. Livingston also suggested a nonsectarian form of collegiate worship and opposed the teaching of divinity.¹⁰ Thus his plan embodied some of the main elements of the modern state university idea.¹¹

The ideas of the Enlightenment, of which Livingston was one of many colonial exponents, had profound effect upon the new institutions of higher learning which were being established to fill the social needs that the traditional colleges had ignored. Not only Jefferson in Virginia but the friends of state universities in the legislatures or constitutional conventions of North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Pennsylvania, and other states were active disciples of the prophets of the Age of Reason. They had read Locke; and Locke's sensationalistic psychology, with its denial of innate ideas, had undermined the very basis of ecclesiastical authority and sanctions in education. Newtonian

¹⁰ *Independent Reflector*, March 22, April 12, April 19, 1753.

¹¹ Livingston's private papers in the Massachusetts Historical Society throw no light on the grounds for his objections to the Anglican scheme and the sources of his own proposal. It is likely that, confronted by a concrete problem, he carried to a logical conclusion his own opposition to the union of church and state. That is to say, he may merely have resolved the conflict inherent in the demand of the Anglicans for public support of a college with quasi-public functions, the control of which was nevertheless to be reserved for their own circle. A nonsectarian, publicly controlled institution was the alternative. It is possible that Livingston may have been influenced by Franklin's *Proposals* (1749) and by the growing tide of secular thinking on educational matters in France.

physics had revealed a rational order which reasoning man might comprehend if he were free from supernatural prejudices. The mind of man, being reasonable, was capable of using knowledge for human happiness—a value cherished by the sons of the Enlightenment. They held that education, if unfettered by priestcraft and religious dogmas, might develop the possibilities which knowledge, especially science, offered for human progress. Such was the outlook implicit in Locke and in the writings of Diderot, d'Alembert, Condorcet, and other French intellectuals who in the 1760's and 1770's were deploring the theocratic basis of education in the Old Regime. Thus the anticlerical character of the writings of the French *philosophes*, who enjoyed considerable vogue on the eve of the Revolution, fitted into the rising secularism of the times.¹²

The idea of secular education, while not yet fully formulated in the classic statements of La Chalotais, Rollin, Turgot, Condorcet, and Helvetius, was already well under discussion when Americans began to found new state institutions of higher learning in an effort to provide more fully for public interest and control. Jefferson, when he wrote in his 1779 report that education “engrafts a new man on the native stock, and improves what in his nature was vicious and perverse, into qualities of virtue and social worth,” as when he urged a state system of public education including a university, was expressing doctrines highly congenial to, if not born of, the Enlightenment.¹³

The Revolution had won independence without creating a well-knit nation. The idea that the inchoate national sentiment might be consolidated and stimulated by a national university may have been suggested to Washington by Samuel Blodget as early as 1775. In any case, both Washington and Blodget became ardent champions of the idea. So too did Madison, John Adams, John Quincy Adams, and—to a lesser degree—Jefferson and Monroe. All of them subscribed to the idea, presently to

¹² See Charles H. Van Duzer, *Contributions of the Ideologues to French Revolutionary Thought* (Baltimore, 1935), 84–85.

¹³ “A Bill for the More General Diffusion of Knowledge,” in *The Works of Thomas Jefferson*, edited by Paul Leicester Ford (12 vols., New York, 1904, 1905), 2:414–438.

become exemplified in France and Prussia of the Napoleonic era, that the nation is the proper educational agency for inculcating loyalty and patriotism.¹⁴ The champions of a national university, who included such well-known figures as Benjamin Rush, Noah Webster, and Joel Barlow, also argued that such an institution might train young men for more intelligent and selfless public service.¹⁵

The idea of a national university did not die, but when it was clear that opinion was generally cool to the proposal, some elements of the scheme were transferred to the states. Thus the sentiment that a state-supported institution might prove socially useful was echoed when John Hubbard Tweedy of Milwaukee declared in the Wisconsin constitutional convention that if the masses are educated as they should be, "we can look forward to the time when all our citizens will be capable of occupying the highest and most responsible stations."¹⁶ The idea of a secular publicly supported university, rejected as a national project, was carried on by the states in response to the ideals of the Enlightenment and the Revolution in general and to the separation of church and state in most of the provinces in which the union had existed.

Before exploring this development it may be well to consider the course of events in those states where separation of church and state did not at once take place. In New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and Connecticut, the established Congregational churches had upheld the struggle for independence. But even in these states there were forces of religious dissent and of secularism which demanded changes in the college charters to achieve a larger measure of public control. Concessions were made at Harvard and Yale without jeopardizing the essentially private and sectarian make-up of their governing boards. One

¹⁴ The story, with pertinent documents, has been told by Edgar B. Wesley in his *Proposed: The University of the United States* (Minneapolis, 1936).

¹⁵ Associated with the program was another idea developed at length in the essays presented in 1797 to the American Philosophical Society in connection with a contest. The prize-winning essayist argued that a national university might enhance the Republic's prestige and well-being by promoting original and socially useful investigations in the arts and sciences. It is possible that the decision of the federal government to inaugurate a coast survey and to support research in connection with exploring expeditions was the fruit of this idea.

¹⁶ Milo M. Quaife, ed., *The Convention of 1846* (*Wisconsin Historical Collections*, vol. 27, Madison, 1919), 570.

group in New Hampshire, on the other hand, demanded that Dartmouth become a state university and welcomed legislation to that end. This action was vigorously opposed. The controversy was settled in 1819 when the Supreme Court handed down the famous Dartmouth College decision. The Court ruled that the New Hampshire legislature by modifying the Dartmouth charter in such a way as to make a chartered private college a public institution had violated the sanctity-of-contract clause in the federal constitution. Chancellor Kent, a leading authority on constitutional law, held that the decision did "more than any other single act, proceeding from the authority of the United States, to throw an impregnable barrier around all rights and franchises derived from the grant of government; and to give solidity and inviolability to the literary, charitable, and commercial institutions of our country."¹⁷ Once and for all it made clear the futility of efforts to transform private colleges into state universities. In so doing, it opened wide the way for launching universities piloted by the states themselves.

Meanwhile the whole issue of the relation of church and state to higher education had been thrust into new perspective when the established church was put on the same plane as the other denominations in Georgia, the Carolinas, Virginia, Maryland, and New York. The separation of church and state implied at least two possibilities for higher education, institutions supported and guided by religious bodies without state subsidy and control or state-supported universities free from church influence. It was the former which enjoyed the favor of the American people in the early national period, a time of reaction against the religious liberalism of the late eighteenth century.

Before the religious impulse became marked and while the secularism and civic emphasis of the Revolutionary era were still on the upsurge, the first steps were taken to found state universities. The state of Pennsylvania, which had no established church, chartered a state university in 1779; for a few years it existed alongside the old College of Philadelphia and finally was merged with it. Vermont launched a university in 1791 but this, like that of Pennsylvania, was to be essentially a pri-

¹⁷ James Kent, *Commentaries on American Law* (12th ed., edited by Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., Boston, 1896), 419.

vate institution. The states which disestablished the Anglican church were the real pioneers in the making of state universities. North Carolina led the way in 1776 by making constitutional provision for such an institution. South Carolina and Georgia followed her example. Georgia made the first move in actually chartering a university, only to see North Carolina get her institution under way first.

The case of Virginia is of special significance. Jefferson at first tried to reorganize William and Mary, proposing to abolish its school of theology, to choose a faculty capable of training students more effectively for state service, and, finally, to substitute for the Anglican governing board one appointed by the legislature without reference to religious views. Jefferson was trying to meet on the political front an actual situation implicit in the separation of church and state. In the report accompanying his famous Bill for the Diffusion of Knowledge (1779), he expounded the philosophy of the Enlightenment in its bearings on the issue under discussion. Jefferson failed to make William and Mary a truly secular state-controlled institution of higher learning—tradition and vested interests were too strong even for his skilled statesmanship.¹⁸

Jefferson thereupon undertook to establish a new university. In making plans he sought counsel in the colonies and abroad. Among the Europeans to whom he turned were Destutt de Tracy and DuPont de Nemours, French philosophers much concerned with the secularization of education and with its utilization for the betterment of man and society.¹⁹ Jefferson also took into account such Old World institutions as Edinburgh, long supported and controlled by the city council; Geneva, the seat of liberal Protestant culture in Western Europe; and the new University of France, which took shape under Napoleon. Curiously, he did not pay much attention to the German state universities, which had become notable seats of secular learning and which, particularly in the case of the newly founded

¹⁸ The best exposition of Jefferson's ideas on and contributions to education is Roy J. Honeywell's *The Educational Work of Thomas Jefferson* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1931).

¹⁹ Gilbert Chinard, *Jefferson et les idéologues d'après sa correspondance inédite avec Destutt de Tracy, Cabanis, J. B. Say, et Auguste Comte* (Baltimore, 1925).

University of Berlin, were intended to awaken the national spirit. However much Jefferson borrowed from and adapted to his own purposes certain ideas and practices current in Europe, he modeled the new University of Virginia, chartered in 1817 and opened in 1825, shortly before his death, on his famous report of 1779. Indeed, there is reason to believe that this report actually influenced the educational statesmen who during the French Revolution organized a national system of education crowned by the University of France. Jefferson had molded into his plans the most advanced thought of the Enlightenment shared alike by Europeans and Americans. In a letter to his friend Destutt de Tracy, he declared that the University of Virginia, the "hobby" of his old age, was to be "based on the illimitable freedom of the human mind to explore and to expose every subject susceptible of its contemplations."²⁰ The institution which he built was secular in character, democratic in its internal government, broad in its scheme of studies; it was quickened by the liberal spirit of the Enlightenment, above all by its confidence in reason and by its faith that knowledge is power rather than merely a mental exercise or a form of religious worship.

Despite the auspicious beginnings of the University of Virginia and the bright prospects of the new state institutions in the Carolinas and Georgia, no one of them realized the modern state university ideal. In Virginia Jefferson's plan for public schools found little support, and the University had no broad source of students; it came to exist almost exclusively for the sons of the well-to-do. Elsewhere, too, the unwillingness of those in power to grant adequate support through taxation for the state universities, together with an overreliance on endowments derived from the sale of land or from the distribution of surplus federal revenue, figured in the story.

But by far the most telling reason for the failure of the institutions in the southern seaboard states to develop during the early decades of the nineteenth century into state universities in the modern sense was the reaction against the Enlightenment. This was especially evident throughout the country in the re-

²⁰ *Works of Jefferson* (Ford ed.), 12:183.

treat of secular values and in the mounting triumphs of the evangelical sects—triumphs well under way with the Second Great Awakening in New England in the 1790's and the Great Revival of 1800 in the South and West. In higher education, this religious impulse expressed itself in two principal ways. On the one hand, each sect bent all its efforts toward establishing colleges in which youth would be kept within the sectarian fold and trained for ministerial leadership; the great number of colleges of this type drew strength away from the state universities. On the other hand, the invigorated sects denounced the state universities as "godless" and tried either to boycott and enfeeble them or to transform them into religious agencies. A few examples will illustrate the point. President Josiah Meigs of Georgia, a liberal-minded Jeffersonian, was forced to resign in 1816 when the University could no longer resist sectarian pressures. The self-perpetuating board of trustees of the University of North Carolina quickly came under Presbyterian influence. Even after 1819 when the state assumed a greater measure of control, the University did not entirely rise above sectarian influences. In South Carolina the triumph of conservatism in politics and of orthodoxy in religion cast its shadow over the College and led to the retirement of President Cooper in 1834. After Jefferson's death even the University of Virginia was subject to religious influence, although a semblance of state control was maintained. In higher education these states were unready to accept the full implications of the separation of church and state. The revolutionary concept of state universities in the older states on the Atlantic seaboard had been premature.

The situation west of the Appalachians was in many respects like that on the seaboard. In the first place, evangelical and sectarian enthusiasm was no less marked in the West than in the East. Religious colleges sprang up all over the new country. Many perished, and most of those that lived were feeble. But some, including Oberlin and the colleges planted by the "Yale band" in Illinois, Wisconsin, and Iowa, were more vigorous than the new state institutions. In addition, champions of the sectarian colleges demanded public subsidies on the ground

that they were chartered by the legislature, enjoyed degree-conferring privileges, and served the interest of the states. The history of each of the fifteen state universities founded in the West between the Revolution and the Civil War proves that the mere separation of church and state—which was written into each of the new constitutions—and the provision for state universities failed to resolve the conflicts between sectarian and non-sectarian concepts. In Illinois, for example, religious interests actually prevented the establishment of a state university. Elsewhere church organizations blocked the progress of the infant state institutions.²¹

When they found it impossible to prevent the establishment and growth of a state university, the churches tried to have their interest represented in it. In this they had some success despite constitutional provisions forbidding the teaching of sectarianism in the state universities. Since the western state universities were staffed by men trained in the older denominational colleges a certain religious tone could hardly be prevented. For a time Michigan tried to satisfy the claims of the rival sects by naming one minister from each denomination to a professorship. To a considerable degree, the religious tone of the course of study and the textbooks in the older private institutions influenced what was done in the infant state universities of the West.

The concept of the state university was more fully realized in the West during the half century after the American Revolution partly because the sects were so evenly divided that no one dominated the situation, as did the Presbyterians, for example, in the Carolinas. The very rivalry of the sects, each demanding public support for its colleges, was an effective argument for state institutions. Above all, the competition of the several religious colleges for the Congressional land grants strengthened the case for the state universities.

The very newness of the country was another reason why the western state university, despite obstacles and setbacks, made headway. In the East, as in England, new ideas had to be fitted

²¹ See Donald G. Tewksbury's excellent monograph *The Founding of American Colleges and Universities before the Civil War, with Particular Reference to the Religious Influences Bearing upon the College Movement* (Teachers College, Columbia University, *Contributions to Education*, no. 543, New York, 1932).

somehow into existing arrangements. There was some truth in a remark of Dr. Manasseh Cutler, the shrewd New England divine who did so much to obtain land grants for the support of higher education in the West. In speaking of the prospects of western universities, Dr. Cutler declared that "in order to begin *right*, there will be no *wrong* habits to combat, and no inveterate systems to overturn—there is no rubbish to remove before laying the foundations."²² However lively some of the rising denominational colleges in the West were, they had no bodies of alumni comparable to those of the older eastern colleges, who often played an important role in the legislatures. Nor were the new denominational colleges objects of pride among influential segments of the population as were Harvard, Yale, and the College of New Jersey.

Moreover, though the western states could not boast of traditions as deeply rooted as those on the seaboard, there sprang up in each a keen sense of state pride, a faith in the future greatness of the commonwealth, an eager desire for prestige. A state university, embracing all the fields of learning and equipped to train youth for the several professions, promised to be a living testimony to the authority and dignity of the state. It also promised to be a strong card in drawing desirable settlers and in keeping ambitious young men at home. Shortly after the founding of the University of Wisconsin the regents declared with pride that the information they had disseminated about the institution "has not been without its appropriate influence in attracting the immigration of men and capital to the State."²³

Closely associated with the newness of the western country was the fact that the public domain offered a material stimulus to the establishment of state universities. The Ordinance of 1787 declared that "religion, morality, and knowledge being necessary for good government and the happiness of mankind, schools as the means of education shall be forever encouraged." What might well have been merely a vague pious statement was translated into actuality when Congress was somewhat reluctantly persuaded, a few days after adopting the ordinance, to

²² William Parker Cutler and Julia Perkins Cutler, *Life, Journals, and Correspondence of Rev. Manasseh Cutler* (2 vols., Cincinnati, 1888), 1:345-346.

²³ *Regents' Annual Report*, January 1, 1851, p. 4.

bestow a land grant on the Ohio Company for the support of higher education. This did not, to be sure, guarantee the success of the state university idea, for Dr. Cutler, the promoter responsible for the concession, had in mind the establishment of colleges quite as religious in character as those in his own New England. But the precedent of land grants for higher learning was at least on record. Congress, as a matter of course, came to grant to each of the incoming states a large section of land to nurture public education.

Land grants, on the other hand, did not assure the future of these new institutions. The grants were often sold quickly to provide the ready cash with which buildings could be constructed. Capital was scarce in a frontier economy. Few looked with any favor on the novel idea of taxation as a means of maintaining state universities or on the no less novel notion of providing for a future endowment by postponing the sale of the education land grants until a rising market enhanced their value. Besides, with the prevailing psychology of the frontier, there was great pressure to sell the educational land grants immediately in order to attract settlers, thus to "build up the country" and to increase the value of private holdings.

Nevertheless, the principle of Congressional land grants to the new states for higher education was of far-reaching importance. Even when the land was quickly dissipated, with little permanent revenue in the pot for the nourishment of the all but stillborn state institutions, the commonwealth clearly had some responsibility for what it had created. "The importance of the pre-Civil War grants," according to one historian, lay "not so much in the permanent support provided as in their influence in furthering the movement for popular control and direction of the educational policies of the various states."²⁴ Indeed, the state university idea owes an incalculable debt to the land grants and to the problems posed by their acceptance and disposition by the states.

The rising state universities were heirs not only of the age-old idea that society must provide for higher education and of the somewhat more modern concept that the state is a proper

²⁴ Earle D. Ross, *Democracy's College: The Land-Grant Movement in the Formative Stage* (Ames, Iowa, 1942), 4.

agency for making that provision; they also inherited the democratic tradition. Of the characteristics of the western state universities, none was more distinctive than the conviction that the recipients of higher education should be not an intellectual elite, but all citizens capable of benefiting from such training. As it was taking shape in the mid-nineteenth century, the state university idea assumed that a democratic social order requires mass education on every level, that all have an equal right to higher education, and that it is possible to teach all things to all men. In Wisconsin the *Southport Telegraph* spoke for many in pointedly declaring that "if the people of Wisconsin intend to foster a hot bed of literary aristocracy . . . we have entirely mistaken their character, and have lived amongst them ten years for no purpose." The first regents of the University sought to dispel any fears of an undemocratic institution by unequivocally stating it to be "a wise policy in regard to the University, to extend the advantages of education which it may afford, as far as may be practicable and expedient, so as to benefit the greatest number."²⁵

Although such ideas found literary expression in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, it was only in the nineteenth century that they were fully developed and that constructive steps were taken to implement them. The democratic impulse was confined neither to the West nor to the East; it was a characteristic of both America and Europe. Yet in the new country west of the Appalachians the ideal of social equality and the conviction that all citizens should have equal opportunities were especially prized. The implications of these ideals for the development of the state university idea were far-reaching.

Of minor importance, but still a factor to be taken into account, was the frequency with which private colleges were attacked as undemocratic. It was common to belittle them on the score that the prevailing classical curriculum was ill-suited to the everyday needs of the plain people and on the ground that tuition fees excluded many worthy sons of the soil. There were further complaints that the state, which exempted private insti-

²⁵ *Southport Telegraph* (Wisconsin), February 15, 1850; *Regents' Annual Report*, January 30, 1849, p. 6.

tutions from taxation and granted them the privilege of conferring degrees, had no jurisdiction over the self-perpetuating trustees, a condition which savored too much of the monopolistic evil. The argument for publicly supported and managed universities which would be responsive to popular needs owed something, at least, to the feeling that private institutions failed to meet the requirements of democracy.

On the positive side, the rising democracy encouraged free and pragmatic adaptation of Eastern and European ideas and practices. In the West, as in the East, there was both indifference and hostility toward the movement to develop a free, publicly supported system of nonsectarian schools. But the victory was more easily won in the new states of the upper Mississippi valley. This was partly because there were fewer well-established religious schools enjoying public support than in the middle Atlantic states; partly because the well-to-do class, which in the East often strenuously denounced the idea of taxation for the support of public schools, was less numerous and less entrenched in the West; and partly because the democratic ideal of equality of opportunity was vigorous in the new country. If the state assumed the responsibility for education on the lower levels, then it logically followed that government was obligated to make possible the advantages of higher learning for everyone desiring it. The force of this corollary was the more marked since accumulations of private and sectarian capital were so small that it was natural for many to turn to the largess of the state, especially in view of the public lands which the new states were obliged to use for the support of learning.

The implications for higher education of the democratic impulse were indeed sweeping. It was no accident that among private colleges Oberlin and Antioch in Ohio were pioneers in opening their doors to women. Precedents were more easily broken in new institutions and in a new region than in the traditional colleges of the older section of the country. The western states, responsive as many of them were to the democratic implications of the women's rights crusade, changed the laws of property and marriage in accordance with the new ideas of equality. Among the more progressive champions of higher

education under state auspices and at state expense, the idea of including women as well as men was a matter of logic which at last overcame prejudice. The beginnings were cautious. The regents at Wisconsin declared in 1850 that the projected normal department of the University would "be made to embrace suitable provisions for the professional instruction of Female Teachers."²⁶ Five years later Iowa achieved what Wisconsin contemplated. Other western state universities followed suit.

Associated with the democratic movement was the idea that voting and general participation in public affairs demanded training for intelligent and responsible citizenship. Many believed that this could be taken care of well enough in the common schools; but some, like Jefferson, held that the university also had an all-important contribution to make in this sphere, that a republic, after all, needed enlightened leaders. In almost all the statements accompanying the launching of the state universities their potential value in making better citizens was set forth. Before the doors of the University of Wisconsin opened, the regents provided for a professor of civil polity, one of whose duties it should be to impart "such knowledge and discipline as may be calculated to prepare liberally educated young men to become good and useful citizens."²⁷ The idea that state universities were to equip youth for better citizenship was shared by many men of a conservative temper. In institutions of learning embracing a great section of the public, they saw insurance against demagoguery, attacks on property, and, in general, threats to the established order. The point may be made here that the emphasis on public education for the successful working of a republican and democratic state was chiefly individualistic: train good, intelligent, and public-minded men, and other matters bearing on the commonweal would take care of themselves. In time the state universities were to reinterpret this idea in terms more explicitly and more concretely social. When this time came, Wisconsin was to take the lead.

Closely related to the belief that all citizens should have an opportunity for higher education was the idea that the curriculum of a state-supported institution of higher learning should

²⁶ *Regents' Annual Report*, January 16, 1850, p. 12. ²⁷ *Ibid.*, 7.

provide for the professional and practical needs of the citizens. Almost at the start the regents of the University of Wisconsin declared that "the application of the Sciences to the useful arts, including every industrial occupation which ministers to the well-being of society, have become too numerous and too important to be neglected in any wisely constructed system of general education."²⁸ They went further in stating that the University was to include in addition to the liberal arts, medicine, and law, a normal department or "nursery of the educators of the popular mind." Almost from the start, too, the University announced its intention of providing instruction in the agricultural and other industrial arts and sciences.

Such a concept was, again, far from new. Bacon had heralded it in the seventeenth century. In eighteenth-century colonial America, Franklin had preached the doctrine that education on the higher as well as on the lower levels should meet the requirements of living by being practically useful to the individual and to society alike.²⁹ Most of the essays outlining schemes for a national system of education in the era of the American Revolution likewise upheld the utilitarian aspects of higher education. Jefferson himself, without sacrificing the more disinterested intellectual and aesthetic values of knowledge, had subscribed to the idea that the university he was founding must use knowledge for socially desirable ends.

Economic and technological developments were beginning to transform American society and economy and to cry aloud for specialized skills. Geologists were probing beneath the earth's surface and discovering vast mineral potentialities, but mining engineers in great number were needed. The surveying of public land and the building of railroads, canals, and bridges required, in addition to the available foreign experts, a company of technicians far in excess of the supply.

The expanding textile, machine tool, and other industrial enterprises similarly opened wide avenues of opportunity. At the same time important developments in the science of agriculture were taking place in England and Germany. American inventors were laying the foundations of further revolution in

²⁸ *Ibid.*, January 1, 1851, p. 12. ²⁹ *Writings of Franklin* (Smyth ed.), 2:386 ff.

agriculture by developing such mechanical instruments as the harvester, reaper, and steam thresher. The dawning technological age opened an endless road to mechanical skill and special knowledge. Business, the more advanced leaders of labor and agriculture, and thoughtful citizens in other circles sensed new fields for education. At the same time the inadequacy of the older apprenticeship type of training for medicine and law was becoming ever more apparent.

Confronted by these pressing social needs for a more functional type of higher education than that offered in the traditional liberal arts institutions, a few college presidents in the 1820's and 1830's spoke out against the educational *status quo*. James Marsh of the University of Vermont, Eliphalet Nott of Union College, Philip Lindsley of the University of Nashville, and others tried to introduce into the classical curriculum courses on the applications of the arts and sciences. The high tide of this movement was reached in 1842 with the publication of *Thoughts on the Present Collegiate System of the United States*. The author of this document was President Francis Wayland of Brown University, a well-known author of college textbooks in economy, social ethics, and political science. Wayland denounced the program of the old-time college as ill-suited for equipping young men with the skills most needed in the everyday life of banking, milling, canal-making, bridge-building, and even farming. Nor did the classical curriculum, Wayland contended, provide society with the techniques indispensable to its further material and moral progress.

From across the Atlantic came similar doctrines. Such utilitarians as Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill taught that the ethical good, including truth itself, is relative to time and place and to be determined by whatever promotes the greatest good of the greatest number. The highest criterion of the good and the moral was, in other words, the expansion and fulfillment of man's material and social wants. That such a philosophy emerged in a society at a time when commercial and industrial forces were becoming dominant was of course hardly accidental. The implications of utilitarianism for education were probed and publicized by such leaders of nineteenth-

century English thought as Herbert Spencer. His famous tract *What Knowledge Is of Most Worth?* argued the value of the scientific studies, on the score not only that the mental discipline they provided was equal to that of the classics, but also that they had practical usefulness both to the individual and to society. The scientific studies, according to Spencer and to others in England and America, exceeded the value of the traditional humanities in providing guidance for conduct and for meeting the actualities of life. The functions of human living—such as self-preservation, health, the gaining of a livelihood, parenthood, and citizenship—as well as the pleasures of leisure were functions best promoted by scientific knowledge. Therefore knowledge was not something apart from the struggles and activities of household, market place, and forum. It was not something to be isolated in an ivory tower and selfishly enjoyed by a few as good in and of itself alone.

Tradition was too deeply rooted in the older colleges for such ideas to make any marked headway. Wayland's innovations at Brown were short-lived. Those in control of the private colleges maintained the traditional curriculum, making only minor concessions. The venerable arguments used in justifying the classical studies were forcefully summarized in the famous Yale report of 1828—a report which made short shrift of the counter-arguments for the practical studies.³⁰ The Yale report was long cited throughout the country. In fact, not until 1850, when Cardinal Newman in Great Britain gracefully and eloquently defended knowledge for the sake of knowledge, was a more powerful and influential rationale for traditionalism available.

Although Harvard and Yale eventually set up affiliated institutes in which the sciences and their application were made the core of the curriculum, the older colleges for the most part excluded or subordinated the so-called practical subjects. Rejected in the classical institutions, the industrial and agricultural sciences found quarters in newly established ones. Among the institutions that furthered the study of the sciences, West Point, which trained engineers as well as soldiers, was a forerunner. So too were Norwich in Vermont and Rensselaer in

³⁰ *Reports on the Course of Instruction in Yale College* (New Haven, 1830).

New York. Founded at Troy in 1824 and developed by Amos Eaton, an "applied geologist," Rensselaer not only broke new ground but stimulated imitation elsewhere. Other institutions of the same type drew inspiration from the Fellenberg manual labor schools of Germany and Switzerland. In these schools ambitious but impecunious young men earned their way while drinking at the fountains of technical knowledge. Of the many new institutions of this utilitarian and—it hardly need be added—democratic type, special mention must be made of the People's College in central New York, the prototype, in a sense, of later agricultural and mechanical colleges, and of the Gardiner Lyceum in Maine, which Wisconsin's first president for a time directed.

By the mid-1840's, when Wisconsin was launching its university, one of the leading educational needs of the nation was for vocational training to develop personnel for a more specialized scientific agriculture and for the rising industry and growing commerce. As yet this need was very inadequately provided for in the handful of scientific and technical institutes, many of which reflected the crusading or opportunistic zeal of their promoters. These institutions, despite their importance, represented at best a movement which, in the words of Earle D. Ross, was tentative in scope and impermanent in support.³¹ No recognized standards, no systemic subject matter lifted them above the empirical level. To these pioneer colleges private initiative was indispensable and state subsidies, even though half-hearted, were important both to meet their most pressing needs and as precedents for later bounties; but the time was at hand for either the states or the federal government to take a directing and sustaining hand. Otherwise this new form of education could develop only in a piecemeal fashion and thus fail to meet the needs of an expanding and maturing industrial and agricultural economy.

Although Americans paid lip service to the idea that government was a mere policeman and arbiter between competing interests, they were already shifting from this negative conception to a more positive one. Federally-financed exploring ex-

³¹ Ross, *Democracy's College*, 45.

peditions and the Naval Observatory, state geological and natural history surveys were contributing both to knowledge and to education.³² Once promoters had secured land grants from the government, it was only a slight step for them to expect that agency also to provide trained engineers for constructing the railroads. Having asked government to protect rising industries by tariff legislation, it was natural for industrialists to expect government also to provide university-trained mechanics and technicians to assist further in the endless search for profits.

It would have been entirely possible for all these and other needs to be met by state institutions apart from colleges in which the traditional classical curriculum prevailed. In fact, separate and autonomous state-supported schools for training agriculturalists and engineers arose in Michigan, Iowa, and elsewhere. But for the most part the western state universities did not at once adapt themselves to such needed practical considerations. This was partly because those in charge of instruction by and large envisioned institutions of the liberal college type. Even when they did see the need for a practical program there was no ready pattern at hand. Only when the federal government in 1862 made huge land grants to the states for the support of agricultural and mechanical education, did the movement become something more than theory. Even thereafter the battle, whether against the wily politicians, the indifferent farmers, or the champions of classical education, was won only after countless skirmishes. As a result, the venerable ideas of autonomy of knowledge, of the antipathy between theory and practice, and of the notion of an intellectual elite largely gave way to the practical, the democratic, the relativistic scheme. The struggle was more significant because it took place at the very time when the family, the church, and industry were all restricting their educational functions. The qualities of American civilization were all involved in the process.

None of these forces which we have seen shaping the state university concept—secularism, democracy, utilitarianism, and the imperatives of science in agriculture and industry—could

³² Merle Curti, *The Growth of American Thought* (New York, 1943), 327-333.

be truly called indigenous. Yet each operated within an American context and each spoke in an American vernacular. On the other hand, one of the powerful factors which helped shape the state university was deliberately borrowed, with adaptations, from Germany.

Germany in modern times has emphasized in a marked degree the role of education as a means of promoting national unity and well-being. We need merely refer to the intellectual revolution, guided by such innovators as Christian Wolff, August Francke, and Christian Thomasium, which transformed the German universities toward the end of the seventeenth century and in the early decades of the eighteenth, and which guided such new foundations as Göttingen and, in the Napoleonic period, Berlin. These universities adopted the vernacular as the medium of instruction, opened their doors to the new critical learning, made the laboratory and the library the center of instruction, and developed and maintained the concept of academic freedom as well as the highest standards in research and in professional training.³³ Thus at a time when Berkeley, Walpole, Burke, and Bentham were criticizing old-fashioned pedestrianism, the rigid classical grip, and the exclusive Anglicanism of Cambridge and Oxford, the German universities were enjoying merited fame.

Furthermore, the more advanced German states, led by Prussia, developed public systems of elementary and secondary education, all carefully related to the state universities. Following this example and influenced by her own advocates of a secular system of national education, post-revolutionary France moved in the same direction.

Far more cultural intercourse existed between Germany and America in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries than scholars long supposed.³⁴ Franklin was in touch with the universities at Halle and Göttingen; William Barton took his doctorate in medicine at Göttingen in 1789. The concern of Dr. Wilhelm Ebeling of Hamburg for America and the inter-

³³ The standard account is Friedrich Paulsen's *The German Universities* (New York, 1895).

³⁴ Harold Jantz, *German Thought and Literature in New England, 1620-1820* (Urbana, Illinois, 1942).

est of his correspondent, the Reverend William Bentley of Salem, in Germany, helped prepare the way for the pilgrimage of Edward Everett, Joseph Cogswell, George Ticknor, and George Bancroft to the German universities shortly after the War of 1812. These young scholars returned to America full of enthusiasm for German institutions and tried unsuccessfully to refashion Harvard along German lines. John Griscom, Calvin Stowe, Alexander Dallas Bache, and other American educators, impressed by German education, published commendatory reports which carried weight. At the same time in England, Cole-ridge, Brougham, Roebuck, Carlyle, and other educational reformers urged the reorganization of English education along the lines of German models. Thus, directly, through the increasing migration of Americans to Germany for observation and study, and indirectly, through English interest in German education, the way was opened to a positive and significant German impact on higher education on this side of the Atlantic. To this, in a lesser degree, the university scholars among the German immigrants—such men as Charles Follen, Charles Beck, and Carl Schurz (one of the early regents of the University of Wisconsin)—contributed.

James B. Angell, who became president of the University of Michigan in 1871, has told the story of what happened at Ann Arbor thirty years and more before his coming. The Reverend John D. Pierce, a Brown graduate and a Presbyterian missionary, had read the report of the French philosopher, Victor Cousin, on the German system of state education and was profoundly impressed by it. He talked the whole matter over with his neighbor, Isaac E. Crary, a Trinity College (Connecticut) graduate and a lawyer who was to be largely responsible for framing the educational provisions in the Michigan constitution of 1835.³⁵ Thus there was incorporated into the basic law of the state a provision for a public system of education from the most elementary to the highest grade.

To outline such a provision was one thing; to achieve it, another. Fortunately the idea of a state university at the head of a system of public education was vigorously championed by

³⁵ *The Reminiscences of James Burrill Angell* (New York, 1912), 226-227.

Henry P. Tappan, who was chosen president of the University of Michigan in 1852. The previous year he had developed his educational program in an arresting book, *University Education*. Thoroughly imbued with the ideals of the German university and system of state education, Tappan began to lay the foundations of a state system of education. But he was not allowed to build the organization he dreamed of. Forced out of the presidency, he lived, however, to see his plan for an integration of the public schools and the university take shape. This was in large part the result of the labors of Dr. Henry Frieze, a professor of Latin, who had conceived the idea in Germany and who witnessed its triumph after Tappan resigned and just before President Angell took over.³⁶ The successful outcome of these struggles at Michigan was a major influence at Wisconsin.

Tappan emphasized not only a state university closely related to the public schools and other educational agencies but an institution of higher learning dedicated to the advancement as well as to the dissemination of learning. Original investigation, he maintained, was an obligation that a state university could not ignore. A beginning, at least, was made at Michigan even in Tappan's tumultuous administration. It is more than likely that John Lathrop, Wisconsin's first president, was reflecting Tappan's conception of a research institution when he proclaimed the desirability of supporting original investigation at Wisconsin.

Important as was the Michigan emphasis on the idea of research in a state university, it proved to be less influential in transmitting the German concept of university research than was Johns Hopkins University. Modeled on German institutions, Johns Hopkins, as we shall see, was to cast its spell in the 1880's and 1890's over the presidents in Madison who began to transform the college into an institution dedicated to the increase as well as to the preservation of knowledge.

From the beginning, the University of Wisconsin, like its sister institutions, had two objectives: a not too well articulated

³⁶ Review by Rev. Dr. H. P. Tappan of *His Connection with the University of Michigan* (Detroit, 1864); James B. Angell, *A Memorial Discourse on the Life and Services of Henry Simmons Frieze* (Ann Arbor, 1890).

profession of solicitude for the custodianship of that body of esoteric knowledge which every society cherishes, and the training of teachers, lawyers, doctors, and other needed professional experts, including technicians in agriculture and industry. The founders were politicians, though a few of them were men of scholarly insight and taste. The mixed aims, cultural and utilitarian, were regarded as necessary and proper for a somewhat unlettered, practical-minded constituency. But the long-term and short-term considerations, in conflict as they were, did not become easily resolved. We shall see the impact on the University of political intrigues, of pressures from religious and economic groups, of the indifference of a large part of a pioneering population bent on making homes and getting ahead, and of the building of railroads, industries, and cities. In the process there developed a faith in education comparable, as Dean Roscoe Pound once insisted, to the medieval faith in religion. The severe, eminently practical buildings erected with so much difficulty in Madison were a far cry from the medieval cathedrals which testified to the sacrifice and faith and ambition of Old World communities. But these college halls were a symbol—the crude prototypes of the more noble structures the future held. If these structures were not in truth cathedrals, they were ample rooms within the temple in which the American spirit sought elevation and even salvation.

We shall have occasion to emphasize the feebleness of the western state universities, the frequently overshadowing influence of better-supported private denominational colleges, the long bitter struggles against political intrigues and public indifference. One fundamental and significant fact, however, must be remembered: that never before had new states exhibited an educational consciousness so well-formed nor succeeded so greatly in implementing the conviction of the state's duty to open to every citizen the doors of higher learning, free from all political and sectarian bias.³⁷ The new institutions did not, to be sure, completely realize the democratic and the above-the-battle ideal. Neither did they succeed altogether in serving the needs of individuals, separately and collectively, or in promot-

³⁷ Henry S. Pritchett, "The Spirit of the State Universities," in the *Atlantic Monthly*, 105:742 (June, 1910).

ing efficient democratic citizenship. But what was achieved was nonetheless remarkable. It is a story that has never been adequately told. Nor can it be told until the history of each of the state universities has been fully written from all the pertinent documents and in relation to social, economic, and political developments as well as to the great movements of thought in Western civilization.

YEARS OF THE BEGINNING, 1836-1866

Part Two

2.

The University in Territorial Days

THE University of Wisconsin was established by law on July 26, 1848, under the provisions of the state constitution. Its beginnings, however, are in the territorial period. The concern of territorial politicians with a university rested, in large measure, upon a land grant made by the federal government for the endowment of a "seminary of learning." The grant had its origin in the arrangements made between the Continental Congress and representatives of the Ohio Company under which the company purchased a large tract of land and received, in addition, several free grants, including two townships, for the endowment of a university. Upon the failure of the company, the university grant passed into possession of the State of Ohio. Territories organized subsequently claimed an equal bounty from the federal government. Accordingly, by the time Wisconsin was created, it had become established practice for each new territory to be given a grant of land for the endowment of a university. It was this land grant, in prospect and in actuality, which focused the attention of territorial politicians upon a university; and, in territorial days and later, problems arising from the selection and sale of the land often evoked much more interest from the lawmakers than problems about the nature and functions of the university.

Yet the creation of a territorial university by the first Territorial Assembly in 1836 appears to have been a by-product of the contest over the location of the capital. The first Assembly

met at Belmont on October 25, 1836. Wisconsin, the fifth and last part of the old Northwest Territory to be organized, included, during the first two years, not only that region which was to become the state of Wisconsin but all the territory which now makes up Iowa and Minnesota and a large part of the Dakotas. The Iowa country west of the Mississippi contained almost as large a population in 1836 as did Wisconsin. In the apportionment of representation to the first Assembly, Governor Henry Dodge had assigned six councilors and twelve representatives to the counties west of the river, seven councilors and fourteen representatives to the Wisconsin counties.¹ In his welcoming message to the Assembly, Governor Dodge urged that Congress be petitioned for one township of land "to be sold and the proceeds of the sale placed under the direction of the Legislative Assembly of this territory, for the establishment of an academy for the education of youth." The government and location of the institution, the governor left entirely to the legislature, although he emphasized the great importance of making adequate provision for education. "It is a duty we owe to the rising generation to endeavor to devise means to improve the condition of those that are to succeed us; the permanence of our institutions, must depend upon the intelligence of the great mass of the people."² The governor's words fell upon inattentive ears.

The permanent location of the capital was a matter of high importance both to the lawmakers and to the townsite speculators and their representatives who congregated at Belmont. Almost every real and prospective town in Wisconsin had its ardent supporters. The problem of selecting a capital was complicated by the presence in the Assembly of representatives from west of the Mississippi. This area, soon to have its own political organization, possessed a voting strength almost equal to that of the delegates from Wisconsin proper. A solution was found in the temporary location of the capital in Iowa. Under the terms of the first proposal the capital was to be located temporarily

¹ Joseph Schafer, *The Wisconsin Lead Region* (Madison, 1932), 57 ff.

² *Journal of the House of Representatives, First Territorial Assembly of Wisconsin*, 1836, p. 14.

at Dubuque and permanently at Fond du Lac. While the bill was in council, Joseph B. Teas, of Des Moines County, succeeded in substituting Burlington for Dubuque and Madison for Fond du Lac. This combination weathered all attacks and was carried into law largely because of the persuasive tactics of one of the principal owners of the Madison townsite, Judge James Duane Doty.³

While the battle over the location of the capital was still raging, Councilman Teas offered a bill establishing a territorial university at Belmont, host to the legislature then in session and an unsuccessful and feeble competitor in the race to become the capital city. This bill, which Teas and his associates carried through the Council and Assembly for the signature of the governor two days after he had approved the capital-location bill, contained no provision for the support of a university. Since neither Teas nor anyone else at the time thought to petition Congress for a grant of land for the support of the institution, and since no representative from Belmont manifested interest in a university, the act gives every evidence of having been little more than a gesture to propitiate Belmont supporters with the gift of a university on paper. The provisions of this act, approved on December 8, 1836, need not detain us.⁴ There is no evidence that the governing board of twenty-one members, designated the Board of Visitors, ever met or ever wanted to meet. This institution had served its purpose when the governor approved the bill locating the capital.

A little more than a year later a second territorial university was given existence in law. The bill, as originally introduced,

³ Joseph Schafer has described Judge Doty as one of "the shrewdest, most subtle, suave, and insinuating of all the speculators. . . . Being a consummate political manipulator, a master of chicane, and a lobbyist of unusual charm and impressiveness, he took a direct part in persuading the legislators to vote as he wanted them to vote." Despite the fact, however, that Madison town lots were presented to at least fifteen members of the Assembly which passed the bill, Schafer doubted whether "such gifts influenced the result greatly." *Lead Region*, 63, 73.

⁴ *Acts Passed at the First Session of the Legislative Assembly of the Territory of Wisconsin*, 1836, pp. 72-73. From 1836 to 1852 the laws passed by the territorial and state legislatures were published annually as *Acts, Laws, or Acts and Resolves*. These will be cited hereafter as *Session Laws*. In 1853 and for two decades thereafter *General Laws* and *Private and Local Acts* were published separately and will be so cited.

provided for its location at the paper town of Four Lakes, a townsite platted on the northwest side of Lake Mendota, then called Fourth Lake. In this form the bill had passed the lower house, but in the Council the location was changed to a point "at or near Madison," thus registering a modest victory for the holders of Madison town lots.⁵

The university act of 1838, the main provisions of which followed the law of 1836, was better designed to permit the establishment of a university. It provided that the governing board should consist of twenty-one members, but at least the prospect of securing a quorum was contained in the provision which made the governor of the territory, the secretary, the judges of the supreme court, and the president of the university ex officio members of the Board of Visitors. The remaining members were to be appointed by the legislature and to hold office at the pleasure of that body. As in the earlier law, the board was authorized to "establish such colleges, academies, and schools, depending upon the said University, as they may think proper and as the funds of the corporation will permit" and to "confer such degrees as are usually conferred by Universities established for the education of youth." Provision was made for changing the name of the institution from a territorial to a state university upon the attainment of statehood.

That the men who secured passage of the law of 1838 had a purpose somewhat more serious if not more elevated than the sponsors of the law of 1836 is revealed in their preparing and carrying through the same legislature a resolution addressed to Congress petitioning support of the university. Calling attention to the provision already made for the establishment of a territorial university, the Assembly asked that Congress grant not only two townships of land as a permanent endowment but \$20,000 in cash. The Assembly urged that the land be selected in the region east of the Mississippi "under the direction of the President of the United States in such a manner as to interfere with no actual settler or occupant of the public lands and that the said lands may be located in sections or half or quarter

⁵ See Joseph Schafer, "The University Charter of 1838," in the *Wisconsin Alumnus*, 39:292-293 (July, 1938).

sections as the President may direct.”⁶ Both the resolution and the university bill were approved by the governor on January 19, 1838.

Congress acted promptly upon this petition. On June 12, 1838, an act was approved “concerning a Seminary of Learning in the Territory of Wisconsin” under which the secretary of the treasury was authorized to “set apart and reserve from sale, out of any of the public lands within the Territory of Wisconsin, to which the Indian title has been, or may be, extinguished, and not otherwise appropriated, a quantity of land not exceeding two entire townships, for the use and support of a University within said Territory, and for no other use and purpose whatsoever; to be located in tracts of land of not less than an entire section, corresponding with any of the legal divisions into which the public lands are authorized to be surveyed.”⁷ Nothing was said about the \$20,000.

The news that Congress had authorized a land grant for the endowment of a university inspired the Board of Visitors, created under the law of 1838, to attempt a meeting in July, but there was no quorum. On the eve of the meeting of the Territorial Assembly, the first to convene at Madison, the Visitors held their first meeting. A president and secretary were elected before the Visitors adjourned, to meet one week later. At the third meeting, held on December 1, 1838, the eight Visitors present transacted two pieces of business. On the motion of Marshall M. Strong, a committee made up of Augustus A. Bird, David Brigham, and George H. Slaughter was appointed “to examine the lands purposed to be donated by Josiah A. Noonan and Aaron Vanderpool, and the lands generally in the vicinity of Madison” and to report at the next meeting a “suitable site for the location of the University.” A second committee, made up of William B. Slaughter, George Beatty, and Marshall M. Strong, was appointed and instructed to “request the Legislative Assembly at their present session, to memorialize the Secretary of the Treasury of the United States to locate the lands donated by an Act of Congress approved 12th of June, 1838,” and to

⁶ *Territorial Session Laws, 1837-38*, pp. 313-315, 327.

⁷ *United States Statutes at Large*, 5:244.

ask the legislature to appropriate the land to the university to be located "at or near Madison." After ordering the proceedings of the meeting published in the *Madison Enquirer*, of which Josiah A. Noonan was co-editor, the Board adjourned. Ten members of the Board were present on December 15 when the committees reported. The committee on the university site submitted that "they had made the said examinations and that in their opinion the site proposed by Mr. Noonan and others was the most eligible." The committee designated to carry the Visitors' request for the land grant to the legislature simply reported that they had done so. The Board took no action on either report and there is no record of their ever having met again.⁸

There is nothing in the records of the Visitors to suggest that their interest extended beyond securing control of the land grant and lodging another public institution in Madison. They failed to attain this immediate object, but they did succeed in implanting locally the idea that the hill and the grounds surrounding the hill just west of the village limits of Madison would one day be the site of a university. That hill, on which Bascom Hall now stands, came to be known as College Hill.

While the territorial legislature of 1838-39 showed no interest in the university or the land grant, the next session adopted a resolution directing immediate selection of two-thirds of the total amount granted to the territory. The governor was authorized to appoint a competent person in each of the three land districts of the territory to select these lands. The agents were required to publish a list of their selections within thirty days of making them. The selections were then to be reported to the governor who was to transmit the lists to the federal authorities for approval. Governor Dodge appointed William B. Sheldon to select university lands in the Milwaukee Land District, John V. Suydam in the Green Bay District, and John P. Sheldon in the Mineral Point District. Suydam, who had prepared the first plat for the village of Madison, completed

⁸ Minutes of the Board of Visitors, December 1, 15, 1838, in the John Catlin Papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin. Catlin, a pioneer real estate operator in Madison, was a member of the Board of Visitors and served as secretary at all the meetings.

his selection, a total of 10,248 acres, in the summer of 1840. William B. Sheldon had completed selection of substantially the same amount of land in the Milwaukee District by October. The selections made by John P. Sheldon were not approved by the Treasury Department. It was contended that mineral lands had been included. This was entirely possible in view of the location of the lands and the publicly circulated charge that John Sheldon was unable to distinguish between mineral and agricultural lands. So the matter stood for the next four years.⁹

Meanwhile, in 1841, Judge James Duane Doty supplanted Henry Dodge as governor of the territory. "The establishment of high schools ought to be encouraged," Doty proclaimed in his first message to the legislature, "and the means having been provided for the support of a University, I would respectfully urge the necessity of its location, and that provision be made for the commencement of some one or more of its branches. It is our duty to secure the means of education to every class of society; but common schools are justly entitled to our first care, being the foundation of all others, and an essential institution for the preservation of American liberty."¹⁰

In response to the governor's recommendations, a House committee on schools, under the chairmanship of Alfred Brunson, frontier minister, missionary, and Indian agent, submitted a report dealing with the university and university grant. Since less than half the land had been reserved when the committee reported in January, 1842, and since there was nothing in the law establishing the grant that could be construed to give the territorial legislature the legal authority to dispose of the lands, the arguments and recommendations of the committee might be dismissed as irrelevant or premature. Nevertheless, the re-

⁹ *Territorial Session Laws*, 1839-40, Resolution No. 6, approved January 11, 1840; "Communication from the Governor [Nathaniel C. Tallmadge] on the Subject of University Lands," February 12, 1845, in *Journal of the Council*, 1845, pp. 221-228. Sheldon had served as register of the Mineral Point land office from 1834 until he was removed from office in 1840 by President Van Buren. The principal charge against him was that he had permitted illegal entry of mineral lands through various devices which may have satisfied the letter but not the spirit of the law. See Schafer, *Lead Region*, 82-84.

¹⁰ *Journal of the House*, 1841, p. 24. The journals of the two houses of the territorial legislature are cited hereafter as *House Journal* and *Council Journal*.

port reflects the attitude of a part of the frontier community toward the disposal and uses of the educational grant, and as such deserves at least passing notice.

Acknowledging a division of opinion among the legislators as to whether the educational lands should be held for a long period of time in order to profit from the expected rise in land prices or be disposed of early at a moderate figure, the committee emphatically favored the latter policy. To withhold the lands from sale would retard the settlement and growth of the new territory. This would not only defeat one of the objects of the federal government in making the grant, but would make Congress unwilling to add to the original endowment. More important, it would cause the youth then in the territory "to be raised in ignorance, or subjected to the expense of *foreign* education; for the sake of aiding immigrants not yet in the Territory, or children yet unborn. . . . Shall we," inquired the committee, "adopt the anti-republican policy of oppressing the few and the poor, in order to benefit the many and more wealthy who may follow us? We protest against such a policy."

For the state to withhold land from sale was, in the eyes of the committee, no less reprehensible than for a speculator to do so. "Shall we oppress the speculator who withholds his lands from sale and settlement, for the purpose of enhancing their value, and at the same time withhold our own lands from the market with the same view? Shall we, as a body politic, pursue the same course we condemn in others?—Consistency is a jewel worthy of every man's pursuit, whether in public or private life."

The committee urged that permission be secured from Congress to offer the university lands for sale immediately and outlined a policy under which the lands could be sold at public auction at a minimum price of two dollars an acre. No purchaser was to be permitted to buy more than eighty acres, and easy credit terms were proposed. The committee estimated that the university grant would yield an endowment of \$115,200, a sum capable of producing an annual income of \$8,064. This sum would be sufficient to hire four professors at a rate of \$1,000 per year and to provide more than \$4,000 annually for

the construction of buildings and branch high schools throughout the state.¹¹

The Brunson report outlined a policy for the disposal of the land that actually was adopted in later years, but in 1842 the legislature was not moved to action by the arguments or recommendations. Indeed, that body showed no further interest in either the university or the land grant until 1844, when the governor was called upon to furnish information about the status of the university grant. On the basis of the governor's report, which showed that less than half the lands had been selected, the legislature appointed an agent, one John H. Haight, to complete selection of all land authorized to be "set apart and reserved by the Act of June 12, 1838." The agent was enjoined to select no improved land nor any claimed by an actual occupant. He was to receive such compensation as the legislature deemed proper. Haight was replaced the next year by Nathaniel F. Hyer, who made the final selections of the original grant.¹² Ten years had passed from the time the grant was made until the final selections were approved—a measure of the desultory interest in a university during territorial days. This interest was not quickened by the knowledge that the land would be unavailable for sale until the territory became a state.



THERE is nothing to suggest that much thought was given during territorial days to the nature of the relationship which would develop between the university and the state. Certainly this relationship was discussed neither in the legislature nor in the press. The acts of 1836 and 1838 indicate a ready acceptance of the idea that legislative control of the university would be exercised through the power of appointing the governing board. Actions taken in connection with the land grant suggest that although the university was accepted as a ward of the state, no one anticipated the time when the institution would be de-

¹¹ "Report of the Committee on Schools," January 10, 1842, in *House Journal*, 1841-42, pp. 95-97.

¹² "An Act to provide for the selection of certain lands reserved by act of Congress for the use and support of a University in the Territory of Wisconsin," approved February 20, 1845, in *Territorial Session Laws*, 1845, pp. 84-85; *ibid.*,

pendent largely upon the state for financial support. There is only fragmentary evidence of what the territorial legislators and other public officials thought the proper function of the university to be. But a suggestion of the general attitude may be found in the expressions of opinion on the functions of education.

The educational views expressed by the territorial officials reflect a uniformly great respect and high regard for education, but action seldom followed their words. The general function of education in the minds of many Wisconsin spokesmen was twofold: to prepare young people for the duties and obligations of citizenship, and to train them to perform the practical tasks of life. The frontier politician was in favor of education, but he was not always sure why. When he tried to explain, his language frequently carried him into dim areas where neither he nor his listeners knew precisely what he was talking about but few objected. Education in the 1840's and 1850's was already regarded as the universal solvent of all social ills. In some quarters schools and colleges were supported as a legitimate device to increase land values and to encourage immigration. Governor Dodge was not above using the common schools to support his proposal that a special tax be assessed on land owned by nonresidents of the territory. Although such a tax was clearly a violation of the law establishing the territory, the governor urged the legislature to construe its power liberally, adroitly suggesting that the proceeds be used for the common schools. Thus opponents of the measure would be put in the position of opposing the school system whose "happy influence over the morals of our citizens would promote the cause of Religion and Virtue, and cement more closely the bonds of our political union, and be the means of preparing the rising generation to participate in the councils of our common coun-

1846, pp. 107-108. The following tabulation of the selections made by the territory and the dates on which they were approved by the Treasury Department is based on the Record of Land, vol. 2, p. 482, in the office of the land commissioners.

<i>No. of Acres</i>	<i>Date Approved</i>	<i>No. of Acres</i>	<i>Date Approved</i>
10,248.82	August 8, 1840	8,738.71	February 25, 1847
10,248.53	March 25, 1841	9,801.73	August 12, 1848
7,001.63	April 4, 1845	46,039.42	Total

try, as well as to enjoy and defend our free institutions from the polluting touch of aristocracy and despotism.”¹³ The fragmentary records of the first constitutional convention held in 1846 show that delegates listened to many champions of public education. John Hubbard Tweedy of Milwaukee, a graduate of Yale and a distinguished citizen, told the delegates that his only hope for the “stability of republican institutions” was in the education of the masses. “If they are educated as they should be, we can look forward to the time when all our citizens will be capable of occupying the highest and most responsible stations—we can look to a bright and unclouded future.” The delegate from Grant County, Lorenzo Bevans, was equally concerned. “All other questions dwindle into comparative insignificance,” he proclaimed, “if you contemplate them in their bearings upon the prosperity of the state, compared with the influence upon the future hopes and prospects of the inhabitants of Wisconsin that are to ensue from the deliberations of this body in connection with the article on schools and school funds. . . . If these great interests are disregarded by this convention, we shall present to the world the mortifying spectacle of an entire failure in having attempted to erect a political superstructure without a foundation on which to build.”

The constitution drawn up by the convention contained an article on education which provided for the establishment of common schools and for a superintendent of public instruction, an officer who “alone can give uniformity, energy, and efficiency to the system.” But there was only one reference to the university and that parenthetical. This was a clause, introduced by Nathaniel F. Hyer, to keep the proceeds from the sale of the university grant from becoming a part of the common school fund. After the Hyer amendment was adopted, a delegate from Racine, Edward G. Ryan, moved to add an amendment which would have appropriated the income from the university fund to the support of normal schools until a university was established. This amendment was defeated after brief debate by the close vote of 51 to 48.¹⁴

¹³ *Council Journal*, 1838–39, p. 8.

¹⁴ Milo M. Quaife, ed., *The Convention of 1846 (Wisconsin Historical Collections*, vol. 27, Madison, 1919), 570–574, 616; Milo M. Quaife, ed., *The Struggle*

In the vigorous newspaper discussion of the Constitution of 1846, the article on education was seldom mentioned, the university not at all. What discussion there was of the educational provision was favorable. The *Racine Advocate*, for example, in the eighth of a series of editorials, found this part of the document wholly good. "A Farmer from Grant," in a letter to the *Platteville Independent American*, agreed that this part of the Constitution was good, declaring that education was one of the "individual rights which has heretofore been neglected."¹⁵ But the attitude toward this article probably had little influence on the outcome. The Constitution of 1846 was defeated in the referendum of 1847.

The second constitutional convention was called in the early winter of 1847. Although the membership of this convention included few of the men who had served in the preceding one, the ideas expressed about education were strikingly similar. The principle of a uniform system of schools, the necessity for providing for a tax levy to support the schools, and the necessity for providing a superintendent of public instruction were again discussed and accepted. The convention listened to the usual oratorical espousals of education. They were almost unanimous on excluding sectarian influence from the schools.¹⁶

The article on education in the Constitution which was adopted early in 1848 stands substantially as it had been pre-

over Ratification, 1846-1847 (Wisconsin Historical Collections, vol. 28, Madison, 1920), 95. It has been argued that the Ryan amendment was evidence of hostility toward the University, but this position is hardly tenable. If the vote meant anything in terms of educational philosophy, it was only that many of the delegates felt that education of teachers might be supported by the University Fund. In 1848 this attitude found expression in the law founding the University.

¹⁵ Quaipe, *Struggle over Ratification*, 490, 678-679.

¹⁶ The chairman of the Committee on Education and School Funds, Experience Estabrook, protested on one occasion that only lip service was being paid to education. "It was a notorious fact," he was reported to have said, "that while education is the most important of all interests, it is the one in which there is the least concern felt by the community in general, or by their representatives. Orators might talk largely about the necessity of education on public occasions . . . and the people assent to it all, but the truth was a perfect apathy pervaded the entire community in relation to it. People looked upon schools as merely a place for sending their children to get rid of them." *Journal of the Convention to Form a Constitution for the State of Wisconsin*, December, 1847, to February 1, 1848 (Madison, 1848), 344.

A move to strike out the provision in the educational article safeguarding the schools from sectarian influence was defeated by a vote of 57 to 2. *Ibid.*, 336.

sented to the convention by the Committee on Education and School Funds, most of the members of which had come from New England or New York. The article established the office of superintendent of public instruction and provided for a system of common schools to be supported in part from a school fund to be created by the sale of school land, in part from local taxes. It permitted the remainder of the school fund, if any, to be used for the support of academies and normal schools. It imposed on the legislature the responsibility for adopting a school law which would establish a uniform system of common school education which should be "free and without charge of tuition, to all children between the ages of four and twenty years." Unlike the Constitution of 1846, the Constitution of 1848 specifically provided for a university. "Provision shall be made by law for the establishment of a State University, at or near the seat of state government, and for connecting with the same, from time to time, such colleges in different parts of the State, as the interests of education may require. The proceeds of all lands, that have been, or may hereafter be granted by the United States, to the state, for the support of a University, shall be and remain a perpetual fund, to be called the university fund, the interest of which shall be appropriated to the support of the state university, and no sectarian instruction shall be allowed in such university."

Responsibility for the sale of the school and university lands and the investment of the funds arising therefrom was given to a board of commissioners consisting of the secretary of state, the treasurer, and the attorney general. This board was required to follow procedures fixed by the legislature, but it was also directed by the Constitution to take mortgages, bearing interest at the rate of seven per cent, on any lands not sold for cash. In such cases, only on payment by the purchaser of the full amount of the mortgage and interest was the board authorized to convey title.¹⁷

Several parts of this article merit particular notice. Although provision was made for the connection of the university to other colleges within the state, nothing was said about the relation

¹⁷ *Constitution of Wisconsin*, Article X.

between the university and the academies or high schools which had been or would soon be established. If the makers of the Constitution regarded the university as head of the public school system, or if they envisioned an educational system that would ultimately extend from the elementary schools to the university, they failed to indicate it. Secondly, the location of the university was definitely fixed, "at or near the seat of state government." The proceedings of the convention record only one attempt to strike out this clause. The motion lost by a vote of 28 to 25.¹⁸ Perhaps in the ten years that followed the attempt to open a university at Madison, people had come to accept the idea that the state university should be located at the capital.

Lastly, the Constitution placed the responsibility for the disposing of school and university lands on a board of three elective officials, none of whom had any direct responsibility for the management of educational affairs. The purpose of creating this board of land commissioners by constitutional process was to make doubly sure that school and university interests would be well protected from irresponsible legislatures. Evidently neither the committee which framed this proposal nor the convention that accepted it even considered making the Board of Regents responsible for the disposition of the university lands. When the proposition came up for debate in the convention, one delegate opposed the ex officio board because "they would be selected on account of other qualities than their fitness for this duty" and urged that the disposition of all school and university lands be left to the legislature. Another delegate agreed that "there was no propriety in putting those officers on the board," but he proposed that the superintendent of public instruction be a member.¹⁹ A third delegate thought that the lieutenant governor should be made a member of the board in order to give him something to do. These objections and suggestions were brushed aside by Eleazer Root, a member of the educational committee and the man generally credited with having taken a leading part in framing the article. He took the position that the proposal, as it stood, protected the

¹⁸ *Journal of the Convention to Form a Constitution*, 1847-48, p. 342.

¹⁹ Milo M. Quaife, ed., *The Attainment of Statehood (Wisconsin Historical Collections*, vol. 29, Madison, 1928), 554-555.

school and university interests.²⁰ How well this system worked to protect the university interest will be considered later. It is sufficient to note here that control over the university land endowment was lodged in an ex officio board created by the Constitution.



IN HIS message to the first state legislature, which assembled in Madison in June, 1848, Governor Nelson Dewey spoke the now familiar phrases about education: "No one measure of governmental policy can contribute more to the stability of our institutions and the permanent welfare of the whole community, than a well-regulated system of public instruction, of common schools, open and free to all. Every state should provide that every child shall have the means of being well educated, and prepared to become a useful member of the body politic, and take care that none are reared in ignorance." He spoke also of the "munificent provisions" for the support of schools, the "deep interest" of the people in education, and recommended "to your favorable consideration, a revision of the school laws now in force, and the re-enactment of a new and efficient system of public instruction, to be uniform throughout the state, adapted to the wants of the community, and based upon constitutional provisions."²¹

Although there was no mention of the university in the

²⁰ In the debate Root explained and defended the committee's proposal as follows: "If no agents had been specified in the constitution, it would have been left to the legislature to select them. This had been done in one state and the result was that the state had been defrauded out of one-half of the value of the lands. The men who wished to buy the lands and knew their value got a law through the legislature providing for their sale by commissioners, and then got themselves appointed commissioners, and got the lands on their own terms. So it would be with us if we left the matter to the legislature. The committee had sought to guard the fund by putting the charge of it in high and responsible hands. And he thought there was also propriety in the officers chosen. The keeping of the funds would very properly pertain to the treasurer, and the title to the lands and all other legal questions concerning them, to the attorney-general. Another consideration in favor of this mode was that it would cause no additional expense to the state. The salaries of the officers were already established, and this was only imposing additional duties upon them. If a separate board were constituted, it would be good economy to pay them roundly. He thought there was no good reason for striking out the section. It was our duty to specify who should have the care of this great interest." *Ibid.*, 556.

²¹ *Senate Journal*, 1848, appendix 2, p. 12.

governor's recommendation for educational legislation, each house, in providing for its permanent organization, created a Committee on University and University Lands. The membership of the Senate committee was announced on June 9, 1848, the day after the governor read his message. Members of the Assembly committee were named the next day. The Senate committee was made up of three men: Joseph Turner of Waukesha County, chairman; Simeon Mills of Madison; and Harrison C. Hobart, who represented the counties of Brown, Calumet, Manitowoc, and Sheboygan. On June 14, only five days after the Senate committee was formed, Joseph Turner reported a bill to establish the university. It came up for consideration on June 19 and was discussed in committee of the whole, with Simeon Mills presiding. The committee reported the bill out with minor amendments and it was laid on the table. Two days later, on a motion by Mills, the bill was taken up; several amendments were made; and it was ordered engrossed. On June 23 it came up for the third reading and was passed and sent to the Assembly.²²

The Assembly adopted several amendments and added two sections to the fifteen contained in the Senate version of the bill. The Senate had provided for the appointment of regents by the governor and had empowered them to purchase land and construct necessary buildings with the approval of the governor. The lower house vested these powers in the legislature instead of the governor. It also trimmed the powers of the Board. The Senate seems to have intended that the Board of Regents exercise a controlling influence over all institutions of higher education in the state by providing that "no student shall be admitted to a degree in any college of this state who shall not have been previously examined and approved by examiners appointed by the regents."²³ This clause was struck out by the Assembly, which also added a clause limiting the power of the

²² The *Senate Journal* contains no mention of the introduction of the bill. The *Madison Argus* reported it on June 20, 1848, as a part of the business of June 13. The original manuscript copy, however, which is preserved in the State Historical Society, bears the following notation: "Reported by Mr. Turner from the Com. of University & University lands & read 1st and 2d times June 14." For the subsequent actions on the bill see the *Senate Journal*, 75, 90, 99.

²³ No. 138 (MS.), "A Bill to establish the University of Wisconsin," in the State Historical Society.

Board so that "in the first organization of the University the regents shall appoint such officers only as the wants of the institution shall require and shall increase them from time to time as the increase of the university fund will permit." This was the only Assembly amendment the Senate refused to accept. The Assembly refused to recede from its position, and a joint committee was appointed to work out a satisfactory compromise. They struck out the Assembly amendment and inserted after the provision permitting the regents to determine salaries of university officers, the clause "Provided that the salaries thus determined shall be submitted to the legislature for their approval or disapproval." This solution was accepted by both houses.²⁴ The two new sections attached to the bill by the Assembly, the one excluding sectarian influence from the university and the other repealing the university acts of 1836 and 1838, were accepted without dissent by the Senate. The bill, thus amended, was adopted by both houses and approved by the governor on July 26, 1848.

Under this law the government of the university was vested in a Board of Regents consisting of a president and twelve members. Board members were to be elected by the legislature for terms of six years; the chancellor of the university was to be ex officio president of the Board. The Board was authorized to appoint its officers, to enact laws for the government of the university, to select a chancellor, professors, and tutors, and to fix their salaries subject to legislative approval. The law provided: "The university shall consist of four departments: First, the department of science, literature and the arts; second, the department of law; third, the department of medicine; fourth, the department of the theory and practice of elementary instruction." The immediate government of the departments was to be entrusted to their respective faculties, but the regents were empowered to regulate the course of instruction; to prescribe, with the advice of the professors, the "books and authorities" to be used; and to "confer such degrees and grant such diplomas as are usually conferred and granted by other universities." The admission fee was limited to ten dollars; the tuition fee in the first and fourth departments was limited to

²⁴ *Senate Journal*, 1848, pp. 208, 225; *Assembly Journal*, 295.

twenty dollars a year for residents of the state. Tuition fees in these two departments were to be abolished altogether as soon as the University Fund would permit. The regents were authorized to spend a portion of the income of the University Fund for the purchase of land, the erection of buildings, the purchase of apparatus, a library, and a natural history cabinet; although, before purchasing land or beginning construction of buildings, they were to submit their plans to the legislature for approval. They were directed to submit an annual report to the legislature showing "the state and progress of the university in its several departments, the course of study, the number of professors and students, the amount of expenditures, and such other information as they may deem proper." And, in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution, the act provided that "the regents if they deem it expedient may receive into connexion with the university any colleges in this state upon application of its board of trustees; and such college so received shall become a branch of the university, subject to the visitation of the regents."²⁵

For eighteen years, from 1848 until 1866, the University operated under the provisions of this law. There were several attempts to alter the law radically, but during this period only a few minor changes were made. In 1854 the legislature increased the membership of the board to fifteen by adding two more ex officio members, the superintendent of public instruction and the secretary of state, who was also a member of the Board of School and University Land Commissioners.²⁶

The legislature wanted to exercise a tight control over the Board of Regents and the University, but they appear to have been more interested in the theory than the practice of their power. They did not even get around to selecting the Board of Regents. Appointment of the regents had been made a special order of business on the evening before the last day of the 1848 session, but the joint session was not held. If it had not been for the legislative experience and watchfulness of Simeon Mills the Board of Regents would not have been promptly appointed.

²⁵ *Session Laws*, 1848, pp. 37-39.

²⁶ *General Laws*, 1854, p. 27.

The law approved on July 26, 1848, had provided only one method of appointment and that by the legislature.

When the Senate convened at five o'clock on the morning of the last day, Simeon Mills was ready with a bill directing "that whenever there shall be a vacancy in the office of regents in the university from any cause whatever it shall be the duty of the governor to fill such by appointment, and the person or persons so appointed shall continue in office until the close of the next session of the legislature, and until others are elected in their stead." The bill was introduced shortly after the Senate met, passed by a vote of 8 to 4 under a suspension of the rules, and reached the Assembly before breakfast recess. The Assembly passed it without change and the governor signed it the same day. So it fell to Governor Nelson Dewey rather than to the legislature to appoint the Board that was to select the site for the University, prepare the plan for buildings, elect the first chancellor, and put the institution in operation.²⁷



GOVERNOR Dewey was faced with all the problems of launching a new state government, but he found time to appoint a Board of Regents for the University. The high quality of the membership of the Board and the absence of partisan flavor attests the care of his selection. That the Board was able to meet within six weeks of the adjournment of the legislature indicates the promptness of his action. Governor Dewey's contemporaries found nothing to criticize in the membership of the Board. Later observers have agreed that the Board was wisely chosen. Four of the first Board members were Madison men, Alexander L. Collins, Thomas W. Sutherland, Julius T. Clark, and Simeon

²⁷ *Session Laws*, 1848, p. 191; *Senate Journal*, 1848, p. 484; *Assembly Journal*, 690. Governor Dewey apparently assumed that his appointments were interim appointments only. In his message to the second legislature he reported that he had appointed a board "under the provisions of law, who will hold until the close of your present session, and until their successors are elected." *Senate Journal*, 1849, p. 27. The Board of Regents, however, took a different position. At their first meeting they drew lots for two-, four-, and six-year terms as required under the law of July 26, 1848. If they had any doubts about the propriety of serving out these terms, they did not voice them in their report to the legislature. By implication the legislature agreed with the Board, since no move was made to appoint their successors.

Mills. To Mills, more than to any other one man, belongs the credit for passage of the University charter. John H. Rountree of Platteville, who had served on the education committee in the first constitutional convention, and Cyrus Woodman of Mineral Point represented the southwestern part of the state. Edward V. Whiton of Janesville, who later became chief justice of the state, refused to serve and his place was taken by A. Hyatt Smith of the same town. Other members of the first Board were Rufus King, editor of the *Milwaukee Sentinel*; Hiram Barber of Dodge County; John Bannister of Fond du Lac; Henry Bryan, who emerged from obscurity long enough to nominate John Lathrop as chancellor; and Eleazer Root of Waukesha.²⁸ Root, a graduate of Williams College and a native of New York, had been an influential member of the educational committee of the second constitutional convention. He was elected the first superintendent of public instruction in the new state. Already he had had a hand in establishing at least three educational institutions: one in Virginia, and two in Wisconsin—Prairieville Academy and Carroll College. One of his contemporaries at Beloit referred to him as a “regular Warwick” at the business of starting colleges.

Part of the Board held a preliminary meeting late in September, 1848, but the first official meeting was held in October. Ten of the twelve members were present.²⁹ Eleazer Root was selected president pro tem; John Rountree, treasurer; and Julius T. Clark, secretary. Its organization completed, the Board proceeded with seeming unanimity to the business of preparing to open a university. A committee was appointed to negotiate the purchase of College Hill; the immediate establishment of a

²⁸ For a brief sketch of the members of this Board see J. F. A. Pyre, *Wisconsin* (New York, 1920), 81–87.

²⁹ The date of the first meeting of the Board is given in the official manuscript records as October 7, 1848. There was, however, an earlier meeting, the record of which was not preserved, probably because there was no quorum. On October 3, 1848, the *Wisconsin Argus* reported that the Board of Regents had held their first meeting the week before. “We are unapprised of their doings other than a report that a committee was appointed to negotiate for a site for the buildings, and steps were taken to organize a preparatory department as soon as circumstances will permit.” Horace A. Tenney in his circular as agent of the Board to collect a “cabinet of specimens,” dated October 7, 1848, mentions a meeting of the Board held “last week.”

preparatory department was approved, its admission requirements and curriculum were formulated, and a committee was chosen to make all necessary arrangements for establishing the department. Eleazer Root was named the Board's agent to secure information "in regard to the manner in which the university should be organized" and to report "practical plans" for the University buildings. Root was authorized "to visit the University of Michigan at the expense of the Board," if he deemed it necessary. On a motion by Henry Bryan the Board elected John H. Lathrop, then president of the University of Missouri, to the office of chancellor at a salary of \$2,000 a year, \$750 more than the governor's. John W. Sterling, who had been associated with Root in his educational ventures at Waukesha, was put in charge of the preparatory department. He was given the rank of professor and a salary of \$500 a year, to be paid from student fees. Horace A. Tenney, junior editor of the *Madison Argus*, was invited to collect geological and mineralogical specimens for the University.³⁰

The prompt and decisive action of the Board may be attributed to the vigorous leadership of Eleazer Root. That the University was entirely without funds, that the legislature had not yet authorized the sale of the university lands, and that the Board had neither property nor yet a building in which to house even the preparatory department was of small consequence. Several years later, when a legislative committee criticized the Board for opening the University without funds and before there was a need for the institution, the Board partially explained its hasty action: "an *early organization of the University interest* is essential to the thrifty administration of the endowment. . . . Wherever the disposal of the lands has been attempted, prior to the creation of a distinct University interest by an act of incorporation, the endowment has been doomed to melt away under an unchecked system of neighborhood spoliation, in fraud of the just rights of the young mind of each successive generation of men." If it was the intention of the Board to prevent squandering of University funds, at the same

³⁰ Records of the Board of Regents (MS.), Vol. A, October 7, 1848. Volume A is unpagged.

time forcing an early sale of the land endowment, it surely attained its purpose when it committed two thousand dollars annually for the salary of the chancellor and additional sums for the professors and for the construction of buildings. At no time during the early history of the University was there the likelihood that a sufficient, uncommitted amount of money would be in the University Fund to tempt for long even the most modest plunder seekers in the legislature or elsewhere.

Notice of the decisions and actions of the Board was transmitted approvingly to the public by the *Wisconsin Argus*. The paper announced that the Board had taken preliminary steps "toward the commencement of this great work . . . and it only requires the sanction of the legislature to put the institution in operation." It went on to predict that the preparatory department would have from seventy-five to one hundred students when it opened and that when the first University building was completed "a numerous freshman class will be ready to enter upon the regular course of studies."³¹

Meanwhile the committee in charge of the preparatory department moved promptly. John Sterling had indicated his willingness to accept the amorphous appointment offered him, and the committee secured from the "citizens of Madison" rent-free use of a room in the Madison Female Academy. In December an advertisement was inserted in the Madison papers announcing that the preparatory department would be opened on the first Monday in February, 1849. Applicants for admission were required "to possess a knowledge of the elements of Arithmetic, Grammar and Geography." The *Argus* added its own comment in support of the department. "A very neat and commodious room has been fitted up in the new academy which will answer all purposes until the first college building is completed. Every facility will be given to those desirous of acquiring an education, and when the beauty and healthiness of the place, the moderate cost of board, etc. and the high character of the teachers are taken into consideration, we hazard nothing in saying that no other literary institution in the north-west

³¹ *Regents' Annual Report*, January 1, 1851, p. 19; *Wisconsin Argus* (Madison), October 31, 1848.

can hold out equal inducements. The University Fund is at present valued at \$200,000 and if judiciously managed, is adequate to all purposes for which it was intended. It is believed that \$50,000 will complete all necessary buildings leaving the balance to be applied to the support of the faculty, the purchase of a library, cabinet, scientific apparatus, etc., etc. Students entering this institution may rely upon receiving a thorough course of instruction, and enjoying advantages soon, equal to any other in the country.”³²

The sanguine expectations of the editor of the *Argus* were not realized when the first class assembled before John Sterling on February 5, 1849. Only seventeen boys from Madison and the surrounding country enrolled the first day. Three more came in later, bringing the total number of the first class to twenty. Thus before an acre of land endowment had been sold, even before the legislature had established the procedures under which the land was to be sold, the Board had succeeded in bringing part of the University into operation.

The committee appointed to negotiate the purchase of College Hill reported meanwhile that the owner, Aaron Vanderpool of the city of New York, was willing to sell the entire tract of 157½ acres to the University for \$15 an acre “with the addition of the taxes for the present year, and a commission of 2½ per cent. to his agents, Catlin and Williamson.” This was more land than the regents wanted, but the owner was unwilling to sell less than the whole tract. The regents assured the legislature that “such portions of it, as may not be needed for purposes of the University, can readily be disposed of without sacrifice.” Accordingly, the Board asked the legislature for approval of its plans to purchase this tract, to employ a chancellor at a maximum salary of \$2,000 per year, “believed to be at about a medium of the rate of salaries, paid to the presidents of our most respectable American Colleges,” and to erect a temporary building on a site midway between the Capitol and College Hill. The regents postponed decisions on the plan for buildings to be erected on the permanent site and on the or-

³² *Wisconsin Argus*, December 12, 1848, p. 2. The advertisements appeared also in the *Democrat* during December and January.

ganization of the University. In the meantime, in search of "all the light" from the "wisdom and experience of others" they were engaged "in a correspondence with many eminent men, connected with other literary institutions." The legislature obligingly passed a joint resolution approving "the salaries of the officers of the University, as determined by the Board of Regents and submitted to the legislature," the purchase of the site, and "the plan of the buildings submitted by said regents."³³

The Board acknowledged that expenses of about \$75 had already been incurred and more were anticipated before funds would be available from the land endowment. It was suggested that the sum of \$1,000 be placed at the disposal of the Board by the legislature to defray contingent expenses and cover the first payment on the site—this sum to be repaid from the University Fund.³⁴ This plea was ignored.

Although the Board of Regents still had no funds, the way was opened for Lathrop to accept the appointment as chancellor.³⁵ He agreed to assume his new office in the autumn of 1849. Born in New York State in 1799, educated at Hamilton College and Yale, Lathrop brought to the University a wealth of educational experience. He had read law, tutored at Yale, participated for a period in lyceum work, occupied a chair at Hamilton College for a number of years, and for the seven years before coming to Wisconsin had served as president of the University of Missouri. Lathrop was small of stature, full-bearded, neat to the point of dandyism, and he possessed a facility of tongue and pen. Yet there is something slightly pathetic about this first chancellor as we follow him through the first decade of the University's history. His coming was greeted with delight;³⁶ his resignation ten years later was accepted without reluctance.

³³ *Regents' Annual Report*, January 30, 1849, pp. 4, 5, 7; *Session Laws*, 1849, p. 173.

³⁴ *Regents' Annual Report*, January 30, 1849, p. 8.

³⁵ Lathrop's letter of acceptance was dated March 14, 1849. Although the regents announced to the legislature that he would enter upon his duties in September, Lathrop declared that he would come to Madison in October. A copy of Lathrop's letter of acceptance is in John Sterling's manuscript *History of the University*, Papers of the Board of Regents.

³⁶ On October 30, 1849, the *Argus* announced the arrival of Lathrop. "He comes among us with the experience of many years and a solid reputation as a

During the ten years between his arrival and departure, Lathrop was to be the central power in the University. The membership of the Board changed, the faculty changed, and the student body changed; but Lathrop, president of the Board of Regents, member of its important executive and building committees, and president of the faculty, undisturbed by the giant chasm between words and deeds, turned out report after report, each promising more stately educational mansions than the one before. By some he was called an obstinate man. He was also cautious to the point of timidity. While he was in Madison he purchased pews in four churches, all of which he offered to sell at a discount to his successor, Henry Barnard.³⁷

The record of Lathrop's relationship with the Board of Regents shows that only rarely were his recommendations rejected. Lathrop never became a power in the educational growth of Wisconsin, but he inspired loyalty among the young men in his charge. When he was under attack in 1858 the students signed a letter assuring him that "there is one place where your worth is acknowledged; your many virtues admired, and yourself beloved . . . where you are best known, you are the most respected." Almost fifty years later, William F. Vilas, one of the students who signed the letter, spoke words of praise to his memory. "To that great, good man, first Chancellor, John H. Lathrop, who, with true vision of its high aims and ultimate triumph, wrought its establishment, unfaltering amid storm and trial, my heart fondly turns with reverent respect and affection." The Swedish novelist, Fredrika Bremer, was impressed by him when she visited Madison in the autumn of 1850. He was, she wrote, "an agreeable and really intellectual man, full of life, and a clear intelligent sense of the value of that youthful state in the group of the United States, and their common value in the history of the world. I derived much pleasure from his conversation, and from the perusal of a speech which he made a short

ripe scholar and most worthy. We have every confidence that under his superintendence, not only the University but the cause of education generally will receive an accelerated momentum."

³⁷ Lathrop to Henry Barnard, September 20, 1859, in the Barnard Manuscripts, New York University.

time since in the Capitol here, on his installation as Chancellor of the University."³⁸

Lathrop arrived in Madison in late October, 1849. On November 21 the Board of Regents installed him in office. Escorted by a committee of two regents, he entered the Board meeting, was introduced to those present, and then was offered the president's chair. The president pro tem, Eleazer Root, in yielding his office to Lathrop, delivered a brief address which, with Lathrop's gracious response, was spread upon the records of the regents for posterity. "We are about laying the foundations of an Institution of learning" Root proclaimed, "which we believe is destined to exert a great and salutary influence on the moral, intellectual and social character of the people of this State, for all time to come. Over this institution we have called you to preside; and upon your counsels we shall rely for the guidance of its instruction and the promotion of its interests. In all your labours in the discharge of your high official responsibilities, you may depend upon our faithful co-operation." These words brought from Lathrop a request for wholehearted support from the Board, unanimity and singleness of purpose. In return he promised his full co-operation to assure the "success, prosperity, usefulness, and glorious destiny of the University of Wisconsin."

Not content with this private investiture, and no doubt seeking a device for bringing the University prominently, even dramatically, before the people of the state, the Board of Regents arranged for a public inauguration of the chancellor on January 16, 1850. It was a grand occasion. Business in Madison, then a village of fifteen hundred, ceased. The legislature adjourned for the day and the Assembly lent its hall for the ceremony. Two conventions then in session in Madison recessed, and even the wheels of justice stopped when the supreme court adjourned so that the justices could march with almost all the male population in the procession which escorted the chancellor, accom-

³⁸ *The Students' Miscellany*, 2:235-236 (June, 1858); William F. Vilas, "Address on Behalf of the Regents" at the exercises attending the inauguration of President Van Hise, June 7, 1904, in *The Jubilee of the University of Wisconsin* (Madison, 1905); Fredrika Bremer, *The Homes of the New World: Impressions of America*, translated by Mary Howitt (2 vols., New York, 1853), 1:636.

panied by the governor, from the United States House to the Assembly Hall. The ladies were not invited to join the parade, which marched behind the Madison Brass Band, but the balcony of the hall was reserved for them.

Speaking for the Board of Regents, A. Hyatt Smith formally invested Lathrop as chancellor "with all the authority, privileges, and emoluments to which, in that capacity, you are now or may hereafter be entitled." Lathrop responded in a two-hour address to the audience of six or seven hundred people, including, one reporter wrote, the most "prominent characters" in the state. In the evening a grand ball was held. The guests included the governor, the secretary of state, the new chancellor, and their "ladies." The *Milwaukee Sentinel and Gazette* reported that Mrs. Murray, late of Kentucky, was "the belle of the party." It was 2:00 a.m. before the dance broke up.³⁹

The man who spoke to the assembled dignitaries of the state gave promise of what could be expected of him during his years as chancellor. In full round periods, with grace, charm, and a show of learning, John Lathrop discovered before his audience the strength and power of knowledge. He discerned "the law of progress, as a distinguishing principle and characteristic" of man. Progress was based upon the accumulation of knowledge, and "while the species shall endure, human knowledge shall be perpetually juvenescent. Time brings with it no decay, age no decrepitude. As in the progress of the world's existence, we, day by day, and year by year, collect the scattered fragments of the

³⁹ Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. B, pp. 9-10 (November 21, 1849); *The Inauguration of the Chancellor of the University of Wisconsin* (Milwaukee, 1850), 17; *Argus*, January 22, 1850; *Sentinel & Gazette*, January 18, 1850. Although Rufus King was delighted with the dance, his feelings were not shared by all. Professor J. Emerson of Beloit College, in writing to his cousin Joseph Emerson on February 13, 1850, observed that "the style of celebrating the inauguration was a matter of surprise and profound regret to us. We had hoped that the University would be if not immediately a collegiate institution of a high order, at least an institution where education would be under the charge of men who would inculcate principles of general religion, and pay a deference to the feelings of religious people in this latitude. But the Chancellor is said to be a skeptic, and they open, as you see, with a ball: and it looks as if we must expect to find the University an actual opponent to Christian education." In April Professor Emerson wrote his father that he believed the report about the chancellor's being a skeptic was incorrect. Letters in the archives of Beloit College, copies of which were kindly furnished by Robert K. Richardson.

great body of truth—restore limb to limb—the swelling outline assumes new grace and beauty, and an immortal vigor, ever springing, never decaying, animates the breathing frame. . . . Indeed,” he proclaimed, “to deny the fact of human progress, or to assign limits to such progress in the ages which are to follow, would be to allege the imperfection of the divine appointments, nowhere else seen in His government of this world.” In a survey of history, in the rise of the new sciences and new industries, in the improvement of man himself, Lathrop found support for his belief in progress. This in turn led him to affirm the obligation of each generation to make its contribution. “If we feel duly and rationally the dread responsibility resting upon us, if we could discharge our obligations to the species, and become, in our turn, its benefactors, we shall tell to our sons more than our fathers told to us.” It was the function of education to fulfill this obligation. “And here I need hardly say that the UNIVERSITY of modern times, acting in unison with the other public schools of the civil state, is the appointed instrumentality by which this instruction is to be rendered. The university is the depository and the almoner of the intellectual treasures of the age.” From this position it was easy for him to argue the state’s responsibility for education. “The American mind has grasped the idea and will not let it go, that the whole property of the state, is holden subject to the sacred trust of providing for the education of every child of the state.

“Without the adoption of this system, as the most potent compensation of the aristocratic tendencies of hereditary wealth, the boasted political equality of which we dream, is but an illusion. Knowledge is the great leveler. It is the true democracy. It levels up—it does not level down.”

Lathrop sternly warned the legislature to make careful provision for the land endowment. “Every act of waste committed on these lands, every sale of an acre for less than its full value, under whatever guise it may take place, is in fraud of the general government, the donor of the fund, in fraud of the substantial interests of the young mind of the commonwealth, and what is more than all, in fraud of that progressive civilization which alone can realize the hope and accomplish the proper destiny

of man in this world." He opposed, at this point, extensive appropriations for buildings, insisting upon a building program which would combine uncompromising utility with "sound and discriminating economy." The library of the University, he declared, would aim "to embody ALL that is worth preserving of the literature of every country and of every age—the recorded thought of the human mind,—the recorded experience of human society." But more important than buildings, library, or apparatus in the University were the professors who "afford the substance of an institution of learning." A professor must be a man of "native vigor, of sound scholarship, of varied attainments, of devotion to his especial department, of aptitude to impart instruction, of fidelity to his associates and to the common cause, of strength of purpose united with a conciliatory demeanor." To the professors should be given the internal management of the University. "The instruction and discipline of the institution is their especial trust, with which a wise Regency will not intermeddle by naked acts of power. Without the clearest necessity, the power should never be invoked to pass the line which limits the mutual responsibilities of the regency and the Faculty."

Seven years before, on a similar occasion in Missouri, Lathrop had refused to descend from the realm of generalities in his discussion of education and the state university.⁴⁰ So on this occasion he postponed discussion of the internal policy and program of the University until "we shall have erected, on yonder beautiful eminence, our temple of science, and shall dedicate it to truth and to reason, and to the great cause of progressive civilization." He did, however, propose that the University should offer training for teachers and "gratuitous instruction to every young man who intends to prepare himself, by subsequent theological study, to become the moral educator of the popular mind." He concluded with the declaration: "And if this State University be the chosen instrumentality by which Wisconsin shall discharge her duty to man, then shall it indeed accomplish a glorious destiny, by ministering in no humble degree to the advancement of the cause of God in this world,

⁴⁰ John H. Lathrop, *Address before the Members of the General Assembly of the State of Missouri . . . December 22, 1842* (Columbia, 1843).

which is none other than the cause of human intelligence and virtue—the great cause of an ever progressive civilization.”⁴¹

Contemporary accounts agree that the address was well received. The *Argus* reporter, whose account suggests that the writer was more impressed than enlightened, declared that the “large and respectable audience listened with the utmost attention and seemed deeply interested and instructed.” The regular correspondent of the *Milwaukee Sentinel* wrote of the “glowing strains of eloquence,” the “chaste and beautiful style,” and the “fresh and original” thoughts. The editor of the same newspaper, Rufus King, who was not without experience in judging oratory, recorded that the address “charmed all ears . . . I have certainly never heard, on any similar occasion, so felicitous an address, or one which commanded such universal assent and approval.”⁴²

Lathrop’s star never shone brighter than in January, 1850. The legislature stood ready to approve almost all that he and the Board of Regents asked for on the day of the inauguration.⁴³ The Board’s report, listing the requests, was a significant supplement to the inaugural address, because the Board here set forth the preliminary organization of the University, submitted its plans for the development of the site and the construction of buildings, and recommended legislative action to increase and safeguard the fund to be derived from the sale of the university lands.

The regents announced without embarrassment that they had “perfected their title” to the quarter section of land purchased from Aaron Vanderpool only to find that the “whole University site was not included within the metes and bounds of this tract.” Therefore additional land had been purchased to complete the site. It comprised, as then laid out, “about fifty acres, bounded north by Fourth Lake, east by a street to be opened at right angles with King [now State] Street, south by Mineral Point Road, and west by a carriage way from said road

⁴¹ Lathrop’s inaugural address, January 16, 1850, is included in *The Inauguration of the Chancellor of the University of Wisconsin*, cited above.

⁴² *Argus*, January 22, 1850; *Milwaukee Sentinel & Gazette*, January 18, 19, 1850.

⁴³ *Regents’ Annual Report*, January 16, 1850.

to the lake." All the land belonging to the Board which was not included within this site had been laid out into streets and town lots. The lots were to be offered for sale.

The plans for the buildings and other improvements on this site, of which College Hill was the central and dominating feature, were devised by the chancellor and two of the Madison regents, Simeon Mills and Nathaniel W. Dean. The drawings, estimates, and specifications were prepared by J. F. Rague, "an accomplished architect in the city of Milwaukee."⁴⁴ The plans, unanimously approved by the Board of Regents and carried out in large part during the next ten years, included the following:

1. A main edifice fronting toward the capitol, three stories high, surmounted by an observatory for astronomical observations; said building to be one hundred and forty feet in length, with an extreme depth of sixty feet, containing thirteen public rooms for recitation, lecture, library, cabinet, etc., and also two dwelling houses for officers of the institution.

2. An avenue two hundred and forty feet wide, extending from the main edifice to the east line of the grounds and bordered by double rows of trees.

3. Four dormitory buildings, two on each side of the above mentioned avenue, lower down the hill, on a line fronting toward the town, each building to be four stories high, 110 feet in length and forty feet in breadth, containing thirty-two studies for the use of students, each study having two bed-rooms and a wood room attached. Assigning two students to each room or study, the plan when completed will accommodate two hundred and fifty-six.

4. Two carriage ways fifty feet wide, bordered with trees—one flanking each of the extreme dormitory buildings and both parallel to the wide avenue.

5. The spaces between the north carriage way and the lake, and between the south carriage way and Mineral Point Road, to be divided into Professors' lots, and to be improved as the Board may hereafter direct.

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, 5. J. F. Rague was one of the most distinguished architects in the West. He had already designed the capitol at Springfield and the territorial capitol of Iowa at Iowa City, which is now the most treasured building on the campus of the University of Iowa. See Rexford Newcomb, "Beginnings of Architecture in Illinois," in the *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society*, 39:320-321 (September, 1946).

The construction of the four dormitories and the central building, together with landscaping the grounds, could be completed, the architect had assured the Board, at a cost of "\$70,000, nearly."

The two innermost dormitories were to be constructed first—it was expected that at least one would be built during the coming summer—to provide for the collegiate students and the teachers' classes. But in order to begin construction work it would be "necessary to anticipate the income to be derived from the sales of the University lands to a limited extent."

The Board then asked the legislature to authorize a loan of \$25,000 to the University from the School Fund, the sum to be repaid, with interest, from the income of the University Fund as it became available.

The Board also pointed out that it was the duty of the state to so administer the lands as to secure "their whole value." Recognition of pre-emption rights to university lands was not approved by the Board. Moreover, the Board protested vigorously against the low valuation which appraisers had set upon university lands which were to be offered for sale. The legislature was urged to adopt a law fixing the value of these lands at \$10 an acre, thus assuring to Wisconsin the maximum benefit of the land grant. The Board members declared that at present it was "their imperative duty to confine their pecuniary appropriations to the Collegiate and Normal Departments."

The legislature, under the spell of Lathrop's address, quickly gave its approval to the building plans, authorized the loan, and adopted a law fixing the value of the university lands at the price recommended by the Board. It did not, however, give to the Board the "discretionary power . . . to regulate the time and the conditions of the sale of said lands," as had been requested, perhaps for the very good reason that this authority already reposed under constitutional grant in the school and university land commissioners.

So, within a few months after Lathrop's arrival in Madison, the prospects of the University appeared bright beyond all reasonable expectations. The preparatory department was in operation; two departments of the University had been organ-

ized, at least on paper; and the legislature had approved the building program, acted to assure the maximum value from the sale of the lands, and authorized a loan to the Board under which construction of buildings could be begun. That the institution which was launched with such dispatch and accepted with such enthusiasm failed to fulfill its early promise may be understood partly in terms of its immediate financial problems, partly in terms of its failure to develop an educational program which would win the sympathy and support of the people of the state and their representatives, and partly in terms of a host of factors including the financial panic of 1857 and the Civil War.

3.

The Aims of the Founders

AFTER the federal government made its first land grant to support a "seminary of learning," more than sixty years elapsed before the University of Wisconsin was established, but it could not be said that the passage of time had produced any common agreement as to what a state university was to be or to do. During the same span of years colleges had been established with almost careless abandon. One investigator, after a careful examination, reported that some 516 colleges and universities were founded in sixteen states before the Civil War.¹ Less than one-fifth of them survived until the twentieth century. A total of 182 founded throughout the United States during this period survived to 1920.² Of this number, 21 were state universities, the majority of which were created because of the federal land endowment. The rest were privately supported and each had a reason for being, each had a definite aim and function implicit in the nature of its origin and support. The same could not be said about the state universities, particularly those founded in the region west of the Appalachian Mountains. Called into being by the federal land grant, placed either directly or indirectly under the control of the state legislature, safeguarded often from sectarian domination by constitutional

¹ Donald G. Tewksbury, *The Founding of American Colleges and Universities before the Civil War, with Particular Reference to the Religious Influences Bearing upon the College Movement* (Teachers College, Columbia University, *Contributions to Education*, no. 543, New York, 1932), 28.

² *Ibid.*, 31-54.

or statutory provision, the state universities before the Civil War were institutions without precedent or tradition, without generally accepted aims or functions. While many sought to emulate the respectable privately endowed universities of the eastern seaboard and even the universities of Europe, they were peculiarly susceptible as state institutions to the influence of popular demand. Unprotected by tradition or doctrine, more or less directly responsible to the state legislature, the state university often attempted to respond to the demand that higher education serve the people directly.

At Wisconsin the Board of Regents was the creature of the legislature, appointed by and responsible to that body. While the time-honored disciplines were not discarded, the University displayed a willingness, from the very beginning, to embrace new disciplines, to absorb into its course of study activities which would have been anathema to the older, traditional colleges and universities. There was, to be sure, often a wide discrepancy between what the responsible officials of the University said the institution was doing and what was actually being done. This discrepancy is to be explained partly in terms of the limited funds, partly in terms of the inability of the University to find the means of accomplishing the objects set forth, and partly in terms of a reluctance on the part of the chancellor and faculty to attempt to do what the University was in principle committed to do. Moreover, the student body was small, the number of graduates smaller, and the largest part of the enrollment each year was to be found in the preparatory department, a department made necessary by the fact that there were no high schools to prepare students for the University.

During territorial days, when it was the subject of legislative action, little had been said about the function of a university. Nor was this point debated in the two constitutional conventions. The Constitution of 1848, it will be recalled, did place the University at Madison, free it from sectarian domination, provide for the protection of the land grant, and permit the University to form connections with other colleges in the state. The first legislature implemented the constitutional provision

and, without much discussion, provided that the University should consist of four departments: science, literature, and the arts; law; medicine; and the theory and practice of elementary instruction.

Except for this general declaration, almost no suggestions or guidance had been offered to the regents by the time they met in the autumn of 1848. The regents disposed of most of the business before them with confidence and dispatch. Only on the matters of organization and course of study did they betray uncertainty. They postponed definite action and authorized the president pro tem, Eleazer Root, to visit the University of Michigan to get information that might aid in preparation of plans for the organization of the University of Wisconsin. The regents announced their hope that the "blessings of education will be as widely diffused through our commonwealth . . . as in any other civilized community. But to secure a result so desirable requires much careful deliberation, and the adoption of wise and judicious measures. The University will occupy the highest place in our educational system, and if properly organized, will make that system complete. From its design, it must necessarily embrace a wide range of study and a severe course of mental discipline. It is important, that the plan upon which it shall be conducted, particularly as regards its several departments of instruction, should be well chosen. To organize these departments in accordance with the advanced progress of science, and so as fully to meet the wants of our youth, is an undertaking of no ordinary difficulty." There were differences of opinion on these matters and faulty organization had frequently led to much difficulty. Accordingly, the Board proposed to study this matter carefully in order to provide for Wisconsin "an institution of learning, of the highest order of excellence."³

A year later, three months after the arrival of Chancellor Lathrop, the Board published its plans for the organization of the first and fourth departments of the University. These departments were to be opened "at as early a day as the finances of the institution will permit." First, the department of science,

³ *Regents' Annual Report*, January 30, 1849, p. 4.

literature, and the arts was to consist of six professorships, each embracing a large segment of human knowledge.

The professorship of ethics, civil polity, and political economy was assigned to the chancellor. This chair was "to render instruction in Theoretic and Practical Morality, in the Science of Government, in International and Constitutional Law, and in the laws regulating the Production, Distribution, Exchange, and Consumption of material wealth, and to inculcate such knowledge and discipline as may be calculated to prepare liberally educated young men to become good and useful citizens of the republic."

The professorship of mental philosophy, logic, rhetoric and English literature was to "treat of the powers and capabilities of the human mind, the modes in which knowledge is acquired and communicated, the use of language in convincing and persuading men, with a special adaptation of the whole to the structure and capabilities of the English Language." Although this program would seem to be enough to occupy the full time and attention of one man, this chair was assigned to the "Normal Professor."

The third professorship, that of ancient languages and literature, was to be responsible for teaching classical and oriental languages and was "to develop the philosophy of language and to unfold the history and the theory of a civilization which has passed away, but has left an abiding impression on human society."

The professorship of modern languages and literature was "to render stated instruction in German and French, to the regular classes, and occasional instruction in other modern languages... to make the acquisition of German and French tributary to the better understanding of the elements of the English tongue; and to render such assistance in the Department of Ancient Languages as the Chancellor may deem expedient."

The professorship of mathematics, natural philosophy, and astronomy was to give instruction in "pure and mixed Mathematics, in Civil Engineering, Practical surveying, and other

field operations, in experimental Philosophy, and the use of apparatus, and in Theoretic and Practical Astronomy."

The sixth professorship was that of chemistry and natural history. The incumbent of this chair was charged with providing instruction in "Chemistry and its applications, in Mineralogy, Geology, the Natural History of plants and animals, and human Physiology. It shall be the further duty of the Professor to superintend the collections, in the various branches of physical science, and to make and publish meteorological observations." The six professors, together with the tutor of the preparatory department and such others as might be appointed, constituted the faculty of the department, under the chancellor.

The second department, the theory and practice of elementary instruction, consisted of a "Normal Professorship." That chair was given responsibility for "instruction in the art of teaching; comprising the most approved modes of inculcating knowledge and administering the discipline of the common school; and in such branches of study as may best prepare the pupils in this Department, for their honorable and useful vocation as educators of the popular mind." This department was to hold an annual session of not less than five months for young men seeking to prepare for teaching. Students in the department were to have access to all regular classes of the University on the same terms as members of the college classes. If they agreed to teach in the schools of the state, they would pay no tuition. They were to receive diplomas upon satisfactorily passing an examination.

The Board intended "to make the University of Wisconsin subsidiary to the great cause of popular education, by making it, through its Normal Department, the nursery of the educators of the popular mind, and the central point of union and harmony to the educational interests of the Commonwealth. It is by making our University the *school of the schoolmaster* that a corps of competent instructors is to be best provided, and that all the educational agencies of the State, from the highest to the lowest, may be made tributary to the great end of training up the mind of Wisconsin to intelligence and virtue." The Board intended no narrow training for the normal students; it was

expected that by having the other departments opened to them, they would be enabled, in addition to acquiring the normal instruction, to go forth with "a mind enlarged with a liberal course of study." It was anticipated that all the educational agencies of the state would "act in harmony, and conspire to the production of one common result. The University no longer hoards its intellectual treasures, but makes the teacher of the district school the dispenser of its bounty; no longer standing aloof from contact with the common mind, as the centre and heart of the whole system, its pulsations send the tide of intellectual life to the remotest extremities of the social body."⁴

Here then was the plan of organization of the University and the justification. Although the plan was enlarged and modified during the next years, the basic pattern was little changed before 1866. The professorships, as established in 1850, survived until that time. The object of the University, as set forth in the beginning, was to offer "practical" courses. While there was a great and enduring gap between what the Board said the University was doing and what it actually managed to do, it is clear that the most important criterion in the determination of the organization and the course of study was utilitarian. This preoccupation with attempting to provide, or at least promising to provide, instruction in those disciplines having immediate utilitarian value can be traced through the ensuing years, and if attainment never matched the stated objectives, if wide differences of opinion appeared as to what should be done first in seeking to achieve the stated aims, it is at least clear that the object of the University was to serve the interest of the people. Moreover, the chancellor and the Board conceived of the University as head of the state system of public education. The movement that resulted in making the University the capstone of the educational pyramid and in securing financial support from the state will be discussed below.

Within a year after the announcement of the plan of organization, the Board proposed an enlargement of the scope of the University by the creation of a "Department of the Practical Applications of Science." The importance of such a department,

⁴ *Regents' Annual Report*, January 16, 1850, pp. 6-12.

the Board insisted, could be seen by all. "The applications of the Sciences to the useful arts, including every industrial occupation which ministers to the well-being of society, have become too numerous and too important to be neglected in any wisely constructed system of general education."

"It needs no argument to satisfy the most casual observer, that the position which nations and communities are destined to take in the scale of Modern Civilization, must depend, in a very great degree, on the extent to which science guides the hand of production and regulates the processes of trade." Because of the vast contributions of science, the Board felt that a state university "cannot now be regarded as entire in its plan and design, without the organization of a Department of the Practical Applications of Science." The department would serve particularly those "on whose intelligence and skill depend the success of the industrial processes, the physical wealth, and the general prosperity of the community."

Establishment of such a department, the Board submitted, was of immediate importance to agriculture. "It is impossible that the annual yield of the land and labor should not be greatly increased in quantity and improved in quality by the universal diffusion among cultivators of a knowledge of the analysis of soils, of the action of manures, of the elements which enter in the composition of grasses, grains, and other agricultural products severally, of the Natural History of plants and animals, and the relations of light, heat, moisture, gravitation, electricity and its cognate agents to the processes of organic life." In addition to improving the productivity and prosperity of agriculture, the Board foresaw that such a department would elevate farming to the dignity of a profession "side by side with the learned professions in interest and honor, as well as in profit."

As in the case of students of the normal department, students in the department of science applied to the arts were not to confine their attention solely to their own department. They were to have access to all University lectures in the other departments. This advantage, the Board pointed out, argued effectively for the establishment of the agricultural school within the University. "By introducing the future Cultivator or the

Artizan, during the period of his professional culture, to the more liberal instructions of the University, we secure to him in the highest degree, the advantages of Chemical and Mechanical Science, of the experimental farm, of models illustrative of the industrial process—and super add to all these, free access to the library, and collections in the various branches of Natural Science, and, in connexion with the regular classes, to the lecture rooms of the Professors of the other Departments, whether Collegiate or Professional.”⁵

The chancellor also assumed that a school of theology would ultimately be established as one of the professional schools. In his inaugural address, and in the first report of the Board of Regents, it was proposed that students intending to become ministers would be granted free tuition. In 1855, however, Chancellor Lathrop discovered that the charter of the University made no provision for a theological department. A year later the Board was content to leave the “professional schools of Theology to the support of the denominations to which they severally belong.”⁶

Although the Board and the chancellor called attention each year to the necessity of establishing a department of the application of science to the arts, it was not until 1856 that they could announce that this department had been created. In 1856 the Board also proclaimed the virtual completion of the organization of the department of medicine and the formulation of plans to open a department of law. In 1857 the chancellor proposed the creation of a department of civil engineering and a department of physics and astronomy. Moreover, noting the recent appearance of commercial colleges in the United States, for “the preparation of young men for trade in its several branches,” Lathrop pointed out that the “instructions of these schools, as their proper design becomes more fully developed, will extend beyond the mere keeping of accounts and the other technicalities of business life, and embrace political economy, the laws of trade and finance, the science of government and its action upon commerce, international law, and ethics. The idea that the American merchant should be a man of liberal

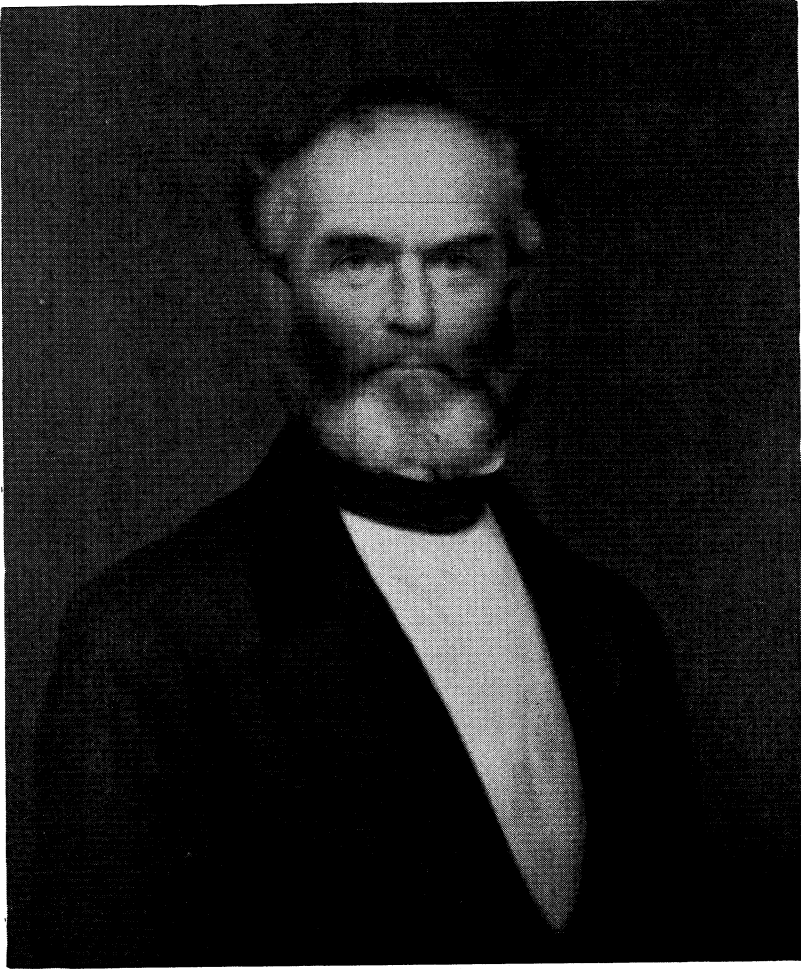
⁵ *Ibid.*, January 1, 1851, pp. 12–17.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 1854, p. 16; 1855, p. 13.

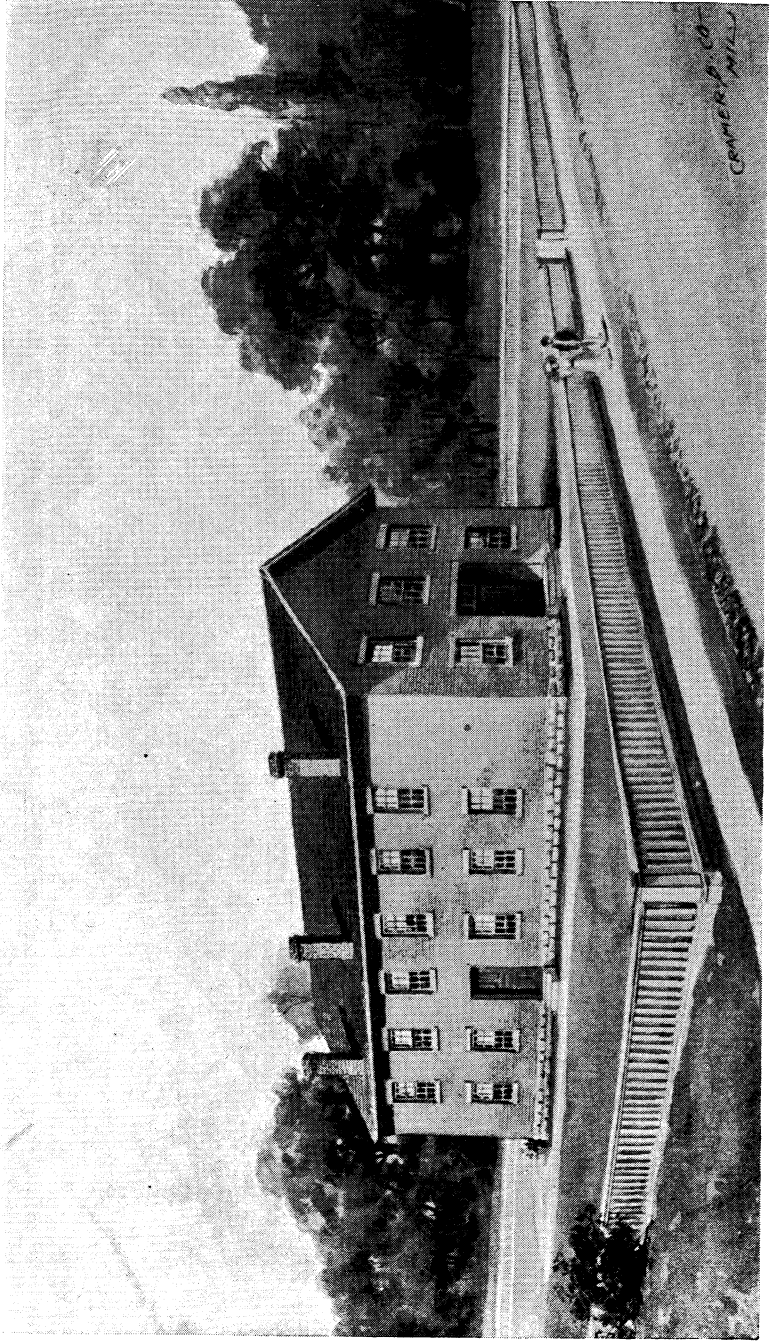
culture will be best realized, by bringing the commercial school within the University system; so as to secure to the student the opportunity, while pursuing his technical preparation for the mercantile profession, to attend courses of instruction in the other departments of the University." Lathrop urged consideration of this matter and pointed out that an "extension of our University system in that direction may be facilitated by arranging the school already in operation in Madison, as a department of the University on conditions satisfactory to the parties." He renewed his recommendation, and in January, 1858 the Board of Regents instructed its executive committee to negotiate arrangements under which Bacon's Commercial College of Madison would be attached to the University as one of the professional departments. The negotiations resulted in the annexation of the Commercial College to the University and in naming the principal of the school "Instructor of Book-Keeping and Commercial Calculations." He served without pay from the University, and the college remained in its old location, but for several years thereafter the University catalogue carried the names of the students in the commercial college as part of the student body of the University.⁷

But even this expansion did not bring into existence all of the professional schools visualized by the chancellor as the necessary parts of a university. In his report to the Board in 1857, he pointed out that the "office of the professional school is to supply the learning and the culture needful to the successful prosecution of any branch of the business of life. Advancing civilization enlarges the catalogue of the professions, by extending the applications of science to the arts, and suggesting the necessity of specific culture to the candidate for practice. The term profession is no longer confined to Theology, Medicine and Law. The schools of Engineering, of Didactics, of Technology, of Agriculture, or Civil Architecture and the Arts of Design, the Commercial College, are all properly professional schools, and as such, should be brought within the

⁷ *Ibid.*, 1855, pp. 8-9, 12; 1856, pp. 22, 23; 1857-58, pp. 68-69; Records of the Board of Regents (MS.), Vol. B, p. 155, January 21, 1858. The chancellor's communication, dated January 21, 1857, appeared in the report for 1856.



John H. Lathrop



Madison Female Academy, Where the First Class of the University Met on February 5, 1849

scope of the University of Wisconsin, equally with those which have heretofore been dignified with the professional name and character.”⁸

In view of the willingness of the Board and the chancellor to have the University be virtually all things to all men, it is not surprising that there was no strict insistence that all who attended the University submit to a prescribed course of study. It was to be more than another decade before Harvard would popularize the elective system in higher education, but at Wisconsin the essence of the elective system was present literally from the beginning. Even the preparatory department permitted students to choose their courses.⁹

The first college class was formed in 1850, and a little more than a year afterward Lathrop, in his first formal report to the Board, declared that “it will continue to be the duty of the State University, to open its doors to those young men of the State, who are desirous of pursuing select portions of the course, without a view to graduation.” The Board of Regents adopted as a part of the first published bylaws of the University the declaration that, “young gentlemen desirous of pursuing select portions of the course, shall be admitted to the recitations and other exercises of the regular classes, with the privilege of attending the lectures of the several professors. Such students shall be charged the usual fee for tuition, payable in advance, and shall be entitled to certificate of the time of membership, and the studies pursued.” Two years later the chancellor announced: “The course of study for the regular classes has been so adjusted that students pursuing the scientific and English branches will find no difficulty in making such selections, as will enable them to fill up their time in the most profitable manner. It is proper that a State University should open its doors to this portion of the youth of the state, and invite them to share in the advantages of its class instructions.” In 1857 the Board of Regents announced that the time had come for “the more com-

⁸ *Regents' Annual Report*, 1856-57, pp. 25-26.

⁹ *Ibid.*, January 1, 1851, p. 7. In 1851 the Board declared that, “although designed mainly for the instruction of Classical Students, the school is open to young men pursuing the branches usually taught in English High Schools, without reference to the regular collegiate course.”

plete development of the departmental plan of instruction; the proper University system. . . . It gives to the student the opportunity of pursuing those branches of instruction which bear on his distinct purposes in life, and in connexion with these, at his option, such other branches, promotive of general culture, as may fill up his time, and make his residence in the University most profitable to himself." But the Board was unwilling to permit students complete freedom in the selection of courses and departments of study. "This option," the Board continued, "will, of course, be made, under the direction of parents and guardians, and the professional advice of the Faculty of the University."¹⁰

The Board's action had followed the recommendations of a committee which had been appointed to investigate "the more complete arrangement of the various studies of the University into distinct schools or departments." The committee opposed complete abandonment of the system of classes but urged adoption of a system which would "fully meet the wants of that large class of young men, who from choice or circumstances, do not propose to themselves the full and regular course of classical studies as prescribed in colleges." The committee recognized that the retention of the system of classes would not attain all the educational ends sought for the University. "To confine the University to the usual college *curriculum* however excellent and effective, so far as relates to its appropriate end, would be alike inconsistent with the present educational want of the State, and especially with these wants as developed by an advancing condition of society, and likewise with the plan of the University as from the beginning contemplated by the Board of Regents, and presented in their various reports to the Legislature. The time has now arrived when an enlarged Faculty and increased resources at the command of the University, will permit a more complete division of studies according to departments, and means of instruction more in accordance with the wants and expectations of the community, than has been heretofore practicable."

¹⁰ *Regents' Annual Report*, December 31, 1851, pp. 9, 34; 1853, p. 14; 1856, pp. 6-7. The report for the year 1856 is dated in January, 1857.

The committee accordingly proposed creation of twelve separate schools or departments. This act, which really involved only designating the professorships departments, was intended to improve the training and discipline of the regular college course, "offer inducements and facilities for a super-graduate course," to those who might want to carry their studies beyond the ordinary course, and "present opportunity and encouragement to a class of young men who have heretofore considered themselves in a great measure excluded from the benefits of University instruction—those who may wish to pursue the studies of particular departments only, and who in colleges, when received at all, are denominated *irregulars*." The committee believed that regular graduates, the super graduates and the irregulars should all receive appropriate degrees to be "formally awarded, as evidence of the progress and attainments of the student, and as encouragement to him to complete a definite course of study whether that course may be limited to a particular department or whether it may embrace all the departments of instruction in the University."

The twelve departments of the University recommended by the committee included the six original professorships, each now raised to the dignity of a department, and the departments of didactics, agricultural chemistry, theoretic and practical engineering, physics and astronomy, medicine, and law. Students who completed the course of study and all of the exercises in all of the University departments except those of medicine and law were to be entitled to the degree of bachelor of philosophy; those who completed this course but substituted modern for ancient languages were to be entitled to a degree of bachelor of science. Three years of additional work would entitle a student to a master's degree in philosophy, arts, or science, depending on the departmental location of his work. Those completing the course of any one department were to be entitled to a diploma "certifying them to be graduates of said department." In justification and explanation of the degrees, the committee pointed out that hitherto no provision had been made in the colleges "to encourage by suitable Academic honors those who are unwilling to complete the prescribed course of classical

reading, and that thus, however high their scientific and philosophic attainments, they are ignored as University students." The adoption of these degrees, the committee hoped, would "remove this objection, while none can complain that confusion is produced as to the meaning and import of University degrees."¹¹

The University of Wisconsin was not unique in promising to admit virtually anyone into any classes conducted in the institution. The neighboring University of Iowa, opened in 1855, had announced a similar intention. "But while framed to furnish the loftiest style of culture," ran the announcement in the *Second Circular* issued by that institution, "it can adapt itself to the lowest. By its rejection of college classes, and its adoption of independent departments, it is enabled to furnish to the student just what instruction he requires, without, at the same time, compelling him to receive much that he does not want."¹²

The plans of the Board and the chancellor were far in advance of anything the University was prepared to offer. John W. Sterling, professor of mathematics, natural philosophy, and astronomy, and the chancellor constituted the instructional staff until 1850. With the organization of the first college class in that year, O. M. Conover, a resident of Madison, was appointed tutor in the preparatory department. Two years later Conover was appointed professor of ancient languages and literature, and Stephen H. Carpenter, also of Madison, was named to succeed him as tutor. In 1854, with the first class of two almost ready to graduate, the Board appointed S. P. Lathrop of Beloit College to the professorship of chemistry and natural history. He entered upon his duties in May of that year but died eight months later. However, with aid of "valuable apparatus" borrowed from Beloit College, he had been able to teach the first course in chemistry offered at the University. The same year the Board appointed Daniel Read of Indiana University to the chair of mental philosophy, logic, rhetoric, and English

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 1856, pp. 39-41. The statement on the prerequisite for degrees was adopted verbatim by the Board and printed in the catalogue of 1857. *Ibid.*, 1856-57, pp. 70-71.

¹² Vernon Carstensen, doctoral dissertation, *The History of the State University of Iowa: The Collegiate Department from the Beginning to 1878*, abstracted in *Iowa Studies in the Social Sciences*, vol. 10: *Abstracts in History*, 107.

literature. The next year the Board announced appointment of Dr. John P. Fuchs to the professorship of modern languages and Dr. Ezra S. Carr to the chair of chemistry and natural history. Fuchs began his duties in 1855, Read and Carr arrived in 1856. With the announcement of these appointments the Board proclaimed that the collegiate faculty was "now full" and that Professor Read, who had been appointed also to the normal chair, would offer instruction to teachers while Dr. Carr would deliver a course of lectures on "Agricultural Chemistry, and the applications of science to the useful arts."¹³

It was manifestly impossible for this small faculty to accomplish all that the Board and chancellor outlined in their successive ambitious reports. Also, it is clear both from what the chancellor wrote and from the course of study adopted and put into operation that, however much might have been claimed for the University as an institution designed to offer instruction in the utilitarian subjects to all who came, whether they were artisans, farmers, or merchants, the course of study embraced disciplines little desired by those seeking "practical" education. Nor was this entirely out of keeping with the high professions of the chancellor who insisted, sometimes in muted tones, that the classical courses of the University were and must remain the center of the institution. The first course of study, published in 1851, revealed essentially a classical curriculum although courses in chemistry, international law, and political economy in the junior and senior years broke the solid array of the time-honored disciplines.¹⁴

The ensuing years saw some modifications of this original plan. In 1855, courses in agricultural chemistry and the art of teaching were added as optional subjects for students in the last term of the fourth year. A year later a course in engineering was offered as optional for one term during the senior year. In 1858 the classical mold was so far broken as to permit courses in United States history, general history, and English language to be taught during the first year. The same year the faculty

¹³ *Regents' Annual Report*, 1852, p. 25; 1854, p. 7; 1855, pp. 7, 8, 9-11. For Beloit's loan of apparatus, see Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. B, p. 75, September 7, 1854.

¹⁴ *Regents' Annual Report*, December 31, 1851, pp. 33-34.

recommended to the Board of Regents that candidates for the degree of bachelor of arts be permitted in the sophomore and junior years to substitute French and German for Greek.¹⁵

Even a cursory examination of the course of study reveals that the University was prepared to offer little of the scientific or the utilitarian instruction which the various expositions on professional education might lead one to expect. Nor was the University's failure to provide for these studies entirely the result of the smallness of the staff. In 1858, after the regents and chancellor had been attacked by the legislature, the chancellor explained, more clearly than on any previous occasion, his view on the proper work of the University. He acknowledged the attack by the legislature and its demand that in the department of science, literature, and the arts, "a more distinct bias should be given to its instructions, in the direction of the several arts and avocations as they exist among men. That the practical should take rank of the theoretical, in the forms as well as the substance of University culture." The chancellor then answered these criticisms by saying that there were two plans on which the faculty of this department could be constituted "and the same general results reached. One is by distributing out to the several chairs, different branches of philosophy and science, and pushing these forward in course of instruction, to their outgrowth in the Arts, and the various forms of social service. The other is to distribute to the professorships or schools the practical *business* processes; carrying the pupil back, in the lecture room, to the science and the philosophy explanative of the nature and the reasons of these processes. On the one plan, the movement is forward from the principle to the issue. On the other, backward from the issue to the principle. In the former case, Science is honored as the mother of Art; in the latter, Art is the master, Science the servant. The former course is natural and thorough, and tends to a higher order of personal culture; the latter is popular and superficial, but productive of dexterity and skill."¹⁶

There is little evidence to indicate that during the first few

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 1855, p. 50; 1856, p. 54; 1857-58, p. 60; Minutes of the Meetings of the Faculty (MS.), vol. 1, p. 56. There is little evidence that the faculty discussed the course of study formally on any other occasion during Lathrop's administration.

¹⁶ *Regents' Annual Report*, 1857-58, pp. 19-20.

years the University was in operation there was either general acceptance or rejection of the aims as set forth in the reports of the Board. In 1850 the *Southport Telegraph*, in commenting on the chancellor's inaugural address and the report of the Board, objected to limiting the usefulness of the University by so restricting instruction as to make "the three professions of Law, Medicine, and Theology . . . pre-eminent and absolute." But such criticisms were more than offset by the warm support given the University by the Madison papers and the *Milwaukee Sentinel*. Most of this comment, however, failed to mention aims or course of study; it simply reflected support of the institution. "If the University of Wisconsin does not soon become as renowned in the West for the profound learning and high intellectual development of its scholars, as Yale and Harvard are in the East, the fault will be with the people, not with the faculty, endowments of the institution or industry and capacity of the scholars." When they found time and occasion to refer to the University in their official messages, the successive governors manifested sympathy for the objectives, and several spoke warmly of the plans to inaugurate teacher training.¹⁷

Regent Alonzo Wing may well have voiced the attitude and hopes of many thoughtful citizens when he wrote to State Superintendent of Public Instruction Barry in 1856:

I have misunderstood the views of the Chancellor, and of the new members of the Faculty Elect, if it is not their desire and intention to so shape the course of instruction as to meet the wants of the young mind of our whole State; and especially to give a practical direction to the instruction imparted to those who may avail themselves of the advantages of portions only of the College Course. It is for this class I would bespeak the fostering care of the Faculty and of the Regents.

If a young man says to me, Sir, I want to fit myself for a trade, I would be a carpenter, a house joiner, a builder of mills or of vessels. I don't mean simply that I want to learn the use of tools for such trade, I can use tools now very well. & I have something of a common education, but there are parts of the trade I don't under-

¹⁷ *Southport Telegraph*, February 15, 1850; *Wisconsin Statesman* (Madison), July 22, 1851, p. 2; *Assembly Journal*, 1849, pp. 677-678; *Senate Journal*, 1851, appendix, 8-10; 1852, pp. 12-13; 1858, p. 27.

stand, and there are many things my Boss don't understand either . . . Can you tell me what course to pursue, or where I can go to receive the instruction I need? I would like to be able to say to him, young man, if you would perfect yourself in your trade, go up to the University, and you will there be put in the way to obtain the soul of your trade, and make a man of yourself as well. If a Gentleman says to me, my son manifests quite a fondness for the study of Geology. He has heard some lectures upon the subject and seems delighted with it. The science is taught in the University, but I am told there is no practical application, and if I send the boy there, he will need his Teacher along as certainly after he comes home as he does before I send him. I would like to say to him, Sir, your information is not correct. But on the contrary if you send your son to the University for one, two or three years, he can at his own option enter one or more of the regular classes, and pursue such portions of the course as tend most directly toward the end he has in view. And more than that. Each Class in its turn, in the pleasantest part of the year, will breakfast in the hall of the University and at Evening, with the Professor of Natural History at its head, spread their tents upon the bank of the Mississippi [*sic*] or upon the shore of one of the Great Lakes, or it may be upon some lofty hill top, and there as well as elsewhere, study the handy work of the Builder of Worlds. I would like to say to the learner of the surveyor's art also, and to the young Engineer go up to the University by all means, because you can there receive the best possible instruction—all drafting, platting, mapping, and in whatever else may be thought essential to the Study, besides a very considerable portion of instruction in the outdoor or field practice, with such instruments as you will hereafter have occasion to employ. The benefits of such a course of instruction, to this class of learners must be inestimable. But this is not all. It seems to me, that it is to this class of Student we are to look for the beginning of that levelling up spoken of by Professor Carr & Reed, and heretofore urged by the Chancellor himself.

Through this means great good will be done in removing the prejudices against the University from the public mind, for the occupations of these young men will lead them to an equal association with the masses in all parts of the State, and hence their influence must be of the utmost importance. Besides, I believe (poverty only preventing) in proportion to their numbers, about as many who enter the University as partialists will pursue the Collegiate course to completion, as who enter for the full course.

I would not be understood however, as wishing to lop off a single branch from the full course which the cause of sound instruction demands, nor to advocate any course that shall be thought (by those better qualified to judge than I am) to tend to weaken the powers of the mind, by relieving it of the necessity for patient investigation & close reasoning, which alone can give it that vigor which commands success in every department of life. But I have been encouraged to hope for the partialist, from the sentiments expressed by the Chancellor. I have understood him to advocate the levelling up, even to the breaking down of the partition walls that separate the liberally educated, from those who have been less fortunate in their early training.¹⁸

So little opposition had been displayed toward the University during the first two years of Lathrop's administration that the chancellor in December, 1851, doubted that the University lost any patronage "from any supposed bias in the mind of the community, against a University under the control of the State, and constituting a portion of its educational system. If a prejudice of this character ever existed, it is fast disappearing before more enlightened views of the duty of the State to make the range of its institutions of learning co-extensive with the entire educational wants of the community." Two years later the chancellor was not so sanguine. He recognized that in a new community a university labored under great disadvantages because there was not "the same general appreciation of liberal culture in the new country as in the old." He now discovered that "an institution of learning gains nothing in public appreciation and patronage from the mere fact of its connexion with the state. Indeed it is to be conceded that a prevailing distrust of the wisdom and consistency of the administration of colleges supported by and under the immediate control of the state, tends to incline patronage into other channels, where more stable counsels and a more steadily progressive policy is supposed to be secured through the medium of close corporations. The rivalry of denominational colleges tends to foster and keep alive this distrust of state institutions; and it is the misfortune of our own university to have begun its organization at so late a day, that

¹⁸ Alonzo Wing, Jefferson, Wisconsin, to A. C. Barry, January 28, 1856, in Papers of the Board of Regents.

denominational institutions had preoccupied the ground and secured the good will of the older and wealthier portions of the state." However, the chancellor felt that the distrust would give way "before juster views of the duty and ability of the civil state to make its own institutions of learning of the highest grade more comprehensive and liberal, than those founded on private and denominational bounty."¹⁹

If the chancellor anticipated that the University would be attacked by denominational interests, he was not long disappointed. In 1854, in authorizing the regents to borrow fifteen thousand dollars from the University Fund, the legislature decreed that henceforth the regents were not to draw the income of the University Fund "except in pursuance of an express appropriation by law." This meant that, until the law was repealed, the regents must each year petition the legislature for the interest from the University Fund and thereby bring the University directly under the scrutiny of the legislature. The first attack upon the University, thought to have been inspired by sectarian interests, was made in the legislature of 1855. Assemblyman Samuel L. Rose, two days after being elected a member of the Board of Regents, offered a bill intended to secure a distribution of the income of the University Fund among the legally established colleges of the state. In support of his bill Rose declared that only ten students were taking the full University course and that there were more useful ways of employing the Fund. The bill was read for the first and second times, discussed by Rose and Judge Levi B. Vilas of Madison, and then it disappeared from sight.²⁰

Two weeks later, when the act appropriating the income of the University Fund to the regents reached the Assembly, Samuel Rose led a momentarily successful movement to defeat it. On the first vote the bill was defeated 41 to 26. The same

¹⁹ *Regents' Annual Report*, December 31, 1851, p. 8; 1853, pp. 14-15.

²⁰ *General Laws*, 1854, pp. 122-124; *Assembly Journal*, 1855, p. 795; *Milwaukee Daily Sentinel*, March 21, 1855, report of the Madison correspondent for March 17, 1855. The Rose Bill, apparently withdrawn by the author, made a much deeper impression on the chroniclers of the history of the University than upon the editors of Madison newspapers. Carpenter, Butterfield, Thwaites, and Pyre all mention it, yet only one Madison newspaper, the *Daily Wisconsin Patriot*, March 19, 1855, was sufficiently moved to comment.

afternoon, however, reconsideration of the bill was called for, and it was passed by a vote of 44 to 22. Rose's motives have generally been ascribed to his desire to have the funds of the University distributed so that the sectarian colleges would benefit. Reports in the Madison newspapers, which quarrelled among themselves over the responsibility for the action, indicate that little more was at stake than the possibility of dividing the University Fund among several institutions. There is no suggestion that the opposition to the University rested on grounds of dissatisfaction with its plans and purposes.²¹

Before the end of the year the *Appleton Crescent* attacked the University as being illiberal and undemocratic because only a few could enjoy its benefits. The *Grant County Herald* proposed that some church be placed in charge of the University. Indicative of the talk in some circles was a letter which John G. McMynn wrote to Professor O. M. Conover asking whether it was true, as a clergyman had told him, that the University was an "infidel concern" in which the Bible was not read as a regular exercise and prayers were never offered.²²

Attacks on the University occurred again in the legislature of 1856, although the Board attempted to create a favorable impression by arranging for the public inauguration of the two new professors, Read and Carr, in the Assembly Hall. The ceremony passed largely unnoticed. Shortly after the session opened, the Madison *Daily Patriot* warned that there was talk of dividing the income of the University Fund and charged that the "annual agitation is revived again and parties interested in side sectarian Colleges, are at the bottom of it." However, no legislation intended to secure this end was introduced. In February one of the regents serving in the Senate, Charles Dunn, introduced a bill designed to free the regents from the necessity of coming before the legislature each year in order to get the income of the University Fund. The bill was referred to the Committee on Education and reported out for

²¹ *Assembly Journal*, 1855, pp. 1019, 1025; *Daily Patriot*, March 31, April 2, 1855; *Daily Argus and Democrat*, March 29, 30, 1855.

²² *Appleton Crescent*, October 20 and, quoting the *Grant County Herald*, December 22, 1855; McMynn to Conover, July 30, 1855, in the Conover Papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

passage without change on February 20. When the bill came before the Senate for consideration on March 27, it gave Senator Charles Clement an opportunity to attack the University in a vitriolic and inaccurate speech, which so pleased the senators that they ordered two thousand copies of it printed. Senator Clement, who attained a kind of fame in the corrupt legislature of 1856 by being one of thirteen senators alleged to have shared in the distribution that year of some \$175,000 worth of stocks and bonds of the La Crosse and Milwaukee Railroad company, attacked the University as being spendthrift, complained that its students were drawn almost wholly from Madison and vicinity, denounced the reports of the regents as being mostly wind, and urged that the Fund remain unappropriated until "the proper class of students for whom this munificence is designed shall knock at the doors of that University." But Clement also favored distribution of the Fund. "There may be some question," he stated, "whether it would not be proper to devote a part of this fund to those colleges in the State which are now affording instruction in proper collegiate studies, and which are the only natural and appropriate feeders to this University." Clement appealed to the Senate "to prevent the interest of this fund from being annually devoured by the cormorants and harpies who are hovering around this capital and are ready to descend when they hear the clink of the key in the lock of the Treasury. I appeal to this Legislature, as the guardians of this noble and munificent fund for the generations which are yet unborn, and ask them that its yearly revenues shall not be squandered upon parasites for almost useless ends. I appeal to the Legislature to preserve inviolate this sacred and glorious trust committed to us by the General Government."²³

Clement moved that the bill before the House be referred

²³ *Daily Patriot*, January 19, 1856; *Senate Journal*, 1856, pp. 330, 431, 802; "Report of the Joint Select Committee Appointed to Investigate into Alleged Frauds and Corruption in the Disposition of the Land Grant by the Legislature of 1856 and for Other Purposes," in the *Assembly Journal*, 1858, appendix; *Speech of the Hon. Charles Clement on the "Bill for an Act Regulating the Disbursement of the Income of the University Fund"* (1856), 14, 15. The inauguration of Read and Carr occurred on the evening of January 16, 1856. Although the addresses they delivered were subsequently printed with the state documents, the newspapers paid little attention to the ceremony. The *Daily Patriot* did

to a select committee and, in spite of his oratory, won his point only by the close vote of 12 to 10. Senator Clement and two others made up this committee, which on the next day brought in a substitute bill under which the Board of Regents was required to obtain legislative approval before withdrawing the income of the Fund. This bill was approved by the Senate, promptly passed by the Assembly, and signed by the governor.²⁴

Senator Clement's attack upon the University has often been regarded as evidence that the legislature in 1856 was on the verge of distributing the income and crippling the University in the interest of sectarian and local interests. The fact that the Senate ordered two thousand copies of the speech printed gives weight to this conjecture. Yet the recorded votes in the Senate tell another story. Although the Senate was willing to reject the act which would turn the income of the University Fund over to the regents without legislative approval, only one vote was registered against appropriating the income of the Fund to the regents. That was the vote of Senator Clement. And this in the face of Clement's clear call for rejection of the appropriation and his invitation to the Senate to distribute the Fund to the sectarian colleges, "the natural and appropriate feeders to this university." Accordingly, while it could not be contended that denominational interests and sectional jealousies were of no importance, it must be recognized that in 1856 they offered no real threat to the continuation of the University.

A year later, in 1857, the legislative committee appointed to investigate the needs of the University reported that "the affairs of the State University have not been administered with an energy commensurate with the expectations of its friends, and that much dissatisfaction is expressed in regard to its present position and past management. Your committee are of the opinion that much if not all of the embarrassment under which the University has heretofore labored, has been owing to the constant opposition which it has received in and out of the

announce it and invited the public to attend (January 16, 1856), but all the other newspapers were so deeply engrossed in the exciting issues of the contest between Barstow and Bashford for the governorship that they neglected to make any mention of it.

²⁴ *Senate Journal*, 1856, pp. 797-798; *General Laws*, 1856, p. 84.

Legislature, from persons and institutions in all portions of the State and from the chilling and discouraging influence of a Board of Regents, a majority of whom were either decided enemies of the institution or, indifferent as to its progress and success." The legislature gave tacit approval to the program of the Board of Regents by authorizing it to borrow forty thousand dollars from the University Fund to construct a new building. The same legislature, without apparently realizing what it was about, repealed the act of 1854 requiring the Board to have legislative approval before spending the annual income of the University Fund.²⁵ The action of the Board of Regents under this law provided the starting point for the full-scale investigation of the University by the legislature the next year.

The supporters of the sectarian schools were somewhat appeased and diverted by the passage of the Normal School Law of 1857. This act appropriated twenty-five per cent of the income from the swamp land fund to the support of normal training. In 1858 the amount was doubled. The act created a Board of Normal School Regents authorized to apportion the fund to the colleges, universities, and academies in the state that had established teacher training departments. The state university itself had been explicitly excluded from the benefits of the act, but the various sectarian colleges were permitted to share in it. The Board of Normal School Regents created an executive officer, the agent, to visit the schools that received funds. The distribution of swamp land income funds under this act was never satisfactory, and the act was repealed in 1856.

The legislature of 1858 was the first to convene after the effects of the Panic of 1857 had begun to be felt. Numerous public meetings were held before and during the legislative session to protest against high taxes and public extravagance. Legislative committees that year conducted a number of investigations of the activities of the legislatures of 1856 and 1857 and turned up a few scandals of conspicuous proportions. The atmosphere in 1858 was not one in which any public institution which had been spending money could expect to

²⁵ *Senate Journal*, 1856, pp. 869-870; 1857, pp. 292-294; *Private and Local Laws*, 1857, p. 908.

escape legislative scrutiny. Disharmony within the faculty no doubt also helped to focus the attention of some legislators on the University. In the summer of 1857 two of the professors had been so bold as to criticize the University. Ezra Carr, in his report to the regents, asked for more assistance in teaching natural history and science, suggesting, meanwhile, that the regents had been guilty of misleading the public in their annual reports. "To accomplish what the public have a reasonable right to expect," Carr wrote, "from the former reports and announcements of the Board it is absolutely necessary that the aid of at least *one other instructor* who is also competent to do work connected with the Laboratory and collections, be obtained. The importance of this will be better understood by recognizing the fact that these departments connect the University directly with the industrial interests of the State, by affording instruction to young men, in Agriculture, Mining, etc., and that in some eastern colleges whose announcements are not more formidable than our own *six* able professors are occupied in giving instruction in departments that are here performed with only *one*." While Carr objected to the failure of the regents to provide the instruction promised, Professor Conover complained bitterly about the failure of the University to maintain academic standards and its willingness to admit students with only indifferent preparation in the classics. "Of the causes which led to the introduction of young men to College standing, with such extremely defective preparation, it is not necessary that I should speak. But whatever sentiments of prudence may have led to this course and whatever purposes of temporary utility it may have served . . . the reputation of the University as a seat of scholastic culture, the interests of liberal learning in the State, and those of the individual who resort hither for education, *imperatively* require, in my judgment, a discontinuance of the system."²⁶ The chancellor himself devoted a large part of his communication to the Board in 1857 to a discussion of the importance of harmony within the faculty. Both Carr and Conover were active around the legislature in 1858, and while there was no agreement between them

²⁶ Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. B, pp. 140, 144.

as to what the University ought to be doing, they were in agreement that the University ought to be doing something else. Professor Read, on the other hand, was heavily opposed to any appeal to the legislature.²⁷

Thus in an atmosphere that bred suspicion of all public institutions, with some members of the faculty anxious to ad-

²⁷ *Regents' Annual Report, 1856-57*, pp. 19-24; Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. B, pp. 124-126, July 21, 1857. The recommendations of the chancellor on this matter were largely the outgrowth of the conduct of Professor Ezra Carr, who also served on the State Geological Survey. On July 17, 1857, the chancellor had read to the faculty that part of his report dealing with faculty harmony. Professor Daniel Read then offered a resolution, unanimously adopted, approving Lathrop's statement and asking the Board to prescribe the duties of faculty members, particularly in relation to attendance upon their work as teachers, their attendance at public occasions of the University, and work outside the institution for money. Minutes of the Faculty, vol. 1, pp. 49-50. On August 12 Carr wrote to the regents: "I see the chancellor's resolution requiring constant attention upon prayers, the declamations of students, etc. was passed. I am sorry the Board have legalized a movement which if rightly understood could not fail to produce and keep up ill feeling in the faculty. A constant daily attendance of all the Faculty upon prayers, or any *obligation* to attend the *ordinary* weekly meetings of the Faculty is something I have never seen imposed in any Eastern college. When the different members of the Faculty are recognized as colleagues, each working uninterruptedly in his own field of labor rather than boys governed by a master, it will be reasonable to expect more 'cheerful' co-operation & harmony. I would have presented another side of this subject to the consideration of the Board but for my wish to have them as free to treat any subject of personal interest to me as though I were not a member." Letter in Papers of the Board of Regents. Six months later the faculty withdrew that part of the resolution directed at Carr's service on the Geological Survey. Minutes of the Faculty, vol. 1, p. 54.

Carr's advice to the legislators can be surmised from his contemptuous reference a year later to the University "with its curriculum of fossil usages," and its departments "filled with fossil men who are subject to hydrophobic spasms at the mere mention of the word science." Carr to Barnard, July 15, 1859, in the Barnard Manuscripts, New York University. Conover later found the explanation of his dismissal from the faculty in his attempts to help reform the University. Writing to Barnard in 1859, he said: "I found myself suddenly deprived of position, for no other reason so far as I could ever learn, than because I believed fully in the sanctity and the universal obligation of truth, because I claimed the privilege of entertaining and expressing independent opinions upon all subjects upon which I was called upon to think or speak." He further confided that the crisis in the history of the University was not caused by "defect of administrative ability," which was present, nor by a lack of "co-operative earnestness, simplicity, & cordiality," which was also present. But from "a failure of moral rectitude and uprightness, the institution was becoming involved in the worst internal evils, and so losing all claim upon the confidence of the community." Conover to Barnard, August 13, 1859, in the Barnard Manuscripts, New York University.

Read made his position clear in a letter to Lathrop in May, 1858: "I would . . . remark, that if any friend of the University hopes that changes may be made which will at once stop all clamor, his hope, I am sure, will be disappointed.

wise on how to correct the evils in the University, with sectional and sectarian rancors against the University still alive, it is not surprising that the legislature of 1858 showed a sustained interest in the University. The interest began with concern over University finances, but before the session had ended the legislative committees had broadened the scope of their investigations to review the functions of the University and to

Some will not be satisfied because they are agitators and want change; some because they are innovators, and desire a non-descript institution such as never did exist in any country, and never could exist, which, however, they are pleased to style a University; some because they want places for themselves or their friends; some because they want their own sect or party dominant in the University; some because they are one-sided, half-educated men and want the University fund turned into some special channel to suit their own narrow views of University education; some because it is easier to complain than to put their own shoulder to the wheel. From these, and other causes, I do not see that there is a reasonable hope, by any change in policy, of silencing all cavil and objection. There is however a sober public opinion which ought to be both respected and consulted, which points to true improvement, to genuine progress, to more enlarged usefulness.

"I would further premise, that the very last resort for University improvement is the direct action of the Legislature. So sensible are Legislatures themselves of this fact, that in creating institutions of education, they do not pretend to make a specific organization of departments and courses of study, but leave this work to the agency of Regents or boards of trust in some form. This is true of our American State Legislatures, and indeed of the legislation of the whole civilized world. The same is true in regard to reform in existing institutions of education. When required, it has been wisely given over to the considerate action of some body of men better adapted in its very constitution to such work than any mere political assemblage can be.

"Let us, for a moment, suppose that the presiding officer, or Professors, in a university, or a *clique* of them, appeal to the Legislature for its direct interposition in whatever case, it may seem to them, or any of them, that change is needed; is it not manifest that a Faculty in which such a law of action should prevail, instead of being a corps of men devoted to the advancement of science and literature, become a body of mere *lobbyies* and legislative hangers on, drafting bills instead of preparing lectures, waiting upon members and committees with more zeal than upon their classes? Or, let us suppose that particular members of a Faculty or Board at one session of the Legislature succeed in their designs, will not other members, at the next session, be likely to resort to the same tactics, and thus strife, rivalry, and manoeuvring, disgrace and degrade [?] the University?

"But what are the true methods of university improvement—I do not speak of noisy and insolent demonstrations in which the eclat of the self-constituted reformer and busy demagogue is the manifest aim—but what are safe and efficient methods of progress and improvement as applicable to an institution of learning?

"If a plan can be devised, in which I see no difficulty, to make every department of the University, to a certain extent a school of art or practice, the popular objection which, certainly in this case deserves respect and consideration, may be obviated, if not wholly removed." Daniel Read to Lathrop, May 25, 1858, in Papers of the Board of Regents.

propose to set forth in law the specific objectives of the institution.

Shortly after the session began, a resolution was adopted providing for the creation of a joint committee, composed of two members from the Senate and three from the Assembly, "to examine into and report upon the condition and efficiency of the State University under its present management." Temple Clark of the Senate was made chairman of the committee. On March 17, Senator James Sutherland introduced a bill to appropriate the income of the University Fund to the regents, on the assumption that the act of 1857 did not operate to give the regents these funds without legislative actions. Ten days later, after it had been discussed in the committee of the whole, the bill was referred to the Joint Select Committee on the University. Two weeks later Temple Clark submitted a report for his committee pointing out that the regents had already drawn fourteen thousand dollars of the University income. This, the committee insisted, was in violation of the law, since the repeal of the law of 1854 had not released the regents from responsibility for getting legislative sanction in order to withdraw the income of the University Fund. The committee promised to conduct further investigation but in the meantime urged that prompt action be taken by the legislature to protect the Fund. A substitute bill to accomplish this end had been prepared. It re-enacted the law of 1854 and directed the treasurer of the regents to return to the state treasury all money he had withdrawn but had not yet spent, together with a record showing all disbursements made of that money which had been spent. On April 15, two days after the report was made, the Senate passed the substitute bill.

Debate on the bill was vigorous, and charges of extravagance, mismanagement and even deceit on the part of the regents were made on the floor of the Senate. These charges were repeated and denied by the local press.²⁸

Up to this point legislative interest had been centered largely

²⁸ *Senate Journal*, 1858, vol. 1, pp. 164, 178, 216, 714, 924, 938-939; vol. 2, pp. 991-995, 1039-1040; *Daily Patriot*, April 17, *Weekly Patriot*, April 24, and *Daily State Journal*, April 16, 17, 1858. The resolution calling for a committee to report upon university administration was proposed by Temple Clark on January 28.

on the financial management of the University and public discussion dealt with the questions of whether the regents should have direct access to the income of the University Fund and whether the University had been guilty of extravagance. Four days after the Senate adopted and sent to the Assembly the substitute bill designed to "protect the university fund," Senator Clark introduced a bill providing for the complete reorganization of the University. This bill was referred to the Senate Committee on Education, School and University Lands.

Meanwhile the Senate bill, upon reaching the Assembly, had been referred to the Committee on Education, School, and University Lands, of which Hanmer Robbins was chairman. On April 28, Robbins submitted a report on the University together with a substitute for the substitute Senate bill which the committee had had under consideration. Two days later, Temple Clark submitted a second report to the Senate from the Joint Select Committee, a report which was largely intended to support the reorganization bill he had introduced on April 19. Thus by the end of April, although interest in the finances of the University had by no means subsided, the interest had widened to include the functions of the University. The two reports together with the bills providing for a reorganization of the University afford a comprehensive picture of what the legislature thought the University ought to be doing.

The first part of the Robbins report concerned itself with the financial history and transactions of the regents, the point at which the discussion had begun. The committee found the charges of mismanagement and extravagance unfounded. From a consideration of the financial affairs of the University the committee proceeded to consideration of the proper use of the "munificent donation" bestowed on the state for the education of present and future generations. The people, the committee proclaimed, "have an unquestioned right to demand that it [the institution created] shall primarily be adapted to popular

Notice of Assembly approval was received by the Senate on February 1. The original of Sutherland's bill of March 17 and of the bill substituted therefor are in the State Historical Society of Wisconsin: Original Bill 290S and 290S Substitute: "A Bill for an Act relating to the University Fund Income." The vote on the latter was 19 to 2.

needs, that its courses of instruction shall be arranged to meet as fully as possible, the wants of the greatest number of our citizens. The *farmers, mechanics, miners, merchants, and teachers* of Wisconsin, represented in this legislature, have a right to ask that this bequest of the government shall aid them in securing to themselves and their posterity, such educational advantages as shall fit them for their pursuits in life, and which by an infusion of intelligence and power, shall elevate those pursuits to a social dignity commensurate with their value." A traditional college could not meet this need, since it had no element of freedom in it. "When clergymen prepare for their duties at West Point, or army officers at Andover and Princeton, may colleges be expected to offer a suitable education to the farmers, teachers and artizans of the State."

The committee insisted that "no partial modification of the college system can remedy this want of adaptation to the needs of the industrial classes, the ill success which has attended the efforts to harmonize them in the Eastern States abundantly proved." While there was not, the committee pointed out, more than one out of every two hundred people engaged in the learned professions, still there were nearly two hundred universities, colleges, and higher seminaries to serve them. Among these establishments there was not one adequately endowed institution that "directs its efforts to the liberal education of the practical and industrial classes. The only sign of progress in this respect has been the establishment in several of the States of agricultural and normal schools." Our educational system must spring from "the wants of the people. It will not be denied that the industrial classes require a more liberal education, the same facilities for understanding the true philosophy—the science and art of their several pursuits that the professional classes have so long enjoyed in theirs. Your committee desire to express in the most earnest manner their deliberate conviction that the supply of this great popular demand is the legitimate business of 'the university of Wisconsin,' and that such an arrangement of its functions as are adopted to this end, will alone secure its usefulness and prosperity."

The committee complained that the University, in its present

form, was "essentially a college with its classical curriculum and a preparatory department attached. . . . As long as different religious denominations exist, we shall have colleges established and sustained by them, doing the work of classical education. And as long as the State university is a college it must obviously bring itself into competition with these, and necessarily contend against their active opposition. The fact of a strong feeling of opposition to the University among the people of the state, will not be questioned. Your committee believes this opposition to arise in a great measure from the fact that it does not occupy its true educational position."

The committee concluded with the plea that the University be made in reality what it was in name. "Let it constitute [contribute?] directly to the educational wants of the greatest number; let it take young men from the academies and public schools where they have obtained the elements of intellectual discipline and culture, and prepare them for their pursuits in life, and the university will be in harmony with other institutions, and command the active support and sympathy of the people." The committee suggested that "the development of such a plan would require that men imbued with the spirit of progress, representative men, should breathe into the new organization the breath of life."²⁹

In many respects the report submitted in behalf of the Joint Select Committee by Temple Clark was similar to the report of the Robbins committee, although the Clark report contained some harsh words of condemnation of the regents for the management of financial affairs of the University. The Clark committee recommended "an entire change in the Board of Regents," because the incumbent Board had been guilty of "gross violation of the law," and found the membership of the Board "a great obstacle in the way" of reforms. The object of the University, the Clark report declared, was "the establishment of an institution of learning for the people of the whole state." It was not a rival of the colleges but an "institution beyond and above them," intended to draw students from them

²⁹ *Senate Journal*, 1858, vol. 2, p. 1067; *Assembly Journal*, vol. 2, pp. 1303, 1329, 1517-1527.

and supply them with teachers and professors. "The true mission of a State university is to educate thoroughly for the active, industrial, and professional pursuits of life, those who seek its advantages, and the follower of each calling should there be able to receive instruction in the various branches of science and learning best suited to the wants of his profession." The Clark committee, using Lathrop's phrase, looked upon the University as a great leveler. "It is to the State University that we are to look for the establishment of equality between the industrial and professional or learned classes of society. It is by the proper establishment of the State University alone, that the industrial classes of the State are to find their position advanced and industry placed side by side with the so called learned professions.

"Our colleges are practically aristocratic institutions, and our State University, as now conducted, does not materially vary from our ordinary college in the course of study pursued."

The committee observed with distaste that Greek and Latin were required subjects of study in the University while study of French and German was optional. The committee espoused practical and scientific education. "We are done with the conservatism of the past. We draw our inspiration from our present progress and build our hopes upon the future." The committee almost became lyrical over the hopes which lay in the study of science. "But it is not by pouring [*sic*] over the dreamy and mystical pages of classic lore that the student is to develop the energy of character and strength of purpose to enter manfully into the great battle of life—to storm nature in her fastnesses, and to unlock her treasures; but by obtaining a thorough knowledge of physical science, following nature into her great laboratories, and discovering her chemical secrets; learning the nature of the air we breathe, the water we drink, and the food that nourishes our system." Thus the committee argued for practical courses. "Give, then, to the *whole* people of the State an educational institution suited to their wants, and discard the present system of college instruction now existing there, and not only should the college course, as at present pursued, be abolished, but also the preparatory department,

where only those branches are taught that can be obtained in any of the high schools and academies of the State, and if it is wrong to establish our State University as a rival to the colleges of the State, it is doubly absurd to make it a rival of our high schools and academies."³⁰

The two reorganization bills, the Clark Bill in the Senate and the Robbins Bill in the Assembly, although differing in detail were in substantial agreement on the main points. Neither, it might be remarked, supported the shrill accusation made by one of the Madison newspapers that the legislature was plotting to "gut and skin the university," or the claims of another that the legislature was trying to ruin it. It is also noteworthy, in view of the starting point of the legislative interest in the University, that both bills clearly provided that the Board of Regents be given the income from the University Fund without having to apply each year to the legislature.³¹

In two important respects the bills differed. The Clark Bill provided for the election of an entirely new Board of Regents, to consist of nine members and a president and with not more than three members from one county. The Robbins Bill, on the other hand, retained the Board substantially as it was although the chancellor ceased to be president of the Board, and by amendment from the floor of the Assembly, he ceased to be even a member. The Robbins Bill also carried the provision that the "University shall be equally open to the admission of pupils of both sexes over the age of sixteen," while the Senate bill was silent on this matter.

The similarities were much greater than the differences. Both bills declared that the object of the University was to offer the "means of acquiring a thorough knowledge of the various departments of learning connected with the industrial and professional pursuits," and provided that substantially the same departments or schools should constitute the University. The

³⁰ *Senate Journal*, 1858, vol. 2, pp. 1280-1290.

³¹ *Daily Patriot and Daily Argus and Democrat*, April 19, 1858; MS. Senate Bill No. 290S Substitute: "A Bill for an Act to Amend Chapter 18 of the Revised Statutes," Sec. 22. This is the final title of Senate Bill 290S, introduced by Senator Sutherland. "A Bill for the Act concerning a State University," Senate Bill No. 384 (MS.), introduced on April 19 by Senator Temple Clark for the Joint Select Committee, will be referred to hereafter by number only, 384S.

final form of the Clark Bill specified that the University should consist of seven schools: normal instruction, agriculture, civil and mechanical engineering, commerce, natural science, philosophy, and law. The Robbins Bill provided for eight departments which included the seven agreed upon in the Senate bill plus the department of philology.³²

Examination of these bills fails to substantiate the charges frequently made by the newspapers during April and May of 1858 that the legislature was motivated by a deep-seated hostility toward the University. It is true that in the heated discussion that followed the first report of the Clark committee and extended from the local into the state press before the end of the month, the University was frequently under attack, but both bills reveal serious purpose. The Assembly and Senate committees were in agreement that they did not approve of the program of the University as it existed; they wanted the University to be a "higher" school; they wanted it to concern itself with "practical" education; they wanted it to serve the industrial, agricultural, and commercial interests directly. In short, they wanted it to become what the chancellor and the Board had insisted over the years it was becoming.

Yet the question can be raised as to why, if the Assembly and Senate were in substantial agreement, neither bill passed. The Clark Bill in the Senate was laid on the table after the Robbins Bill had passed the Assembly. The Robbins Bill was reported out on April 28. On May 11 it was passed by vote of 55 to 10. Three days later the Senate, after inserting several amendments, adopted it by a vote of 14 to 8. One of the Senate amendments provided that the terms of the incumbent regents would expire with the passage of the bill. The bill was then returned to the Assembly for approval of these amendments, but the Assembly refused to pass the amended version. The bill then died on the calendar.³³

The basis for the Assembly's rejection of a bill that had already been adopted is found in the Senate amendment legislat-

³² 384S (MS.), Sec. 3, 6; 290S (MS.), Sec. 3, 9, 11. The original draft of the Clark Bill stipulated that not more than three regents should reside in Madison.

³³ *Assembly Journal*, 1858, vol. 2, pp. 1516, 1800, 2071-2072; *Senate Journal*, vol. 2, p. 1572.

ing the Board of Regents out of office.³⁴ The issue that defeated the reorganization of the University by the legislature was in one sense irrelevant. The defeat of the bill rested on the difference of opinion in the Senate and the Assembly as to the cause of the University's failure to accomplish the things for which both claimed it was designed. For political or other reasons a sufficient number of the senators felt that a new board was needed to carry the proposed legislation into operation. To a certain extent, the report of the Robbins committee had supported this notion when it had urged that "the development of such a plan would require that men imbued with the spirit of progress, representative men, should breathe into the new organization the breath of life." But in the end the Robbins committee and, under its leadership, the Assembly took the position that the defect was not in the Board of Regents but in the law. Hence the Assembly would not be party to dismissing the regents. This spelled the defeat of the bill and the defeat of the proposed legislative reorganization. It opened the way for the Board of Regents to initiate a reorganization of its own, the cost concrete result of which was the resignation of Chancellor Lathrop and the employment in his place of Henry Barnard.

Shortly after the legislature adjourned, Madison members of the Board of Regents, either anxious to forestall another legislative investigation or convinced of the validity of criticisms which had been made, united in a call for a special meeting. No quorum appeared on the day designated, and the meeting was postponed to the next day. The first steps were then taken toward reorganization—perhaps, if the chancellor and several of his supporters on the Board had prevailed, these would also have been the last steps. Final action, however, was postponed until the regular meeting in July. The record of the transactions of the June and July meetings is too confused to show clearly all that

³⁴ John W. Hoyt, credited by Joseph Schafer with being the author of the Robbins report, declared in the *Wisconsin Farmer*: "We are not willing however, that injustice should be done to the Board of Regents [in a last-minute amendment] and hence were driven, on the eve of adjournment to the extremity of laboring for the defeat of our own measure." Quoted by Joseph Schafer in "John Hiram Lathrop," in the *Wisconsin Alumnus*, (November, 1939), vol. 41, no. 1, p. 21, footnote.

the regents had in mind, but the results reveal the mixed motives of members of the Board. There is no doubt that the reorganization was aimed in part at meeting criticisms of the University. At the same time it served as a pretext for removing from office two professors who had been too energetic in opposition to the chancellor.

In his message to the regents at the June meeting, Chancellor Lathrop again reviewed the position of the University in relation to the state and affirmed his belief in a system of education extending from the elementary schools through the academies to the University. Pointing out that the object of the University, under the law, was to provide the inhabitants of the state with the means of acquiring a "thorough knowledge of the various branches of science, literature, and the arts," Lathrop contended that all disciplines not belonging to the departments of law, medicine, and normal instruction must be offered by the "residuary department" of science, literature, and the arts.³⁵ The Board accepted this view in the reorganization and specified, moreover, that the "studies of this Department should be selected, arranged and pursued, with a distinct reference to their bearing on the industrial pursuits of civilized life, as well as on the personal culture of the pupil in preparation for the successful discharge of his duties as a man and a citizen."³⁶

The chancellor acknowledged that two ideas had been developed in the "agitation of the University interest in the late Legislature" which were of "sufficient importance, in the opinion of several members, to justify a call of the Board." The first of these was that the time had arrived for "a full development of the Normal Department of the University." He reported that the Normal School regents had indicated a willingness to co-operate with the regents of the University to bring this about and urged that serious consideration be given the matter. The University regents responded by appointing a committee of three to confer with the Normal School regents.

³⁵ Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. B, pp. 162, 167-168. The request for the special meeting on June 2 was signed by N. W. Dean, D. W. Jones, L. B. Vilas, Alfred Castleman, H. A. Tenney, J. H. Lathrop, C. Abbott, L. C. Draper, and E. S. Carr.

³⁶ *Regents' Annual Report*, 1857-58, p. 8.

The other idea was that, in the administration of the department of science, literature, and the arts, "a more distinct bias should be given to its instructions, in the direction of the several arts and avocations as they exist among men." The chancellor here misrepresented the intent of the legislature, which was to establish a group of coequal schools, not merely to reorganize the department of science, literature, and the arts. However, if the regents were to make any changes under the charter of 1848, those changes would have to be made within the department of science, literature, and the arts. They could not, under that law, carry through the kind of reorganization contemplated by the legislature.

In discussing the criticism that the University courses were impractical, the chancellor affirmed his belief that the "true end" of education was to enable the individual "through development and instruction, discipline and knowledge, to find his true place in the social system, and to make his action therein, whether of muscle or of mind, productive of substantial and enduring good to himself and his fellows." Success and effectiveness in the department of science, literature, and the arts, Lathrop contended, could be attained in one of two ways. The department might be so organized that instruction would be devoted primarily to the branches of philosophy and science and "pushing these forward in courses of instruction, to their outgrowth in the Arts, and the various forms of social service." The second way would be to provide instruction in the practical arts and then work back to the "science and the philosophy explanative of the nature and the reasons of these processes." The former, the chancellor declared, "is natural and thorough, and tends to a higher order of personal culture; the latter is popular and superficial, but productive of dexterity and skill." Although the chancellor's sympathies were clearly with the former, he exhibited a reluctant tolerance for the latter. "Now, if any gentleman pleases to call an Institution of learning, constructed in the latter form, a University, and in the other, a mere College, no great harm is done, if nobody is deceived by it; neither is any great sum added, thereby, to the stock of human knowledge. . . . The pertinacity with which this dis-

tion has been pushed here, is a phenomenon in the educational history of Wisconsin."

The chancellor's message included a thinly veiled attack upon members of the faculty: "With reference to any plan of organization which may be adopted at this meeting, I have one thing to say, that however perfect it may be, it will fail in administration, unless it be made to command the harmonious, loyal and labor-loving assent of every member of the University faculty. The University is in a condition to command, now, but a limited number of men. These should be able men—representative men—men who will, with singleness of purpose, address themselves to the work assigned them by the Board. . . . With such men, the deficiencies of organization will be cured by administration, efficient and harmonious."³⁷

The business committee of the Board, of which Lathrop was a member, then presented an ordinance for the reorganization of the University. The purpose of the ordinance was to attain the "greater efficiency" of the University and "its better appreciation in the community," and it was submitted as "embodying the plan of organization, in its main features, contained in the Assembly bill on the same subject." It provided for the establishment, in the department of science, literature, and the arts, of seven departments or schools: agriculture, commerce, engineering, natural science, philosophy, philology, and polity. The ordinance also included a clause which provided that "all schools, or chairs of instruction heretofore established in the University of Wisconsin by this Board, by ordinance or otherwise, are hereby abolished: and all appointments in the same are declared to be null and void." The attempt by Professor Ezra Carr, then serving as a member of the Board, to have this clause struck out failed by a vote of 3 to 5. A committee was appointed to prepare recommendations for filling the chairs thus vacated. Josiah L. Pickard presented a resolution, which was adopted, providing for the appointment of a committee of three to make a thorough examination of the ordinance and to report amendments at the next meeting. Pickard, Abbott, and Draper were appointed.

³⁷ Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. B, pp. 168-170.

On the same day the Board adopted a resolution establishing a Board of Visitors. (The Board was also called a visiting committee and an examining committee.) The Board, to be named by the regents, was to visit the University during final examinations, as earlier examining committees had done, and report to the regents. The formal creation of the Board of Visitors was clearly the result of what had transpired in the Assembly. When the Robbins Bill was before that body for consideration, an attempt had been made to provide for the establishment of a permanent legislative committee to watch over the Board of Regents and the University. Although the proposal had been rejected by the House and condemned by the *Daily State Journal*, it bore fruit in this provision to establish a body, appointed from the citizens of the state, which would each year visit the University and report its findings and recommendations.³⁸ The Board of Regents published the report of the Visitors for the first time in 1860³⁹ and more or less regularly thereafter. A great many changes in the course of study and in the organization of the institution in subsequent years were first formally presented to the Board through the medium of the Visitors reports.

When the June ordinance was published in the newspapers, few editors found much to criticize. Madison papers approved of the act as carrying out the intent of the Robbins Bill, as the Board claimed it was doing. The dismissal of the entire faculty was likewise accepted without a murmur. The *Journal* implied that the faculty had resigned in order to permit the Board to act "without embarrassment, as they may deem its best interests require." Members of the faculty, of course, could not agree that they had resigned. They were legislated out of office. Professor

³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 163, 164, 172-174, 178-179; *Daily State Journal*, May 11, 1858. The regents who voted to strike out the clause abolishing all chairs of instruction were Draper, Pickard, and Carr; those who voted to retain it were Lathrop, Abbott, Vilas, Jones, and Tenney. At the July meeting the business committee brought in a resolution, which was adopted, providing that no member of the Board could be elected or appointed to a position on the instructional staff of the University and that any instructor in the University, if elected to the Board of Regents, must resign his position on the faculty. This resolution was obviously aimed at Professor Ezra Carr, who was in attendance the day the resolution was passed, but absent thereafter.

³⁹ *Regents' Annual Report*, 1859-60, pp. 31-34.

Conover prepared a letter to the *Journal* pointing this out, but apparently he never sent it. Only the *Appleton Crescent*, which had hardly distinguished itself as a champion of either the University or the faculty, protested the dismissal: "The Vandals have turned out the members of the present able faculty of the State University at Madison, and will undoubtedly replace them by some of the seedy remains of the Shanghai literati."⁴⁰ On the whole, however, the newspapers were generally sympathetic and uncritical.

Before the Board met again to complete the work of reorganization begun on June 3, tentative plans had been made to combine the office of chancellor with that of agent for the Normal Schools in the hope of attracting Henry Barnard, the nationally known editor of the *American Journal of Education*, to Wisconsin to fill both posts. On July 3, 1858 Lyman C. Draper, then superintendent of public instruction, wrote to Barnard about his hopes and plans to improve the Wisconsin educational system. In the course of his letter Draper confided his hope that Barnard would "become interested in our noble young state" and that "*some day you may be attracted here. . . .*" To be frank, we need a change in the head of our University—it will be effected sooner or later. I know many of our best men are looking hopefully to you; if such an invitation should hereafter be extended to you, I anxiously hope you will consider *long & well* before returning a declinature." While Draper was not sure that the question of a new chancellor would be discussed at the coming meeting of the Board, he was confident something would be done soon, "the sooner, in my opinion, the better."⁴¹

That Chancellor Lathrop was not unaware of general dissatisfaction with his administration seems fairly obvious. Curiously enough, he too thought of Barnard as his successor. On July 7, four days after Draper had written, Lathrop wrote to

⁴⁰ *Daily State Journal*, June 3, 1858; *Daily Argus and Democrat*, June 4, 1858; *Appleton Crescent*, June 19, 1858; undated draft of a letter from Conover to "Editor of the Journal," in the Conover Papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

⁴¹ Draper to Barnard, July 3, 1858, in the Barnard Manuscripts, New York University.

Barnard that the state now needed the service of "the highest class of talent and wisdom in originating and administering a state Educational System." In short, Lathrop declared, Wisconsin needed Barnard's services. Lathrop's own "physical endurance" was limited, and for the past year or two he had contemplated retirement from the chancellorship to the chair of ethical and political science. He planned to retire "whenever the arrangement could be made with a fair prospect of subserving thereby, the true interests of the University." It was Lathrop's opinion that if Barnard would accept the chancellorship of the University and also become head of the Normal School of the University, Lathrop would be able to retire.⁴²

Thus when the Board met on July 27 to complete the work begun on June 3, although Barnard had not yet signified his willingness to accept the post, it was reasonably clear that there would be a new chancellor, and many members of the Board thought he would be Barnard. The effect of this impending change cannot be measured, but there is no doubt that it explains the willingness of the Board to leave several problems unresolved. The reorganization of the normal department, for example, could safely be left to Barnard when he arrived.

The committee⁴³ appointed to examine the ordinance and to submit amendments differed somewhat from Lathrop in its analysis of the difficulty. The committee declared that for the past two years the University had felt the effects of agitation. Although much had been said and written in the public press which was "unworthy of any real friend of sound learning, there have been uttered some truths which seem to indicate a popular demand for change or *reorganization* to use a popular term. So far as your Committee have been able to ascertain the

⁴² Lathrop to Barnard, July 7, 1858, in the Barnard Manuscripts.

⁴³ The committee had been extensively advised in its work by Professor Conover, or at least the chairman of the committee, Josiah L. Pickard, had been. To Robbins, who had sponsored the Assembly bill, Conover confessed that he sought to correct the errors of the Board "as quickly and kindly as possible." The June ordinance, he declared, was "absurd." Conover to Hanmer Robbins, June 12, 1858, in the Conover Papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin. See also Conover to Pickard, June 17, 1858, July 10, 1858, *ibid.* While Conover was undoubtedly deeply interested in helping work out a fruitful reorganization of the University, his personal antipathy toward Chancellor Lathrop is also clearly revealed in his letters dealing with the reorganization.

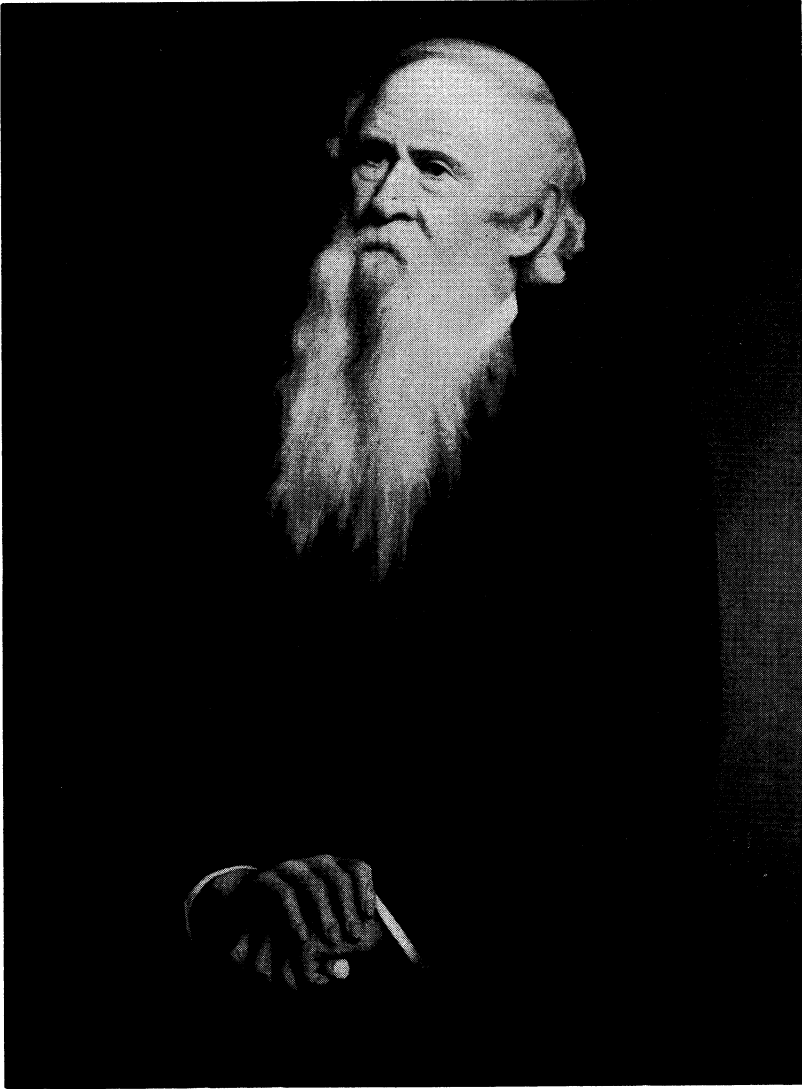
basis of such demand, it presents itself under two heads. 1st the present low standard of Scholarship, 2nd Lack of practicalness—or in other words, failure to supply the educational wants of the State especially such as spring from her industrial pursuits, art, commerce, etc.”⁴⁴

The revised ordinance, however, was not much different from the original, except that no provision was made for a school of commerce. The other six schools remained substantially the same. The revised ordinance established seven professorships—virtually the same in name and responsibility as those in the old organization. The seven professors, with the aid of three instructors and one tutor, were to provide instruction in the six schools of the department of science, literature, and the arts. The ordinance provided that the school of agriculture would not be opened until the University's annual income applicable to salaries reached sixteen thousand dollars. Salaries of professors were limited to fifteen hundred dollars per year, those of instructors were limited to seven hundred and fifty dollars. The ordinance also provided for the suspension of the preparatory department after five years. The faculty was directed to arrange for two courses of study, one scientific and the other classical, leading to degrees.⁴⁵

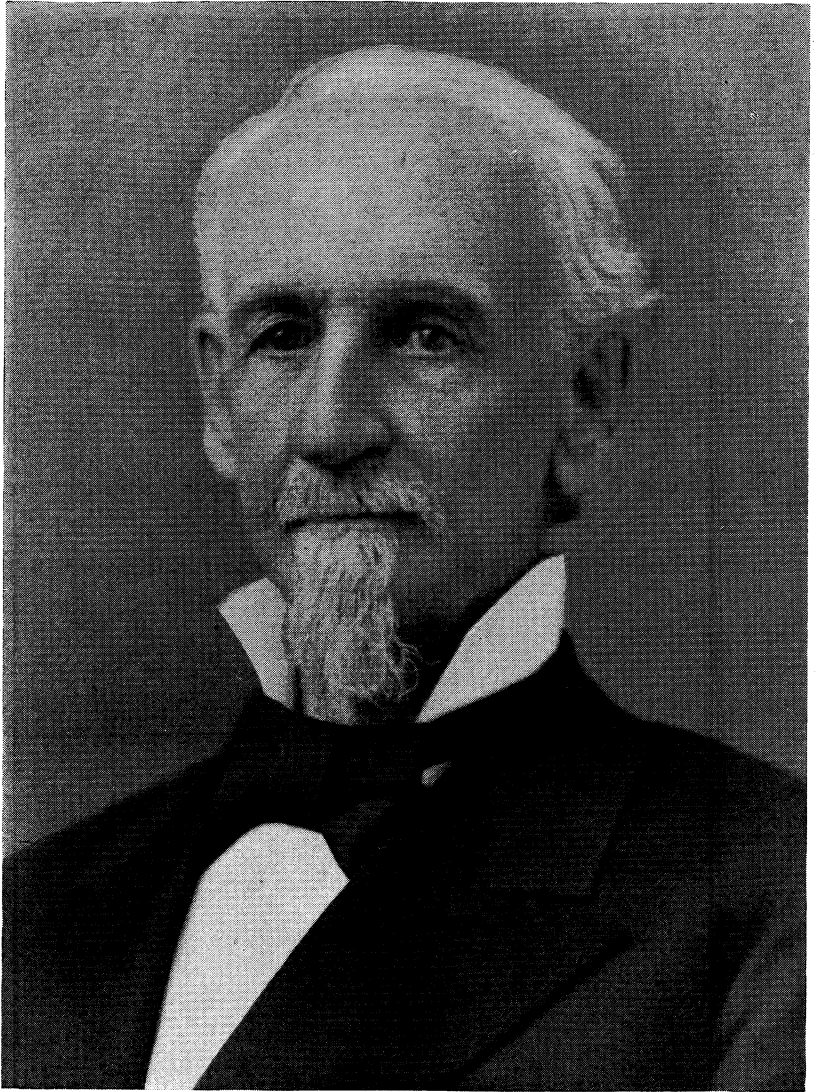
Although the ordinance as presented and adopted in July differed but little from the one presented in June, and the changes to be wrought under it were slight at best, records of the July meetings afford voluminous testimony of extended disagreements within the Board. Indeed, two of the regents, Vilas and Castleman, spread their objections upon the record. They contended that the revised ordinance wrecked the reorganization plan proposed in June, but they failed to specify just how. They also complained that the revised document deprived instructors of the right of participating in the government of the University, and they objected to the decision to increase the salaries of professors from one thousand to fifteen hundred dollars at a time when the Board could not afford this expenditure.

⁴⁴ Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. B, p. 188.

⁴⁵ For a copy of the ordinance as adopted, see *Regents' Annual Report*, 1857-58, pp. 9-12.



Henry Barnard



John W. Sterling

In the final vote on the adoption of the reorganization plan, the regents divided 7 to 5. Carr, Draper, Dean, Dewey, McMynn, Pickard, and Chancellor Lathrop voted to accept the revised ordinance; Abbott, Castleman, Dunn, Tenney, and Vilas voted against it. After all the turmoil and agitation, very little had been accomplished. Lathrop in his message of June 3 had warned that this might happen. At that time he had stated that the question of reorganization might become one of nomenclature. "The same ground is occupied—the same man occupies it—the trumpets have flourished—the *name* is reformed, and that is all."⁴⁶

Lathrop resigned the chancellorship "to disembarass the Board" and was promptly elected professor of ethical and political science, the chair he had occupied while chancellor. Professors Read, Sterling, and Carr were re-elected to their old chairs. O. M. Conover was not re-elected. The chair he had occupied, that of professor of ancient languages and literature, was tendered to James D. Butler of Wabash College, but only after a fierce contest. The Board of Regents balloted twelve times before Butler was elected. Auguste Kürsteiner, who had followed John P. Fuchs as professor of modern languages and literature in 1857, was not re-elected. In his place the Board elected J. C. Pickard over the opposition of his brother, Regent J. L. Pickard. In a vote for a new chancellor, Barnard received eight of the ten votes cast, Horace Mann received one, and Professor Ezra Carr, who had not been nominated, received one.⁴⁷

The harvest from the regents' deliberations and actions was slight. A new chancellor had been selected, and two sometimes fractious members of the faculty had been dismissed, but the distribution of professorships had remained substantially what it was before. Nevertheless, in the catalogue published in Sep-

⁴⁶ Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. B, pp. 177, 194; *Regents' Annual Report*, 1857-58, p. 20.

⁴⁷ Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. B, pp. 181-183. J. L. Pickard, in a letter to Conover, stated that he felt Kürsteiner was "eminently qualified for the Professorship he held" and he had not wanted his brother to have the position. Pickard to Conover, March 12, 1859, in the Conover Papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

tember of 1858 the Board and chancellor yielded to the old temptation of making the University seem much more than it was, and presented the reorganization as having succeeded in establishing six new schools within the department of science, literature, and the arts. The names of the seven members of the faculty were shuffled in various ways so as to provide a "faculty" for each school. Thus the school of natural science claimed a faculty consisting of the chancellor and Professors Carr, Sterling, Lathrop, Read, and Pickard. The school of civil and mechanical engineering claimed the same faculty, except Lathrop, but added one instructor and James D. Butler, professor of ancient languages and literature. The school of philology was somewhat more modest. Besides the chancellor its faculty included only Professors Read and Lathrop.⁴⁸ For the next two years these "schools" with their "faculties" were solemnly presented in the catalogues.

While it is obvious that the reorganization did not bring about the reform of the University sought by the legislature, no vigorous or sustained objections were made. Professor Carr, who had voted for the ordinance, a year later complained in a letter to Barnard that the legislative plan had been "so altered by amendments that the whole thing was made to appear ridiculous." Conover protested privately in his letters to Pickard and Robbins that the regents' reorganization had not carried out the intent of the legislature. John Wesley Hoyt, however, who has been credited with authorship of the Robbins Bill, found nothing to complain about in the reorganization. He regarded the action of the Board as "a solemn promise for the future."⁴⁹

While there had been some discussion in the newspapers over the ordinance of reorganization adopted in June, and a few doubts had been expressed as to whether the ordinance would really accomplish what it was intended to do the passage of the revised ordinance aroused no comment at all. If any of the newspaper editors suspected that the Board had gone through

⁴⁸ *Regents' Annual Report*, 1857-58, pp. 70-72.

⁴⁹ Letters to Barnard from Carr, June 13, 1859, and from Hoyt, October 13, 1858, in the Barnard Manuscripts, New York University.

the motions of reform while in fact only reshuffling the old departments and professorships, none mentioned it.⁵⁰

The change in the organization of the University and the chancellorship yielded no striking results. Barnard accepted the office in January, 1859, but never assumed active management of the University, and only a few transitory changes can be traced to his administration, none of fundamental importance. In 1859 arrangements were made to organize a normal class in conjunction with the Madison high school, and the students were made titular members of the University student body. Also at the suggestion of Barnard the Madison high school assumed responsibility for maintaining the preparatory department of the University. In 1859 a new department or school of "Physiology and Hygiene" was established in the University with David Boswell Reid as the professor.⁵¹

In 1860 the normal department was separated from the University, and the same year the faculty pointed out to the Board that the arrangement of having the preparatory department of the University in the Madison high school was unsatisfactory. The high school was crowded, its school year did not correspond with that of the University, and University students from abroad objected to receiving any part of their instruction in the high school. For these reasons the faculty thought the regents should make provision for preparatory instruction at the University. The Board responded by authorizing the employment of a tutor to provide preparatory instruction.⁵²

Meanwhile other changes, induced primarily by the financial difficulties of the Board, were pending. In July, 1859, the Board had adopted a resolution providing that all appointments to the instructional force would expire in July of 1860. Barnard was invited to present, at that meeting, "a plan of reorganization or administration, by which the expenses for interest, in-

⁵⁰ *Daily State Journal*, June 11, 15, 16, 19, 21, and *Weekly Argus and Democrat*, June 29, 1858.

⁵¹ Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. B, p. 214; Minutes of the Executive Committee of the Board of Regents, Vol. A, p. 92, July 28, 1858; *Regents' Annual Report*, 1858-59, p. 71. See below, pages 163 ff., for a discussion of Barnard's chancellorship.

⁵² Minutes of the Faculty, vol. 1, pp. 87-88, 93, June 23, July 13, 1860.

surance, instruction, etc.,—the necessary expenses shall be brought within the current income.” Instead of presenting such a plan, Barnard submitted his own resignation, which the Board accepted the next year. Left largely to their own devices, more concerned with financial than with educational matters, the Board proceeded at the July meeting to reduce the instructional staff of the University to five professors and one tutor. The salary of the professor of modern languages was fixed at eight hundred dollars a year, that of the other four professors at one thousand dollars per year, and that of the tutor at not more than six hundred dollars. Professors Butler, Carr, Read, and Sterling were re-elected. John P. Fuchs was selected to replace J. C. Pickard.⁵³

During the years of the Civil War the Board and the faculty were content to carry on virtually without experiment. Lathrop, who had been designated to serve as acting chancellor until Barnard took full charge of the University, had resigned his professorship in late 1859 to accept the presidency of Indiana University. Sterling was made dean of the faculty and administrative head after Lathrop's departure, and he continued to hold this post after the resignation of Barnard. Never one to experiment, Sterling was content to try to hold things together until a new chancellor was elected. One of the few changes in the course of study was the result of a new recommendation by the Board of Visitors, which in 1861 urged the general study of French and German. The regents responded by providing that one year's study of these languages would thereafter be “an indispensable condition to conferring a de-

⁵³ *Ibid.*, vol. 1, pp. 81–82; Barnard to the Faculty, March 19, 1860, *ibid.*, 80–81; Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. B, pp. 243–244, 254–256, 290–291. In dismissing J. C. Pickard the Board adopted a resolution acknowledging his qualifications for the position and his “scholarly zeal and attainments.” The change, the Board declared, was “actuated by a general demand for a professor, who by his birth, associations and Early Education is peculiarly qualified to teach the German and French languages.” *Ibid.*, 258. This resolution revealed something less than complete candor on the part of some members of the Board. Auguste Kürsteiner had written to Conover in 1858 saying that the German editors were going to put a stop to Pickard and that “Carl Schurz is as mad as a march hare,” and enclosing the translation of an article by Schurz, soon to be printed in the *Milwaukee Sentinel*, charging that Pickard had not yet acquired the necessary principles of French and German. Later Schurz wrote Conover proposing the appointment of Fuchs to the chair occupied by Pickard and asking whether

gree at graduation." The two most conspicuous innovations in the University program, military training and the organization of a normal department open to both men and women, can be ascribed directly to the Civil War; they were the results of expediency rather than educational philosophy.

In the summer of 1861, with military preparations engaging the attention of many people, the faculty recommended to the Board of Regents that a department of military science and tactics be established in the University. The students, the faculty pointed out with pleasure, had already organized a military company among themselves and by drilling one hour each afternoon had made such progress as to "compare favorably with any company in Camp Randall. Much of their proficiency is no doubt due to their Captain, E. G. Miller, a volunteer in the first regiment who, after serving out his time on both sides of the Potamac [*sic*], returned to the still air of delightful studies." Having observed the establishment of military departments in other state universities, the faculty urged that one be inaugurated at Wisconsin. "Such a department," the faculty declared, "befits the State University rather than any denominational college; and nowhere are the location, the grounds, and the buildings so favorable as at the University, for such an experiment."⁵⁴

The Board of Regents thought well enough of this proposal to adopt a resolution establishing a department of military science provided that the legislature would appropriate one thousand dollars annually for its support. Governor Louis P.

"we can remove Pickard immediately." Kürsteiner to Conover [1858] and Schurz to Conover, March 13, 1859, in the Conover Papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

Pickard was well aware of the movement to remove him. In December, 1859, he wrote Barnard that there had been a "fierce demand for my immediate removal" in the Madison *Democrat* on the grounds of his not being acquainted "in the slightest degree" with either German or French. Early in July he wrote to Barnard to "present . . . a few reasons why I think I ought not to be discharged from the Faculty of the University." Twelve days later, after the Board had elected Fuchs to the position of professor of Modern Languages and Literature, Pickard again wrote to Barnard reporting his dismissal and asking that he be appointed to the chair of English Language and Literature when it was established. "That chair I would rather have than any other. It is what I first applied for supposing it was then to be established." Pickard to Barnard, December 24, 1859, July 2, 14, 1860, in the Barnard Manuscripts, New York University.

⁵⁴ *Regents' Annual Report*, 1860-61, pp. 7, 10, 12.

Harvey, formerly president pro tem of the Board of Regents, recommended that the legislature appropriate the required funds, and a select committee of the Assembly brought in a very favorable report. The committee contended that the war had already shown the necessity for establishing military academies in all northern states. Although confident, in March, 1862, that the "rebellion has almost reached its inglorious end," the committee felt that provision should be made now for the protection of Wisconsin in the future. On this basis it recommended the establishment of a military department in the University and the appropriation of funds for that purpose. The bill was killed two weeks later when the enacting clause was struck out.⁵⁵ No further official action was taken to establish a military department until the reorganization of 1866.

Although unsuccessful in securing the establishment of a military department, the faculty encouraged voluntary drill. In 1862 the faculty proudly reported that drill had been maintained for two-thirds of the year with marked success. Military drill "besides enabling most who have left us for the army, to start as officers, has heightened the physical vigor of all who have shared in it, and thus given a sympathetic aid to their mental efforts, the daily outlook on the manoeuvres in the camp has seemed to stimulate all to a corresponding self-denial and energy in their own field of duty." In 1864 the University was seriously disrupted when thirty students, including all but one of the graduating class, joined up in response to the call for volunteers for one hundred days. The company marched off with the principal of the normal department, Charles H. Allen, at its head. Although no attempt was made to translate military service into college credits, Sterling reported to the Board that the entire faculty had agreed the seniors were worthy of their degrees and recommended that they be conferred without requiring these students to complete the requirements for graduation.⁵⁶

Of much greater significance was the opening of the normal

⁵⁵ Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. B, pp. 317-318, January 16, 1862; *Assembly Journal*, 1862, pp. 549-551, 800-802.

⁵⁶ *Regents' Annual Report*, 1861-62, p. 16; Sterling to the Board of Regents, June 30, 1864, in Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. B, p. 365.

department as a part of the University in March, 1863. This step was taken as a war measure more with the view to increasing the enrollment of the University than to fulfill the conditions of the University charter, but it also served to open the doors of the University to women. Charles H. Allen, formerly agent for the Normal Schools, was appointed principal of the school, and South Hall, except for those portions occupied by Professor Sterling and his family and the principal of the normal department, was turned over to the normal department. Moreover, one room in the central building was fitted up as a classroom for the students of this department. When the normal department opened, all students, in accordance with the plans announced by the Board ten years before, were permitted to attend the lectures and other exercises for the University classes. In addition, young ladies not intending to teach were permitted to enroll. The Board even promised that a gymnasium would be fitted up in South Hall "where ladies will be trained in Lewis' new system of gymnastics."

The new department was an immediate success if judged in terms of enrollment alone. During the winter term, 1862-63, the total enrollment amounted to 63; 29 were in college classes, while 34 were classified as preparatory students. In the spring term, after the normal department opened, the total enrollment increased to 177. One hundred and twelve, of whom 76 were women, were enrolled in the new department. In the following term the total attendance at the University reached 229. One hundred and sixty-two, of whom 119 were women, were registered in the normal department.⁵⁷

The faculty regarded the sudden invasion of the women with mixed feelings. The women quickly availed themselves of the offer to attend any classes in the University. In June, 1863 Professor John P. Fuchs declared in his report to the Board, "As quite a number of young ladies participated in the exercises, I deem it my duty to communicate to the Board my experience and views concerning the admittance of young ladies to the University Classes. As far as my department is concerned the

⁵⁷ *Regents' Annual Report, 1862-63*, pp. 4, 35-36.

experiment has proved a successful one. In earnestness, application and quickness of perception they, in general, were certainly not inferior to the young men, while their presence evidently exerted a beneficial influence on the deportment of the latter." James D. Butler, professor of ancient languages, in a friendly letter to Barnard in October of the same year reported that there had been criticisms for admitting "Allen's Normal School into our University. We infringe they say on the field of right belonging to Academies." He had three young ladies reading Livy with him.

The views of the dean of the faculty were not, however, as cordial as those of Fuchs. In his report to the Board in January, 1864, Sterling declared, "The fear has been entertained by some that the admission of females to the privileges of the University would result in letting down the Standard of culture if not destroy its character as a college. Under this impression the movement has generally excited the disapprobation of the Alumni and of the students in the higher classes, some of whom on this account have gone to other colleges. This prejudice however seems already to be giving place to more enlightened views and will no doubt in a short time be entirely removed."⁵⁸

It quickly became clear that by no means all of the women enrolled in the University were intent upon preparing to teach. In 1864 the Board reported that 361 students had attended during the last year, 181 men and 180 women. Only 60 students, mostly women, had pursued the regular normal course; 50 were members of the preparatory department; and 209 were designated "irregulars" since they did not devote themselves to any regular course. Only 42 men were enrolled in college classes. A year later the Board reported a decline in enrollment from the high of 361 to 306; there were 169 men and 137 women. Forty-one were in regular college classes, the remaining 265, including all the women, were classified as follows: 66 in the normal classes; 97 in the preparatory department, of whom 53 were women; and 102 in the select course, 84 men and 18 women. In 1865 the Board announced that the first graduating class from the normal

⁵⁸ Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. B, pp. 344, 360; Butler to Barnard, October 24, 1863, in the Barnard Manuscripts, New York University.

department, composed of 6 young women, had received their certificates.⁵⁹

The decline in the popularity of the normal department began in 1864 when Charles H. Allen, the principal, asked and received leave to serve in the Union Army. Allen resigned the next year. After Allen left, there was no one on the faculty to champion the normal department. Several members of the faculty regarded the presence of women on the campus with distaste. In reporting to the Board in 1865 the faculty acknowledged that the normal department had made the University a "more useful institution" during the past three years, but it was not to be "disguised that among former students of the University, and among leading ones now in the institution, there has been a strong feeling of opposition to the Department, mainly on the ground of its bringing females into the University." It was feared that the presence of "females" would lower the "standard of culture," although the faculty saw no reason for accepting this view. "There has been no such mingling of classes in the higher and more recondite subjects as to render this effect possible, even if it would be the result." With the resignation of Professor Allen the faculty suggested that the normal department be combined with the preparatory department or dropped altogether. The Board of Regents chose the first alternative.⁶⁰

There is little evidence to show that either the Board or the faculty felt any reluctance about curtailing or even suspending the most successful venture in "practical education" conducted by the University up to that time. If left to their own devices, it is unlikely that either body would have moved to expand women's privileges beyond letting them enroll in the normal department and attend regular college classes. The legislature of 1866, however, took a hand by specifically providing that the University was to be open to women in all of its departments. The story of the long-drawn-out struggle to win for women equal rights in the University is told in another chapter.

⁵⁹ *Regents' Annual Report*, 1863-64, p. 2; 1864-65, p. 2.

⁶⁰ Minutes of the Executive Committee of the Board of Regents, Vol. A, p. 142, May 18, 1864; *Regents' Annual Report*, 1864-65, pp. 5, 22.

4.

Concerning Lands and Buildings

MONEY, Chancellor Lathrop often remarked, is the nerves of learning. Money alone, he insisted, could provide the buildings, the books, the laboratories, and the faculty needed for a university. Enough money even for a modest program was difficult to obtain. Not until 1867 did the state contribute to the support of the institution, and then only to the extent of restoring income which had been lost through an act of the legislature which reduced the principal of the University Fund. Not until 1876 did the legislature adopt a millage tax for the support of the University and thus make the state's contribution more than token support.

The chief source of financial support in the early years was the income from the University Fund. This was supplemented by tuitions and room rents collected from students and, for a few years, from the sale of university lots. Since the income from all these sources was never sufficient to support the ambitious program advocated by the chancellor and the Board, they had to borrow from the state and private lenders. In 1852 the regents mortgaged the University for a loan of \$5,000. In blithely pledging the future income of the University Fund, the chancellor and the Board showed more than a touch of that frontier buoyancy and expansiveness which, among other things, was characterized by the firm belief that each succeeding year would be better than the last.

Tuitions and other student fees never constituted a significant

part of the University income. The room rents hardly paid for fuel and janitor service; tuitions were not enough to support a single professorship. In 1860, when the Board reduced the salary of the professors from a maximum of \$1,500 to \$1,000, student fees were turned over to the professors.¹

The sale of university lots offered little more than temporary relief. In 1850 the Board had informed the legislature that the full site desired for the University was not included within the metes and bounds of the quarter section tract purchased from Aaron Vanderpool. The additional land needed to complete the site was procured by direct purchase and by exchange of land. Land remaining in the possession of the Board but outside the site selected was to be divided into village lots and sold. The Board was willing to permit the legislature and posterity to assume that they had purchased the Vanderpool tract before making sure that it included the site they wanted for the University. The experience of the participants in the transaction did not warrant this inference. John Catlin, who acted as Vanderpool's agent, and Simeon Mills, on the Board of Regents, had lived in Madison since the late 1830's and both had had abundant experience in buying and selling land. Moreover, everyone who had ever looked at the plat of Madison knew that King, now State Street, was laid out along the north line of section twenty-three, township seven, range nine east. The tract purchased from Vanderpool was the northwest quarter of section twenty-three, contiguous with the western limits of the village of Madison, and all of it lying south of King Street. If the Board that recommended and then completed the purchase of this tract did not know that the tract did not include all of College Hill, they might have discovered it by the simple expedient of adjourning long enough to step out of the Capitol, where they were meeting, and looking west along King Street, which had been sufficiently cleared to permit a view of the hill. One glance would have assured them that the whole hill was

¹ At the February meeting of the Board in 1860, it had been decided to reduce professors' salaries from \$1,500 to \$1,250, plus half the student fees, which were to be divided equally among the professors. Records of the Board of Regents (MS.), Vol. B, p. 237. At the July meeting the same year salaries were reduced to \$1,000 and all student fees were turned over to the professors. *Ibid.*, 254.

not on the property they proposed to purchase. But it is inconceivable that the Board, or at least the Madison members, did not already know this. The inference is inescapable that the Vanderpool land was bought in the full knowledge that it included only a small portion of the site wanted for the University. The Board must have bought it chiefly so that they could break it up into lots, sell the lots, and secure the means for the early opening of the University. No other conclusion is tenable in view of the membership of the Board and the celerity with which the Board moved to turn the excess land into cash.

In the summer of 1850 Simeon Mills was appointed land commissioner of the Board and authorized to plat and dispose of the lots in the University Addition to the village of Madison. Before the end of the year Mills had laid out one hundred and seventy-four village lots and twelve five acre "outlots." The commissioner reported that some lots had been exchanged for land needed to complete the University site, four had been contracted "nominally for the sum of fifty dollars, but really in consideration of the erection of a brick boarding house, sufficiently large to accommodate fifty students with board," and the rest offered for sale. Although only eleven lots had been sold by the end of 1850, Mills was confident that a sum of nearly \$14,000 would soon be realized from this source. Mills's optimism was soon justified. The sale of lots was brisk during the next few years; more than \$5,000 was collected in 1852 alone. By 1854, when most of the lots had been sold, the total receipts amounted to more than \$12,000.²

At that time the regents were not at all displeased with the way in which they had managed to show a handsome profit from the sale of their surplus land, and there is no evidence that their contemporaries disapproved of their employing the usages of town-booming to the profit of the University. Much later, when

² *Regents' Annual Report*, January 1, 1851, pp. 6-7, 33, 34; annual reports of the land commissioner, 1852-1856, in the annual reports of the regents. The University Addition included, in terms of present-day Madison, substantially all the area between State Street and University Avenue on the north, Regent on the south, and from Mills Street east to the original village limits. Simeon Mills, with an engaging modesty, bestowed his family name upon the street marking the western extremity of the University Addition.

the expanding needs of the University made it necessary for the Board to repurchase some of the land sold in the 1850's and to pay prices which reflected a lusty advance in real estate values, and long after the early financial struggles had been forgotten, some regretted that the Board in the early days had not foreseen, with John Jacob Astor, the "inevitable" and perennial advance of land values in city real estate. They forgot that the aim of the Board had been to start, not to endow, a university.

The student fees provided only a trickle of revenue; the sale of lots had been completed within five years of the opening of the University and the money swallowed up by the building fund. And so, the Board of Regents had to rely primarily upon the income from the University Fund, created through the sale of the land given by the federal government for the endowment of a university. Although it has often been argued with good cause that the sale of the university land endowment was conducted entirely in the interest of land seekers, the financial need of the University, as defined and subsequently imposed by regents and chancellor, was a factor of considerable weight in determining the land policy and the condition of the fund.

The selection of lands in the original grant had been completed shortly after Wisconsin became a state and, under the terms of the grant, came into full possession of this endowment. The makers of the Constitution had assigned the responsibility for the management of school and university lands to the ex officio board of commissioners—the secretary of state, the treasurer, and the attorney general. This disposition of responsibility was supposed to protect the lands from being sold too cheaply and the funds from being dissipated. Thus two elements in the land policy had been determined by the constitutional convention: the state would sell the land rather than retain it and depend upon leases for income;³ and secondly, authority for sale

³ Two of the states in the Old Northwest, Ohio and Indiana, adopted the policy of leasing the lands rather than selling them. Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin followed the practice which was more popular on the frontier of selling the lands outright. See George W. Knight, "History and Management of Land Grants for Education in the Northwest Territory," in *Papers of the American Historical Association* (New York, 1885), 1:117 ff. An attempt was made in the second constitutional convention by the delegate from Racine, H. T. Sanders,

of the land and investment of the funds therefrom—although these functions were to be conducted under regulations and laws adopted by the legislature—was placed under a board which had no direct relation to, nor responsibility for, the University.

The legislature did not get around to implementing the constitutional provision until the spring of 1849, when it passed a law establishing the legal framework within which the state was to manage her educational endowments for more than a decade. The law, containing one hundred and twelve sections, provided for the sale of all educational lands in separate tracts at public auction. Pre-emptors who had settled on any of these lands before August, 1848, were given the right to purchase forty acres at the lowest appraised price. Purchasers of land were required to pay ten per cent of the whole price at the time of purchase and to pay the balance within ten years. The interest rate, as provided by the Constitution, was seven per cent, payable in advance. Thus the purchase of school and university lands was encouraged by the provisions for a small down payment and long term credit at relatively low interest rates. But the law safeguarded the school lands by providing that title to lands sold on credit would remain in the state until the full price and all interest charges had been paid, and by establishing procedures for repossessing and reselling lands on which purchasers had defaulted.

The law provided further that all funds accumulated from the sale of lands were to be available for loan to citizens of the state. Loans were to be limited to \$500 an individual and were to be secured by mortgages on real estate. In no case was a loan to exceed more than one-half the appraised value of the property offered as security, nor was it to be made for more than five years, although it might be renewed after that period. The interest rate on money lent from the School and University Funds was the same as that paid by the purchasers of university lands.

The law virtually repeated the words of the Constitution in

to insert a provision into the Constitution requiring the lands to be leased rather than sold. He called attention to the way in which educational lands had been sold and the funds squandered in Illinois and warned that the same would happen in Wisconsin unless the Constitution prevented it. His proposal won no support from the other delegates. *Journal of the Convention to Form a Constitution for the State of Wisconsin, 1847-48* (Madison, 1848), 322.

specifying that "the net proceeds of the sales of all lands which have been or may be granted to this state for the support of a university, shall be and remain a separate and perpetual fund, the interest of which and the rents accruing from the leases of said lands, shall be appropriated to the establishment and support of the State University."⁴ It is clear that the security of the fund rested almost exclusively upon small real estate mortgages and that its productivity would depend upon the prosperity of the small farmers and land holders of the state. It cannot be said that the law contained provisions which were necessarily detrimental to the educational funds, but it is clear that in its loan features the farming and land-seeking interests in the state had won a victory over the business interests.⁵

Before the lands were offered for sale, the various tracts were appraised by three appraisers appointed for each county. In January, 1850 the secretary of state, reporting for the Board of Commissioners of School and University Lands, announced that appraisals had been completed in all counties except those lying north of the Fox and Wisconsin Rivers. This included a total of almost sixty-four sections located in sixteen counties. The average appraised value of the university lands was \$2.87 per acre; the value of section sixteen, reserved for the support of the common schools, was \$3.72 per acre. The appraised value of the university lands ranged from \$7.06 per acre, for one section in Washington County, down to \$1.13 per acre, for seven sections in Green County.⁶

Chancellor Lathrop questioned the appraisals of university

⁴ *Session Laws*, 1849, p. 149. The following discussion of the disposal of the university lands and the administration of the Fund rests largely upon a study made by Irvin G. Wyllie, the principal conclusions of which he published in his article "Land and Learning," in the *Wisconsin Magazine of History*, 30:154-173 (December, 1946).

⁵ This subject has been carefully examined by Joseph Schafer in his article "Wisconsin's Farm Loan Law, 1849-1863," in the *Proceedings of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin*, 1920, pp. 156-191. He found that "probably quite as many people were effectively interested in the fund as were interested in the educational upbuilding for which the income from the fund alone could be used." He asserted that a vigorous battle took place while the law was being framed, and "while the evidence is not absolutely clear, it looks as if the lines were pretty definitely drawn between business interests on the one hand and the farming interests on the other." *Ibid.*, pp. 157, 165.

⁶ Report of the Secretary of State, January 11, 1850, in *Senate Journal*, 1850, pp. 399, 417; *Regents' Annual Report*, January 16, 1850, p. 17.

land by implication in his inaugural address; the Board of Regents protested directly. The Board called the attention of the legislature to the fact that "selected" university lands had been appraised at less than the school lands comprised mostly of the unselected section sixteen, implying that the fault lay not in the quality of the university lands but in the appraisers. The regents were as strongly opposed to recognizing the rights of pre-emptors as they were dissatisfied with the low appraisals. They called attention to the success with which university lands had been administered in Michigan, where a minimum price of \$12 an acre had been established. The regents urged that the legislature fix the price of Wisconsin university lands at a minimum of \$10 per acre. The regents called the attention of the legislature to this matter "in the earnest confidence that the correcting hand of legislation will be promptly applied and the fund saved."⁷

Two weeks later the Senate Committee on the University and University Lands brought in a report supporting the regents. The committee charged that the appraisals had been illegal and agreed that the university lands had been carefully selected. "It is well known that most of the University lands were selected at an early day by persons reputed to be good judges of land. The selections have been since surrounded by numerous inhabitants, and extensive improvements, whereby their value have been enhanced; and most assuredly those lands which have been pre-empted must be valuable, or they would not have been thus settled, at the risk of a high price being fixed upon them. From all which, it is hard to resist the conviction, that the low valuation of them is the result of ignorance or design." The committee deplored that the University had been

⁷ *Regents' Annual Report*, January 16, 1850, p. 14. The regents were probably justified in assuming that the land selected to make up the two townships granted the University should be more valuable than the lands in section sixteen of each township which was reserved for schools. The men who chose the university lands were authorized to reserve any unoccupied land in the public domain. There is, however, nothing to show that the men who made the selections did more than visit the respective land offices and make their selections from the unoccupied lands as shown by the land plats. There is nothing to show that the university lands were selected with the desire to get the best lands available for the University, nor is there anything to show that the university lands were selected at random.

opened before funds were available for its support, yet "the honor of the State, as well as the good to be derived from the education of our youth, forbid the idea of retreating or repudiating." This complaint did not mean that the committee was willing to urge that a tax be levied for the support of the University: far from it. The committee merely recommended that the regents be given the loan they had asked for and that a minimum value of \$10 an acre be set upon all university land. The legislature responded with a law fixing the price of the land as requested by the Board and recommended by the committee. For the moment at least the Fund seemed safe and the prospects of getting a large endowment bright.⁸

Yet there were many obstacles in the way of the policy so adopted. The Board of Regents, on the one hand bringing pressure to bear to hold the university lands off the market until a high price could be secured, was on the other hand committed to an educational and building program which would require relatively extensive expenditure of funds. In the hope of giving the University a wide appeal and answering the complaint that board and room could not be had in Madison at a moderate rate, the Board had included four dormitories in its building plans. In order to open the University proper, and to begin construction of the first building, the Board had borrowed \$25,000 from the School Fund. It was soon apparent that the university lands would not sell rapidly enough at \$10 an acre to provide a fund sufficient to carry out the program which had been adopted, so the regents were compelled to decide whether to withdraw their opposition to the sale of the lands at a moderate price or postpone the execution of their plans. The Board chose the former course.

But it is doubtful whether the prices fixed in 1850 could have been maintained even if the Board of Regents had insisted upon that course. At the time when the policy of holding

⁸ *Report of the Committee on the University and University Lands*, January 29, 1850, pp. 4, 5, 7; *Session Laws*, 1850, p. 144. The State Historical Society's copy of the committee's report is bound with others in a volume carrying the binding title "Reports of Committees, 1848-57." A shortened and somewhat different version of the report appears in the appendix of the *Senate Journal*, 1850, pp. 467-469.

the land for \$10 an acre was adopted, the state contained a population of little more than three hundred thousand people. During the next decade almost half a million immigrants swarmed into the new state. This migration "transcended all previous experience in the settlement of any portion of the New World of the same extent of territory."⁹ The settlers who came in the 1850's, no less than the land-seekers in territorial days wanted cheap land; they opposed land speculators who bought large blocks of land to hold for high prices, and they objected to any policy of the state, in disposing of its own land, which would keep the land out of the hands of willing buyers. And for the state to ignore the rights of pre-emptors was little short of outrageous. Attacks on the policy were not long in coming.

Sale of university lands at \$10 an acre, begun in May, 1850, proceeded slowly. This might have been expected, since government land was available for \$1.25 an acre. Although easy credit was offered to purchasers of university lands, this was no real inducement since the required ten per cent down payment amounted to only twenty-five cents an acre less than the full price of government land. By the end of 1850 only one thousand acres of the university grant had been sold, and the income from the Fund was not large enough to meet the interest charges due on the loan contracted by the Board at the beginning of the year. The policy of holding university lands for a high price was attacked in the legislature in 1851. A Senate bill was passed, lowering the minimum price of university lands to \$4 an acre and recognizing the pre-emption rights of settlers. Although this bill was vetoed by the governor, the legislature promptly passed another, which the governor signed, lowering the minimum price of the land to \$7 an acre. This bill permitted bona fide pre-emptors to purchase the land on which they had settled at the price fixed by the appraisals of 1848 and 1849, and directed the commissioners to make refunds to all previous purchasers of any amount which they had paid in excess of the newly established price.¹⁰

⁹ *Historical Atlas of Wisconsin*, compiled and published by Snyder, Van Vechten & Co. (Milwaukee, 1878), 134.

¹⁰ Wyllie, "Land and Learning," in *Wisconsin Magazine of History*, 159-162; an anonymous entry in the Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. A (unpaged),

Within the space of a year the hope of getting a large fund from the "seminary grant" had begun to fade. But not all was lost. The legislature which had reduced the price of the university lands, at the request of the Board of Regents, petitioned Congress for a second grant of land for the support of the University. The reduction of price did not greatly increase the rate of sales. During 1851 less than three thousand acres were sold,

March 10, 1851, recorded the Senate's passage of the earlier bill on March 3, the Assembly's concurrence on March 4, despite the opposition of the "University interest," and Governor Dewey's veto of the bill on March 10, which "saved the day"; *Session Laws*, 1851, p. 419. S. H. Carpenter, one-time Madison newspaper man, tutor in the preparatory department, and later professor in the University, stated that the price of the land was reduced to \$7 an acre at the suggestion of the regents, who feared that the financial needs of the University could not be met unless sales were increased. See his *Historical Sketch of the University of Wisconsin from 1849 to 1876* (Madison, 1876), 14.

The data on the University Fund given below, compiled by Wyllie and included in the article cited above, is based on a variety of sources: reports of the Commissioners of School and University Lands, the secretary of state, state treasurer, superintendent of public instruction, and Board of Regents, and annual messages of the governors:

Year	Interest-Bearing Capital	Income of Fund	Acres Sold	Total Sale Price	Average Price per Acre
1850	\$10,446.00	\$1,090.99	1,058.98	\$10,899.28	\$10.29
1851	25,005.04	1,364.05	2,947.91	14,167.56	4.81
1852	44,446.26	1,980.57	3,200.00	21,626.63	6.76
1853	95,244.85	4,448.89	?	60,939.51	?
1854	161,146.61	8,775.08	15,489.88	56,499.19	3.65
1855	178,150.30	12,261.43	5,680.00	21,849.36	3.86
1856	298,991.55	16,085.58	39,096.86	128,804.13	3.29
1857	315,953.46	21,595.53	560.22	1,692.81	3.02
1858	316,365.83	20,738.67	1,278.57	4,099.55	3.21
1859	300,725.22	21,247.06	640.30	3,090.08	4.73
1860	286,725.92	19,183.99	1,552.76	4,988.36	3.21
1861	261,948.66	18,497.86	80.00	218.28	2.73
1862	241,151.76	13,986.70	40.00	120.00	3.00
1863	182,110.53	13,005.56	40.00	81.04	2.00
1864	157,170.25	11,522.40	2,930.23	8,202.89	2.80
1865	160,780.55	11,757.77	3,371.62	9,081.12	2.69
1866	180,230.70	?	9,549.44	25,171.92	2.62
1867	193,884.88	13,484.86	3,330.00	10,269.98	3.08
1868	199,433.14	14,957.45	3,174.12	8,529.86	2.69
1869	202,698.14	14,483.04	1,978.87	4,925.39	2.49
1870	203,866.14	14,204.40	1,550.58	4,539.42	2.92
1871	207,139.38	14,462.68	2,205.00	5,174.54	2.35
1872	206,983.88	14,380.63	1,588.38	3,556.73	2.24
1873	216,519.38	14,743.82	3,051.81	9,393.11	3.04
1874	220,833.06	15,580.07	1,431.11	3,757.43	2.63
1875	222,732.56	15,336.74	491.60	?	?

at an average price of \$4.81 per acre. Since this price was more than \$2 below the minimum established by law, it is clear that most of the sales had been made to "bona fide" pre-emptors. At the end of the year the Commissioners of the School and University Lands reported that the "sales of University lands have been comparatively trifling, and generally upon pre-emptions proved under the act of the present year, at the original appraised value."

The commissioners entertained little hope of disposing of the lands at the price fixed by the last legislature. "To insure the sale of any considerable portion of the university lands, a further reduction in the price is necessary. As the law now exists relating to these lands, none can be sold, except on pre-emption, for less than seven dollars per acre, which at present operates nearly as a prohibition of sale. Other lands of equal quality, in good localities, and in great abundance, may at this time be purchased at government price."¹¹

Against this argument the Board of Regents offered little resistance. The loan of \$25,000 had been used for the construction of one building, North Hall; laying the foundation for a second, South Hall; improving the grounds; and paying current expenses. In January, 1851, the Board had confidently expected that the proceeds from the sale of university lots would be sufficient to permit completion of the second building.

By the end of the year the picture had changed. The chancellor declared that there was little immediate prospect that large classes would pursue the full collegiate course to graduation. Yet he insisted that it would be a "suicidal policy for the University, on this account, to limit the number of its Faculty, the extent of its library, apparatus and cabinet, or to cheapen and debase the quality of its instructions." Accordingly, he proposed the appointment, in 1852, of a professor of languages. By the next year a professor of physical sciences would be needed, and, soon thereafter, two more professors to complete the faculty. The possibility of having the resources to carry out

¹¹ *Regents' Annual Report*, January 1, 1851, pp. 13-14; *Report of the School and University Land Commissioners*, 1851, pp. 3, 4; also printed in the *Senate Journal*, 1852, appendix, pp. 201-202.

this program appeared remote. The chancellor now admitted that the sale of lots could be expected to do no more than extinguish the "private indebtedness" of the University; sales of seminary lands to date had amounted to only \$25,000 and the income of this fund, according to the provisions of the law, must be applied to payment of the interest due on the loan from the School Fund. Anticipating, on the basis of two years' experience, an annual sale of about \$15,000 worth of land, the chancellor looked forward to a clear revenue of \$1,000 in 1854. If this were realized, the University would "very soon become a self-supporting institution." In the meantime, income would be insufficient to meet the required expenditures. To meet this inadequacy he proposed that the legislature grant to the University an annual income of \$5,000, on the condition that all advances made from the state treasury be repaid out of the "future excess" of revenue from the University Fund when it matured. Secondly, in order to assure the early opening of the normal department in the University, the chancellor proposed that the legislature make a loan from the School Fund for the erection of a building and also make an annual appropriation from the same fund to pay the interest on that loan and support the normal department faculty. The Board had made a similar suggestion the year before, but their language was so circumlocutory that the legislature may be forgiven for not having understood, particularly in the light of the Board's declaration, in the same report, that the money was at hand to complete the building to be used for the normal department. Finally, the chancellor proposed that the legislature endow a department of the "Application of Science to Agriculture and the Useful Arts."

The chancellor's proposal for getting funds for the normal department was approved by the Board and recommended by the governor,¹² but the legislature did nothing about it. Instead,

¹² *Regents' Annual Report*, January 1, 1851, p. 7; December 31, 1851, pp. 8-12, 14. Governor Dewey had been explicit. In his message to the legislature on January 9, 1851, he called attention to the need for trained teachers, pointed out that the Constitution had stipulated that the income from the School Fund was to be applied to the support of common schools, academies, and normal schools, and recommended that the University be granted "a further loan, sufficient to complete the structures already commenced, and that a sum equal to the interest upon the principal of the cost of the normal structure, be appropriated from the

they adopted a law following the recommendations of the commissioners. The value of the remaining university lands was fixed at a minimum price of \$3 an acre and new appraisals were ordered to be made. Stephen H. Carpenter later charged, "The interests of the University were thus set aside for the interests of the settlers, or for the supposed interests of the state at large."¹³

Having failed to get the support of the legislature for any of the money raising proposals submitted in 1852, and unwilling to suspend the operation of the University or even curtail expansion of the institution along the lines marked out in 1850, the chancellor and the Board accepted the legislature's act in good spirit. But this was not the whole story. They went further and specifically supported the policy. The chancellor, forgetting his earlier avowals, or perhaps having thought better of them, later declared that "the seminary lands, having been re-appraised during the last summer, and being henceforth subject to entry at their present fair valuation, will probably all be taken up within the next five years. But it is obviously, now, and will continue to be from this time onward, the interest of the institution, to hasten the sales; and it has been suggested that this object may be effected, by forwarding plats of seminary lands to some general agent in each county in which the lands lie, with instructions to find purchasers, and charge ordinary commissions for the service. The adoption of some efficient means of bringing their lands to the notice of emigrants and capitalists, is certainly very desirable." The Board of Regents not only formally approved the new policy but justified it. "Had Wisconsin located these lands at an earlier day, with a more painstaking diligence in their selection, the endowment of our state University would have enabled it, ere long, to rival, in its ample means of instruction, the richly founded and time honored institutions of our land, and to open its doors, like the district school, without charge, to the youth of this and neighboring states." The regents

income of the school fund, to be expended under the direction of the Board of Regents, to establish and in aid of normal schools." *Senate Journal*, 1851, appendix, pp. 8-10.

¹³ *Senate Journal*, 1852, pp. 12-14; *Session Laws*, 1852, p. 769; Carpenter, *Historical Sketch of the University*, 17.

affirmed that since 1848 they had "endeavored to protect the lands from waste and spoliation." The views of the Board had been "sustained by wise legislation." Thus the lands had not been offered "at the low range of prices which has, for temporary reasons, prevailed for two or three years past; a re-appraisal has been made during the past summer, on very accurate personal observations, and the lands are now open for entry and sale at a fair valuation."¹⁴

University lands went on sale under the new policy at the end of October, 1852. Within three months over three thousand acres had been sold, surprisingly enough, at an average price of \$6.76 per acre, more than twice the minimum price set by law. Up to the end of that year land sales had brought the University Fund up to a total of almost \$47,000. However, after interest charges had been met on the loan from the School Fund, only \$650 remained from the income of the Fund to be applied to the current expenses of the University which, that year, were reported to be \$8,480.27. Most of the expenses for 1853 were met by a loan of \$5,000 from J. D. Ledyard of Cazenovia, New York, secured by a mortgage on the University grounds, and by \$2,904.38 collected from the sale of university lots. Nevertheless, the prospects of a very rapid sale of university land at the reduced price seemed so good that the regents asked the legislature for authority to withdraw \$16,000 from the University Fund in the form of a loan in order to complete the second building. But the legislature of 1853 refused.

The rapid sale of university lands during 1853 justified the expectations of the regents. Almost \$61,000 worth of land was sold. If the rate of sales attained that year continued, the Board predicted that the original grant would be disposed of within another two years, bringing the capital fund up to \$175,000.

In the light of the very favorable condition of the University finances, the regents announced their intention of appointing additional professors and renewed the request for a loan of \$15,000 for building purposes. The regents also promised that as soon as the second building had been completed, a sinking fund would be established to liquidate the debts, and the legis-

¹⁴ *Regents' Annual Report*, December 31, 1852, pp. 5, 23.

lature was assured that no more buildings would be needed until the indebtedness already incurred had been completely discharged.¹⁵ The legislature authorized the loan, but it directed that the regents must, henceforth, submit each year to the governor a detailed estimate of expense for the coming year, and directed that no money was to be drawn from the state treasury by the Board of Regents except in pursuance of an express appropriation by law.¹⁶

Meanwhile interest in getting an additional land grant for the University had revived. Chancellor Lathrop, in his communication to the Board in early 1854, regretted the fact that the present endowment of the University had to bear the burden of providing buildings and grounds and expressed the hope "that an additional share of the public bounty may still be secured to the institution." Before the end of the year Congress adopted an act under which the state was given two additional townships of land for the support of the University. These lands were given in lieu of saline lands which the state had not been able to claim upon entering the Union. In anticipation of this grant, an agent of the Board had gone into the northwest portion of the state in 1853 and there located the entire grant in the newly organized Pierce County. However, before the grant became legal, settlers entered some twenty thousand acres of the selected lands. This required that other lands be selected. Almost half the new land grant was located in Pierce County, the rest was selected in the counties extending from St. Croix in the west to Door County in the east. These lands, almost all farming lands, were offered for sale under the terms established for the disposal of the original grant.

During 1854, sales from the original grant continued briskly. By the end of the year the Board of Regents announced that the University Fund had reached a total value of \$161,000. An estimated \$19,000 worth of land remained unsold. The new

¹⁵ *Regents' Annual Report*, 1852, pp. 18, 29; 1853, pp. 5, 9. The mortgage on the University grounds, probably illegal, was in force from 1852 to 1864. According to the notations on the canceled document, the mortgage deed was registered in Dane County on November 1, 1852, at 6:00 P.M. Papers of the Board of Regents. It was paid off on June 2, 1864.

¹⁶ *General Laws*, 1854, pp. 122-124.

grant was estimated at a value of \$120,000. When all the lands should be sold, the Board expected to have an annual income of \$22,000 from the University Fund, plus another \$3,000 "from other sources." The Board promised that the normal and agricultural departments of the University would soon be opened.¹⁷

The prosperity of the University in 1855 was shown in the announcement by the Board that the faculty for the collegiate department had now been completed by the appointment of three new professors and that arrangements had been made to begin normal instruction in 1856 and to offer lectures in agricultural chemistry. Moreover, steps had been taken to organize the medical department and plans were being drawn up to establish the law school. Although nothing had been done to reduce the indebtedness of the institution, the Board contemplated the future without mistrust. "The existing revenue of the University is sufficient for the support of the institution on its present scale, the gradual increase of the aids to instruction, and the payment of the annual interest on the debt incurred for the grounds and buildings. The Board now looks to the income yet to be derived from the recent land grant by Congress, for the rapid extinction of the debt and the accumulation of a building fund for the erection of the remaining structures comprised in the plan adopted by the Board."¹⁸

As the Board anticipated, 1856 was indeed a banner year for the sale of lands. In all, almost 40,000 acres, mainly from the new grant, were sold for approximately \$129,000. The total value of the fund increased to \$310,000. The Board of Regents looked forward to the time when the Fund would amount to \$350,000, but now doubted that the income from the Fund

¹⁷ *Regents' Annual Report*, 1853, p. 24; 1854, pp. 5, 10; *United States Statutes at Large*, 33 Congress, 2 session, Chapter 5, approved December 15, 1854; Carpenter, *Historical Sketch of the University*, 17. In 1856 the Board of Regents took full credit for having secured the second land grant for the University. In discussing the status of University finances the Board declared: "The Board, after three or four years of negotiation and effort, obtained an additional grant from Congress, for the benefit of the University, and for no other purpose whatever, the avails of which, when sold, are likely to reach about the same sum [as the original endowment]." *Regents' Annual Report*, 1856, p. 13.

¹⁸ *Regents' Annual Report*, 1855, pp. 8, 10, 12, 13.

would be sufficient "to create for Wisconsin a University of the same grade with our own Harvard, and other leading educational institutions of this country." Nothing more could be expected in the way of endowments. Further improvements in the University must come as a result of state aid or private donations. Nevertheless, the Board proposed the creation of a department of theoretical and practical engineering and a professorship of astronomy and physics. In view of the increased patronage of the University, the expansion of its services, and the healthy condition of its finances, the Board asked the legislature to authorize a loan of \$35,000 from the principal of the University Fund for the construction of the "main edifice." The legislature of 1857 responded handsomely by authorizing a loan of \$40,000 for the building. Thus on the eve of the Panic of 1857, the Board of Regents, having already accumulated an indebtedness of \$45,000, prepared to double the debt.¹⁹

In 1857 the University Fund had reached \$316,000 and the income was reported to be over \$21,000. Most of the value of the Fund was represented in the evidences of indebtedness given to the Commissioners of School and University Lands by the purchasers. Only a little over \$50,000 had been actually received and reported out on loan under the terms of the law of 1849. In short, the buyers of university land still owed over \$260,000 of the purchase price.²⁰ Although buyers of university lands had

¹⁹ *Annual Report of the Commissioners of School and University Lands for the State of Wisconsin*, 1856, p. 24; *Regents' Annual Report*, 1856, p. 11, 13; *General Laws*, 1857, pp. 29-30. The commissioners' report was also printed, with original pagination, as Document D in *Governor's Message and Accompanying Documents*, 1857, vol. 1.

²⁰ Irvin G. Wyllie has compiled, from the annual reports of the Commissioners of School and University Lands, the state treasurer, secretary of state, Board of Regents, and superintendent of public instruction and the annual messages of the governors, the following tabulation of the money that was out on loan each year up to the time the state stopped making these loans. The figures include the amounts borrowed by the regents.

1850 \$ 1,170.00	1855 27,595.00	1860 57,451.94
1851 3,095.00	1856 36,261.20	1861 58,135.44
1852 3,395.00	1857 50,521.20	1862 54,144.90
1853 3,620.00	1858 54,342.20	1863 21,407.00
1854 25,230.33	1859 52,242.20	1864 18,607.00

The drop which took place in 1863 was due to three factors: the forfeiture of old loans, the recall of old loans, and the decision to make no new loans.

collectively paid less than seventeen per cent of the purchase price of the land up to the end of 1856, the Board of Regents, in asking for authority to borrow from the principal of the Fund, assumed that almost as much money would be paid into the principal of the Fund in 1857 as had been paid in up to that date. They did not ask for, nor did the legislature give, authority to call University loans or to require purchasers of university land to increase their payments to reduce the debts on the land purchased. Hence it is clear that voluntary retirement of debts, plus the additional sale of land, was expected to furnish the \$40,000 authorized for the new building. Yet less than six hundred acres of the land was sold in 1857, and the amount of money paid in by borrowers and land purchasers that year was negligible. Authority to borrow money from the University Fund availed the regents nothing.

By the end of September, 1857, the Board of Regents was convinced that "under the monetary pressure which is likely to prevail for the coming year" very little money would be paid into the treasury. But the Board was quite "unwilling to defer the occupation" of the new building beyond the opening of the school year of 1858. In fact, they insisted: "on opening the departments of instruction in this edifice, a new era will be inaugurated in the history of the University, to which its antecedent operations have been properly introductory." Accordingly, plans had been drawn and contracts let at a cost of \$36,550, exclusive of excavation, supervision, and fitting up and furnishing the building. The regents now asked the legislature, in view of the near certainty that payments into the University Fund would not support the costs of construction, for legislation permitting them to borrow from any funds subject to loan in the hands of the Commissioners of School and University Lands.²¹

The legislature of 1858, to which this appeal was submitted, was unsympathetic. No relief was granted. In fact, a committee investigation revealed that the Board of Regents had, through a favorable interpretation of the Normal School Law of 1857, obtained a loan of \$5,000 from the Normal School Fund. It was

²¹ *Regents' Annual Report*, 1856-57, pp. 7-8.

alleged by the committee that the Board of Regents had given a mortgage on the University grounds as security for this loan. These charges led to the full legislative review of the financial transactions and educational objectives of the Board discussed elsewhere.

Although rebuffed by the legislature, the Board was determined not only to complete the building under construction, but also to increase the teaching staff and academic offerings of the University. Chancellor Lathrop had resigned in the summer of 1858 and Henry Barnard had been appointed to the post. In September, 1858, the Board announced that in addition to the chancellor there was a faculty of nine, including a tutor and the "Instructor of Commercial Calculations." The chancellor's salary was increased to \$2,500 per year and that of the professors from \$1,000 to \$1,500. The regents insisted it was their intention "to proceed cautiously in the expansion of the scope of the university, and the multiplication of departments in it."²²

The contract for the major construction work of the central building had been let in 1857, but because of the shortage of funds, little work had been done that year. Work was resumed in 1858, and the Board expressed the hope that the building would be ready for use at the beginning of the school year in 1859. In order to carry on the work, the Board had relied on "unexpended balances of the income of the University; and secondly, advances made by individuals on faith of the building fund, as it may hereafter be paid into the State Treasury." These advances were secured on warrants issued by the Board bearing interest at the rate of ten per cent. The Board justified this action on the basis that some arrangement had to be made to continue construction of the building since the contractor had \$13,000 worth of materials on the grounds. The Board was confident the warrants would all be redeemed at maturity but intimated that legislative aid would be useful.²³

The legislature in 1859 at least made a gesture in the direction of assisting the regents. A law was passed authorizing a loan

²² *Senate Journal*, 1858, vol. 2, p. 1290; *Regents' Annual Report*, 1857-58, pp. 7, 11.

²³ *Regents' Annual Report*, 1857-58, p. 6.

to the regents of \$20,000 from the general fund in the state treasury, to pay contractors and insure the "speedy" completion of the "central edifice." The same act instructed the Commissioners of School and University Lands to collect by January 1, 1860 thirty per cent of the principal on all loans made out of the University Fund and to repay to the state treasury the \$20,000 loan and interest. But this did not help much. Only \$10,000 was received from the state treasury under this authorization. By September, 1859, the Board reported that its total debt to the School and University Funds, to the state treasury, and to J. D. Ledyard now amounted to \$69,110. In addition, there had been incurred a "floating indebtedness" of \$21,996.18, of which more than \$20,000 was represented in warrants issued by the Board drawing ten per cent interest. The building committee reported that more than \$45,000 had now been spent on the building and complained that "the history of their financial affairs is one of continuous embarrassments." This committee, while suggesting that wisdom might have dictated postponement of construction of the building, protested that the failure of the state to fulfill its obligation by making available the money authorized had caused much of the committee's embarrassment.²⁴

Early in the legislative session of 1859, a member of the Assembly introduced a resolution pointing out that there was an institution located "near the city of Madison called the University of the State of Wisconsin" but that the governor had not even mentioned it in his message to the legislature. Accordingly, the member asked for the appointment of a select committee to determine "whether this Legislature has any control, or can exercise any authority over the affairs" of the institution; to examine its financial condition, the cost of the buildings, and "for what these building are"; to ascertain "whether that institution has ever been of any benefit to the people of this State, outside the City of Madison" and whether it "would not be for the best interests of the State to donate said institution to the small

²⁴ *General Laws*, 1859, pp. 228-229; *Regents' Annual Report*, 1858-59, pp. 4, 36. The new chancellor, Henry Barnard, was among those who held warrants, having made a loan of \$3,000 to the Board. *Ibid.*, p. 32.

City of Madison, under the condition to pay the debts of the same, if any there be, and release the State from all other liabilities." Subsequently a substitute resolution was adopted calling for the appointment of a joint legislative committee to investigate the condition of the University.²⁵

In its report this committee reviewed the financial history of the institution and urged that expenses be materially reduced. While recognizing that the University had not yet met public expectations, the committee was inclined to look hopefully to the future because Henry Barnard was now chancellor. Although it believed the building program of the regents had been far in advance of the educational needs of the state, the committee found no "special extravagance in the buildings themselves," and felt that Central Hall was "economically if not wisely built." The regents' proposal that they be permitted to issue University bonds "to take up their floating debt" and complete the main hall was approved. Nevertheless, the joint committee, which included two members of the Board of Regents, was not convinced that the University should continue in association with the state. "We cannot repress the conviction that its present system of connection with the State is unfortunate for both, and the decree of divorce would be attended with the happiest results. It needs no extended observation to see that State Institutions fall far behind those managed and controlled by the citizens, in every element of prosperity and usefulness; and the reason is there is more individualism, more personal interest, watchfulness and responsibility attached to the latter." The committee could find nothing in the state constitution which required that the union be continued, and though it brought no bill to provide for the separation, it urged serious consideration of the proposition. Several measures designed to assist the regents passed the Senate in 1860, but they were either defeated or permitted to die in the House.²⁶

The Board of Regents was thus left to finish the building as best it could, continuing the expensive policy of issuing interest-

²⁵ *Assembly Journal*, 1860, pp. 185, 254; *Senate Journal*, 194.

²⁶ *Senate Journal*, 1860, pp. 721-724, 831-833; *Assembly Journal*, 1096-1097. The committee's report was signed by B. E. Hutchinson, Ben Ferguson, and

bearing warrants to get money. In the spring of 1860, with the new building still absorbing a large portion of the income of the University Fund, Professor James D. Butler wrote to Henry Barnard pointing out that a great many men had been employed to work on the grounds. Mrs. Butler had counted twelve working at one time. "The money laid out in sodding, etc.," he mourned, "would have seated several recitation rooms,—and bought many books." O. M. Conover, once a member of the faculty and now a member of the Board of Regents, gossiped to Barnard that one of the University professors held between \$6,000 and \$7,000 of the University's floating debt. Conover was worried about the relationship thus created between the professor and the Board; he felt that such a professor, if he were so inclined, could close the University or embarrass its operation. "What a position for the University to occupy and to remain in!"²⁷

In order to cut expenses, the Board, in the summer of 1860, reduced the number of professors to five and reduced salaries to \$1,000 per year. The total cost of the building, as calculated by the Board in September, 1860, was now over \$60,000, of which more than \$14,000 had been paid out of current income, more than \$28,000 had been secured from various loans from the state, while \$17,509.54 was represented in interest-bearing warrants issued by the Board. The regents acknowledged that they had "conducted the erection of this building under circumstances of very considerable embarrassment and difficulty; that the resources of the University, for its proper educational work, have, in consequence, been greatly restricted for several years past, and that the same effect will continue to be felt for years to come." The regents now admitted that it would have been wise to have postponed the project, but they felt their past errors were beyond recall and they congratulated themselves and the state upon the completion of "a noble structure . . . con-

M. M. Davis of the Senate and by Edward D. Holton, William W. Blackman, C. G. Meigs, and M. B. Patchin of the Assembly. James Child, the eighth member of the committee, dissented to that "part that relates to the decree of divorce." Hutchinson and Davis were members of the Board of Regents at the time.

²⁷ Butler to Barnard, May 27, and Conover to Barnard, May 29, 1860, in the Barnard Manuscripts, New York University.

spicuous from afar in every direction, to all who approach the capital of this commonwealth, and serving to remind alike the stranger and the citizen, that Wisconsin recognizes and accepts the truth, that the education of the people is the highest interest of the state." The building was "upon the whole, the best building for educational purposes that has yet been erected in the West; and that it is a structure, not for this year, nor the next, nor mainly for this generation, but is fitted to be what it was designed to be, the central point of educational interest in Wisconsin for generations yet to come."²⁸

But the hard financial facts of the present were still to be dealt with. The total indebtedness of the University now amounted to more than \$85,000. The Board announced a policy of rigid economy. The total budget for salaries was fixed at \$7,100 and the Board adopted an ordinance providing that \$10,000 was "irrevocably" appropriated from the annual income of the University Fund to pay the interest on the debt and to retire it. This meant that more than half of the income of the University was now to be devoted to payment of interest and retirement of the debt. In order to reduce the interest charges of the "floating indebtedness," the regents revived the proposal of the year before which would authorize issuance of University bonds bearing interest at the rate of seven per cent. The legislature of 1861 did authorize \$35,000 worth of "state university income bonds," to be redeemed between 1866 and 1886, but no such bonds were sold because the regents, later the same year, proposed a simpler method of disposing of the University debts.²⁹

During the first two years after the Panic of 1857, the University Fund continued to yield a high income. Although few of the purchasers or borrowers paid anything on the principal of their debts, many did pay the interest charges. The income from the Fund was actually greater in 1859 than it had been the year before, even though the value of the Fund had decreased by

²⁸ Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. B, p. 254, July 11, 1860; *Regents' Annual Report*, 1859-60, pp. 4-6. The salary of the professor of modern languages and literature was reduced to \$800.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 8, 14; *General Laws*, 1861, pp. 286-287.

\$16,000. Sale of land virtually ceased in 1857 and never exceeded two thousand acres a year until 1864. Up to 1860 the Fund had sustained almost no losses.³⁰

The next year, however, the Commissioners of School and University Lands began to report the forfeiture of university land because of nonpayment of interest. A total of 17,800 acres was returned to the state in 1861. University land continued to be repossessed during the next four years. While it is impossible to determine exactly how much was forfeited, it is clear that a relatively large proportion of the land was returned. In September, 1863, the Board of Regents reported that of the total land grant of more than 92,000 acres, almost 40,000 acres still remained on hand, 23,426.07 acres having been forfeited and not yet resold.³¹ These forfeitures represent the principal reason for the decline in value of the University Fund.

Even before the volume of forfeitures began to mount, the financial situation of the University was gloomy. In September of 1861, the regents reported that the Fund, which three years before had reached a total value of \$316,000, now amounted to only \$264,255.27. Income for the next year was estimated to be \$18,497.86, but from this amount, the state would deduct the sum of \$1,039.08 for administration cost, leaving a net income of \$17,458.78. The total debt of the University had reached \$97,216.27, over \$13,000 of which was in interest-bearing warrants. In the past year, the Board had spent \$7,023.91 for interest payments as against \$7,575.79 for faculty salaries. The annual

³⁰ In 1860 one of the regents, M. M. Davis, conducted an exhaustive study of the expenditures of the University to that date and of the history of the University Fund. He reported, and the Board published with pleasure, that the Fund had been so well managed that the total losses would not exceed \$500. *Regents' Annual Report*, 1859-60, p. 14. A joint select committee of the legislature had conducted a lengthy investigation of the transactions of the Commissioners of School and University Lands in 1856 and had uncovered evidence of a great many irregularities in the sale of school lands, and some irregularities in the disposition of university lands. It was charged that the University Fund had sustained losses through carelessness and perhaps dishonesty, but these charges were not completely substantiated. See the *Report of the Joint Select Committee, of the Senate and Assembly, Appointed "to Investigate the Offices of the State Treasurer, the Secretary of State, and School and University Land Commissioners . . ."* September 12, 1856, printed, with separate pagination, in the *Senate Journal*, 1856, appendix, vol. 2.

³¹ *Regents' Annual Report*, 1862-63, p. 8.

interest charge on the outstanding debts of the University for the coming year was estimated to be \$7,267.62. Moreover, during the next three years, \$2,500 would have to be taken from the income of the University to provide a sinking fund for repayment of the loan received from the School Fund in 1850. In 1864 the sinking fund would have to be increased to \$4,000 per year to provide for retirement of the \$15,000 loan secured from the University Fund in 1854. If the present income of the University continued to be realized, the Board would have only \$7,701.16 annually until 1864 to meet current expenses. After that, the net income would be reduced to a little over \$6,000 a year. In view of the experiences of the past two years, the Board was by no means certain that the present income would be maintained in the future. Even without employing a chancellor to replace Barnard, whose resignation had been accepted early in 1861, and without adding to the present "inadequate instructional force," and by practicing the most rigid economy, the regents declared they could not maintain the University with less than \$10,500 per year.³²

The situation viewed by the Board was "in ugly contrast to the roseate anticipations elaborated liberally in former reports by this Board to the Legislature." Nor could the Board find solace in possession of the "best building for educational purposes that has yet been erected in the West." No ray of hope, no touch of optimism, no promise of future attainments—a promise tendered as it had so often been to obscure the mundane and pedestrian achievements of the present—relieved the bleak picture of the University as it was contemplated by the regents late in the summer of 1861. With more than a touch of venom, the Board declared, "It is submitted that the policy—adopted by the early movers in the organization of the University, and enjoined by the provisions of its charter—of providing grounds, buildings, and the entire outlay of preparation for a University

³² *Ibid.*, 1860-61, pp. 3-4. In 1856 the legislature had adopted a law which authorized the Commissioners of School and University Lands to deduct from the income of the respective funds a sum sufficient to pay expenses for handling the work incident to the sale of the lands and investment of the funds. *General Laws*, 1856, pp. 97-98. No protest was made against this arrangement by the Board of Regents until 1861.

from the income of its endowment, has *signally failed.*" The practice of a "sensible patience and prudent economy," the Board observed acidly, might have saved the situation; but now the University was loaded with debt.

Ignoring the constitutional provision that safeguarded the University Fund, the Board proposed that: "The sensible way of extricating the University from its present embarrassments, is for the Legislature to direct that the cost of buildings and grounds be paid from the *capital* of the fund, and thus leave the annual income of its net resources unencumbered." The appropriation of \$100,000 from the principal of the Fund would permit the retirement of the existing debts of the University and leave enough to repair the buildings and install the collections of the state geological survey which had been assigned to the institution. The Fund would be reduced by such a transaction to \$164,255.27, but the full income, estimated at over \$10,000, could be devoted entirely to the current expenses of the University.³³

This proposal was submitted to the legislature for the Board by a committee composed of the president pro tem, Louis P. Harvey, who was an ex officio member of the Board by virtue of being secretary of state, and M. M. Davis. It was received by Governor Louis P. Harvey, who transmitted it to the legislature that met in January, 1862. As might have been anticipated, Governor Harvey had no more reservations about the propriety and legality of employing this method of discharging the University debt than had President pro tem Harvey or Secretary of State Harvey. In his message to the legislature, the governor reviewed the financial condition of the University and commended the plan proposed by the regents to deal with the debt. A bill was introduced in the Assembly appropriating from the capital of the University Fund a sum sufficient to pay off the debts against the University. This bill was carried through the Assembly without encountering any opposition and passed by a vote of 54 to 13. It reached the Senate on April 3 and, after receiving only perfunctory attention, was passed the next day

³³ *Ibid.*, 5-6.

by a vote of 24 to 2. The regents, at their meeting in June, 1862, formally went on record as approving and accepting this means of disposing of the debt.³⁴

But even this act did not bring immediate relief. The law was passed too late to save the interest on the whole debt for 1862. Moreover, much of the value of the Fund was in the form of securities which could not be turned into cash. Not until September, 1864 was the Board able to report that the last of the debts, consisting of \$19,000 owed to the School Fund and \$5,000 borrowed from J. D. Ledyard in 1852, had been liquidated. Through forfeiture of lands and payment of the University debt from the principal of the University Fund, that Fund by 1864 had been reduced to \$157,170.25, the lowest it had been since 1853, yet the income was estimated to be \$11,000. Salaries of the professors had been reduced in 1863 to \$900 per year.³⁵

Meanwhile, the legislature had taken various steps to provide additional safeguards for funds received from land sales. In September of 1860, the land commissioners questioned the wisdom of the policy under which the school and university lands had been sold and the funds invested. The commissioners announced that the "yearly recurring losses in the investment of these funds, create serious apprehension that their entire waste is only a question of time," and proposed that the state make good the losses sustained by the trust fund through the levy of a special tax. The legislature refused to take action, but the next year

³⁴ *Assembly Journal*, 1862, pp. 29, 982; *Senate Journal*, 745, 746, 761, 766; *General Laws*, 1862, pp. 168-169. The Records of the Board of Regents (Vol. B, pp. 320, 321) show that either the secretary was confused or the Board wanted to make doubly sure that its position was understood. On June 24 the Board adopted a resolution stating that it desired to pay the debts of the University in the manner prescribed by the law. The next day another resolution was adopted under which the regents accepted the provisions of the law. Its formal report of September 30, 1862, contains the following resolution (page 5), which does not appear in the manuscript records: "Resolved, that this Board desires to accept the provisions of chapter 268 of General Laws of 1862, and to have the principal of the University Fund applied to the payment of the debts of the University in the manner provided in that act so far as practicable; and that the executive committee be instructed to communicate with the Commissioners of School and University Lands upon this subject, and adopt the necessary measures to have the wishes of this Board carried into effect."

³⁵ *Regents' Annual Report*, 1863-64, p. 5; 1862-63, p. 7.

the commissioners returned to the subject with a specific proposal. They recommended that they be empowered to invest the principal of the School Fund, "as fast as it accumulates, in the bonds of this State . . . or in the bonds of the United States." The legislature responded in its session in 1862 by authorizing investment of the School Fund in bonds of the state. Two years later this policy was extended to include the University Fund and other trust funds accruing from the sale of lands. Henceforth the Commissioners of School and University Lands were "authorized and directed to invest, in preference to all other loans and investments, the principal of the school, university, swamp land and drainage funds now in the treasury, or which may hereafter be paid in, in the bonds or certificates of indebtedness of the state of Wisconsin."³⁶ Although the financial needs of the state during the Civil War help to explain this new policy, the law betokens a changing attitude on the part of the lawmakers toward the state and the individual. In 1849 the legislature accepted the premise that the educational trust funds of the state could rest securely upon loans made to the plain people of the state. In 1864 the pledged credit of the state represented the best security the legislature could find for these funds.

The law governing the sale of educational lands was changed in 1863 to reduce the price of the remaining lands and to require that one-quarter of the purchase price be paid at the time of sale instead of one-tenth, as had been provided in the law of 1849. On the basis of these new policies, the University Fund was slowly reconstituted. From the low point reached in 1864, after a total of \$104,339.42 had been deducted for the payment of debts, the Fund slowly increased again as sales of the forfeited lands were resumed. In 1867 the Fund reached almost \$194,000 and the income was over \$13,000. In 1875 the Fund amounted to more than \$222,000 and the income exceeded \$15,000.

But the utility of the University Fund in the 1860's was not confined strictly to furnishing money with which to conduct the

³⁶ *Annual Report of the Commissioners of School and University Lands*, 1859-60, pp. 57, 58-59, printed, with separate pagination as Document D in the 1859-60 volume of *Governor's Message and Accompanying Documents* (no title page); report for 1860-61, p. 4, in *Annual Message of the Governor and Reports of State Departments*, 1860-61; *General Laws*, 1862, p. 53; 1864, p. 273.

University on this modest basis. The handling of the Fund by the regents with the approval of the legislature afforded an excellent basis from which to launch a campaign to secure financial aid from the state, not by virtue of any inherent claim that higher education might have upon the state for support, but simply because the state, through the action of its agents, the regents and the legislature, had failed in its trust by permitting the lands to be sold too cheaply and the Fund to be dissipated.

During the 1850's Chancellor Lathrop had intimated from time to time that the state should accept a measure of financial responsibility for the University, but he was never very direct or forceful in his proposals. He apparently did not even convince the Board of Regents. As late as 1860, the regents, in asking the legislature for assistance, affirmed their belief that the legislature stood ready to "extend its fostering care to the State University, in any desirable way which will not constitute a draft upon the people or the treasury of the State."

The next year, as we have seen, the Board found the explanation for the desperate condition of the University in the unwise actions of earlier Boards. A year later, however, the Board spread the blame somewhat when it questioned the constitutionality of the law under which the University Fund had been required to bear the cost of its administration. The regents intimated that the state had accepted the obligation of maintaining a university "irrespective of the aid granted by the general government." Even granting that such an interpretation of the Constitution might not be valid, the Board contended that "it cannot for a moment be supposed that the state is absolved from all responsibility as soon as the fund becomes insufficient to the end sought, least of all when the fund has been diminished through her own management of it."

While not denying the responsibility of earlier Boards, the present Board insisted that the legislature share in full measure the responsibility for the condition of the University. "Had not successive legislatures allowed the use of the fund for other purposes than those originally designed, it would be amply sufficient today for all the purposes of a University. By legislative authority, nearly half of the capital is locked up in build-

ings. By legislative authority debts have been contracted, and the interest upon these debts has consumed the fund. . . . We have ample buildings but an exhausted treasury. Who shall replenish it? To what source can we look but to the state, through whose innocent instrumentality it has become exhausted. The general government holds her trustee responsible. The constitution of the state acknowledges the responsibility. . . . The care of university funds should be given to the University, and further than this, money already taken from the University treasury for that purpose should be restored. This act of justice would be a relief to the University of permanent value." While the regents concluded their indictment and plea by weakly suggesting that the state should at least relieve the Fund of charges made for its administration, the arguments they had advanced foreshadowed the eventual admission by the legislature of its culpability and responsibility.³⁷

Though the indictment was not repeated the next year, the Board again asked to be relieved of the charges made by the land commissioners for the administration of the Fund. Moreover, they called the attention of the legislature, almost wistfully, to the fact that Michigan, with a land endowment only half as large as that received by Wisconsin, now enjoyed an annual income of about \$40,000 from that source. Michigan's prosperity, its large student body and excellent reputation, the Board declared, furnished "a shining refutation as well of the idea that such a trust cannot safely be committed to the honor and justice of a State government, as of the other idea, which too often finds careless or interested currency, that an institution for the higher learning, forming a part of the organized agencies of the State government, cannot attain the highest degree of excellence and success."

In 1864 the regents modestly invited the attention of the legislature to the injustice of the state's continuing to charge the University Fund for clerks' hire. Evidence of returning prosperity was revealed in 1865 both in the attempt of the Board to employ Josiah L. Pickard as chancellor of the University and

³⁷ *General Laws*, 1863, pp. 430-431; *Regents' Annual Report*, 1859-60, p. 15; 1861-62, pp. 3-4.

in the increasing of salaries of professors to \$1,000 a year. The Board again sought relief from the state's annual charge against the income of the University for management of the fund.³⁸

But if the Board did not itself repeat its plea for state support, it enabled members of the faculty to express their views in the regents' annual report. This communication, signed by Sterling as dean of the faculty, was read to the regents by the ponderous Professor Read at the June meeting. In this report, consisting of ten closely packed pages of small print, the faculty had its say about the past, present, and future of the University. The history of the seminary grants was reviewed to demonstrate that in bestowing seminary lands on the state, the federal government had intended that a university be established. The faculty observed that the policies of the several states toward a university differed; some accepted the institution as a child, others pursued a policy of acting like a stepmother, "doing nothing for it [the university] except finding fault with its administration, and then perhaps wondering at its want of success; seeming indeed to grudge the fund which it never gave." Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, and Iowa had "rendered large pecuniary aid" to their universities, while others, "not excepting Wisconsin, have charged the University for the administration of its fund, and possibly at a higher rate than individuals would do for like services." The faculty observed with pleasure that "within a recent period, our University has been recognized by the executive and other departments of the government in their public communications, in terms of respect and encouragement, and in one or two instances, with strong and positive recommendation of aid by the state. It is certain that without State aid to supplement the fund derived from the Congressional grant, few if any of our State Universities will be adequately endowed, and without it this class of institutions must, in the progress of time, in this respect, fall behind privately endowed institutions. Were this fund, according to the true intent of the grant, sacredly guarded from all diminution or encroachment for buildings or purposes other than those of instruction, it might be otherwise."

³⁸ *Regents Annual Report*, 1862-63, p. 9; 1863-64, p. 5; 1864-65, pp. 6-8.

Turning to a consideration of the early difficulties and mistakes of state universities, the faculty found all had fallen into errors of policy. Lands were sold at rates below their value; the money was loaned without sufficient security; attempts, sometimes successful, were made to divide the funds among several colleges. The various administrations of the universities also made frequent blunders. "One of these, invariably made, and always clearly discerned by a sagacity which comes too late for practical use, is the investment of too large a portion of its funds in dead walls." The understandable desire for immediate results also led to difficulties and embarrassments. "Thus in the Ohio University, a professor was appointed whose special business it was 'to drum up' for students, and in the University of Wisconsin one who, at a large expense, ventilated its buildings, already by their site pretty well provided for in that regard. The number of the students was in the one case affected just about as much as the atmosphere in the other."³⁹

But the condition of the University of Wisconsin, as it appeared to the faculty, was far from hopeless. The University had a beautiful campus, three substantial buildings, various apparatus and books; the student body now numbered over three hundred; and "the habit of resorting to the State University has, to some extent, been created." While the University had not as large an endowment as Michigan, neither did it have as little as some of the other state universities. Moreover, the University Fund would increase in the years to come, and "We are to bear in mind that the University is for all time, and it is not to be questioned, that the State will sooner or later furnish the means of adequate support." Furthermore, the faculty had "full confidence that the close of the war would greatly fill up our higher institutions of learning, and our own among the number" not only through the return of former students, but because "others from the army having had their hopes and views enlarged, and having some means at their command, would, before resuming their places in society, spend a time in the University."

With confidence that conditions were improving, the faculty

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 1864-65, pp. 17-18. The reference was to D. B. Reid, employed by Barnard in 1859. One of Professor Reid's claims to fame, announced in 1859, was that he had "ventilated Parliament."

suggested the early establishment of a law school and urged the early appointment of a chancellor. Hitherto, the faculty confessed, they had been restrained from making this suggestion because of the condition of University finances and because the right man would be hard to find. "It often happens, in University history, that the President adds nothing to the institution in its efficiency above the ordinary Professors, except the burden of greater salary. It is not, however, doubted that the election of an earnest practical man, adequate to the office and not too great for it, would benefit the University, by providing an officer to oversee its general interests, and also by relieving Professors from care which does not properly belong to them."⁴⁰

Thus by 1865, on the eve of the reorganization of the University, which would bring into it the agricultural college, the worst difficulties were already in the past and the case for state support was being developed. The campaign for state support will be examined in some detail below. It is sufficient to observe here that the foundation had been laid in the early 1860's and, in the serenely confident words of the faculty, it was "not to be questioned that the State will sooner or later furnish the means of adequate support."

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 20, 22, 23.

5.

Regents, Presidents, Professors

MORE than sixty men served as members of the Board of Regents during the eighteen years that appointment to the Board was primarily the responsibility of the legislature.¹ Few were re-elected. Almost a third of the regents lived in Madison. Travel was difficult in those days and until the late 1850's no provision was made for paying regents either mileage or per diem. This explains the rapid gravitation of control into the hands of Madison men and the frequent complaints during the early years that the University was merely a Dane County or Madison high school. Over half the regents for this period had come originally from the Middle Atlantic states, mostly from New York. Almost as many came from New England. Only six were of foreign birth. Of the various professions and occupations on the Board during these years, lawyers were best represented. More than half of the members had practiced law at one time or another. Some had been or were teachers; some were businessmen. Although Wisconsin was primarily an agricultural state and would continue to be one for a number of years, only four members of the Board in the period up to 1866 had ever been farmers. Over half had gone to a college or seminary; three had attended the University of Wisconsin. Three had had experience in helping to found a college or two. Of the thirty-seven whose political affiliation could be deter-

¹ It should be borne in mind that not all appointments were made by the legislature. The governor made occasional interim appointments which the legislature permitted to stand.

mined, twenty-three were Republicans. Almost all the regents held political offices in the local, state, or national government. Although the Board did not lack distinguished men and its collective action was always of considerable importance, relatively few of the members in the early period distinguished themselves in conspicuous service to the University.²

The first Board of Regents launched the institution but thereafter, when there was a chancellor, relied on him for leadership. University business affairs were handled principally by the executive committee, the building committee, and special committees on which the chancellor and resident regents figured prominently. The Board concerned itself largely with approving or rejecting policies recommended by the chancellor or the committees, or with placing the official stamp of approval on action. Only once did the Board attempt to deal directly with a broad problem of educational policy: in 1858 it attempted a reorganization of the University.

The first few meetings were well attended, but for a number of years afterward the Board struggled along with a bare quorum, usually with seven or eight members.³ In the late 1850's the Board adopted a resolution asking for the resignation of members who failed to attend two consecutive meetings. Attendance at meetings continued to be poor.

At the first meeting attended by Chancellor Lathrop, the Board voted to incorporate into its bylaws the rule that all appointments of professors should be made by the Board on the nomination of the chancellor. Two years later the Board further clarified the chancellor's duties by specifying that he should report from time to time on the condition of the University and make such recommendations to the regents as he considered necessary and expedient. His power to nominate candidates for faculty positions was reaffirmed. The chancellor was formally made a member of the executive committee and given power to convene the committee for special meetings; and, with the secretary of the Board, he was given responsibility for ex-

² This paragraph rests upon an analysis of the Board of Regents, 1848-66, prepared by Estelle Fisher. The paper is on file in the Archives of the University of Wisconsin.

³ See James F. A. Pyre, *Wisconsin* (New York, 1920), p. 88.

cuting "all conveyances, diplomas, and contracts." The chancellor was assured of the "faithful cooperation and support of every member of the several Faculties" and empowered to convene meetings of the faculty, then composed of two members besides himself; to call for their individual or collective advice; and to enlist concurring action and assistance "in all matters touching the discipline, the course of study, and the order of the Institution." The chancellor, with the advice and consent of the faculty, was authorized to draw up and execute rules and regulations necessary for the government of the institution. The Board offered guidance in words which suggest Chancellor Lathrop's prose style and attitude. "The immediate government of the University shall be administered kindly but firmly, with a view to the conservation and improvement of what is valuable in character, to the formation of habits of self government and diligent study, to the reformation of the offender, and to the maintenance of sound discipline, and a high standard of scholarship and deportment in the Institution."⁴

During Lathrop's administration the actions of the Board made it clear that the chancellor must formulate and execute policy. This position was explicitly stated to Barnard. In 1860, the president pro tem of the Board, Louis P. Harvey, then the secretary of state and soon to be governor of Wisconsin, wrote to Barnard about the relationship of the chancellor to the Board. "It is . . . the desire of the members of the board that the Chancellor assume decisively the responsibility of recommending such changes in the Faculty, and in the management of the institution, as he deems will best promote the usefulness of the university." While pledging the cooperation of the Board, Harvey continued: "But I want respectfully to urge that you do not hesitate to *lead off* for any and every measure you desire adopted."⁵ No statement could have made clearer the stand of the Board on the matter of responsibility for developing and determining the policies of the University.

⁴Records of the Board of Regents (MS.), Vol. B, pp. 13, 34, 36, November 21, 1841, January 18, 1851. The bylaws and ordinances were published in the *Regents' Annual Report*, December 31, 1851, pp. 28-37.

⁵L. P. Harvey to Barnard, June 29, 1860, in the Barnard Manuscripts, New York University.

After Barnard resigned, early in 1861, the Board named John W. Sterling dean of the faculty, giving him the responsibility for directing internal affairs of the University. Control of the institution then rested largely with the executive committee of the Board and the dean, but this committee was so hampered by lack of money that it had little opportunity to form educational policy.

Horace A. Tenney, one-time curator, land agent, librarian, and regent, in a brief, unpublished history of the University, charged that the Board of Regents in the 1850's was often hostile toward the University. This charge was also made by an investigating committee of the legislature in 1857. But there is little evidence to support these contentions. Occasional members were not entirely friendly. In 1855, Samuel L. Rose, two days after being elected a member of the Board of Regents, denounced the University as spendthrift. Later the same year, Alexander Gray, secretary of state and ex officio member of the Board, offered a resolution which, if adopted in its original form, would have closed the University. But for the most part the record of the conduct of the Board, though it suggests indifference from time to time, hardly supports the charge that even a substantial minority was actively hostile to the University.

Governor Dewey, a Democrat, in naming the first Board, had selected an equal number of Whigs and Democrats. This balance was not long maintained. In 1851 the legislature selected four new regents to replace those whose terms had expired. Of these four one was a Democrat and three were Whigs; the Democrat was re-elected and the Whigs were replaced with Democrats. In 1853 and again in 1855 Democrats received most of the appointments, partly because the Whig Party was dying and the Republican Party had not yet attained full strength.⁶

The Board of Regents was not free from the mounting and unconcealed partisanship which stained all offices of the state government in the middle 1850's. In 1855 one of the regents, Charles Dunn, introduced a resolution condemning Professor O.

⁶ *Milwaukee Sentinel and Gazette*, March 8, 1851, p. 2; March 19, 1855, p. 2; February 1, 1859, p. 2.

M. Conover for attending a meeting held to denounce the governor for removing the state geologist from office. The resolution was discussed, laid on the table, and a week later withdrawn by the author.⁷ Although the overt act of censuring a member of the faculty for participating in a political meeting was not carried through, the threat remained.

Whether political regularity constituted, in the middle of the 1850's, one of the prerequisites for appointment to the faculty cannot now be determined. There is no doubt that this was assumed by many people. John P. Fuchs, professor of modern languages and literature, ascribed both his first appointment and his resignation to political pressure. Yet in 1859 the legislature elected two Democrats and three Republicans to positions on the Board, and was commended for being nonpartisan. Fuchs, writing to Conover in April, 1859, felt that the political excitement of the middle fifties had begun to subside, and that it had now become the earnest desire of all parties not to allow the University to be influenced any longer by political changes.⁸

In the handling of all immediate problems the executive committee of the Board, made up of the chancellor and Madison members, spoke with authority and finality. The committee met each month, or oftener if necessary. It devoted the larger part of its time to examining bills, authorizing payment, and discussing and directing repairs and improvements on the buildings and grounds. It was the executive committee that approved Lathrop's plan to combine utility and beauty by planting a thou-

⁷ Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. B, pp. 78, 81, February 3, 10, 1855.

⁸ Fuchs to O. M. Conover, April 6, 1859, in the Conover Papers, in the State Historical Society of Wisconsin; *Milwaukee Sentinel*, February 1, 3, 1859. In his letter to Conover, written after Conover's dismissal from the faculty and subsequent election to the Board of Regents, Fuchs recalled that he had received his appointment when the University was under Democratic political influence "and no one could expect to receive an appointment at that Institution, unless he belonged to that political party which had a majority in the Board of Regents. The Democrats being then in power, and myself being, at that time, a Democrat, I obtained the Professorship of Modern Languages through the favor of some prominent members of that political organization. This took place shortly before the late presidential campaign." Fuchs then left the Democratic Party because of its attitude on slavery and joined the Republican Party. The men to whom he owed his appointment remained Democrats, and Fuchs was criticized for having changed parties to get the job. He therefore resigned. At the time of Fuchs's resignation he was bitterly denounced by the *Weekly Argus and Democrat*, a Democratic paper in Madison, in its issue of September 9, 1856.

sand fruit trees on the campus. As custodian of the grounds, the executive committee adopted various resolutions for the protection of both grounds and buildings. Although it succeeded in getting the campus fenced at an early date, the committee did not please the entire Board of Regents. In 1861, the Board directed the committee "to give orders and enforce them, that hereafter no person whatever shall be allowed to pasture any cows, horses or other animals in the University grounds, or allow any other use of said grounds than is legitimate and proper to the purpose of the Institution, during any season of the year." The animal exclusion act was not strictly enforced. James L. High, a student at the University from 1860 to 1864, recalled that Professor Read's "ancient and venerable cream-colored horse" grazed on the campus during these years.⁹

The allotment of space in new buildings and the fixing of prices for room and board were functions of the executive committee. When South Hall was occupied in 1855 the executive committee directed that Professor Sterling and the chancellor should arrange all details. Sterling "and lady" were granted free board and room in return for managing the boarding establishment which was opened that year. Board rates for the faculty members, then called college officers, living in South Hall were fixed at \$3 a week for each member of the family over five years of age, and \$1.50 for each servant. Students were to be permitted residence in the hall only after depositing the sum of \$25 for the thirteen-week term.¹⁰ They were to pay their proportionate share of the expenses of the boarding hall, but not more than \$2 a week.

Trivial matters often came before the committee. The chancellor asked and received permission in 1855 to purchase a book, and the next year to buy lithograph portraits of Webster, Clay, and Calhoun for University use. Professors, and even the chancellor, wanting to be absent during the school term, had to get permission from the executive committee. Thus Lathrop, when invited to serve on the Board of Visitors to West Point, first

⁹ Minutes of the Executive Committee, Vol. A, p. 34, August 31, 1851; Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. B, p. 293, January 17, 1861; James L. High, *A Great Chancellor and Other Papers* (Chicago, 1901), 226.

¹⁰ Minutes of the Executive Committee, Vol. A, pp. 52-53, July 26, 1855.

secured the consent of the committee; and when the new professor of agriculture, S. P. Lathrop, wanted to attend the National Cattle Show at Springfield, Ohio, as the official representative of the State of Wisconsin, the committee gave its permission provided the chancellor would agree.¹¹

The executive committee approved plans for commencement exercises, arranged for the use of the Baptist Church or the city hall, and hired the brass band. The committee accepted resignations from departing members of the faculty, supervised the preparatory department, authorized expenditures for advertising the University in various newspapers and journals, and performed many other managerial, supervisory, and custodial functions.

Although the full Board of Regents approved the plans for the three buildings constructed during the 1850's, the responsibility for obtaining the plans and for supervising construction was given to a building committee, of which the chancellor was a prominent member. Lathrop had insisted in his inaugural address that University buildings should be designed to suit the purpose for which they were intended. In the construction of North and South Halls his recommendation was followed. In their plain rectangular form, simple lines, lack of ornament, and rigid adherence to utility these two structures are unique among a host of University buildings whose varying and sometimes terrifying designs show at very least an unstable and sometimes capricious architectural taste.

In 1857, before beginning construction of the "Central University Edifice" [Bascom Hall] the Board of Regents formulated Lathrop's recommendation into a declaration of policy to guide the building committee. "Due regard should be had in the design, adapted to architectural proportion, beauty, and the peculiarity of the Site. The building should fit the ground, and be in harmony with its Surroundings. Only so much should be expended in ornament as will produce a pleasing and proper effect, obtainable without great cost, and not be inconsistent with the fact that the edifice is for practical use and not mere show. In a

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 6, 39, 53, 55, May 1, 1851, October 23, 1854, July 26, 1855, February 12, 1856.

word, it should be plain, substantial, comfortable, and exactly adapted to the purpose for which it is designed, and for no other." Perhaps the formulation of a policy calling for simplicity, appropriateness, and utility in University buildings of itself spelled the end of such a policy. At any rate, the building committee, reporting before the end of 1857, declared that the new central edifice was a "model of architecture, imposing and massive." The completed structure, with its curved portico and its large and small domes, could hardly be said to have attained simplicity.¹² Generations of students testified that it was not comfortable. Yet in comparison with Science Hall, for example, the building was austere simplicity itself.

With the completion of the central building, the building committee went out of existence until the 1870's when legislative appropriations made further construction possible.



DURING the ten years that he served as chancellor, John Hiram Lathrop was the pivotal force in the University. His relation to the Board of Regents has been traced in other connections, so little need be said here except in summary. One has only to compare his reports and requests to the Board of Regents with the actions formally taken by them to see how effective he was. In fact, the annual report of the chancellor to the regents often became the substance of the regents' report to the governor. Lathrop seldom consulted the members of the faculty formally on the course of study, program, buildings, organization, or any of the other problems on which he advised the Board of Regents. Carr, Conover, and Kürsteiner, after 1858, charged that Lathrop was dictatorial and autocratic.¹³ Lathrop's actions as chancellor

¹² Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. B, p. 114, March 24, 1857; report of the building committee, in *Regents' Annual Report*, 1856-57, p. 35. In 1874 Edward Searing, then superintendent of public instruction, described this "model of architecture" as "one of the most ill-contrived, inconvenient, and thoroughly absurd edifices probably ever erected for instructional purpose in this country." *Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction*, 1874, lxxxix.

¹³ At the time of Lathrop's resignation as chancellor, Conover insisted that Professor Read was his only staunch supporter. In writing to J. R. Brigham shortly after he had been dismissed from the faculty, Conover declared that it had been charged that he "could not work 'harmoniously' with the Chancellor—in fact had rather abused the poor man." Conover acknowledged that he had

led Carl Schurz to remark that it was an anomaly that in Prussia, an autocratic state, the universities were organized on democratic principles, but that in the United States they were not.¹⁴ Yet few evidences of overt opposition to Lathrop's alleged despotism appear in the records before the failure of Kürsteiner and Conover to attain re-election to the faculty in 1858.¹⁵

From the beginning of his administration until the end, Lathrop championed state-supported education. He envisioned a unified state-supported system to extend from elementary schools through academies and high schools to the University. The University was to be the heart of the whole educational system. Whatever his shortcomings, and however far his vision exceeded his grasp, these things Lathrop foresaw and advocated. He never tired of advancing the idea that the University should serve the interests of all the people, as he conceived those interests.

Lathrop never had grave difficulties with the Board of Regents, but he never managed to convert many people beyond

had occasion to rebuke both the chancellor and his wife for what seemed to him "unworthy and intolerable conduct," and continued, "According to the Chancellor's statement I made a 'brutal attack' upon him in Faculty meeting last winter—when I felt it to be my duty to intimate to him in what seemed to me appropriate but very distinct and decided terms my want of admiration of his disingenuousness in his dealings with the Faculty." It was also charged "that I had been endeavoring for some time past to oust the Chancellor from his position—which was not quite as true as it ought to have been." Conover felt that if the right men were placed on the Board the next year, Lathrop would probably withdraw entirely from the University, and Professor Read, too. Professor Carr had written Horace A. Tenney several weeks earlier that when he had charged that "the faculty will bear witness to the manner and spirit in which every suggestion of reform has been met, and the unwillingness with which their suggestions have been received," he had had the chancellor in mind. Lathrop, he declared, did not represent the faculty before the Board. Conover to Brigham, August 10, 1858, in the Brigham papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin; Carr to H. A. Tenney, July 19, 1858, in the Tenney Papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin. Lathrop himself wrote to Brigham: "In the Chancellorship, I have assumed the *responsibilities* of administration, and have taken and used the *powers* necessary to the discharge of these responsibilities. I expect my successor to do the *same thing*; and to leave me, as professor, to the quiet and uninterrupted discharge of the duties of my department. The principle is simple, efficacious, and peace-preserving." Lathrop to Brigham, August 30, 1858, in the Brigham Papers.

¹⁴ Undated letter of Kürsteiner to Conover, enclosing translation of a paper prepared by Carl Schurz, in the Conover Papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

¹⁵ See Conrad E. Patzer, *Public Education in Wisconsin* (Madison, Wisconsin, 1924), 239, 242.

his immediate circle. His writing and speaking, his delicate suggestions, his motion by indirection, his unwillingness to state his demands positively and in language which invited no misunderstanding, helped to keep him from exerting a powerful influence in Wisconsin's educational development. His weakness was not of ideas, for he sponsored plans and projects which were later popular; but he lacked the aggressiveness of a great educational leader. His failure cannot be ascribed entirely to hostility on the part of the legislature. He was simply incapable of the force necessary to prevail upon the legislature (not one penny was contributed to the University during Lathrop's administration), or else he could not impress legislators with the importance of his ideas. Lyman Draper, as secretary of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin and, for two years, superintendent of public instruction, succeeded in the 1850's in getting from the legislature grants of money for projects intrinsically more novel than state support of higher education.¹⁶ Unlike Draper, Lathrop was politically impotent; he could conceive a program, but he could not marshal his forces to carry it through the legislature. His great deficiency was ineffectiveness.

Yet he was well liked. When he submitted his resignation as chancellor in 1858, he was promptly elected professor with only one vote registered against him, named vice-chancellor until his successor should be appointed, and authorized to correspond with Henry Barnard to persuade him to accept the post. Lathrop remained at the University as acting chancellor until the summer of 1859, when he was again invited to take the presidency of Indiana University. This time he accepted immediately and submitted his resignation to Wisconsin in August, 1859. Lathrop remained at Indiana for one year and then returned to the University of Missouri as a professor. Shortly thereafter, he again became president of that university and held the position until his death in 1866.¹⁷

¹⁶ Draper secured funds from the legislature to help support the Historical Society and in 1859 persuaded the legislature to pass a bill providing that ten per cent of the income from the School Fund and the proceeds of a special state tax of one-tenth of a mill on property be devoted to "establishing and replenishing town school libraries." Patzer, *Public Education in Wisconsin*, 442.

¹⁷ Minutes of the Executive Committee, Vol. A, p. 91, August 20, 1859; Jonas Viles and others, *The University of Missouri: A Centennial History* (Columbia,

This gentle, reserved, cultivated, idealistic, stubborn, despotically man returned to Madison in June, 1862, to deliver the annual address before the literary societies of the University. The reporter of one of the Madison newspapers remarked that one of the striking features of the alumni dinner was the "frequent manifestation of deep and warm attachment with which ex-Chancellor Lathrop seems to have bound to himself to [sic] every student connected with the University during his tenure of the office." Lathrop stayed on in Madison to deliver the address at the Fourth of July celebration held at Capitol Square.¹⁸ There was no suggestion of remembered bitterness in anything Lathrop said or did. In public he was warmly acclaimed. But even though the Board was then officially searching for a chancellor, Lathrop was not invited back.



THE Board of Regents had been willing to give Lathrop their support; to his successor, Henry Barnard, they virtually promised to abdicate. When Barnard was approached for the chancellorship, he was, after Horace Mann, America's leading educator, and his reputation already spanned the continent.¹⁹ Although his positive influence upon the University came to no more than a mark made on water, his two-year connection with education in the state of Wisconsin deserves attention. These years tell how anxiously men sought a leader who would translate their vague and hopeful ideas into realities.

The wooing of Henry Barnard was begun almost simultaneously by Lathrop and Draper in July, 1858; but neither, apparently, had knowledge of what the other was doing. The Board of Normal School Regents was also in touch with Barnard. In July, the Board of Regents of the University elected Barnard to

1939), 110. Lathrop's resignation was presented to the executive committee on August 20, 1859, placed on file, and accepted by the Board the following January.

¹⁸ *Wisconsin Daily State Journal*, June 26, July 5, 1862.

¹⁹ For a discussion of Barnard's educational ideas, see Merle Curti, *The Social Ideas of American Educators* (Part X, *Report of the Commission on the Social Studies, American Historical Association*, New York, 1935), 139-168. See also Richard E. Thursfield, *Henry Barnard's American Journal of Education* (*Johns Hopkins University Studies in Historical and Political Science*, Series 63, no. 1, Baltimore, 1945).

the chancellorship. The Board of Normal School Regents agreed to appoint him its general agent. Lathrop was directed to write him urging his acceptance. This Lathrop dutifully did early in August. Draper wrote a day later confiding to Barnard his fear that Lathrop would "not so conduct his correspondence with you as to lead you to think he really wishes you to accept." In the next months, other members of the Board, including Pickard and Castleman, and one of the Normal School regents wrote urging Barnard to accept the appointment. Late in August, Barnard informed the secretary of the University regents that he would "visit Madison early in October, for the purpose of an interview with the Board, and of personal observation generally." If it appeared that he would be more useful in Wisconsin than elsewhere, he could see no reason why he should not "accept the office which the Regents have tendered me." Barnard warned, however, that he was troubled by poor health and disturbed by fears that he might not be able to devote his full energy to the task.²⁰

To the Board of Normal School Regents, he wrote: "I will not disguise . . . that my acceptance of the Chancellorship of the State University, depends on the prospect of my being useful as a laborer in the great field of popular education, and your letter points out a way in which I can co-operate with others in the most effectual way of advancing the education of the State, viz; by improving the qualifications of all the teachers."²¹

After visiting Madison, Barnard returned to Hartford. In November he was still undecided. To Draper he wrote: "*My own mind is made up in the affirmative*—but I am requested by parties here to give them a hearing, before I say 'yes.' If I felt sure of the policy of the legislature in reference to the Nor. Ins. Funds & of the actions of the Regents of that Fund, I should say 'yes,' 'yes,' 'yes'." Shortly thereafter Barnard notified Lathrop that he would accept the appointment and in January, 1859, he

²⁰ *Weekly Argus and Democrat*, July 6, 1858, p. 1; September 21, 1858, p. 1; Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. B, p. 183, July 29, 1858; Lathrop to Barnard, August 2, 1858; Draper to Barnard, August 3, 1858; draft of a letter from Barnard to J. D. Ruggles, secretary of the Board of Regents, August 24, 1858; all in the Barnard Manuscripts, New York University.

²¹ Quoted in the *Weekly Argus and Democrat*, September 21, 1858.

officially notified the Board of Regents. Barnard then promised that he would arrive in Madison about February 1, and announced his intention "to know but one object—the faithful discharge of such duties as may be entrusted to me in connection with the system of Public Instruction in Wisconsin."²²

News of Barnard's acceptance was greeted with enthusiasm by the public and educational press. The *Wisconsin Journal of Education* expressed the hope that with Barnard's appointment the University would "become in reality a part of our system of education, and be entitled to a larger share of the sympathies of the people." If the new chancellor received the support of the regents and legislature, the *Journal* predicted, Wisconsin would have as "head of a complete system of education, a genuine, *live* University." Lyman C. Draper, superintendent of public instruction, proclaimed in his annual report that Barnard's election was "the most important event that has ever occurred in our educational history,—if not, indeed, the most important, in view of its probable consequences, that has ever transpired in the history of the State."²³

Lathrop meanwhile advised Barnard what he should say in his inaugural address. The ceremony was to take place early in January. Lathrop counseled that the legislature of 1859 was made up of new but "I doubt not well meaning men." Barnard should propose measures "designed to put the system of public instruction, including the University, on the best footing." Assuring Barnard that "the mind of Wisconsin is that you are the man to do the work," Lathrop warned that there would be malcontents. The malcontents could be rendered powerless if there were established the "abiding sentiment that the legislature have discharged their whole responsibility in the management of the University when they have taken care to make up the Board of Regents of intelligent and pure men. While I hold

²² Barnard to Draper, November 15, 1858, in Draper Correspondence, State Historical Society of Wisconsin; Lathrop to Barnard, November 26, 1858, in the Barnard Manuscripts, New York University; Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. B, p. 214, January 19, 1859. Barnard's letter of acceptance was dated January 12, 1859.

²³ *Wisconsin Journal of Education*, series 1, vol. 3, p. 221 (January, 1859); State Superintendent of Public Instruction, *Annual Report*, 1858, p. 108.

that the legislature should secure the interest against absurd or corrupt administration, this obviously cannot be done by making the University administration a subject of ordinary legislation. The board of trust must be *trusted* to do their appropriate work subject to good general laws and a wholesome responsibility. Agitators have learned to go 'crop lots' to the legislature. This is our open side. I call your attention to it that it may be well guarded. It will be in your power to do it."²⁴ Draper added his pleas to those of Lathrop that Barnard come to Madison in order to be at hand for the session of the legislature to give advice on common school and other educational legislation.

The inauguration of the new chancellor was postponed from January to February. The affair was planned to rival the ceremony for Lathrop. One of the speakers for the day was to be the governor.²⁵ An attack of pneumonia detained Barnard in Hartford late in January and again postponed the inaugural.²⁶ In January Lathrop wrote to Barnard warning that "disorganizing influences are likely to awaken into activity which might have been kept in a quiet slumber, by your presence and by the initiation of measures looking to valuable and definite educational results." The legislature would elect four regents and the chancellor should be present to give his advice.²⁷

When it definitely appeared that Barnard would not arrive before the legislature completed its session, the attitude of his correspondents turned from one of expectation to regret and even reproach. Draper wrote sadly, "Unless you are able to reach here soon, I shall conclude that our common School Educational matters will be thrown a year behind." He wrote again that if Barnard arrived even a few days before the adjournment of the legislature, something might still be gained. This sentiment was echoed two weeks later by Lathrop. So insistent had the letter writers become that Barnard, not a modest man, wrote that he feared Draper and other friends entertained "too fa-

²⁴ Lathrop to Barnard, December 29, 1858, in the Barnard Manuscripts, New York University.

²⁵ Draper to Barnard, January 22, 28, 1859, in the Barnard Manuscripts.

²⁶ Mrs. Barnard to Draper, February 1, 1859, in the Draper Correspondence, State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

²⁷ Lathrop to Barnard, January 28, 1859, in the Barnard Manuscripts.

avorable ideas of my power to be useful." Yet he was pleased that so much should seem to hinge upon his action, and he pleaded: "Only bear with me till I fairly get into the traces. I love to work, & am quite disposed to work for the cause in Wisconsin. I believe we can accomplish something permanently and extensively useful if we can get the confidence of the Legislature & the people."²⁸

On March 1, Draper reported that Lathrop had continued on as chancellor pro tem—"this is displeasing to some, who would be glad to see you here at the helm. Our old chancellor has lost what limited influence he formerly had—after all his efforts against Ex-Prof. Conover for Regent. . . . I only mention this as a fact." But even though Barnard had not yet come to Wisconsin, the legislature had appointed him to a commission which would revise the school laws. "You see, my dear sir, in this, a renewed expression of the unbounded confidence of our people in you. I hope you will be able to advise & help in this matter if you are spared."

Wisconsin people were not alone in their unreserved confidence in Barnard. A teacher in Illinois, C. S. Hovey, wrote to Barnard saying he must succeed in Wisconsin. "On your success hangs the success of 'the new order of things' not only in Wisconsin, but over the border. We of Illinois have watched with no little interest the movements at the North in selecting the man to stand at the helm. We are content."²⁹

Barnard finally arrived in Madison late in May, 1859, and met with the Board in June. On July 27 the inauguration took place and shortly thereafter Barnard was away again. He had addressed the regents at the special meeting on June 22, 1859. The regents expected from the great man a plan. What they got was a declaration that Barnard proposed to act with and for

²⁸ Draper to Barnard, February 5, and to Mrs. Barnard, February 14, 1859, and Lathrop to Barnard, February 26, 1859; Barnard to Draper, January 14, 1859, in the Draper Correspondence, State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

²⁹ Draper to Barnard, March 1 and 21, and C. S. Hovey to Barnard, June 25, 1859, in the Barnard Manuscripts, New York University. The legislature in 1859 adopted a joint resolution appointing Barnard, Draper, and Josiah L. Pickard "to make such revision of the school laws of this state as they may deem expedient, and report the same to the Governor in time to be submitted by him to the next legislature for its consideration." *General Laws*, 1859, p. 248.

them and would resign when his interests failed to coincide with theirs. His recommendations, none of large proportions, included the proposals that preparatory work should be turned over to the Madison High School, that the normal department of the University should be developed, that practical instruction should be offered in science as applied to individual and public health, agriculture, and other industrial pursuits, and that the ordinances of the Board should be revised to accomplish these ends. He questioned the wisdom of having spent so much money for dormitories, but urged that best use be made of them; he recommended that steps be taken to protect the great beauty of the grounds. He reminded the regents, perhaps half in apology for having had nothing to offer in the way of a general plan for the University, that when he took this post he had "expressly stipulated, that I was to be relieved from all instructional duty in the classes of the University and was to be at liberty to cooperate with the Board of Regents of Normal Schools, as their agent, and with the teachers and friends of common schools." On July 26, the day before his inaugural, Barnard presented, in lieu of a plan, a report by Lathrop, written before he left for Bloomington, reviewing the occurrences of the past year.³⁰ A mountain of expectation had been built up; none of the hopes were fulfilled. But the Board, in good faith, proposed to dismiss the entire faculty. This was to give Barnard complete freedom in reorganizing the institution. Barnard was invited to prepare recommendations for a full reorganization.

After his inauguration and several months in Madison, Barnard wrote to Daniel C. Gilman, saying there were no more hindrances than he had anticipated and added: "I wish you was here to share the excitement. . . . The facilities for laying the foundations of a great work are even greater than I anticipated, & in about three years time I hope, if my health holds out, to see some fruits of my labors in this University."³¹ Barnard did organize teachers' institutes and arranged with the Madison High School to provide normal training; but his only contribu-

³⁰ *Regents' Annual Report*, 1858-59, pp. 9-17.

³¹ Barnard to Gilman, October 29, 1859, in the Barnard Manuscripts, New York University.

tion to the University was the employment of David Boswell Reid as professor of physiology and hygiene and director of the museum of practical science. He was unable to attend the regular meeting of the Board in January, 1860, because of the death of one of his children. When he arrived in February, neither he nor the Board had any plan. He presented his resignation that summer instead of the general plan of reorganization that the Board had asked for. Although the Board rejected Barnard's resignation, in their formal report of 1860 the regents felt called upon to explain and in part to justify themselves. Barnard's health had been bad, but unless he should be able to take active control of the institution soon, the Board would be compelled to accept his resignation and search for a new chancellor. In January, 1861, on a motion of Horace A. Tenney, the Board did accept the resignation. Never more than a phantom chancellor, he was yet revered by almost everyone. Though he made no original proposals, and his innovations lasted no longer than his term of office, the Board, the faculty, and the educators in the state seemed ready to deliver the entire educational system into his hands. Barnard's bad health, his unwillingness to give up his multifarious activities, and the desperate financial condition of the University brought his tenuous tenure to an end.

Although the acceptance of his resignation by the Board was accompanied by a motion of regret, and most of the newspapers and educational journals also expressed regret, Barnard's brief connection with the University soon became the subject of bitterness.³² In 1865 the faculty, in recommending that a chancellor be employed, could not resist a jibe at Barnard and the Board and urged that someone not too big for the place be hired. Horace Tenney, who as a member of the Board had moved the acceptance of Barnard's resignation in 1861, later denounced Barnard bitterly as a fake and a fraud. "A more wretched impostor, dead-beat and humbug, probably never swindled a literary institution under pretense of being a great educator. . . . Of his connection with the University it is due to truth to say, that he did not even rise to the dignity of a total

³² See the *Wisconsin Journal of Education*, series 1, vol. 5, pp. 308-311 (March, 1861) for a summary of the newspaper comment on Barnard's resignation.

failure." In 1867 James D. Butler wrote Barnard that his career had been bitterly derided at an alumni banquet. Ten years later, James High, '64, called Barnard an "ornamental chancellor."³³

The bitterness that followed Barnard's departure was perhaps inevitable. He was hotly pursued and flattered into accepting the position. Having indicated that he would accept, he himself seemed to think he would find time to work for Wisconsin and do a "great work." Members of the Board of Regents, educators, even the legislature itself, promised Barnard again and again that all he had to do was lead; they would follow. But their expectations and high hopes for great educational leadership from Barnard were never realized. That the Wisconsin experience rankled in Barnard's memory is clear. Writing to Draper in 1876, he declared, "If my health had not broken down, with the hold I had already got on the teachers, & the movers in local school movements, we would have done a great work in that state." Twenty years later, when President Charles Kendall Adams called upon him, Barnard insisted that he would have accomplished much if his health had permitted him to continue.³⁴



LATHROP had urged Barnard to have Daniel Read, Lathrop's most stalwart supporter, named assistant president during Barnard's absence from the campus. But the Board of Regents made John Sterling dean of the faculty. Sterling, the senior member of the faculty, was virtually head of the University after Lathrop left, but not until the acceptance of Barnard's resignation was he officially listed as dean. In 1865, at the request of the faculty, his title was changed to vice-chancellor.³⁵

³³ H. A. Tenney, manuscript History of the University, in the Papers of the Board of Regents; Butler to Barnard, April 12, 1867, in the Barnard Manuscripts; High, *A Great Chancellor*, 232.

³⁴ Reuben G. Thwaites, *The University of Wisconsin* (Madison, 1899), 74 n.

³⁵ Lathrop to Barnard, November 26, 1858, in the Barnard Manuscripts; *Regents' Annual Report*, 1860-61, p. 29; 1864-65, p. 23. Lathrop was apparently closer to Read than to any other member of the faculty. In 1859 or 1860 he urged Read's appointment to the post of president of the University of Missouri, an office Lathrop had held before coming to Wisconsin and which he again accepted in

Thus from the time of Lathrop's departure in 1859 until the arrival of Paul Chadbourne in 1867, John Sterling was the administrative officer of the University. Besides teaching mathematics and such other subjects as necessity required, Sterling performed many tasks: he met with the Board of Regents and with the executive committee; he looked after the buildings and the grounds; he corresponded with prospective students; he assembled the catalogue for printing; he interviewed new students; he collected tuitions; he showed new students to their rooms; he sold them secondhand furniture; he helped to examine and classify them when they entered the University; and he kept the records. While Barnard was still chancellor, Sterling wrote him saying he was having the buildings cleaned and the walls whitewashed "at as little expense as possible." Others, like Professor Butler, might worry about a leak in the roof, or that the lightning rods had blown down, or that the fire insurance had run out, but Sterling arranged to have these matters taken care of "at as little expense as possible."³⁶

The Board, assured of his frugality and his devotion to the interest of the University, seldom refused his requests. He would, they assumed, never ask for more than was needed. He was not anxious for personal power, nor was he an experimenter. He was content to keep the University operating on a modest scale.

His devotion to the University must at times have been tried, as when one of the literary societies asked him to make frames for pictures to hang in its hall or when members of another society turned over to him for safekeeping all the funds in their treasury, expecting him to be their banker. Although there is no record that Sterling ever refused to perform these many and various tasks, his communications to the Board occasionally sug-

1865. After Lathrop's death Read was made president of Missouri. Jonas Viles and others, *The University of Missouri*, 111.

The report of the faculty containing the recommendation that the title of vice-chancellor was more appropriate than that of dean was signed by Sterling, but it was read to the Board by Daniel Read. The Board agreed to the change, but the next year the legislature abolished the office of chancellor.

³⁶ Sterling to Barnard, August 30, 1859, and Butler to Barnard, May 27, 1860, in the Barnard Manuscripts, New York University.

gest his feeling that too much was being expected of him. In January, 1861, he complained to the Board that he had too much to do, that during the administration of Barnard he had shouldered the whole responsibility for administering the University. He had accepted this responsibility only because of "the peculiar circumstances of the University," but now he wanted to be relieved. In June of the same year, certain that he would receive no additional salary for serving as dean of the faculty, Sterling repeated his request to be relieved of the office and responsibility. "Since the position as it seems, is regarded by the Board as one of *honor* merely, and as the undersigned has enjoyed the honor now two years, he desires that it should be shared by his Colleagues. Unless therefore the Board see their way clear to appoint a Chancellor the undersigned respectfully requests that some other member be appointed as Dean of the faculty."³⁷

The Board paid no attention to his complaint, and he continued to carry the administrative responsibility without extra pay. He continued to grumble from time to time that the burden was too much and that someone else should be selected; but since he did the job well enough and since he was devoted, conscientious, and upright, the Board of Regents—since they had no money with which to employ a new chancellor—found no reason to change. Apparently no serious thought was given to making Sterling chancellor, although the thought must have occurred to him as it did to some of the alumni.³⁸

In 1866, after the legislature had provided for the reorganization of the University and the Board had begun a search for a president, Sterling wrote to the executive committee refusing to serve longer as executive head. For lack of a quorum, no action was taken.³⁹ But early the next year Chadbourne was elected

³⁷ Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. B, pp. 297-298, 310, January 16, June 25, 1861.

³⁸ In an address before the alumni in 1877 James L. High declared that he had "sometimes thought when our regents were searching New England colleges for a fit person to be called to the presidential chair, that they would have done but a simple act of justice, equally creditable to themselves and to the university, in bestowing its highest official dignity upon one who, by his unquestioned fitness, not less than his long years of efficient service, had fairly earned the honor." *A Great Chancellor*, 233.

³⁹ Minutes of the Executive Committee, Vol. A, p. 170, October 8, 1866.

president of the University. Somewhat later Sterling was made vice-president; he was the only member of the old faculty retained after the reorganization of 1867.



THE faculty was formally organized on September 22, 1851, with the chancellor, Professor Sterling, and a tutor, Obadiah M. Conover, present. Weekly meetings were held thereafter for a great many years. The minutes, except for the period between 1861-64 for which Daniel Read lost the records, were regularly, if not fully, kept.

There is little evidence that the early faculty ever concerned itself much with the course of study, except when a question of adding, substituting, or modifying a requirement came up for discussion. Debate, if any, was never recorded. There is no record of an expression of educational philosophy or of the conflict between science and the classics. Although these men were not untouched by the problems which agitated higher education in the middle of the nineteenth century, their secretary apparently did not consider discussions of these matters important enough to record. The course of study and the organization of the University, it appears, were responsibilities of the chancellor and the regents. During the interregnum, when the faculty might have changed the organization, it did nothing. Nor is there much evidence of direct communication between the faculty and the regents. The chancellor spoke for the faculty, although periodically he transmitted reports of its members to the regents. Sometimes the regents acted upon faculty suggestions. Doubtless some professors attempted to influence members of the Board who lived in Madison, but neither the records of the Board nor of the faculty suggest that, even in the early days, there was much direct formal contact between faculty and regents.

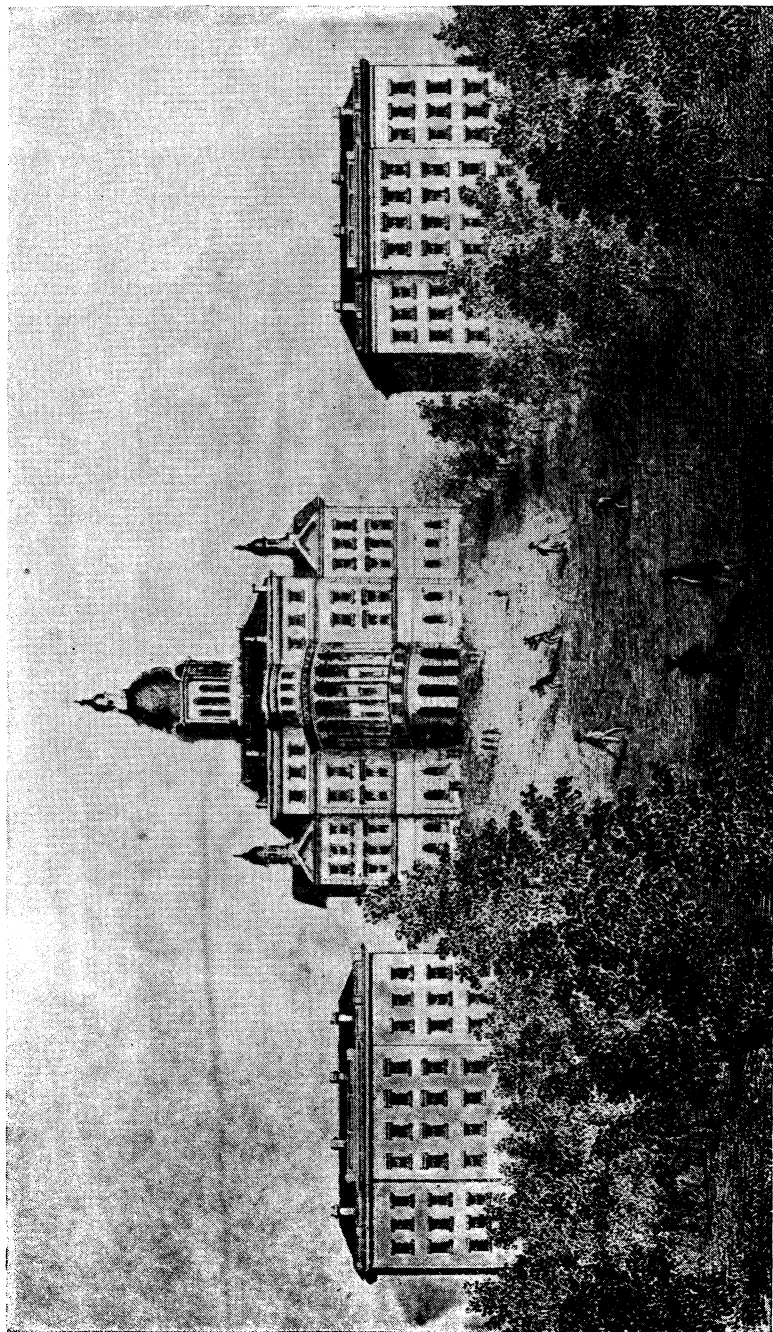
The foremost concern of the faculty was with those problems created by bringing boys together for the purpose of education. It is indicative of the faculty's interest and preoccupation that at the first meeting, on September 22, 1851, Lathrop, Sterling, and Conover agreed that the hours of study and recitations should

be as follows: from six to seven and nine to twelve in the morning; from two to five in the afternoon; and seven to nine in the evening. It was also agreed that the study rooms should be visited by a faculty member at least once in the forenoon and once in the afternoon and once between seven and nine in the evening. Apparently visitations between six and seven in the morning were considered unnecessary. At the second meeting, Chancellor Lathrop presented for approval a plan for keeping a record of scholarship and deportment; it was a plan which Lathrop had employed while he was president of the University of Missouri.⁴⁰ And a similar plan had been adopted at the State University of Iowa in 1860.

Based upon the assumption that each student was innocent until proved guilty, the plan provided that at the beginning of the term every student was credited with one hundred points in scholarship and in deportment. On the side of scholarship, for every crime or lapse from grace as reckoned in the faculty decalogue, students were debited from one to fifty points. A student was debited one point for failing to recite, for absence from recitation without excuse, for failure to prepare an assigned composition or declamation; for "special failures" he could lose from one to nine points. There was "for a perfect recitation, in whole and in part, no debit." In 1852 the rules were emended to provide a debit of five points for absence from an examination. Each officer of the University was to keep a record and to report debits at the weekly Friday-evening faculty meeting. The chancellor kept a great book in which he recorded the debits. At the close of each term the number of debits was subtracted from the one hundred credits originally given, and the balance, if any, was recorded in the permanent record book, which was also kept by the chancellor.

The rules governing deportment were somewhat more exacting. Here too a student started at the beginning of the term with a credit of one hundred. Absence without excuse from daily prayers, declamation, or recitation cost two points; unexcused tardiness cost one point. Absence from the study room without

⁴⁰ Minutes of the Meetings of the Faculty, vol. 1, p. 1, September 22, 1851; Viles and others, *University of Missouri*, p. 41.



The University in 1867



The Class of 1860

excuse cost one point; causing "disorder" cost one or more points. In 1852 "personal violence" was proscribed and penalized fifty points; absence from an examination cost ten points. The same year a penalty of five points was established for any student who entered a saloon or barroom in the village of Madison or vicinity. All other misdemeanors were debited at the discretion of the faculty. Lapses in deportment, like those in scholarship, were reported weekly to the chancellor, totaled at the end of the term, and entered in the permanent record.

The student who accumulated twenty-five debits in a term was given a warning, and the chancellor notified his parents. Fifty and seventy-five debits brought further notifications and warnings. The rule provided that the student who lost all his credits should be "separated from the institution" for one term or longer, at the discretion of the faculty. The system of values embraced within this code is revealing: fighting was considered five times more serious than missing an examination and ten times as bad as visiting a saloon; missing a recitation was more a crime in deportment than in scholarship; and the penalty for missing an examination was twice as severe in deportment as in scholarship, suggesting that regularity and promptness were more esteemed than diligence in studies.

The records of the faculty are crowded with trivial cases of misconduct and consequent punishments. There are occasional melancholy entries to the effect that so-and-so exhausted his credits and his father was invited to withdraw him from the University. Drinking, disorderly conduct, fighting, absences from examinations, stealing books, forging excuses, and many other misdemeanors came before the faculty. The crimes were solemnly considered and the offenders sometimes brought before the faculty for questioning. Sometimes a member of the faculty was designated to consult the culprit. Often a report would come back of confession, repentance, and high resolve to do better. In 1864, a student was charged with assaulting another, and Sterling was appointed to investigate. When he reported that the aggressor "manifested proper feelings," regretted his conduct, was willing to repair the property damage, and had already apologized to the boy whom he had attacked, the faculty

permitted him to remain in school and debited him only twenty-five points. In 1865 seven young men were charged with having attended the German theater in Madison. The faculty dismissed one permanently, three were dismissed for the remainder of the term, and the other three were permitted to remain in school although publicly reprimanded and placed on good behavior. The faculty rarely took punitive measures against a student for academic failure, although in 1859 a student who had failed in an examination of Demosthenes was required to make up his deficiency during the summer if he intended to continue with his class.⁴¹

Records show that though the faculty had great interest in maintaining discipline, they were quick to defend the students against any attack from outside. In 1861 Sterling admitted that there was gossip about their deportment and scholarship but branded it "as false and slanderous; and we affirm that in deportment and scholarship the students of the Wisconsin University will bear favorable comparison with those of any similar institution in the land."⁴²

The practice of holding a daily chapel meeting was adopted early in the history of the University, and attendance of all students and faculty members was required. In 1857 the faculty asked further that the chancellor "invite the resident clergy of Madison and others at his discretion to conduct religious services in the College Chapel on Sabbath afternoons." Two years later the faculty's "Committee on Chaplaincy" recommended the appointment of a University chaplain and nominated Professor Butler for the post. The chaplain was to be responsible for religious exercises each morning and for arranging the religious lectures each Sabbath afternoon. His duties were to be considered equivalent to one recitation.⁴³ Butler was chaplain until after the Civil War.

The faculty as a group showed little inclination to challenge the authority of either the chancellor or the Board of Regents,

⁴¹ Minutes of the Faculty, vol. 1, pp. 2, 3-4, 66, 114, 118, 119, October 6, 1851, July 25, 1859, April 13, 15, 1864, February 6, 1865.

⁴² Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. B, p. 310, June 25, 1861.

⁴³ Minutes of the Faculty, vol. 1, pp. 52, 68, September 28, 1857, September 20, 1859.

although on one occasion they disapproved of a proposal by the chancellor and were supported by the executive committee. They did combine in 1865 in bringing charges against one of their colleagues, Professor Ezra Carr, for "dereliction of duty."⁴⁴ But although the executive committee and the Board investigated, nothing came of it.

The teaching of the faculty had little to distinguish it from that in academies and colleges throughout the land during this period. In 1856 students, even those of regular college standing, met for daily recitations from textbooks, and their study hours were prescribed by the faculty. By the time of the Civil War the faculty permitted some freedom among the college students, although preparatory students were expected, even if not living in the dormitories, to spend six hours a day in recitation or in study hall under the supervision of the tutor. Moreover, although the professors were ostensibly responsible for instruction in clearly defined if somewhat numerous disciplines, specialization was achieved largely in the catalogue. Most of the professors taught what had to be taught, few managing to stay entirely within the fields assigned to them. Most of them taught in the preparatory department. In 1856 the schedule shows that the chancellor, who occupied the chair of civil politics and ethics, heard a sophomore class in Latin, two recitations from the preparatory class in Vergil and the Latin reader, and the seniors in a course in political economy. Daniel Read taught "mental philosophy and active powers" to juniors and seniors, rhetoric to sophomores, and each year was supposed to offer a course of lectures in didactics. Sterling's teaching day was filled with teaching mathematics to the juniors, sophomores, and freshmen and arithmetic to the preparatory classes. Professor Conover taught Latin to the seniors, Latin and Greek to freshmen, and two classes in English grammar. Fuchs taught German to the juniors and French to the sophomores. Augustus Ledyard Smith, tutor, taught all the preparatory classes except those handled by the chancellor, and by Conover and Sterling. The other faculty member, Professor Carr, was not teaching that term.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Minutes of the Faculty, vol. 1, p. 121, May 14, 1865.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 40, 41, April 23, 1856.

Few of the men who served on the early faculty attained greatness as teachers or scholars, although an abundant sentimental literature attests their popularity. The quality of Sterling's instruction will be discussed in another chapter. Of the others, most had at least adequate preparation. Obadiah M. Conover, appointed tutor in 1850 and professor of ancient languages in 1852, was born at Dayton, Ohio, in 1825. He graduated from Princeton at the age of nineteen, taught school near Lexington, Kentucky, and later at the Dayton Academy. He studied law and later returned to Princeton Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1849. Shortly thereafter he came to Madison and published several issues of a literary and educational monthly called *The Northwestern Journal*. Few comments on his teaching remain, but we have his own bitter complaints about the admission of ill-prepared students to his classes. He was not re-elected in 1858. For several years thereafter he assisted in the management of the Madison High School and the preparatory department of the University. In 1864 he became supreme court reporter and continued in this post until his death in 1884.⁴⁶ An occasional poet, a classicist, a conservative, and a Republican, Conover was a man of scholarly taste and good training.

James Davie Butler was elected professor in Conover's place. Few men who served on the early faculty, not even the chancellor, had wider experience than Butler. Born at Rutland, Vermont, in 1815, he went to Wesleyan Seminary at Wilbraham, Massachusetts; to Middlebury College, Vermont; and to Yale Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1840. Shortly thereafter he made his first trip to Europe, where he visited several German universities, apparently supporting himself in part by writing articles for the *New York Observer*. He returned to the United States in late 1843, lectured on his European travels, and divided his time between teaching and preaching. In 1854 he accepted a position as professor of Greek at Wabash College. He expressed some reluctance about coming to Madison. He feared that the classics would be sacrificed to science, but he left Wabash without distress since his salary there was

⁴⁶ *State Journal* (Madison), April 29, 1884, p. 1.

not being paid.⁴⁷ He was not re-elected in 1867, but he continued thereafter to make his home in Madison.

Butler never wrote a book, but from his pen poured an almost endless stream of articles and slight monographs. He contributed more than two hundred articles to the *Nation*, and contributed irregularly to newspapers in New York, Boston, Cincinnati, and Chicago. Reuben Gold Thwaites described him as the perennially gentle scholar who went through life "quite undisturbed by a concern for material cares." He wrote on literature, art, history, antiquities, numismatics, philology, travel, pedagogics, religion, and philosophy. A scholar by taste and temperament, Butler complained to Barnard of his loneliness in Madison: "None of my associates here are of scholarly habits." Later the same year he alluded to this again, saying that although he had been unanimously re-elected to his position, he regretted the "lack of literary associates here—the absence of professional enthusiasm in our faculty." But even his protest was gentle. "The next generation," he told Barnard, "may see a good institution here,—but I shall be in the tombs of the Capulets." As it turned out, however, he lived until 1905, until after President Van Hise had been inaugurated. Although never a conspicuously popular teacher—his subject may have had something to do with that—Butler enjoyed wide popularity as a lecturer, preacher, and writer. His touches of sly humor were often embedded in the complex prose of which he was a master. He was not above twitting the regents when they sought to admonish him for neglecting to submit his annual report in 1863. He responded, "Tempted into tasting a bit of roast pig two days ago, I paid for it by such a cholera as to make me neglect my usual report. I was further beguiled into this sin of omission by fears that my humble and recondite labors were unnoticed by you. Henceforth however I shall go on my way exultant in my discovery that you, Gentlemen, like Divine Providence, while administering matters the most vast, yet find nothing too minute for your inspection."⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Butler to Barnard, August 4, 1858, in the Barnard Manuscripts, New York University.

⁴⁸ Reuben G. Thwaites, "Memorial Address: James Davie Butler," in the *Transactions of the Wisconsin Academy of Science, Arts, and Letters* (Madison, Wis-

Butler helped and encouraged many students and maintained a lifelong correspondence with many. One of these was John Muir. In an autobiographical sketch, Muir recalled that it was Butler who was responsible for his first appearance in print. Pyre remembered Butler in his old age for the "circumstantial plenitude of his prayers," his "prodigious habit of hiving quaint and curious tid-bits of forgotten lore which he unloaded at odd times" and his "big voice" which "sounded against the library hush, preternaturally so."⁴⁹

Ezra Carr shared with Butler the affection of John Muir, but beyond that there was little in common between Carr and Butler or the rest of the small faculty. Born at Stephentown, Rensselaer County, New York, in 1819, Carr had graduated from the Polytechnic School in Troy and received the degree of doctor of medicine from Castleton College in Vermont, where he taught chemistry and natural history before coming to Wisconsin in 1856. At Wisconsin he taught agriculture, chemistry, and natural history and served on the committee of the State Geological Survey. For one year he was a member of the Board of Regents but, when forced to choose between his professorship and his regentship, he resigned from the Board.⁵⁰ In 1867 he was not re-elected to the faculty. He moved to California where for six years he occupied the post of professor of agriculture in the newly opened University of California. Later he served as superintendent of public instruction in California. He wrote on agriculture and chemistry and prepared a book on *The Patrons of Husbandry on the Pacific Coast*,⁵¹ a chapter of which he based on Lathrop's lectures in political economy.

While he was at Wisconsin he was vigorous in pushing the claims of his department, tactless in relations with his colleagues, and often contemptuous of what he considered the ineffective disciplines they represented. Although he talked much about

consin), 15:901, 902, 904; Butler to Barnard, February 19, 1866, in the Barnard Manuscripts; Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. B, p. 345, June 23 1863.

⁴⁹ William Frederic Badè, *The Life and Letters of John Muir* (Boston, 1923), 1:121; Pyre, *Wisconsin*, 132-133.

⁵⁰ *Daily Argus and Democrat* (Madison), July 29, 1858, p. 2.

⁵¹ Manuscript biography, prepared by the Writers Project of the Works Progress Administration, in the State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

laboratory work, his teaching consisted largely of lectures. Students remembered these for his use of demonstrations, particularly for his aplomb in accepting the failure of an experiment. He would tell the class what was going to happen; and if it did not, he was undisturbed. Carr announced in the catalogue that in his department, "the recitation of the student consists in his giving a lecture illustrated with experiments and demonstrations on the same subject and after the manner of the Professor, thus not only requiring an intimate knowledge of the subject discussed but at the same time the faculty of communicating his knowledge." The examining committee in 1861 found Carr's method "somewhat novel" but "in the highest degree advantageous," although they felt there was not sufficient opportunity for laboratory experimentations. John Muir wrote appreciatively about him: "I shall not forget the Doctor, who first laid before me the great book of Nature, and though I have taken so little from his hand, he has at least shown me where those mines of priceless knowledge lie and how to reach them."⁵²

During his eleven years at Wisconsin, Carr was engaged in many disputes with his colleagues, with members of the Board, and with politicians. Even his leaving was accompanied by an uproar because, it was charged, he tried to take with him geological collections which belonged to the University. He had sold his collection to the University in 1856. The Board of Regents, unable to determine whether the items Carr claimed were his or the University's, offered him twenty-five dollars for his interest in the collection. Carr indignantly refused.⁵³ The solution is not on record but the connection of Ezra Carr, the fractious one, with the University of Wisconsin terminated in 1867. On leaving, he sweetly offered the regents his "active sympathies and cooperation."

Daniel Read came to the University in 1856, in the same year as Carr. Except for the chancellor, he was at the time the oldest man on the faculty. Born at Marietta, Ohio, in 1805, educated

⁵² Burr Jones, "Reminiscences of Nine Decades," in the *Wisconsin Magazine of History*, 20:158 (December, 1936); *Regents' Annual Report*, 1859-60, p. 65; 1860-61, p. 12; Badè, *Life and Letters of John Muir*, 1:143.

⁵³ Minutes of the Executive Committee, Vol. A, p. 174, July 12, 1867.

in a local academy, and graduated from the University of Ohio in 1824, he had taught political economy at the University of Ohio and ancient languages at Indiana University.

In 1850 he had been a delegate to the Indiana constitutional convention, an experience from which he never fully recovered. In the years that followed at both Indiana and Wisconsin, he told successive classes about his activities as a constitution-maker. One of his students at Wisconsin recalled, after sixty years, that the students "listened with keen interest to the well-told narrative of his experiences." A pious, conservative, courtly man, an admirer and supporter of Lathrop, he taught courses in his own department and, upon Lathrop's departure, took over some of the classes the chancellor had conducted. And, although it was not required of him, he taught for a time "Evidences of Christianity." He resigned in 1867 and accepted the presidency of the University of Missouri. He held this position for the remainder of his active career.⁵⁴

Of the others who taught in the early period, little need be said. John P. Fuchs, first professor of modern languages and subsequently re-elected to the position, was born in Dutch Guiana in 1823 of German parentage, trained in Dutch and German universities, and received a medical degree at the age of twenty-five. He came to America in 1849 and to Wisconsin in 1854 and that year became teacher of French and German at the University. He resigned and went to Milwaukee to teach in the schools there, and then returned to the University after the dismissal of Pickard. He served until 1867 when the Chadbourne reorganization shook him out. He then moved to Chicago and there practiced medicine until his death in 1878.⁵⁵ He wrote little, but Carl Schurz considered him a good scholar. Burr W. Jones remembered him as a man devoted to literature, an inveterate pipe-smoker, and so near-sighted that he was never

⁵⁴ Jones, "Reminiscences of Nine Decades," *op. cit.*, 159; Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. B, p. 133, July 21, 1857; Viles, *University of Missouri*, 110 ff.; *Madison Democrat*, October 6, 1878, p. 2. James Butler described Read as the "oldest and largest man" on the old faculty, as more conservative than Sterling, and as one whose teaching from the first to the last "ran in the same groove." According to Butler, he even taught students how to pray. James D. Butler, "An Early Decade of Wisconsin University," in *The Badger*, 1890 (Madison, 1889), 85.

⁵⁵ Thwaites, *University of Wisconsin*, 63 n.

able to discover which students were absent from his classes.

Professor Kürsteiner, who replaced Fuchs, was chiefly noted for having founded a choir. "I think," he wrote to the regents, "it necessary and very appropriate that a young man ought to try to cultivate his voice, not only to raise it in praise of his Creator and for the enjoyment of his fellow beings, but also for his advancement and progress."⁵⁶

Although the Board and faculty appreciated the choir, Kürsteiner was forced out in 1858, and his place given to Joseph C. Pickard. Pickard, the brother of the regent, Josiah, was for two years professor of modern languages. He had been trained at Bowdoin and in a theological seminary. After he left Wisconsin he taught English at the University of Illinois.⁵⁷

David Boswell Reid, who served as professor of physiology and hygiene and director of the museum of practical science from 1859 to 1860, was a native of Scotland. He had received his medical degree from the University of Edinburgh in 1830 and remained on the staff there for several years. In Edinburgh he developed the "first systematic plan of ventilation ever carried out in any public building." Engaged for a time in a project to "ventilate the houses of Parliament," he had quarrelled with the builders and, in 1855, had come to the United States to lecture. His work on ventilation brought him to the attention of Henry Barnard, who, in 1859, secured his appointment to the faculty of the University of Wisconsin. He remained at Madison only one year, apparently unappreciated by his colleagues. His dismissal in 1860 by the Board was a grave breach of the contract Barnard had made with him. The examining committee in 1860, however, was impressed by his teaching. "The students presented some excellent drawings prepared by themselves, of different structures, showing several modes of ventilation, and the arrangement of rooms for convenience and comfort. Their examination indicated a good acquaintance [*sic*] with the general principles of physiology, as applied to the useful arts."⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Kürsteiner to the regents. Undated report in the Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. B, pp. 148-149.

⁵⁷ *Madison Democrat*, November 26, 1910, p. 1.

⁵⁸ *Dictionary of American Biography; Regents' Annual Report*, 1859-60, p. 33; 1864-65, pp. 17-18.

Such was the early faculty, better trained in theology than in other disciplines. It is with them that Lathrop planned a University which would offer a practical and utilitarian education. In their interests and training can be found, in large part, an explanation of the failure of the University to take more than a tentative step in the direction of implementing the grand plans of the chancellor and the Board. Conover, Sterling, and Butler were trained in divinity schools. Read, although not trained in theology, was by taste and temperament one of them. Small wonder, then, that in the years when these men guarded the springs of learning at the University, its offerings were those of the traditional colleges, weakened perhaps by the lack of a coalescing principle.

6.

Students: Mid-Nineteenth Century

UNTIL the close of the Civil War the enrollment at the University hardly rivaled that of the private colleges in the state. In 1856 Lawrence Institute at Appleton claimed a total student enrollment of 445.¹ But only twice in the 1850's were more than 300 students registered at the University. That number was again reached and passed in 1863. Not until 1858 did the number of students enrolled in college classes exceed the number in preparatory and special classes and then only because special students were counted as members of regular college classes. As late as 1865 only 41 of the total of 331 students were in regular college classes. In the preparatory department there were 110 students, in the normal department there were 80, and 100 were special students. This meant either that they could not satisfy the entrance requirements for the college course or that they were unwilling to take the full course.

Throughout this period the largest number of students were from Madison and Dane County. In his first report Sterling insisted that patronage would be restricted to the vicinity of Madison unless the University made provision for cheap board and room.² Lathrop and the Board, in their first plan for the University, proposed the development of dormitories. Even though Barnard later deplored the resulting expenditures, the dormitory system continued till long after the Civil War.

¹ Charles McKenny, ed., *Educational History of Wisconsin* (Chicago, 1912), 376.

² *Regents' Annual Report*, January 16, 1850, p. 20.

The first dormitory, North Hall, was ready at the beginning of the school year of 1851-52. The chancellor reported that besides providing public rooms for lectures and recitations and cabinets for library and apparatus, it would accommodate between fifty and fifty-six students. The building was heated, the regents claimed, by two hot-air furnaces. Although students could get good board with Madison families for a dollar or two a week, the regents had ordered erection of a mess hall for those who wanted to get board at the actual cost. The chancellor reported that under this provision board "need not exceed eighty cents per week." The charge for a room in the dormitory was five dollars a term. Students who lodged and boarded in town were required to be present six hours a day in the public rooms and were charged a dollar a term for heat. Tuition was also low. During the first years it was fixed at ten dollars a term for the two terms which then constituted the school year. The chancellor estimated that a student could attend the University for from \$75 to \$110 a year and insisted that no educational institution in the country "offers the advantages of liberal culture on more favorable terms." With the completion of South Hall in 1855 a dining hall was established in that building "for the common use of the faculty and students" under the supervision of Professor Sterling and his wife. The "refectory system," as the chancellor called it with nice discrimination, was pronounced an immediate success, for it offered students board for not more than two dollars a week; and resident members of the faculty paid three dollars a week for each member of the family over the age of five. Besides affording economical accommodations to students, the residence of the faculty on the college grounds, the Board felt, and the "social and domestic influence of daily intercourse in the hall, and elsewhere" would "tend to elevate the standard of good manners and good order in the institution."³

³ *Ibid.*, December 31, 1851, pp. 7, 32; 1852, pp. 20, 21; 1855, p. 6. In 1854, on the recommendation of the chancellor, tuition was reduced to five dollars per term and room rent "including heat" to three dollars per term. The whole cost of tuition and room rent for one year of three terms was reduced to twenty-four dollars. *Regents' Annual Report*, 1853, pp. 19, 50. The next year the tuition was reduced to four dollars per term. *Ibid.*, 1854, p. 46.

Besides providing inexpensive room and board and reducing tuition charges in order to attract a large and representative enrollment, several attempts were made to provide scholarships for worthy students, and in 1857 a bid was made for the support of the largest foreign element by printing the annual report of the regents in German.

The frequently made charge that the University was a local institution, a mere high school for Madison, caused the faculty, the chancellor, and regents grave concern. In 1855 the chancellor, partly in answer to the criticisms, submitted an analysis of the student attendance at the University during the calendar year 1855. Only 43 were from Madison and 54 from other parts of Wisconsin; 8 were from Illinois, 3 from New York, 2 from Ohio, 2 from Missouri, and 1 each from Virginia, Pennsylvania, Maine, Kentucky, California, Minnesota, and Canada West. Of the 43 students claiming Madison as home, "a large portion are from the families of those who have made Madison their residence, with a view to the advantages of university instruction." A year later the regents pointed out that during the calendar year of 1856 there had been 169 students enrolled: 64 from Madison, 69 from other parts of the state, and 36 from other states and Canada.⁴ Similar analyses continued to be made from time to time thereafter, showing that students were attracted from various parts of the state and nation.

The students who came to the University in the 1850's from the farms and villages of the state arrived with diverse educational preparation. Some had been trained in academies; some by private tutors—the local minister or some other local savant; and some, like John Muir, were largely self-taught. There were, of course, no public high schools. Although students could enter the preparatory department at the age of twelve, most in that department were much older and some even displayed full beards. Most of the students in the University seem to have been in their late teens or early twenties, but occasionally one registered who had reached the advanced age of thirty or even forty.

⁴ *Regents' Annual Report*, 1855, p. 19; 1856, p. 10. The information concerning enrollment in the year 1856 was conveyed to the public in a letter from Lathrop to the *Milwaukee Sentinel*, January 13, 1857.

In the academic year 1860-61 a man of fifty was among the students.⁵

Having arrived in Madison, whether by train, stagecoach, farm wagon, or foot, the new student sought out the chancellor or Professor Sterling in order to make arrangements to be examined and assigned to the appropriate classes, and also, if he were planning to live in the dormitory, to be assigned a room. If he engaged a room in the dormitory, the new student had to get furniture. This he could buy secondhand from the reserve maintained by the University. Isaac N. Stewart, who attended the University in 1859, wrote his father that the furniture in his room cost eight dollars "new from the store." Bed, plain pine table, a few wooden chairs, a bookstand, an oil lamp for light, and a spirit lamp for a cookstove constituted the bare essentials for these almost monastic rooms. Carpets or other floor covering were strangers to the dormitory rooms. Straw- or husk-filled mattresses were commonly used.⁶ Students made periodic trips to near-by farms to buy their mattress filler, although some of the more ingenious got it without paying. If a student's room was cleaned at all, the student cleaned it.

In 1865 the Board of Regents finally became convinced that North Hall could not be heated by the hot-air furnaces. The students had known this for a decade. Thus stoves were installed in the student rooms. The University supplied the stove, but each student had to provide his own supply of firewood. Some cut their own. Others purchased their fuel. Outdoor privies were used until the 1880's. The constant bad condition of the little buildings was the subject of frequent and fruitless discussion by the Board of Regents. Not until many years after the Civil War was running water introduced into the dormitories; students had to draw and carry their water from the University well.

Some students were affluent enough to pay between a dollar

⁵ Edward L. Hindes, *The University during the Civil War*, p. 71. This unpublished bachelor's thesis, dated 1913, is in the library of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

⁶ I. N. Stewart to M. E. Stewart, April 30, 1859, in the Stewart Papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin; E. H. Jones, "Student Life at the University in 1857," in the *University Press*, May 1, 1878; Alice K. Fallows, *Everybody's Bishop* (New York, 1927), 101.

and a half and two dollars for board at the college dining hall or at some other eating place. But many were compelled to board themselves, or, as the chancellor put it, "provide their own material, and take their meals in the building."⁷ The bill of fare of the students who provided their own "materials," while it apparently sustained life, was hardly calculated to do more. Harvey Reid, who attended the preparatory department in the spring of 1861, recorded that bread and milk constituted the chief elements in his bachelor fare. References to changes from this diet crowd into a diary which recorded this young man's keen interest in a nation moving into civil war. On April 30 he recorded the extravagance of purchasing potatoes. The roasted potatoes were a "rare treat." Reid and his friends fished in the lakes, for food as well as for sport; they wanted to supplement and vary a slender diet. On a week-end ramble he found some fresh-water clams and brought them home to cook and eat.⁸ Samuel Fallows, of the class of '59, who later was brevetted brigadier general, served as superintendent of public instruction, and attained the office of bishop in the Reformed Episcopal Church, brought his food from home and cooked it on a camphene stove. He lived twenty miles from Madison and frequently walked home and back over a week end.⁹ John Muir recalled, over fifty years after he had left the University, that before enrolling he had been assured by a student that many boarded themselves for a dollar a week. "The baker and milkman come every day. You can live on bread and milk," he was assured. Muir remembered that he frequently had to reduce his expenses for board to half a dollar a week.¹⁰ One of John Muir's roommates, who lived with him in the northeast corner room of North Hall in 1862, recalled for Muir's biographer that Muir's diet was simple. It consisted "chiefly of bread and molasses, graham mush, and baked potatoes. Being on good terms

⁷ *Regents' Annual Report*, 1852, p. 21.

⁸ "The Diary of Harvey Reid, Kept at Madison in the Spring of 1861," with introduction and notes by Milo M. Quaife, in the *Wisconsin Magazine of History*, 1:35-63 *passim* (September, 1917).

⁹ Fallows, *Everybody's Bishop*, 123.

¹⁰ John Muir, *The Story of My Boyhood and Youth* (New York, 1912), 275, 277.

with Pat [the janitor] he had access to the wood furnaces in the basement where he could boil his mush on the coals and bake his potatoes in the hot ashes."¹¹

Another student diarist, James L. Foley, who went to the University from September, 1865, to June, 1866, boarded with two other students. On January 17, 1866, he recorded their daily fare: "We generally have coffee in the AM Potatoes and Meat M. and pudding and Milk at supper." A month later he recorded: "We are living rite well now. We have Potatoes, meat & coffee & Bread to Breakfast,—Tea, Bread & Butter to Dinner and Pudding and Milk for supper."¹²

Foley's college expenses, neatly totaled for each quarter and including even the item of twenty-five cents for straw to fill his mattress, amounted to \$57.18 for the fall quarter; \$57.85 for the winter quarter; and \$31.60 for the spring quarter. The relatively low expenses for spring are to be explained by the fact that he had completed purchase of furniture and wood and had only "living expenses," room rent, and tuition to pay that quarter. In the fall of 1866 he enrolled at Beloit College, and his first quarter there cost \$69.80 although he boarded in the college boarding hall. Foley practiced the most rigid economy, but he was unable to get through a year at the University within even the maximum set by the chancellor a decade earlier.

Daily compulsory chapel was a part of the University program, but some students began and ended each day with prayer, John Muir among them.¹³ Not content with daily chapel, prayers in their rooms, and Sunday morning services in one of the local churches, some students attended the Sabbath afternoon services conducted from time to time in one of the college buildings, and evening would find them back in one of the local churches.¹⁴ If churchgoing were the test of piety none could honestly charge, as the ignorant or mendacious occasionally did, that the University was a godless and atheistic institution.

¹¹ William F. Badè, *The Life and Letters of John Muir* (Boston, 1923), 1:90.

¹² Diary of James L. Foley, unpagged, lent by his daughter, Mrs. W. L. Haight, of Racine, Wisconsin.

¹³ Badè, *Life and Letters of John Muir*, 1:91.

¹⁴ "The Diary of Harvey Reid," in the *Wisconsin Magazine of History*, 1:35-63 (September, 1917).

The intellectual interests of the students in the 1850's and the success of the first literary society to be formed, the Athenaeum, were reflected briefly during the years 1857 and 1858 in a monthly magazine, *The Students' Miscellany*. Begun in January, 1857, under the sponsorship of the Athenaeum literary society, the first ten numbers, comprising a volume of 304 pages, were published by the society at the subscription price of a dollar a year or twelve and a half cents a copy. In 1858 the Athenaeum society decided to share with the other students of the University the pleasure and expense of publishing the magazine. A magazine association was established and editors elected, and the last eight numbers, comprising a volume of 320 pages, emerged under student-body sponsorship. At the end of the year the *Miscellany* died, a minor casualty of the depression of 1857. The full file of the eighteen numbers, gathered and preserved by Lyman C. Draper for the State Historical Society, mirrors the tastes, attitudes, and intellectual interests of the pre-Civil War undergraduates. Not again until the 1870's did the students have an organ of opinion. The articles which appeared in the *Miscellany*, although by no means distinguished, were mostly of serious purpose, and almost all, whatever the subject, carried a heavy freight of classical allusion, perhaps as much a testament to the effectiveness of Professor Conover's teaching as a token of the literary usages of the mid-nineteenth century. Stern, almost somber, purpose pervaded the magazine. Even its publication was justified in terms of self-improvement. In introducing the *Miscellany*, the editors said that one purpose of the magazine was to advance the cause of the University. "Another reason . . . for the publication of this periodical" was that it was necessary for their "own highest intellectual progress. We believe that the art of composition should be studiously cultivated, as being best adapted to make *thinking, self-reliant, educated men.*" Pleading for broad liberal education, for continuous reform to attain a higher civilization, for a nation of independent thinkers, the editors pontificated that "no forms of government should be regarded with so much reverence, no dogmas so sacred, and no customs or opinions so hallowed by antiquity, or so interwoven into the structure of society, as not to be brought

before the bar of reason for free investigation, or placed in the crucible for analysis." That life was "real and earnest" they did not doubt. "In coming to this University," the editors reminded themselves and their readers, "we have not forgotten, that, though students, we are yet men; that we are not to bury ourselves in the lore of the past, but to gather wisdom from its depths to guide us in the great practical duties of life."

Such sentiments appear again and again. J. F. Smith, one of the editors of *The Students' Miscellany*, in an article on "The Object of Education" said that "man was made not only to *know* and to *feel*, but to *act*." Firmly he pointed out: "Man has no right to ignore the duties which devolve upon him, as a social being. He is so constituted, that the path of happiness and the path of usefulness are one. He who would reap the fruits of his vast acquisitions and varied powers must employ them in the service of mankind. Let him acquire knowledge in the school of experience; learn wisdom in solving the all-important problems of his own daily duties; and cultivate the finer feelings of his nature by carrying joy and gladness to the abodes of want and suffering, and by sowing the seeds of virtue and intelligence in the moral wastes of the earth."

The editors of the *Miscellany* had to find serious purpose even in amusement. In 1858 a University chess club, with William F. Vilas as president, was organized "for the advancement of chess science, and the development of those faculties of mind which this most excellent game is so well calculated to educate." Admitting that there was some disapproval of chess because it took too much time, the editors conceded that it was "morally wrong" to spend one's entire time at chess but that this would not happen at Wisconsin; the club would meet only once a week, on Saturday night. The editors listed the names of some of the world's famous men who had found delight and profit in the game. Thus chess-playing and the club were approved.

The articles published over the period of almost two years showed a wide, sometimes self-conscious, interest in literature, history, art, poetry, philosophy, and morality. The editors of the *Miscellany*, like their elders, never tired of reminding their readers that the University of Wisconsin was at least equal to

the older universities of the East; in fact, they often insisted, it was superior since the East was obviously becoming effete. Thus it was with pleasure that they published a letter from a former member of the Athenaeum society boasting about the superiority of the intellectual attainments of the University of Wisconsin over those of eastern schools. "I have realized this more fully as I have nervously watched the servility, the staleness, the barrenness of the production in Eastern colleges. . . . There is no need of servility at the West. We have there our Indian mounds, our vast lakes, and undulating prairies and openings. Need, then, our poet go back to the mouldy piles of poor jaded Greece and Rome?"¹⁵

The *Miscellany* carried a full quota of original verse, one of the principal distinctions of which was the almost complete absence of that curious mixture of Latin and English with which undergraduates and sometimes their elders amused themselves in this era. The beauty of Lake Mendota more than once challenged the undergraduate rhymers' creative impulse. There was no notable issue. Despite the high purpose and solemn resolve of the editors, "humorous" pieces were published from time to time. Puns, bad spelling, and outlandish exaggeration were the principal elements in the collegians' attempts at humor; the contemplation of matrimony and styles in women's clothing were a source of amusement to some. But on the whole the *Miscellany* stood for high thinking, stern discipline, and plain living.

When women were first admitted to the University in 1863, they were greeted with numerous and often bitter expressions of hostility from the men. James L. High, who had witnessed the coming of the women, recalled fourteen years later that "they came like an army with banners, conquering and to conquer; they came with bewitching curls, and dimpled cheeks, and flowing robes, and all the panoply of feminine adornment; and worst of all, they came to stay." Nor did High attempt to conceal his fixed disapproval of coeducation. "We believed then and still believe that the problem of coeducation is not susceptible of

¹⁵ *The Students' Miscellany*, 1:16-17, 21, 22, 145, 304 (1857); 2:74 (1858).

perfect solution, and is incompatible with the highest culture of either sex."¹⁶

But the University of Wisconsin was in no sense pioneering when the regents cautiously opened the back door of the University to women by establishing the normal department and admitting students of either sex. Oberlin had led the way three decades earlier, long before the University of Wisconsin was established. Lawrence Institute at Appleton had opened its doors to women in the very beginning. The University of Iowa welcomed both men and women students to the institution when the first classes were organized in 1855. Students who attended the University of Wisconsin in the 1850's showed no hostility toward coeducation. On the contrary, they favored it. This is suggested by the results of the numerous debates on the subject held in the 1850's by the literary societies, and by the published expressions of student opinion in the *Miscellany*. In 1857 the editors of the *Miscellany* announced that the regents were considering a plan which would open the University to both sexes. "In this plan we most heartily concur." The editors reported with pride that ladies attended Ezra Carr's lectures on chemistry. Early in the next school year the *Miscellany* congratulated Professor Kürsteiner for having invited ladies to join his classes in French and German. Several ladies had joined the classes thus "gracing the recitation room with a charm which has heretofore been wanting, except in Dr. Carr's department of chemistry and botany, where the presence of fair ones was as much an inducement to regular attendance of students, as the desire to become acquainted with the hidden mysteries of nature, or the beauties of her floral displays. We believe there is a project in *esse* to admit our female friends to the full benefits and privileges of the University, and we hope that it will be so."¹⁷ By 1863 this attitude had changed.

In the Madison of almost a century ago these boys, many of them from farms, found no lack of lighter amusements. Boating and fishing on the lake were popular for all who could afford the

¹⁶ James L. High, *A Great Chancellor and Other Papers* (Chicago, 1901), 231, 232.

¹⁷ *Students' Miscellany*, 1:87, 238.

price of boat hire. Almost all the boys made one outing across Mendota to visit the state insane asylum and marvel at such evidences of secular progress as the water closets or the great kitchen in which steam was used for cooking. Some, boy-fashion, scoured the countryside in the spring and fall, looking for wild strawberries, unguarded apple trees, and melon patches. Harvey Reid, on a week-end ramble, visited a friend who lived on the southern side of Lake Monona. Near-by he found an Indian encampment consisting of two wigwams sheltering five Indian men, four squaws, and seven children.¹⁸

There were no organized sports as yet, but students found diversion in playing wicket, quoits, and even baseball. In 1866 James Foley witnessed a baseball game between a Milwaukee team and a Madison team in which the Milwaukee men emerged victorious by a score of 48 to 15. The faculty did not disapprove of athletic exercises, and the regents even promised to offer the students of the normal department the opportunity of taking gymnastic exercises according to the Dio Lewis system, but all sports were strictly of the students' choosing and making.

Even before the Civil War students had attempted to form a military company to practice drilling. The University Light Guards was organized in 1858, although the unit was not conspicuously successful.¹⁹ During the Civil War drilling was generally popular, although a week after the firing on Fort Sumter, when many students were in a frenzy of drilling, Harvey Reid and John Muir, instead of spending Saturday learning to be soldiers, hired a boat and rowed over to Picnic Point to do their laundry.²⁰ Until 1863 the students drilled as the University Guards, but in that year the title of University Myrmidons was adopted as more fitting to "the belicose character of so redoubtable a body of warriors."²¹

James L. High, who once commanded this corps, recalled in later years "the feeling of exultant pride with which I first

¹⁸ "The Diary of Harvey Reid," in the *Wisconsin Magazine of History*, 1:40, 62 (September, 1917).

¹⁹ *Students' Miscellany*, 2:274.

²⁰ "The Diary of Harvey Reid," in the *Wisconsin Magazine of History*, 1:49 (September, 1917).

²¹ High, *A Great Chancellor*, 225.

marshalled my gallant myrmidons, and charged up and down the campus, executing strategic and tactical movements unparalleled in the art of war, to the great admiration of the young ladies in the south college, who gazed with wondering eyes, and utterly putting to rout the only enemy that ever opposed our victorious progress, Professor Read's ancient and venerable cream-colored horse." High, who did not enter the army until after his graduation in 1864, recalled, too, the difficulty of "successful handling of Greek Roots or problems in the differential calculus" amid the preparations for war. "We who were left behind were painfully struggling, with the aid of grammar, lexicon and mayhap an occasional pony, through the story of classic wars twenty centuries gone by; while here in our own time was a Titanic struggle for the unity of the great republic, and we were living, moving, breathing in a heroic age."²²

A surprisingly large number of the students or former students served in the Union Army; a few served the Southern cause. One investigator found that of the fifty graduates from the University up to 1864, twenty-eight joined the Union Army. The same investigator found that at least 215 who had been connected with the University entered the army.²³

The students in the pre-Civil War days for the most part lived a life of Spartan simplicity as befitted the sons of pioneers. Yet not all managed to fill their time with study and such recreations as were approved by the faculty. The rules of conduct were often broken. The records of the faculty, as has already been observed, show that students sometimes visited saloons, gaming houses, and even theaters! Of wenching there is no record. But they sometimes got into fist fights, destroyed property, or otherwise caused disturbance. For these lapses from good conduct they were reprimanded and penalized by the faculty. The record of student conduct was not marred by duels between students, nor was the faculty required, as at the neighboring University of Iowa, to prohibit students from carrying pistols and knives.

There is little in the plain living, the simple amusements, the rigid and rigorous disciplines of almost a century ago that

²² *Ibid.*, 225-226, 227. See also Hines, *The University during the Civil War*, *passim*.

²³ Hines, *The University during the Civil War*, 93 ff.

would appeal to students today, but many a student who had attended the University before the Civil War remembered his University years as the most exciting period in his life. A half century after he left Madison and the University, John Muir recalled that as he departed he had climbed to the top of a high hill on the north side of Lake Mendota and stopped to gain a last long look at the beautiful University grounds "where I had spent so many hungry and happy and hopeful days. There with streaming eyes I bade my blessed Alma Mater farewell."²⁴



THE practice of celebrating the successful completion of each academic year by conducting public examinations of the classes and presenting a literary exhibition began early at the University of Wisconsin. The public examinations were intended to put the scholars on public display so that all who cared might come and judge, in the results of the examinations, the diligence of the scholar and the competence of the professor. During the early years the professors themselves conducted the examinations; later, men not connected with the University were invited by the Board to conduct the inquisition. The public exhibition was the culmination of the "literary anniversary." On this occasion the students, carefully drilled by one or more of the professors, presented original essays, declamations, and orations.²⁵

In 1854 the University conferred degrees upon two of that class of twenty boys and young men who had assembled under Sterling in a room of the Female Academy in February, 1849.²⁶ In that year the literary anniversary concluded with commencement exercises which combined the public exhibition of former years with the conferring of degrees and the baccalaureate address. For a number of years the baccalaureate address was a

²⁴ Muir, *My Boyhood and Youth*, 286-287.

²⁵ In 1853, for example, the public examinations were held on Monday and Tuesday, July 25 and 26, from nine to twelve in the morning and from two to five in the afternoon. At half-past seven on the evening of July 27 the public exhibition was presented in the Dane County courthouse. *Daily Argus and Democrat*, July 25, 1853.

²⁶ The imminence of the first commencement probably induced the Board to adopt an official seal for the University. The first step toward obtaining such a seal had been taken at the initial meeting of the Board in October, 1848, when

part of the commencement exercises. During the Civil War the address became a sermon and, instead of being a part of the commencement-day exercises, was delivered on the Sunday preceding the graduation ceremonies. In 1854 the two men's literary societies contributed their mite by arranging for a speaker to address their joint societies and such "citizens and strangers" as might care to attend the lectures. The address before the societies was a feature of commencement week for a number of years.

The literary anniversary of 1854 took almost a week. Public examinations of the classes began on July 21 and continued through July 24. On July 25 Judge Levi Hubbell addressed the literary societies. Interest in his impeachment the year before had nearly crowded out of the Madison press all references to the University commencement exercises. Fittingly enough, the judge, who had escaped conviction, chose "Liberty" for the subject of his address. On Wednesday, July 26, the commencement program was presented at the Baptist Church. The exercises, according to the chancellor's published announcement,

a committee was appointed. The committee never reported formally, but Professor James D. Butler declared years later that the first seal used by the Board was simply the eagle side of a United States half dollar. Shortly after Lathrop's arrival the Board directed the chancellor to prepare a suitable device for the corporate seal of the University. Almost five years later, on February 11, 1854, Lathrop reported to the Board of Regents: "The undersigned was instructed, at a former meeting of the board, to procure a seal with suitable device, for their corporate use. After consultation with members of the board and others, the following simple device was decided upon: The human eye, upturned to receive the light falling upon it from above; the motto in illuminated letters above the eye, 'Numen lumen,' (God our light); the legend around the rim of the seal, 'Universitatis Wisconsinensis Sigillum.'

"The work was executed in Cincinnati, under written instructions, which were not very strictly observed, and justice is not in all respects done to the design. I regard the seal, however, as on the whole a good one, and recommend its adoption by the board."

There is no record that anyone ever asked Lathrop where he got the motto, why he selected it, or what he had in mind when he designed the upturned eye and the converging rays, and Lathrop never explained. The Board accepted Lathrop's creation without question. Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. A, unpagged, October 7, 1848; Vol. B, pp. 12, 59, November 21, 1849, February 11, 1854. The seal, sanctified by age and long usage, continues to be the signet of the University despite its obscure symbolism and its unfamiliar motto of uncertain origin. See Kenneth F. Burgess, "Numen Lumen," in the *Wisconsin Alumni Magazine* (Madison), 13: 278-280 (March, 1912); H. B. Lathrop, "Numen Lumen," *Ibid.*, 328-330 (April, 1912).

would begin "at ten o'clock A.M., precisely, and continue through two or three hours."²⁷ The program opened with music and prayer. There followed the salutatory by one of the two seniors, orations by four undergraduates, and the valedictory by the other senior. Musical numbers came after each forensic effort. The chancellor then conferred the two degrees, and, after another musical number, gave the baccalaureate address. More music followed, then the benediction, and the first commencement exercises of the University of Wisconsin were over.²⁸

The editor of the *Argus and Democrat* told his readers that the program was "highly interesting," but his report was hardly sympathetic. The two graduates, Charles T. Wakeley, "formerly a printer in this office," and Levi M. Booth, were mentioned and their merits discussed: "The former entered the University with thorough practical habits and strong native good sense as the basis of an education and has not been much injured by his scholastic acquirements and associations. The latter has much good sense yet to acquire to make his college learning of any avail to himself." The chancellor's address was as always "happy in style and matter." These comments provoked the *Patriot* to prompt and harsh rejoinder. "It has been unfortunate for the University," the *Patriot* apologized, "that its public exercises have usually been attended by a set of ignorant and coarse political editors, who seem to look upon it as a party caucus; and have the indelicacy and littleness to canvass the merits of students in their papers, arrogating to themselves the duty of censors. . . . It takes the vanity of ignorance, and the feebleness turned out of some pious charity school from lack of mind to meet even its requirements, to be guilty of such brutality." The *Patriot* hoped that no students were embarrassed by the insults and counseled that "the jeers of a boor have no effect on intelligent minds."²⁹

²⁷ *Daily Argus and Democrat*, July 24, 1854.

²⁸ *Weekly Wisconsin Patriot* (Madison), July 29, 1854. A. S. Wood was given one lot valued at seventy-five dollars in the University Addition for furnishing the music. Land Contract No. 64, August 14, 1854, Deeds, in Papers of the Board of Regents.

²⁹ *Daily Argus and Democrat*, July 26, 1854; *Weekly Wisconsin Patriot*, July 29, 1854.

Although new events were added to the literary anniversary during the ensuing years, few were dropped. In 1857 not only did the chancellor give the baccalaureate address in Latin, but one of the student orations was presented in the same language—to the edification of the “citizens and strangers” who attended. This public display, though fully in keeping with academic uses, may have been intended partly to answer a critic of the year before who had complained that the standards of scholarship at the University were very low, and that the University was making a jest of the bachelor of arts degree by conferring it upon students who had not studied Greek, thus “pandering to popular slaver and cant of the Greeley type of learning.”³⁰ In 1858 a student oration in German was added to the commencement program, but neither the student orations in Latin and German nor the practice of presenting the baccalaureate address in Latin endured for long. After Lathrop’s departure no chancellor complimented a graduating class by using any language but English for his final words of advice.

The custom of requiring each senior to deliver a graduation oration persisted without any change. In the course of time this provided such a sustained oratorical program as to try the patience of students and faculty alike. In 1871 the commencement exercises included thirteen senior orations, in addition to the salutatory address in Latin and the valedictory oration.³¹ After that year only a selected number gave orations. In 1877 the faculty voted to require each member of the graduating class to prepare either an oration or a thesis. The next year the students petitioned the faculty for the abolition of commencement, but without success.³²

At commencement the class standing of the graduates was announced—in a manner not wholly satisfactory to all students. Under the rules adopted by the faculty in 1879 all students who maintained an average of 95 graduated with first honors; those with an average of 93 graduated with second honors; and those who had submitted acceptable theses, attained an average of 93

³⁰ *Weekly Wisconsin Patriot*, June 28, July 5, 12, 1856; July 25, 1857.

³¹ *University Press*, July 1, 1871.

³² Minutes of the Meetings of the Faculty (MS), vol. 1, p. 351, March 19, 1877; vol. 2, p. 14, April 29, 1878.

in the subject on which the thesis was written and an average of 85 in all subjects graduated with special honors. All students not included within these groups who had an average above 80 had their names published according to their respective standings. The rest were listed alphabetically in the printed commencement program.³³ This particular part of commencement together with the orations were frequent subjects of student complaint. In 1881 the entire senior class protested to President Bascom and the faculty that commencement exercises as now conducted were tedious to the public, a burden to the students and a cause of envy among them, and a source of ill will toward professors. All the seniors wanted some other kind of commencement exercise, preferably an address or lecture by a celebrity. The faculty approved and recommended to the regents that such a change be made.³⁴ Although the recommendation was not accepted, the Board directed that the faculty select honor orators and honor students on a wider basis than that afforded by markings in scholarship and deportment alone. The Board directed, to the delight of many students, that henceforth "in no case should public exhibitions be made of the relative standing of members of the class further than is shown by the selection for honor orations, and appearance on the schemes." This was not a surprise to the faculty which had announced earlier that year that the names of the graduates would not be published in the order of their standing. The *University Press*, in commenting on the faculty decision, approved because "this publication creates a wrong impression upon outsiders. Those who are not familiar with the working of the marking system are too apt to imagine that a student's class standing is an indication of his ability and application."³⁵

Although the Board sought the next year to satisfy student objections by permitting only volunteer orators to participate in the commencement program, the students were not satisfied. The student press denounced the regents' plan. "The whole

³³ *Ibid.*, vol. 2, pp. 40-42, June 9, 1879.

³⁴ *University Press*, February 10, 1881; Minutes of the Faculty, vol. 2, p. 120, February, 1881.

³⁵ Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. C, p. 361, June 21, 1881; *University Press*, May 17, 1881.

system deserves hearty condemnation," said the *University Press*.³⁶ They continued to complain, but no changes were made so long as John Bascom was president. Shortly after Chamberlin assumed the presidency, the Board named him and the president of the Board of Regents, George H. Paul, to review the whole matter of commencement. Specifically, the committee was directed to consider dispensing with the baccalaureate services, excusing seniors from preparing orations, and providing for a commencement address by some distinguished person.³⁷ At last the old order began to dissolve, although some of the faculty continued to hold that the seniors ought to deliver orations on commencement day.³⁸

The practice of an academic procession began in 1858. The first one was organized under the direction of "General" H. C. Bull at the west door of the Capitol. Led by the band and the Governor's Guard in full uniform, the procession marched from the west door of the Capitol to the city hall, where the program was held. "Citizens and strangers" were invited to join in the marching, but women were not. The doors of the city hall were opened "for the admission of ladies only, at 9 A.M."³⁹

In 1861 the Alumni Association was formed, and arrangements were made for a banquet, oration, and poem the next year. Thereafter the alumni had a day as part of the regular calendar of events during commencement celebrations. In 1865 the first graduates of the normal department of the University received diplomas. Since all of them were women, University authorities were in a quandary. Unwilling to permit the women to participate in the regular commencement exercises, they arranged for special exercises for the normal department graduates on the Tuesday afternoon before the regular commencement. For five years thereafter, in spite of their protests, the women were thus segregated.

During the long period when the University was without a

³⁶ Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. C, pp. 373-374, January 18, 1882, *University Press*, April 21, 1883.

³⁷ Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. C, p. 572, September 4, 1888.

³⁸ Chamberlin to Paul, January 10, 1889, in the Paul Papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

³⁹ *Argus and Democrat*, July 24, 1858.

chancellor, public interest in the "literary anniversary" waned, partly because of the financial distress of the University, partly because of the lack of active leadership, and partly because of the Civil War. With the return of peace interest in the exercises quickened, and the Madison papers began to publish longer accounts of the events. In 1867 one local newspaper printed the full text of both Professor Butler's baccalaureate sermon and Professor Sterling's commencement address.⁴⁰ Since the Board of Regents had announced, in the week of the exercises, the dismissal of the entire faculty in order to give the new president a free hand in reorganizing the institution, it should perhaps have been expected that the commencement of 1867 would not go smoothly. Sterling, in his address, chose to review the history of the University. He spoke of the obstacles which the institution had had to face, the "ignorance and prejudice" of the people, and the "gross misrepresentations" made against the University in the early days. Sterling welcomed the reorganization with its promise of increased endowment and state support, but the "new dispensation," as he called the reorganization, had brought about the dismissal of the entire faculty. He complained that the old faculty had been discarded without so much as a word of thanks for their devoted work during the years of the University's acute impoverishment. With untypical bitterness Sterling protested to the graduates of 1867: "We have not been thought worthy to be retained in the positions we have so long been permitted to hold."⁴¹ Alumni protests to the regents saved Sterling, but the other members of the faculty were swept out.

During the 1870's and thereafter the anniversary was crowded with events, mostly oratorical. Public examinations of the classes continued to be conducted until 1880, but interest in this part of the program decreased as other events moved into prominence. These events now included the lecture to the law graduates—an annual affair established after the organization of the law department, the baccalaureate sermon, the anniversary celebrations of the literary societies, the class-day exercises, the alumni banquet, oration and poem, and finally, the commence-

⁴⁰ *Wisconsin State Journal*, June 24, 27, 1867.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, June 27, 1867.

ment exercises featuring a procession which seldom failed to include, besides the faculty, graduates, and alumni, the governor, members of the supreme court, members of the Board of Regents, and other prominent state officials. The mounting public interest in the commencement was reflected not only in the presence of so many dignitaries in the procession and on the platform, but also in the increasing amount of space given to the event by the local newspapers, and to a lesser degree, the press through the state. In 1879 the *Wisconsin State Journal* printed the full texts of all the scheduled lectures and addresses. In the issue of June 18 the report of the University exercises filled all seven columns of the front page and another five columns inside.⁴² Indeed, few events of a nonpolitical nature brought together so many prominent people of the state.

⁴² *Ibid.*, June 16, 17, 18, 19, 1879.

NEW FOUNDATIONS, 1866-1887

Part Three



7.

Of Growth and Government

THE reorganization act of 1866 basically changed the method of appointing the Board of Regents. From the founding of the University until the year of the act the regents, except for those appointed at the very first, had been elected by the legislature. The criticism had often arisen that under this method of selection the Board was largely composed of regents from Madison and from southeastern Wisconsin. This was substantially true, but in view of the distribution of population such a composition of the Board was not unnatural. It was also believed that the old Board had been influenced by political considerations. And much discontent had been expressed over the chancellor's membership on the Board. Thus it was that in the new basic law of 1866 the regents were to be chosen by the governor, two from each congressional district and three from the state at large. The secretary of state was to serve as secretary of the Board, and the state treasurer as treasurer. The president was no longer to be a member of the Board. This system was altered periodically. In 1869 the secretary of state was dropped and his functions delegated to a permanent, salaried secretary of the Board. In 1870 the superintendent of public instruction was again made an ex officio Board member. In 1879 the size of the Board was decreased. Henceforth only one regent was to be chosen from each congressional district and three from the state at large.¹ All in all, the Board

¹ *General Laws*, 1866, pp. 154-155; 1869, p. 17; 1870, pp. 135, 136; *Laws of Wisconsin*, 1879, pp. 67-68.

was probably somewhat more interested in educational and cultural matters than the great majority of Wisconsin citizens. It represented the legal profession and business more than it did education or agriculture. Most of its members were of sufficient prominence to bring prestige to the University.

Several regents acting in unofficial capacity conspicuously promoted the interests of the institution. Ex-Governor Salomon was useful in the period immediately following the reorganization of 1866 in securing some financial assistance; William F. Vilas, an alumnus, did much for the Short Course in agriculture and for the material resources of the institution; Spooner lent an influential hand in the establishment of the annual appropriation in 1872; Washburn provided funds for the establishment of the observatory; and Hiram Smith promoted the experiment station and dairy school. If, as it often happened, a regent was at the same time a member of the Wisconsin Assembly or Senate, he usually did his best to support bills designed to advance the interests of the University. But the majority of the Board members in this period did not as individuals make the interests or welfare of the institution their first thought.

On June 28, 1866, the Board of Regents adopted an elaborate set of bylaws. These provided for two annual meetings, one in June and one in February, and such special meetings as might be necessary. The executive committee was charged with the carrying out of all orders and resolutions not otherwise especially provided for; it was to fill vacancies in the faculty during the recess of the Board; it was to audit accounts and to take care that the institution suffered no detriment. This committee came to be greatly overworked and, under the chairmanship of Napoleon B. Van Slyke, revolted against the responsibilities thrust upon it. Standing committees on course of study and textbooks, on the library, and—in the mid-eighties—on buildings and on finance fulfilled the functions delegated to them. Special committees were from time to time set up to prepare bills to be submitted to the legislature and to work for the passage of these bills. The bylaws also covered almost innumerable other contingencies, including parliamentary procedure,

the duties of the secretary and treasurer, the length of the University term and the dates of the vacations, the tuition rates, the course of study, public exercises—including commencement, and the selection and duties of the Board of Visitors. This agency at first consisted of six persons, appointed at the semi-annual meeting, but in 1876 it was reconstituted to include three members of the Board and ten others—a resident of each congressional district and two from the state at large. The Visitors were to attend examinations, make suggestions regarding instruction, discipline, and similar matters, and call the attention of the regents to the needs of the University. The pressure of expanding interests of the University led the regents to become more record-conscious and more businesslike in their handling of University affairs. Account books and inventories in the later seventies and eighties received more attention than formerly; a stenographer was called in 1888 to take careful notes of all the meetings of the Board; and, most important of all, the secretary was made the business agent of the Board.²

The provisions in the original bylaws of 1866 and the amendments thereto which affected the appointment and functions of the president of the University are of especial importance in view of the issues that arose throughout the seventies and eighties. The bylaws of 1866 provided that the president and the professors were to be elected by ballot at the annual meeting. An amendment in 1874 modified this procedure by declaring that "the terms of office of every officer of the University, and of every employee shall be during the pleasure of the Board unless otherwise expressly provided." The bylaws of 1866 specified that the president of the University should, from time to time, give to the Board information on the state of the institution and recommend to their consideration "such measures as he shall deem necessary or expedient, and in transmitting the communications and reports of Professors and others he shall express his views of the same." He was, further, to recommend to the Board candidates for chairs vacant in the

² Records of the Board of Regents (MS.), Vol. C, p. 9, June 28, 1866; Bylaws of the Regents, adopted June 28, 1866, in Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. C, pp. 579-583.

several faculties. The president was to designate rooms to be occupied by students and, after consultation with the faculty, to make all rules needful for the instruction and discipline of the students and to submit these rules from time to time to the regents for their approval. In 1876 the bylaws were amended to require the president to submit all recommendations in writing and to report to the Board or the executive committee any contemplated change in personnel in the instructional force, together with salaries involved.

Thus the bylaws of the Board clearly indicated that its legal authority was complete and unqualified and that it intended to keep its powers and prerogatives. In spite of the provision for full discussion of broad matters of educational policy, the Board on the whole confined its attention to the business and administrative aspect of its functions. To this general statement there were some important exceptions which help explain the problems that arose in the administration of John Bascom. Although the executive committee frequently took steps that pretty much committed the full Board to a course of action, and although certain regents, particularly the president of the Board and those on the executive committee, exerted considerable influence in shaping policy, the whole Board, not any one man nor any single committee, was the responsible organ for administering the University.

Confronted by the task of choosing a new Board of Regents in 1866, Governor Fairchild, a friend of the University, proceeded with considerable care. Political considerations affected some of his choices. Certainly John Rountree, in proposing J. C. Cover, editor of the *Grant County Herald*, frankly stated that this appointment would "give satisfaction to your friends . . . who are the true men of the county." Cover was appointed although he had, as he himself admitted, "severely criticized some of the course of conduct and management of the University," and although he had opposed the use of the Morrill grant for establishing a college of agriculture integrated with the University. If Governor Fairchild acted with political expediency in mind, he resisted many pressures. Spokesmen for the Methodists, assuming that religious considerations might well

figure in appointments, urgently recommended several leaders of that denomination. The Wisconsin Agricultural Society asked for the appointment of John Hoyt, editor of the *Wisconsin Farmer* and a vigorous champion of the union of the new agricultural college with the University. Fairchild weighed these and other suggestions and rejected them. Nor did he select any of the candidates of Professor James Butler, who responded to his request for suggestions from the teaching staff.³

In by-passing Professor Butler's suggestions, Fairchild deprived the new Board of some able educators. But the fourteen men he named included some strong figures. Two of these, and ex-Governor Salomon, had served on the old Board. Of the new men, Napoleon B. Van Slyke, a prominent Madison banker, brought to the Board considerable business experience. Among the new appointees were also two alumni, John B. Parkinson, who would presently resign to take a chair of mathematics at the University, and Samuel Fallows, an educational leader and an outstanding churchman. Within a year or so Fairchild named new regents, including Henry D. Barron, Jared C. Gregory, and Hamilton H. Gray, all experienced in administration and politics.

The victory of the Reformer-Democratic coalition in 1874, which brought "Farmer Taylor" to the governor's chair, coincided with the ousting of President Twombly by the regents.⁴ Prominent men, including a delegation of Methodists who had championed Twombly, waited on the new governor and urged him to recommend to the legislature a reorganization of the Board and to replace, at once, the regents who had taken the most active part in the dismissal of Twombly. Taylor was openly criticized by General Charles S. Hamilton, the regent most bitterly vindictive in the fight against President Twombly, for listening "to partisan and sectarian appeals" of Methodists.⁵

³ Rountree to Fairchild, May 7, 1866; Cover to Fairchild, May 22, 1866; R. D. Mason to Fairchild, April 16, 1866; Wisconsin Agricultural Society to Fairchild, undated; Butler to Fairchild, April 16, May 10, 1866, all in University Executive Records (MS.), 1848-88, State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

⁴ See below, pp. 238 ff.

⁵ Jared C. Gregory to Jerome R. Brigham, January 4, 1875, in the Brigham Papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin; *Madison Daily Democrat*, April 30, 1874.

Hamilton's term expired within the year and he was not re-named. The four new men that Governor Taylor appointed at once were strong men. One was a Republican; the others had supported the Reformer-Democratic coalition. Of the latter George H. Paul, a well-educated Milwaukee Democrat, was a particularly wise choice and was to demonstrate over a long period his disinterested devotion to the University. All but one of the new men had been college-trained. One, Thomas Chynoweth, was an alumnus of the University.⁶

The new appointments nevertheless occasioned considerable criticism and concern both without and within the Board. Governor Taylor's bitter critic, the *Wisconsin State Journal*, felt that it was especially unfortunate that Regent Hamilton H. Gray had not been kept on the Board inasmuch as he had gone east to interview the prospective president, John Bascom, and was the only member of the Board personally acquainted with Bascom. The *Journal* also deprecated the failure of the governor to reappoint Augustus L. Smith, "a ripe scholar," and B. R. Hinckley, the only agriculturalist on the Board and a man of sterling integrity" and "common sense." At least one of the regents held over from the former regime, Napoleon B. Van Slyke, later confessed to feeling "some uneasiness" when the Taylor board was named. Van Slyke feared that the new members, before becoming acquainted with the problems of the University, might "upset things generally, and do that which more experience and knowledge of the past would prove, when too late, was a mistake."⁷ Yet he admitted that in the twelve years of his service no member of the Board, including those appointed by Taylor, had left without his regret at the change.

The Board was quick to resent any suggestion of its political-mindedness or of any association at all with politics. Yet the composition of the Board was certainly influenced by political considerations. Governor William E. Smith, who succeeded Ludington, believed it expedient to appoint "at least one Ger-

⁶ *Madison Daily Democrat*, April 30, 1874, p. 1.

⁷ *Wisconsin State Journal*, April 27, 29, 1874, p. 1; Van Slyke to George H. Paul, February 3, 1877, in the Paul Papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

man" and one farmer to the Board. This he did, in spite of the fact that he would have preferred to name someone else, "if it could have been done with propriety, having due regard to all interests."⁸ The appointment of Republican Boss Elisha W. Keyes by Governor Ludington in 1877 was a political appointment, pure and simple. When Keyes came up for a second appointment, a considerable movement supported by student and alumni petitions was organized to keep the governor from again naming him. Keyes broke the opposition on this occasion, only to meet again in 1889 a formidable challenge, when the unwarranted story was circulated that the Board was united against him and that the faculty and President Chamberlin were also against him. "I do not exactly relish the idea of being thrown overboard to the whale," Keyes protested.⁹ Although Keyes had done much for the material growth of the University and had generally enjoyed student favor, on the occasion of his last "annual address" to the freshmen and sophomores he was greeted with ironic applause, riotous demonstrations, cheers, and catcalls. At length he left the hall in high dudgeon, his address undelivered.¹⁰

On his own retirement in 1887 President Bascom declared that the Board had, during the twelve years of his administration, behaved as politicians. In a private letter Regent Van Slyke himself virtually admitted that at least in the manner of the shifting composition of the Board political considerations figured in a way that was both too marked and altogether unfortunate. As a result of his long experience as a regent he had concluded that members should be appointed without reference to politics and that they should be retained during their usefulness. "The Board should feel secure in their places to give them strength, and time to carry out their projects, thereby insuring stability of purpose."¹¹

⁸ Smith to Brigham, February 8, 1878, in the Brigham Papers.

⁹ *The Badger*, February 1, 1883; Alexander Berger to Keyes, January 31, 1883, and Paul to Keyes, February 13, 1883, both in the Keyes Papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin; Keyes to Paul, January 25, 1889, in the Paul Papers.

¹⁰ *Badger*, February 1, 1883; James F. A. Pyre, *Wisconsin* (New York, 1920), 240. Pyre was an eyewitness of the events described.

¹¹ Van Slyke to Paul, February 3, 1877, in the Paul Papers.

Both President Twombly and President Bascom felt that the president should be a member of the Board, as he had been before 1866 and as prevailing custom in other state universities suggested. In addition to the feeling that the Board should include the president, the conviction also prevailed in some quarters that the alumni as such should be represented. In 1871 the Alumni Association, now ten years old, petitioned the governor for the appointment of an alumnus to the Board.¹² Many letters recommended candidates, many qualifications were emphasized—geographical and educational. But frequently and intensely the letter writers urged that the candidate be a member of the Alumni Association. Early in 1874 the *Wisconsin State Journal* suggested that the regents be chosen by the alumni. The student organ took the position that such an arrangement might be wise in the future, but that for the present the alumni group was not sufficiently large and representative.¹³

The organized movement for alumni representation in the Board seems to have been launched in June, 1885, when George H. Noyes of Milwaukee introduced, at the commencement festivities of the graduates, a resolution which, if acted on by the legislature, would put the choice of regents into the hands of the Alumni Association. The *Milwaukee Sentinel* supported the proposal on the ground that the alumni were educated men, presumably devoted to their alma mater, and further that they represented all political interests.¹⁴ At the next annual meeting of the Alumni Association, in June, 1886, a committee of seven was appointed to present to the legislature the matter of alumni representation on the Board of Regents. The resolution proposed that at least five of the regents be appointed from a list of alumni drawn up by the association.¹⁵

When the legislature assembled in January, 1887, Assemblyman Bartholf introduced the bill which the alumni committee had elaborated. It provided that the governor, the superintend-

¹² Copy of resolution in the University Executive Records, 1848-88, State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

¹³ *University Press*, February 3, 1874.

¹⁴ *Milwaukee Sentinel*, June 26, 1885, p. 4.

¹⁵ *Madison Daily Democrat*, June 24, 1886, p. 4.

ent of public instruction, and the president should all be ex officio members of the Board and that the president should serve as chairman of the executive committee. The nine regents who had been chosen by the governor from the congressional districts would continue to be selected from congressional districts, but two members from the state at large were to be dropped and five other members were to be selected by the governor from a list prepared by the Alumni Association.¹⁶ That this arrangement corresponded to practice at Harvard, Cornell, and Michigan was used as an argument in its behalf.

The introduction of a bill aiming at the reorganization of the Board of Regents corresponded in time with the activities of a committee investigating the construction of the second Science Hall. No doubt the fact that the regents were under fire affected the course of the reorganization bill in both houses of the legislature.¹⁷ The bill was reported to the Committee on Education at the request of Senator Ginty, in order that Regent Marshall might be heard. He stoutly opposed the bill. With one or two exceptions the entire Board of Regents, he contended, was against it. The bill was further criticized on the score that it was a personal attack on the existing Board, that it was class legislation, and that it would tend to localize the University by putting it unduly under the control of Madisonians. Senator Hurlburt, chairman of the committee, about-faced and voted to report a substitute bill providing for election of the regents by popular vote. This substitute was apparently drawn for the purpose of defeating the original bill. Alumni nevertheless defended the substitute proposal, arguing that the experience of Michigan justified the proposal and that it would democratize the government of the University.¹⁸

The regents were indignant. Governor Rusk was asked to veto the substitute or elective bill, and he did.¹⁹ Certain regents regarded the attitude of the *Aegis*, the student paper which had supported the alumni bill, as indefensible, especially in view

¹⁶ *The Aegis*, April 22, 1887.

¹⁷ See below, p. 323.

¹⁸ *Aegis*, April 22, 29, 1887.

¹⁹ Roujet D. Marshall to Paul, April 13, 17, 1887, in the Paul Papers.

of the fact that in advertising the University in its columns the Board was in effect contributing to the support of the magazine. "When the new Pres. takes charge," Marshall exploded, "I hope if the young people are not taught anything else they be taught to be *gentlemen*."²⁰ But the students were not silenced. Another *Aegis* editorial in November, harking back to the alumni bill, elicited a letter from Paul to Keyes expressing indignation that such an editorial, criticizing the Board, could appear in a student paper supported by the regents. He ended on the very sour note, "I want no more of it."²¹

Undaunted by the defeat of the bill, the Alumni Association at its meeting of June 21, 1887, appointed another committee to submit a bill at the next session of the legislature. Edward P. Vilas of Madison and others spoke with feeling in favor of the movement. On their side the regents continued to fight any changes in the manner of choosing the Board. The new president, Thomas C. Chamberlin, attempted to bring about an agreement upon some measure more acceptable to all interested in the University.²² Early in the legislative session of 1889 a similar bill was introduced.²³ Chamberlin tried to steer between Scylla and Charybdis. He had informed Paul that it did not seem to him "important whether the President is a member of the Board by law without a vote, or whether he is practically a member by privilege. The same is equally true with reference to committee relationship. . . . It seems to me chiefly important that this old battled question be disposed of so that it shall no longer vex the atmosphere of the University." Yet Chamberlin, like his predecessors, in reality did feel that the president should be in a position to know what the Board did and to inform the Board of his own ideas regarding policy. He did come out in opposition to the provision in the alumni bill which would have made the president of the University also the president of

²⁰ Marshall to Keyes, April 25, 1887, in the Keyes Papers.

²¹ *Aegis*, November 18, 1887; Paul to Keyes, November [n.d.], 1887, in the Keyes Papers.

²² *Madison Daily Democrat*, June 22, 1887, p. 1; Chamberlin to Paul, June 23, 1888, in the Paul Papers.

²³ Bill No. 134A (MS.), Assembly Bills for 1889, in the State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

the Board and he opposed the clause regarding alumni representation.²⁴

The alumni presently offered to the legislative committee a substitute bill in which the features that had occasioned the sharpest criticism were left out.²⁵ Regent McMynn expressed his opposition to this sheared proposal in an open letter to the *Wisconsin State Journal*.²⁶ In his opinion the inclusion of the chancellor in Lathrop's day had not worked well. In elaborating his position in a letter to Paul, McMynn wondered how any president could wish to be a member of a Board that employed him and to which he was directly responsible. The regents held that separation of the instructional force and the representatives of the state was proper in the government of the University and that if the regents had confidence in a president, he might well have more influence off the Board than on. McMynn argued his point with influential senators and urged Paul to do likewise.²⁷

But the forces favoring change were too powerful to be driven to the ground in this wise. The alumni were articulate and influential. The governor intimated that some change in the government of the University was due. Bill 134A was stripped of its alumni clause and thus shorn passed both houses early in April. The president became a member of the Board and of all standing committees, but without the right to vote except in case of a tie.²⁸ Thus was resolved the issue that had loomed so large in the minds of Twombly and Bascom. It remained to be seen whether conflicts would henceforth be avoided in the pattern which was achieved with so much effort and against the grim opposition of the regents themselves.

²⁴ Chamberlin to Paul, February 14, 16, 1889, in the Paul Papers.

²⁵ *Assembly Journal*, 1889, p. 577.

²⁶ *Wisconsin State Journal*, February 15, 1889, p. 4.

²⁷ McMynn to Paul, March 8, 1889, in the Paul Papers.

²⁸ *Ibid.*; Lucien S. Hanks to Paul, April 2, 1889, in the Paul Papers; *Laws of Wisconsin*, 1889, p. 318.

8.

President Paul Chadbourne

DURING the summer of 1866 the newly appointed Board of Regents was faced by formidable tasks, each of which seemed almost as pressing as any other. The roof of North Hall leaked; the plaster had fallen from walls and ceilings and cluttered up the stairs; the doors, windows, locks, and lights were in a sorry mess. The eaves and flashings in the roof of University Hall had so rusted that the rain had flooded it relentlessly.¹ But such emergencies were more easily met than the momentous business of choosing a president. The buildings could be repaired, but the tumultuous past of the institution, its poverty, and its uncertain future cast dark shadows over any promise held out by the reorganization act of 1866.

In the choice of a new president, there was much to be said for putting at the head of the reorganized institution someone who knew its problems and who was familiar with people in the state. Josiah L. Pickard could have fulfilled these needs. He had served as an elected regent for three years before the Civil War and had continued, as superintendent of public instruction, to sit on the Board during the war. But Josiah Pickard probably knew too much about the University. In any case he had doubts about its ability to survive the storms of politics and the blight of indifference. That he was not set against heading a university is suggested by his later acceptance of the presidency of the State University of Iowa, but for the time being he preferred to remain superintendent of the public schools of Chicago.²

¹ Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. C, pp. 24-25, July 17, 1866.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 32, 35, July 19, 31, 1866.

About a dozen men, including R. C. Abbot of the Michigan State College of Agriculture, Daniel Coit Gilman of Yale, and Alexander Winchell, soon to become the storm center in a controversy at Ann Arbor over Darwinism, were approached, only to turn down the overture or the offer.³

At some point in the search Regent John G. McMynn, the superintendent of public instruction, recalled the valedictorian of the class of '48 at Williams. This was Paul Ansel Chadbourne, now professor of the sciences at his alma mater. It was well on in August before the correspondence with Chadbourne had reached the point where it seemed warrantable for the executive committee to call a full meeting of the Board. The date on which the University should open was dangerously near, and it seemed imperative, in the disorganized state of affairs, to take action at once.

The Board met on August 23 and learned that in the opinion of the committee, Chadbourne was "*the* desirable candidate." McMynn read a letter from the eastern theologian and naturalist which indicated that while he was definitely interested in the position at the University of Wisconsin, he was opposed to that section in the reorganization act which contemplated full coeducation. This question had already been settled at Williams. Chadbourne himself had helped shape the adverse report of the faculty committee appointed by President Mark Hopkins to consider the matter. In Chadbourne's opinion, no state in the whole Union existed in which anything like a majority of the people favored the education of males and females in the same college. If undertaken at Wisconsin, coeducation would drive the most desirable students from the University. "My own opinion is," continued Chadbourne in his letter to Regent Van Slyke, "that your law will cause a great deal of trouble. If you ignore it, some will complain; if you attempt to repeal it and succeed, many who are committed to the system will denounce you." If a single regent, or if any considerable portion of the population were determined that the experiment be tried, Chadbourne felt it would be "unfortunate in the extreme," both for him and for the University, should he under-

³ Horace A. Tenney, manuscript History of the University, in the Papers of the Board of Regents.

take the responsibilities of the presidency. He would find himself in disagreement with a considerable number of the faculty, who apparently favored coeducation; he would inevitably arouse bitter opposition. Only if the reorganization act could be modified would he feel justified in accepting a position which, he confessed, greatly appealed to him.⁴

Chadbourne's reservations only seemed to whet the desire of the regents for his leadership. There was in fact no unqualified enthusiasm for coeducation, and the Board determined not to let this provision in the reorganization act stand in the way of getting a man so well qualified for the position. Only two of the ten regents voted against Chadbourne on the first round. On the last formal ballot these dissidents graciously made the election unanimous.⁵

Urged to present in person his views on the organization of the University, Chadbourne came to Wisconsin. At Milwaukee he talked with members of the executive committee and with other gentlemen, including his old teacher—General Harrison Hobart, a former regent. Chadbourne and the executive committee conferred several times, canvassing the whole situation. On September fifth, Chadbourne, still a Williams professor, presented his views in writing to a skeleton meeting of the Board. Rejecting coeducation, Chadbourne favored the establishment of a separate female college, along lines followed by Harvard and Columbia several years later, when they suffered Radcliffe and Barnard to take root. Chadbourne now proposed that the separate college for women have its own rooms and its own teachers, with a course of study similar to that in other liberal arts colleges. The women students might make use of the cabinet and the libraries of the University; they might even attend University lectures prescribed by the regents.⁶ The records give no evidence that any of the regents present objected to the proposal.

Chadbourne did not reject the offer of the presidency solely because of the coeducational part of the legislative act of 1866.

⁴ Chadbourne to Van Slyke, August 22, 1866, in Papers of the Board of Regents.

⁵ Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. C, p. 43, August 23, 1866.

⁶ Chadbourne to the regents, September 3, 1866, in Papers of the Board of Regents; Report of the Committee on Organization, in Reports to the Regents, Vol. B, p. 20, October 2, 1866.

He was not unwilling to take the chance that, once he was installed, the regents might or might not persuade the legislature to abandon full coeducation, but he could not stomach the attack made on him in the *Daily Wisconsin Union*, a Madison paper edited by the chairman of the Democratic State Committee. In its issue of August 27, 1866, the *Daily Wisconsin Union* took exception to Chadbourne on the score that his name appeared among the delegates elected from Massachusetts to the Radical Republican Convention in Philadelphia. What else could he be, then, demanded the *Union*, but a blatant politician? "If that is his stripe," continued the editor, "he can do no good to the real educational interests of this state, and the less he becomes identified with them, the better. It will be the ruin of what is left of the University to place a radical political agitator at its head." The recent elections, the *Union* went on, made it clear that nearly half the people of Wisconsin were Democrats, and conservative. In view of the political divisions in the state, the appointment of any political partisan to the presidency of the University would be a great misfortune. The institution must have the confidence and support of all the people. "The University cannot be continued as a radical machine, and possess any vitality, or be the means of usefulness." The following day, the attack was continued. The *Daily Wisconsin Union* demanded that the regents revoke their action, or that Chadbourne repudiate any close connection with the Radical Republicans.⁷

At once the *Wisconsin State Journal*, a Republican organ, took up cudgels for the regents and President-elect Chadbourne. The list of delegates to the forthcoming Philadelphia Convention, the *Journal* pointed out, included Ralph Waldo Emerson, James Russell Lowell, John Greenleaf Whittier, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Theophilus Parsons, Josiah Quincy, and other distinguished jurists and leaders of thought who could in no sense be damned as "mere politicians." Inclusion of Chadbourne in such a list of notables only increased the respect widely entertained for the newly elected president. The Philadelphia Convention, the *Journal* continued, was the end product of

⁷ *Daily Wisconsin Union*, August 27, 1866, p. 2; August 28, 1866, p. 2.

an effort to bring together true lovers of the Union from both North and South. Chadbourne was indeed no political agitator. He had never taken any active part in politics. "If he is a man fit to be at the head of the State University he must have pronounced opinions on the great questions that now agitate our country, and he will, at proper times and in a proper manner, indicate those opinions. It is not likely that for the sake of a position involving much more labor with less pecuniary reward than that which he now holds, he will come West to sink his individuality, forget his manhood, and renounce his rights and duties as an American citizen."⁸ At the same time the Republican editor of the *Journal* repudiated the charge that the University had been traditionally a machine for the use of political agitators. The only professor who had freely expressed his political opinions, the only one whose instruction touched political issues, had been an ardent Democrat!

Two days later the *Daily Wisconsin Union*, which had initiated the attack, announced that Chadbourne had been appointed a delegate to the Philadelphia Convention without his knowledge or consent and that he had no idea of going or of identifying himself with politics. But the damage was done. For Chadbourne was "chagrined and indignant" at the abuse, which exceeded any he had ever met. He did not fear his ability to overcome opposition, he told the regents. But he expected that similar attacks would be made and that these would inevitably militate against the best interests of the University, which would be "hard enough to carry" when everyone lent "a helping hand." So, a few days after the newspaper controversy, Chadbourne informed Regent Van Slyke of his determination not to accept the presidency.⁹

Chadbourne was undoubtedly sincere in his expression of regret at the decision he was making. In amplifying his reasons in a long letter written on his return to Williamstown he declared that he would be glad to accept the presidency any day that he could see his way clear to do for the University what would be an honor to him and to the state. "And if ever that

⁸ *Wisconsin State Journal*, August 29, 1866, p. 2.

⁹ *Daily Wisconsin Union*, August 31, 1866; Chadbourne to Van Slyke, September 3, 1866, in Papers of the Board of Regents.

time comes & the Regents should again invite me, unless some unforeseen change takes place in my affairs, I shall accept the place. But it is not for the interests of any concerned that my name should again be mentioned unless there is a certainty, that the Institution can be organized essentially as I have indicated in my Communication to the Regents & that the people of the State will give me courteous treatment.”¹⁰

Thus encouraged the Board of Regents left no stone unturned in trying so to arrange matters that Chadbourne might still come to Wisconsin. On October 2 it formally expressed regret at the turn of events, approved the plan of reorganization and the change of law recommended by Chadbourne, and took steps to bring about the change in the law which he desired. The Board resolved to recommend to the legislature an amendment of the law of 1866: “The University shall be open to females as well as males under such regulations and restrictions as the Board of Regents may deem proper.”¹¹ A month later the executive committee decided to ask the Williams professor to meet the full Board at its semiannual meeting in February, with a view to laying before it his wishes for any changes in the law, organization, and work of the University.

At this point new obstacles developed. Professor Sterling informed Chadbourne that there was great doubt as to whether the proposed change would be made. Moreover, if accomplished, it would be disagreeable to “certain parties,” Sterling continued. Consequently, Chadbourne decided to forego Wisconsin and to accept the presidency of the new Massachusetts Agricultural College, which had been offered him. He expressed his continuing interest in the University and wrote to Regent Van Slyke that, if the Massachusetts presidency had not come along, he would have done everything possible to aid the regents in changing the law, and that, if success had been theirs, he would have undertaken the work and “risked the consequences.” In a subsequent letter Chadbourne kept alive the interest of the regents in him. In April, 1867 the legislature so changed the law as to admit women under “such regulations

¹⁰ Chadbourne to Van Slyke, September 14, 1866, in Papers of the Board of Regents.

¹¹ Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. C, pp. 52, 56, October 2, 3, 1866.

and restrictions" as the Board determined—without any of the opposition predicted by Professor Sterling.¹²

The legislature agreed, beyond this change, to provide funds for the University.¹³ At their meeting on February 14, 1867, the regents, in a memorial to the legislature, indicated an unwillingness to try to obtain a suitable president until that body provided for "an appropriation . . . at least equal annually to the yearly interest on the amount heretofore withdrawn from the productive fund and the income of the University for the erection of buildings and the management of the fund." No doubt such a lever facilitated the appropriation by the legislature of an annual sum of \$7,303.76 to the University to "compensate" the institution for funds its friends believed to have been unjustifiably if not illegally diverted from the institution.¹⁴ Chadbourne probably looked with added favor on the possibility of a renewed call after modest financial support from the legislature was thus assured.

The way thus paved for resumption of the Chadbourne matter, the regents invited the Massachusetts educator to Wisconsin in May. After conferences in Milwaukee the offer was formally renewed and, on July 22, accepted. The prolonged and arduous negotiations that preceded the finale throw much light on the harmonious relations that existed between the regents and Chadbourne throughout his presidency (1867–1870). It is clear that in its desire to have Chadbourne for president the governing board had gone to great lengths. It had undertaken to secure a change in the law of 1866 insofar as it related to coeducation, and had succeeded in doing so. It had pushed for financial support from the legislature on the assumption that this would be bait for Chadbourne. The new president had been wise in insisting that all the outstanding issues likely to provoke friction between himself and the Board be cleared up

¹² Chadbourne to Van Slyke, November 15, December 15, 1866, in Papers of the Board of Regents; *General Laws*, 1867, p. 115.

¹³ Dean Charles S. Slichter has argued, with insufficient evidence, that the move to obtain regular and sustained legislative support for the University was part of the program by which Chadbourne was coaxed into accepting the presidency. Slichter, "Paul Ansel Chadbourne," in the *Wisconsin Alumnus*, 41:321 (July, 1940).

¹⁴ Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. C, pp. 62–65, February 14, 1867; *General Laws*, 1867, p. 114. See also pp. 304 ff.

before he accepted the office. Above all, it must be remembered that Chadbourne was the first actual head of the institution since Barnard had resigned. Things had not gone well during the long interregnum, so the regents were more ready to give the new president relatively free rein, in the hope that he might strengthen and develop the University. The circumstances of Chadbourne's coming and the interregnum preceding him contributed to the harmonious yet positive character of his administration; but Chadbourne's own personality, his intellectual equipment, and his social and educational philosophy were far from negligible in its success.



PAUL Chadbourne was a type of self-made man for which pioneer Wisconsin had respect. Born in 1823 in a rural community in Maine, he was an orphan from the age of thirteen and had to support and educate himself. He worked both on a farm and in a carpenter's shop. Then, at the age of seventeen, after having gone through a district school, he found employment in a drugstore. There he probably served as a doctor's apprentice;¹⁵ he certainly studied chemistry on the side. He was ambitious for education, and at nineteen—the age at which it was customary to graduate from college—he went to Phillips Exeter Academy. When he enrolled he had but twenty-three dollars to meet the expenses of a year's study, but by copying documents in a law office and by whatever other work he could find, he supported himself while preparing for college. In 1845 he entered the sophomore class at Williams College and three years later was graduated with highest honors. Then for a few years he taught school, first in Massachusetts, then in New Jersey. As doggedly as ever he pursued his own education; during the long vacations he studied theology at the East Windsor Hill Seminary in Connecticut.

Despite this training he did not enter the ministry. Instead, he turned to natural science, no doubt under the influence of two naturalists at Williams, Amos Eaton and Albert Hopkins.

¹⁵ It is probable that Chadbourne obtained the M.D. degree, not as an immediate result of apprenticeship, as Slichter implies, but subsequently as a lecturer on chemistry at the two medical schools with which he was associated.

His decision suggests also the rising interest in science at the time, the interest that made lyceums so popular and from which sprang the new special schools at Yale and Harvard. But Chadbourne could not afford to study science either abroad, as so many young men of his generation were doing, or at Harvard or Yale, where Louis Agassiz and Benjamin Silliman were attracting students. Instead, he studied science as best he could by himself and was rewarded in 1853 with a professorship of chemistry and botany at Williams College; later he was given the chair of natural history.

In spite of chronic illness—"gangrene of the lungs" with frequent hemorrhages—Chadbourne's bouyancy and energy were seemingly inexhaustible. Three years after his appointment at Williams he went to Newfoundland to study its terrain, flora, and fauna and to collect specimens. The next year he fitted out a chartered vessel and conducted a similar expedition to Florida. In 1859 he went to Europe and made the grand tour. On his way home he examined geological formations and studied the geysers of Iceland. Attracted by the Arctic, Chadbourne fitted out a vessel in the following year and explored the coasts of Greenland, bringing back to the Williams museum an impressive collection of specimens. He became profoundly interested in the study of traces of the early Norsemen in Greenland; his research in this field was to find a cordial response among the Norwegians of Wisconsin.

Even these exploring and collecting activities together with his academic duties at Williams were not enough to absorb Chadbourne's full energy. In 1858 Bowdoin appointed him to succeed Professor Parker Cleaveland, a distinguished scientist; thereafter he divided his time between Williams and Bowdoin. As if he still had not enough to do, he held the professorship of chemistry and natural history at the Berkshire Medical Institute and lectured at Mount Holyoke Female Seminary.¹⁶

As a scientist, Chadbourne was a generalist rather than a specialist, but he was thus in step with the science of his time. Although he collected valuable specimens, his talents were not

¹⁶ This account is based largely upon articles on Chadbourne in the *Williams Vidette*, 6:107, 153-154 (February 10, May 4, 1872), and in the *University Press*, June, 1870.

those of an original investigator. One of his student admirers considered him capable of making important contributions to knowledge but stated that "his earnest desire to spread the great truths of Science broadcast before the world, draws him off from those fields where if he followed his natural tastes he would be treading."¹⁷ He was hardly a thorough scholar in any scientific field, although he asserted that he could teach any college subject better than it was usually taught; but, in any case, he was well-informed and could present his material so ably as to be esteemed in some circles as an expert.¹⁸

Whatever his limitations, Chadbourne's reputation spread, and in 1860 he was asked to deliver a series of lectures at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, the nation's clearing-house of scientific knowledge. In these *Lectures on Natural History*, he condemned the contemporary American tendency "to test everything by its money value alone." He indicated where the study of science might contribute to the acquisition of wealth but emphasized at far greater length the less material values of natural history. He dwelt upon the importance of botany, zoology, and geology for mental discipline and for deepening man's natural love of the beautiful.

An important part of these lectures was devoted to the aspect of science which was of great interest to everyone, the "conflict" between religion and science. Chadbourne felt that there was actually no conflict but, on the contrary, complete harmony. "Every tree . . . in its special adaptation, shows a personal God," he declared authoritatively. The beautiful adaptation of means to ends in the world of nature provided overwhelming evidence of the divine authority of God, the veracity of the miracles, and the authenticity of Biblical revelation.¹⁹ This reasoning was not original, but Chadbourne presented it well.

Seven years later Chadbourne again publicly discussed the same subject in his Lowell Lectures at Harvard, reiterating his belief that the world of nature proves that the Glory of God is the final cause of all things, that there is a Personal Creator,

¹⁷ *University Press*, June, 1870.

¹⁸ Burr Jones, "Reminiscences of Nine Decades," in the *Wisconsin Magazine of History*, 20:270 (March, 1937).

¹⁹ Paul A. Chadbourne, *Lectures on Natural History* (New York, 1860), 5, 137, 154.

and that all nature is subservient to God's principal creation, man, whose possession of both intellectual and moral characteristics sets him off from the animal world. Chadbourne did not touch explicitly on Darwin or evolution, but he showed that he was acquainted with the new scientific thinking; he concluded that "the arguments from the final cause of varieties and from the chemical relation of the elements to each other and to the wants of man are strongly opposed to that theory as it is generally held."²⁰

The Lowell Lectures were well received. A reviewer in the *Journal of Chemistry* declared that a difficult task had been performed in a creditable manner, for Chadbourne had displayed originality in his synthesis of religion and science, won the respect of scholars, and held the attention of the general public. Harvard adopted the published lectures as a textbook. So did a number of denominational colleges, including several in Wisconsin.

These views later contributed substantially to Chadbourne's success in Wisconsin, both with the regents and with the public at large. Science was coming increasingly to be regarded as both practical and necessary in a growing agricultural society, and the regents wanted a scientist to preside over the University. Chadbourne was not only a scientist with a national reputation but also a stout defender of religious orthodoxy.²¹ In view of the fact that Wisconsin's private colleges often denounced the University as a hotbed of religious skepticism, Chadbourne's orthodox views were to prove an asset to the institution. It was difficult for the sectarian colleges to talk about the University's irreligion when they themselves used as a text President Chadbourne's own *Lectures on Natural Theology*. Thus Chadbourne's prestige as a scientist and his unquestioned religious orthodoxy were a fortunate combination.

²⁰ Paul A. Chadbourne, *Lectures on Natural Theology* (New York, 1867), xvi; Paul A. Chadbourne, *Instinct, Its Office in the Animal Kingdom and Its Relation to the Higher Powers in Man* (New York, 1883), *passim*. Shortly after leaving Wisconsin in 1870, he delivered a second series of Lowell Lectures. He discussed in these the instincts of animals and men and attempted to show how the Darwinian theory of natural selection was untenable.

²¹ On one occasion he was to leave a Madison church during a sermon in which doubt was cast on the story of the Garden of Eden.

Furthermore, Chadbourne's unbounded energy had carried him out of academic life in several directions. He had served two terms in the Massachusetts senate; he had had an interest in a cotton mill; and he had invested in western lands and mines. He was able, therefore, to command the respect of the legislature as an experienced politician. Although none of his commercial ventures had succeeded, he managed to convey the impression of being a man of affairs, not only among students and the general public but even among such regents as the banker, Van Slyke, and other Wisconsin businessmen.²² Moreover, Chadbourne appealed to the rural population. He spoke before the Wisconsin Horticultural Society²³ and acquired a reputation as an authority on agriculture. His charming wife and his own social gifts quickly made the president's home on Observatory Hill a pleasant gathering place, and the Chadbournes became welcome additions to Madison's social circle. His ability to impress people in these many ways contributed to the new president's success in Wisconsin.

In Chadbourne's own personality, nevertheless, lay his greatest strength in maintaining harmonious relations with the Board of Regents and the positive and vigorous leadership that he developed. His figure was small and unimpressive, but his profile was distinguished and his energy abundant. "He was as quick and alert as one of our squirrels and always reminded me of one," wrote a professor's wife who knew him well. Sanguine, facile, ambitious, and able to make the high opinion he entertained of his ability seem entirely natural and warranted to all save those who knew him best, Chadbourne could with no effort always put his best foot forward. Apparently no one took it amiss when, after two years on the job, he reported that "in looking over the history of the past two years I cannot recall a single act that I now wish to change. I tried in every case to do just what the best interests of the University seemed to me to demand. I did in every case exactly what I should do again under like circumstances, and if in any case I failed to do what

²² Jones, "Reminiscences of Nine Decades," in the *Wisconsin Magazine of History*, 20:271 (March, 1937).

²³ MS. Diary of Professor Addison E. Verrill, January and February, 1868, in the State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

was the best, I have not yet seen my mistake." Such conceit was accepted because of Chadbourne's administrative skill, ability with people, and sound judgment. He was warmhearted and, in the words of a Williams colleague, able to make "charitable and correct" judgments of his fellow men.²⁴

Hardheaded and sensible, Chadbourne accepted matters as he found them and worked skillfully within the existing framework. He was overworked but contented himself by reminding the regents that, in addition to his administrative responsibilities, he taught three times as much as his original agreement had called for. With this reminder he pointed out that his professors taught "twice as much as would be required of them in Eastern colleges." Necessity demanded this heavy teaching load, he continued, and it had to be carried; "but if men are worked in this way they cannot make the progress they otherwise would—they are too apt to become mere teachers and lose their power over young men and over the community." The young women in the University could not be removed, and so he tolerated them, but on his own terms. Likewise, he was a realist in supporting the idea of elective studies and in opposing military drill. "It is useless to say what men 'ought to do,'" he remarked. "We must take them as they are and do the best we can with them."²⁵

He favored the establishment of a medical school, which no doubt would have been useful to the state and would have added to the prestige of his administration; but the medical profession in Wisconsin showed little interest. Chadbourne, therefore, concluded that the University's meager resources should be reserved for doing better that which was already being done. Since it was impossible to uproot the normal schools, it seemed inadvisable to maintain in the University an inferior normal department devoted only to the preparation of elementary teachers. Chadbourne dropped normal instruction

²⁴ Mrs. William F. Allen, "The University of Wisconsin Soon after the Civil War," in the *Wisconsin Magazine of History*, 7:23 (September, 1923); Report of the President, June 21, 1869, in Reports to the Regents, Vol. B, p. 77; *University Press*, January 1, 1872, quoting Governor Lucius Fairchild's comment on Chadbourne's "wonderful power of organization and execution"; Arthur L. Perry, *Williamstown and William College* (Norwood, Massachusetts, 1899), 652.

²⁵ Report of the President, June 23, 1868, in Reports to the Regents, Vol. B, pp. 35, 37-38.

and transformed that department into the Female College. When the University was criticized for failing to do all that it should, Chadbourne replied that it was attempting and achieving "all that could reasonably be expected of an institution with its slight resources and limited financial support."²⁶

In all matters of educational policy, Chadbourne established a remarkable leadership over both faculty and regents. In the course of the negotiations which finally brought him to the University, the regents had evidently offered him the opportunity of forming his own faculty. Certainly they had cleared the way for new appointments; even before taking office, Chadbourne had begun negotiations with Professor William F. Allen and perhaps with some of the other men whom he later employed. He had, however, no intention of making immediately so clean a sweep as to arouse students, alumni, and the friends of the professors whom he wished to replace. He had apparently laid a shrewd plan to gain his ends, in due time and without causing unseemly disturbance to any one. When three Madison men wrote him asking about his attitude toward the decision of the regents to dismiss the faculty to make way for Chadbourne men, he replied, "I said at the outset, as I say now, the Regents must judge of the men who now compose the Faculty, for it is entirely out of the question for me to give an intelligent opinion respecting their fitness for the places they occupy. I never met but two of them. With those gentlemen I was well pleased. After associating with the gentlemen a year I should feel competent to act as judge in the case, but I am not competent now, as any one must know. I am entirely content that every man should remain—certainly I have not asked that *any one* should be dismissed, and shall not ask it. It is not my place to dictate to the Regents, or to give them advice unless they ask it. But certainly the men now in office should be preferred to new men, unless there are solid reasons for change."²⁷

The regents dismissed most of the old faculty in 1867. Daniel Read left to become president of the University of Missouri; Ezra Carr went to California; and James Butler, employed by

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 31, 36, 37, 38.

²⁷ Chadbourne to Orsamus Cole, Luther Dixon, and O. M. Conover, June 1, 1867, all in the Conover Papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

the Nebraska railroads, became a promoter of colonization. Alumni and others petitioned to have Professor Sterling kept on, and Chadbourne was too wise not to comply. With this single exception he was free to employ new, promising, young men. He and his faculty worked well together. Certainly the new men accepted his leadership in all matters of appointment, curriculum, and educational statesmanship. In turn, Chadbourne encouraged the professors to discuss matters of pedagogy in faculty meetings.²⁸

His ability as an administrator showed itself in his fine sense of diplomacy in unpleasant circumstances. Among the new men whom he had appointed was T. N. Haskell, a minister who had been an applicant for the presidency in 1866. He taught English and rhetoric for a year, but he was not a successful teacher. Chadbourne reported to the regents, "It is but justice to him to say, that no man in the University has worked harder than he, but his success has not been such as to warrant me in presenting his name at this time for election. It is with great reluctance that I have come to this decision, for if devotion to his work would alone fit a man for a place, Prof. Haskell would be entitled to an election."²⁹

Chadbourne's success in working with other men was nowhere so well displayed as in his relations with the Board of Regents. Not only was there harmony between president and regents, but under Chadbourne, his office was given new prerogatives and wider authority, and he enjoyed a friendly respect and trust that the next two presidents never knew. Only once, apparently, was there any misunderstanding or friction between Chadbourne and the regents, and that did not prove to be serious.³⁰ He was permitted, even encouraged, to make decisions in matters both small and great. His gift for energetic and competent administration is well displayed in the report that

²⁸ Reports to the Regents, Vol. B, *passim*; Minutes of the Meetings of the Faculty, vol. 1, pp. 144-146, December 30, 1867, January 6, 13, 20, February 10, 1868.

²⁹ Report of the President, June 23, 1868, in the Reports to the Regents, Vol. B, pp. 31, 32.

³⁰ President Chadbourne made clear his disapproval of the regents' replacement, during his absence in the East, of Carpenter by Orton as dean of the law school. Chadbourne had nothing to say against Orton, but he felt that as president he should have been consulted.

he prepared on the cost and design of new and much-needed privies and in the means he suggested for preventing children from plucking of a Sabbath the rare and beautiful flowers on the campus at the very moment of their first opening. He was given a free hand in the choice of titles for the library, the selection of textbooks, the course of study, and all matters of student discipline. He shaped important policy for the University, making decisions concerning the status of women students, the law school, normal instruction, medical education, publicity, and faculty appointments. A year after he took office the regents agreed to confirm the nominations he would make for vacant chairs, irrespective of any former action of the Board.³¹ The records of the Board of Regents show that the internal affairs of the University were left entirely to Chadbourne.

After his resignation in 1870, the story was current that quarrels with the regents had caused him to leave. This the regents promptly denied, praising Chadbourne for his wise and efficient guidance of the University. To his skillful leadership they attributed its growth and prosperity.³² Whether the pleasant relations with the Board would have continued if Chadbourne had chosen to remain longer than a brief two and a half years, whether his positive conception of his office would have gone unchallenged, no one, of course, can say.³³

Chadbourne's success with the regents may have been merely that of a new broom; his ability may have been greater at winning confidence than at keeping it. In any case there can be no doubt that the president strengthened his position by cultivating the support of the Wisconsin public. His lecture, "The Influence of History on Individual and National Action," before the State Historical Society in 1868 pleased an influential audience by its thoroughgoing individualism and patriotism;³⁴ the legislature ordered it printed for state-wide distribution. In

³¹ Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. C, p. 98, June 24, 1868.

³² *Regents' Annual Report*, 1869-70, p. 27.

³³ There is evidence, however, to suggest that the honeymoon would not have lasted if Chadbourne had remained at Wisconsin: the difficulties that his two successors encountered with the regents and, as president of Williams College, his own failure to achieve anything like the success he had enjoyed at Wisconsin.

³⁴ Paul A. Chadbourne, *The Influence of History on Individual and National Action* (Madison, 1868), *passim*.

lectures before normal schools, teachers' institutes, and popular assemblages, Chadbourne won friends for the University and the confidence of the regents in his leadership and common sense.³⁵

When he resigned in 1870, enthusiastic tributes from every part of the state provided additional evidence of the high esteem he had won. The select committee of the legislature on an appropriation for University building declared that "in President Chadbourne we find a man of superior executive ability and peculiar fitness for the position he occupies, whose qualifications are perhaps not excelled in the United States."³⁶ The Alumni Association unanimously passed resolutions expressing profound regret at his departure, warm thanks for his courtesy and kindness toward graduates, and appreciation of the "very signal service" he had rendered the University.³⁷ The press was loud in praise of his achievements and strong in its expression of regret at his leaving. Even the *Madison Democrat*, a paper with political views markedly different from those of Chadbourne, spoke warmly of his many friends and admirers and of his success as an administrator.

Popularity did not blind Chadbourne to the limitations of state institutions of higher education. In 1869 he published an article in *Putnam's Magazine* criticizing the emphasis in these universities on the practical and utilitarian at the expense of broadly cultural values. He did not, to be sure, condemn practical education; he contended that in general it could best be pursued at special institutions rather than in association with liberal arts programs. He deplored the efforts of state institutions with limited funds to attempt too much at the expense of high standards. His conclusion that each school should confine itself to a definite field of labor was directly opposed to the essential idea of the state universities. So, too, was his emphatic approval of private, philanthropic endowment of higher education.³⁸ The article apparently evoked no criticism or ill will

³⁵ Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. C, pp. 91, 95, February 14, 1868.

³⁶ *Assembly Journal*, 1870, p. 499.

³⁷ Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. C, p. 120, June 24, 1869.

³⁸ Paul A. Chadbourne, "Colleges and College Education," in *Putnam's Magazine*, 14:335 ff. (September, 1869).

in Wisconsin, but that Chadbourne should express these opinions while enjoying such success at Wisconsin, and before he had actually left his post, is an indication that his full heart was not in any state university and that the University of Wisconsin was, after all, merely a steppingstone to the presidency of Williams.

9.

President John Twombly

WITH the resignation of Chadbourne came another trying search for a president—a search of sufficient interest to stir up talk in the press. The principal issue appeared to involve regional pride. The editor of the *Madison Daily Democrat* insisted that Easterners were all fossils and that the post must go to a Wisconsin man. But the *University Press* charged that the apparent antagonism toward an Easterner merely concealed the local appetite for spoils. “It makes but little difference whom we have for president of the University,” said the editor of the *University Press*, “as long as there are so many frantic, half-starved politicians howling after spoils no man, who is capable of filling the position, will consent to do it for any length of time.” The editor contended that at least five organized rings were scheming to lay hold of the presidency. He concluded: “Sectionalism is now cursing American politics and it is to be hoped that it may be kept out of our system of higher education and it is further to be hoped—and that with good reason from present indications—that the Regents will secure for the University the very best available man let him come from where he will. We would like to see a western man chosen provided the right man can be secured, but Heaven deliver us from a man who is out of business and seeking the appointment.”¹

At least three men refused to consider the presidency. One was the Reverend Jeremiah Diman, professor of history and

¹ *University Press*, January 1, 1871.

political economy at Brown—an able scholar who turned down professorships at Harvard, Princeton, and Johns Hopkins. The regents showed at least a passing interest in Professor Seelye, presently to become the first president of Smith, and in Noah Porter, about to become president of Yale.² But the man they chose was of different clay.

It is possible but not certain that Regent Samuel Fallows, still influential in Methodist circles, suggested the name of the Reverend John Twombly. At that time pastor of the Methodist Church in Charlestown, Massachusetts, and formerly the minister of a half-dozen other Methodist churches, Twombly was well-known in sectarian circles. It mattered little to the regents that Charles Allen, attorney general of Massachusetts, after making inquiries, wrote that neither he nor his office-mates had ever heard of Twombly, that he enjoyed no widespread reputation, and that he certainly was not one “who would inspire enthusiastic hopes for the future.” With the exception of Gregory and Brigham, the Board seemed to be very eager to call him.³ Having come to Madison with the understanding that the Board would pay his expenses in case he did not become president, Twombly was elected to the presidency on June 30, 1871.⁴

The new president was fifty-seven years old. He stood six feet tall, had a large frame, a large head, expressive features, a deep voice, and dignified manners. Twombly proved paternal toward students, strong-willed in his relations with the regents, and deeply pious in the eyes of the public. His oratorical abilities were considerable, but he was no scholar. His only experience in the classroom had been a three-year term at Wilbraham Academy in Massachusetts shortly after his graduation from Wesleyan University. He had, indeed, filled many Methodist pulpits and taken an active part in educational affairs. The New England Educational Society, founded in 1855, owed him much. He had expressed his interest in youth by promoting the

² J. S. Dudley to Brigham, January 19, 1871, and Van Slyke to Brigham, June 11, 1871, both in the Brigham Papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

³ Allen to Brigham, June 28, 1871, and Gregory to Brigham, June 7, 1873, both in the Brigham Papers.

⁴ Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. C, p. 157, June 30, 1871.

Young People's Christian League, which was later merged with the Epworth League. Largely at his initiative, the New England Association of Public School Superintendents was launched. He had been a prime mover in the organization of Boston University, the Methodist institution of which he was a trustee from the start. Moreover, Twombly was an outspoken champion of coeducation. His educational prestige was enhanced by his having served from 1855 to 1867 as a member of the Harvard Board of Overseers.⁵

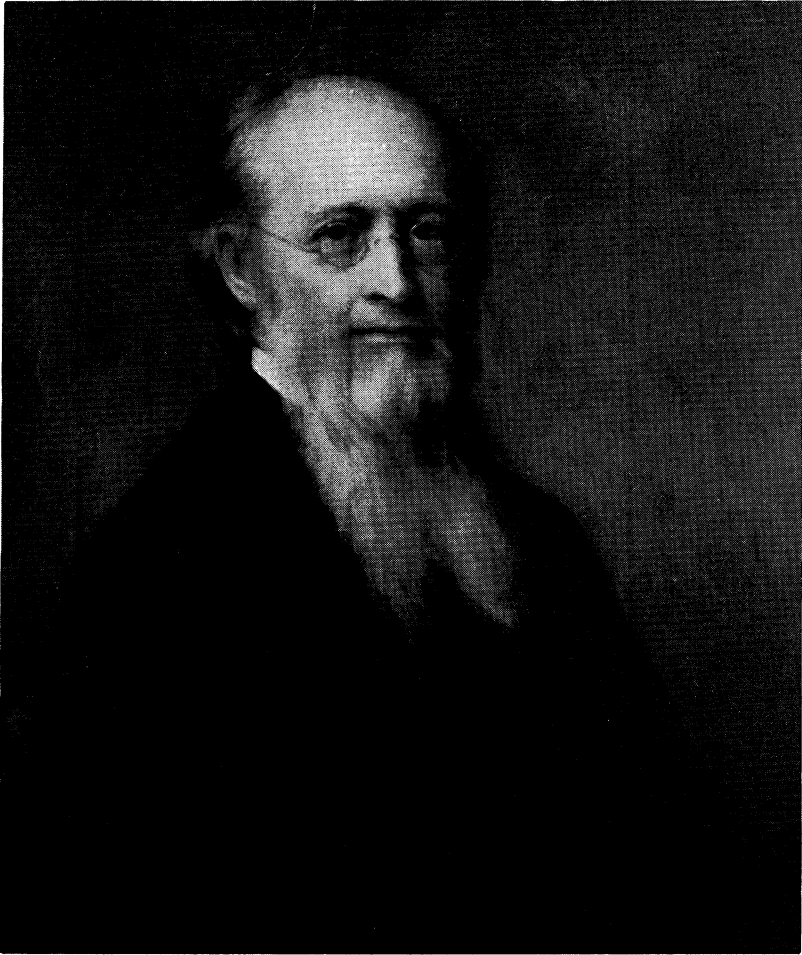
Twombly's administration began auspiciously. In their first report after his election, the regents praised his "high character and long experience in collegiate and educational management," his "energy and practical knowledge."⁶ The *University Press*, shortly after the beginning of the first term of Twombly's presidency, hailed the new chief for opening the doors of all classrooms to women and for making "coeducation a fixed fact." Nor was the praise confined to University circles. The editor of the *Wisconsin Journal of Education* rejoiced not only in Twombly's championship of full educational equality of the sexes but in his interest in developing close relationships between the University and the common and normal schools of the state. The *Journal* also took heart in the fact that the new president was "filled with the western spirit" and believed in a "glorious future" for the University.⁷

Yet before a year had passed, trouble began to brew. At Board meetings, by invitation of the regents, Twombly did read communications regarding the needs of the University, but he felt that a more intimate connection should exist between the Board and the president. "I have given some attention to the subject," he declared, "and I do not find an institution of similar grade with ours, the faculty of which is so completely isolated from the governing body, as our Faculty is from the Board of Regents." He had always felt at a disadvantage in being "deprived of all direct intercourse" with the regents "on

⁵ *National Cyclopaedia of American Biography* (30 vols., New York, 1897-1943), 12:147.

⁶ *Regents' Annual Report*, 1870-71, p. 3.

⁷ *University Press*, September 1, 1871; *Wisconsin Journal of Education*, n.s. vol. 1, p. 260 (July, 1871).



Paul A. Chadbourne



John H. Twombly

matters vital to the University's interests" and proposed that the president become a member of the Board.⁸

The proposal was unacceptable to the Board. Gregory and Brigham appear to have been indulgent and patient with Twombly, but Gregory wrote that the other regents were "unreasonable and fault-finding all the while."⁹ According to Twombly's reading of the statutes and bylaws of the Board, the president was vested with considerable power, including the right to hire and fire employees when the Board was not in session. In actual practice, however, he found it impossible to ask any of the University employees to do even a small job for the institution without first getting permission of the regents.¹⁰ In addition, Twombly rightly felt that he, unlike Chadbourne, had no chance to choose his own faculty or to map out his own program: he had to work with Chadbourne men on a Chadbourne program. This situation, taken with the limitation of the president's powers, was hard for Twombly to bear. And the regents on their part, having by then no confidence in his judgment or in his administrative ability, could not entertain his proposal for making the president a Board member.

But these issues were not the only stumbling blocks. The University catalogue for 1872, prepared by Twombly, conveyed the impression that the institution had achieved full coeducation. When General Charles Hamilton, president of the Board, saw the catalogue, he was furious. To his mind, the president's statement went beyond his powers. Writing to Twombly on August 6, 1872, Hamilton expostulated: "It is in direct opposition to the whole letter and spirit of the Board of Regents. The Female College and the College for gentlemen are entirely separate and distinct, and it is only *when the ladies prefer*, or when the *instructional force is deficient*, that Ladies and Gentlemen are to recite together."¹¹ Subsequently, in the heat of the controversy between Twombly and the regents, the presi-

⁸ Report of the President in Reports to the Regents, Vol. B, p. 202, January 21, 1873.

⁹ Gregory to Brigham, June 7, 1873, in the Brigham Papers.

¹⁰ Report of the President in Reports to the Regents, Vol. B, p. 221, June 17, 1873.

¹¹ *University Press*, February 3, 1874.

dent insisted that the governing board was against true coeducation and that he alone had maintained and furthered it. Certainly General Hamilton and some of his colleagues were determined to brook no statement of the peculiar Wisconsin compromise that implied a degree of coeducation larger than what prevailed. Yet even Chadbourne had granted women the bachelor's degree and the advance of coeducation was all but foreordained. The undergraduates, however, gathering that Twombly had been fighting the regents on the issue of coeducation gave loyal support to the president. When the regents finally denied any opposition to the coeducational principle, the students turned against Twombly, whose teaching was anything but popular and whose piety and paternalism rubbed many the wrong way.¹²

The Board of Regents had concluded, by the spring of 1873, that Twombly must go. Early in June, Twombly received from General Hamilton a letter informing him that he had not met the expectations of the regents and urging him to resign at the meeting of the Board to be held two weeks hence. Twombly was all fire and indignation. Writing to Regent Brigham, he declared that "the request of Gen. Hamilton is unreasonable and absurd, in as much as there are no grounds for such a demand; not a murmur of dissatisfaction has ever reached me. I cannot believe, sir, that you, who know so well the peculiar character of the office will demand of me a compliance. I did not seek the Presidency of the University. It sought me." Twombly went on to explain that his name had been presented by a friend to the committee on selection without his knowledge; that he was at the time pleasantly and profitably employed; that he would not even have taken the trouble to visit Madison had he not been urged and promised his expenses in case he did not accept. Had he known what he learned a few weeks later, he continued, he would have followed the example of the several gentlemen who, fully examining the situation, refused to be candidates. "Socially and financially the place offered no inducement; and but little educationally. . . . During the whole history of the institution, it has been one of severe trial to the occupant,

¹² *Ibid.*

and rarely filled to his satisfaction and that of the public. The rejection of it by a large number of educators acquainted with western institutions is suggestive." Incumbents, he knew, had been subject to the criticism of men of all denominations, of all political parties, of the press, of a thousand patrons, and of many gentlemen with candidates for the office. "Yet no note of complaint has reached me from any source."

Twombly resolutely refused to admit the charge of failure. In his long letter to Brigham and in a carefully prepared report to the regents dated June 17, 1873, he declared that he had received abundant assurances of his satisfactory conduct of the presidential office. The few cases of student disorder were part and parcel of college life everywhere, and he had received the commendation of the faculty for the manner in which he handled these disorders.¹³ "Among the students we have had every phase of religion and party, and has any one heard a word of complaint in respect to my management of political or sectarian matters? I have not. On the contrary, I have received cordial expressions of satisfaction from Jews, Catholics, all sorts of Protestants, and from those that have too little faith to constitute a basis for classification." Twombly reminded the regents that when he accepted the office, he was told that there had been great trouble at different times in the faculty, and that some troublesome members remained who, if they should again give trouble, would be promptly discharged. "Have I not managed that peculiar and energetic body of men so as to secure a high degree of unity and efficiency?"¹⁴ Finally, Twombly pointed out that during his term the college had grown in numbers, that the course of study had been enriched, and that the standards of scholarship had improved. He had initiated a movement to put the University into intimate connection with the public schools. There was good evidence, he contended, that he had been influential in obtaining in the legislature the annual ten thousand dollar appropriation.¹⁵

¹³ Twombly to Brigham, June 3, 1873, in the Brigham Papers.

¹⁴ Report of the President in Reports to the Regents, Vol. B, p. 220, June 17, 1873.

¹⁵ Twombly to Brigham, June 3, 1873, in the Brigham Papers. Twombly did not originate the movement for bringing the University and the rest of the educational

Twombly was no man to be pushed down without a fight. In the concluding passage of his letter to Regent Brigham, he declared that it had cost him six hundred dollars to move to Madison, that his outfit in furniture had amounted to fifteen hundred dollars more, and that the expense of returning to his former field of activity would be considerable. "The avenues to business in my line are now closed and will remain so until next spring," he added. The letter concluded with a request for a hearing before any action was taken.

At least two regents, Brigham and Gregory, did not approve of the tactics employed by the president of the Board. At one with their colleagues in believing that Twombly was a misfit and that in the interest of the University he must go, they felt that the whole affair must be arranged decently, justly, and with no undue haste. But Twombly's own attitude frustrated the achievement of this. "The thunderbolt from Hamilton to Twombly suggesting in terms not to be misunderstood, that the Board will accept his resignation," wrote Regent Van Slyke, "has moved the Divine wonderfully. He cannot see why he is not a success, and when Greg. and I gave him the same advice, he was rather inclined to show fight. Having a thick skin, he fails to see the point and this very obtuseness is one of the causes of his general failure."¹⁶ It was at last agreed that Twombly should resign within the year and that the Board would keep the whole matter quiet while they unobtrusively looked for a successor.¹⁷

But arrangements did not proceed according to plan. Certain members of the Board thought that a special meeting should be arranged and Twombly forced out. This suggestion met with the objection, expressed by Regent Gregory, that were this done Twombly would be given a power with the legislature which

system of the state into close harmony. But he did speak effectively on that issue before the State Teachers Association. Many factors, including the visit of the state newspaper association to the University, accounted for the annual \$10,000 appropriation. Yet a student editorial in the *University Press* (December 15, 1873) declared, with some point: "We think that all will acknowledge that he has been unremitting in his efforts to build up the University, and according to the testimony of many outside the University he has exerted a powerful influence."

¹⁶ Gregory to Brigham, June 7, 1873, and Van Slyke to Brigham, June 11, 1873, both in the Brigham Papers.

¹⁷ *University Press*, February 3, 1874.

might well crush the Board and ruin the University. "We are in an awkward spot." Twombly was stronger with the people than the regents were, continued Gregory, and in a showdown fight with Van Slyke and Hamilton would "make a breakfast of them." Discretion, moderation, and every semblance of good faith were, in his view, imperative.¹⁸

On November 18, 1873, the executive committee met. At the request of the committee, the president joined in this discussion of his resignation. He was urged to name as early a date as possible when the regents might expect his resignation and informed that if he did not do so, the full Board would be assembled to take action. Six days later Twombly announced to the committee his intention of submitting his resignation to the Board at its January meeting—the resignation to take effect on March 31 or June 30, at the option of the Board.¹⁹

By this time it was no longer a secret that Twombly was on his way out. Whether the responsibility for the public knowledge of this fact rested with the regents or with Twombly is not known. The regents maintained that within forty-eight hours after the agreement had been made in June to preserve secrecy, Twombly had broken faith; and the president insisted that the regents had broken faith. In any case, it was common knowledge in December, 1873, that Regent Gray had gone to the East to talk over the possibility of obtaining Professor John Bascom of Williams for Twombly's successor.²⁰ Indeed, according to the *University Press* of December 15, the *New York Evening Post* had already announced the call of Bascom to Wisconsin.

That some of Twombly's friends throughout the state felt outraged at the turn of events was not unnatural. Some four thousand Methodists petitioned the legislature for his retention. It is true that his supporters maintained that the purpose of the petitions was not to force the legislature to override the regents but to expose the Board's bad faith and to exculpate President Twombly.²¹

¹⁸ Gregory to Brigham, October 13, 1873, in the Brigham Papers.

¹⁹ Minutes of the Executive Committee of the Board of Regents, Vol. A, p. 246, November 18, 1873; Report of the President in Reports to the Regents, Vol. B, p. 238, January 20, 1874.

²⁰ Gregory to Brigham, December 15, 1873, in the Brigham Papers.

²¹ *University Press*, February 3, 1874; *Madison Daily Democrat*, May 1, 1874, p. 1.

On January 17, 1874, Senator Romanzo Davis introduced into the Senate a resolution requesting the regents to refrain from any action regarding Twombly until the education committees of the Senate and the Assembly had investigated and reported to the legislature "the true facts and matters of difference" between the regents and the president of the University.²² At this point Twombly wrote to the Board of Regents that he was compelled to recall his letter of November promising to submit a resignation in January, inasmuch as the conditions surrounding the letter had been violated. It was clear that he was banking on support from the education committees. Up to this point Twombly had enjoyed the sympathy of the greater part of the student body, but now, convinced that the president had misrepresented to them the position of the regents on co-education, the students turned against him. Four-fifths of the senior class signed a petition asking for his removal, and copies of the petition were given to the regents and to the appropriate committees at the Capitol.²³

Events now moved rapidly and dramatically. Both sides of the case were thoroughly discussed at a meeting of the education committee of the Senate, the regents, and Twombly. The discussions revealed that there were no differences between the president and the Board on the issue of coeducation. The education committee recommended the indefinite postponement of Senator Davis' resolution, and the Senate followed the recommendation.²⁴

At ten in the morning of January 21, the Board of Regents met, General C. S. Hamilton presented a resolution "that in view of the incompetency of President J. W. [*sic*] Twombly, he possessing neither the learning to teach, the capacity to govern, or the wisdom to direct, he be, and is hereby removed from his position of President, and from all connection with the University." Brigham introduced a substitute resolution which, after reviewing the main points at issue, declared that the president was removed from his office. At seven-thirty in the eve-

²² *Senate Journal*, 1874, pp. 14-15.

²³ *University Press*, February 3, 1874.

²⁴ *Ibid.*; Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. C, pp. 194-196, January 20, 1874; *Senate Journal*, 1874, pp. 25, 29.

ning President Twombly's resignation was received and immediately accepted. John Bascom was elected president, Vice-President Sterling was made acting president, and Twombly was paid for the first twenty-one days of January!²⁵

The *University Press* commented with considerable insight and justice on the whole affair. "Although we would by no means assert Dr. Twombly's fitness for the position, yet it seems evident that he has not received the cordial support which a President, no matter how incompetent, should receive, and without which no one, however well qualified, could succeed." It would have been better, continued the editorial, had Twombly resigned the previous June. His course in refusing to abide by his November decision was hardly justifiable. The editorial expressed regret at the sectarian spirit introduced into the petitions to the legislature in his behalf. "Every man should stand or fall according to his own merit regardless of party or sect."²⁶ In the stubborn contest between the president and the regents the legal governing body of the University had won. In any showdown with a president, no matter what support he might muster, the regents were likely to prove the master. But the victory thus won did not forecast smooth sailing in the relations with presidents to come.

²⁵ Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. C, pp. 196-198, 200-201, January 21, 1874.

²⁶ University Press, February 3, 1874.

10.

President John Bascom

I WISH you Regents a happy issue out of all your University afflictions," wrote Joseph C. Pickard, sometime professor of modern languages and literature, to Regent Brigham on January 9, 1874. "I found the pot a bilin', as you had said. Parkinson has friends, and so has Carpenter. And wouldn't Sterling like the *compliment* of a nomination—*election* I mean? Your task is to find a man superior to those three combined. There must be such a man somewhere. If Bascom is that man, I hope you will get him, in spite of *cataracts* of petitions from the Methodists."¹ Within less than two weeks the Board of Regents, after hearing an account of Regent Hamilton Gray's interview with Bascom the month before in Williamstown, had unanimously chosen him president.² The salary was that which Twombly had received—thirty-five hundred dollars a year and the use of the president's house. Bascom began his duties at the start of the spring term in 1874. "The Regents are more than satisfied with the change," ran the comment in the annual report issued in the following September, "and do not hesitate to predict from it an effectual increase of good in the management of the University, and a far higher position for it among the colleges of the country."³

And well might the regents have expected much from

¹Pickard to Brigham, January 9, 1874, in the Brigham Papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

²Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. C, pp. 200-201, January 21, 1874.

³*Regents' Annual Report*, 1873-74, p. 3.

Bascom. He was an outstanding personality, an accomplished scholar, properly regarded as something of an authority in mathematics, theology, psychology, English literature, aesthetics, and political economy. Bascom's textbooks, critical articles in the specialized journals, and his popular writings in the more widely read magazines made him "a man who has earned a national reputation as an original thinker, able writer, and ripe scholar," said the Visitors. President Bascom was a dominant influence in the intellectual life of the students from the time he came in 1874 until he left Wisconsin in 1887. To his "long experience and peculiar aptitude in teaching," Bascom added the "executive ability" needed to put the University on a firm footing.⁴ He had "an instinctive hatred of all pretense and sham"; he was in the forefront of liberal thought, and he came to the University a well-known champion of coeducation, women's rights, and of social and economic justice. Although Bascom was a sympathetic interpreter of the new science, his religious zeal was unquestionable. Like the Puritans, he believed in the responsibility and obligation of men of piety and learning to lift the community to the highest possible ethical standards. He waged a campaign in Madison for the enforcement of laws regulating taverns and the sale of liquor to minors; he became a leader of the Prohibition Party. Wisconsin heard him defend the right of workers to join trade unions and to strike for a decent wage; and they listened to him argue for the regulation of monopolies and the use of both science and law to improve the lot of the farmer.

With such a social philosophy Bascom was bound to make both friends and enemies. Many among those of New England-New York stock, revering learning and strict morality and imbued with a feeling that the community was responsible for righteousness, were quick to see in Bascom a man after their own hearts. Many of the most enthusiastic tributes to Bascom reflect sympathy with his moral idealism and his sense of community responsibility for well-being. A man of the most scrupulous principles in all matters affecting the use of public money, a man of frugality and efficiency, Bascom would not put up with

⁴ Report of the Visitors, in *Regents' Annual Report*, 1873-74, pp. 7-8.

any slipshod methods in dealing with the University's small budget. His catholic learning, his devotion to the classical conception of education, his sympathy with new movements of thought, and his great moral strength appealed to many who came to know him.

On the other hand, Bascom's emphasis on the community's responsibility for private morals and general well-being, on the classical as opposed to the vocational ideal of higher education, and on women's rights, prohibition, and the public control of wealth in the public interest, all won him enemies. Bascom's social ideals evoked opposition many times over. Thus his encounter with Horace Tenney was not exceptional and like other tensions with the regents is best understood in its larger setting. Tenney, prominent Madisonian long associated with the University as curator and regent, indignantly declared that Lathrop, Barnard, and Chadbourne had never regarded the capital city as unduly dangerous to the morals of University students. "Indeed," he complained, "they had enough to do in discharging the duties of their trust without twidling [*sic*] about temperance, womans rights or the beauties of unswerving Faith." Tenney estimated that not five out of a hundred Madison citizens were in sympathy with "that compound of hypocrisy and favoritism" that claimed to monopolize and guard all virtue.⁵ A prominent alumnus of Fond du Lac, Calvin Todd, believed that educational leadership was incompatible with political leadership, and that Bascom had forfeited his prerogatives as an educator when, as president of a public institution of higher learning, he aggressively led the Prohibition Party.⁶

In addition to resenting Bascom's "mixing in matters of local politics, and getting a peaceable community by the ears," the head of the Wisconsin Telephone Company, Charles H. Haskins, spoke for many others in indicting the president for his emphasis on classical and religious values at the expense of practical and vocational ones. Since Wisconsin, he wrote, was both an agricultural and an industrial state, its students at

⁵ Tenney to Keyes, March 12, 1884, in the Keyes Papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

⁶ Calvin C. Todd to Keyes, June 8, 1885, in the Keyes Papers.

the University should be instructed fully in all the latest discoveries and methods in order "to enable them to make the state foremost in the application of useful and scientific facts, to agriculture and mechanics." There were plenty of classical and theological seminaries, Haskins continued, already available to Wisconsin's citizenry. "The people of the state want a school, where a farmer's boy can learn to increase the yield, and improve the quality of his crops—where the mechanic's son can learn to apply the most useful facts of chemistry and other sciences to his daily work—where the future manufacturer can learn how, in the future, to excel his rivals in the excellence and variety of his products."⁷ It was unfair to insist that Bascom was entirely indifferent to the claims of science and the practical subjects. Yet some of the scientists on the faculty felt he slighted their claims—in his parting message to Wisconsin, he did declare that the University had been too largely dominated by science.⁸

For a brief period, at least, the relations between the regents and the new president were cordial. On June 16, 1874, the executive committee reported to the Board that Bascom would presently lay before them plans for the improvement of the institution, and that it was to be hoped prompt action would be taken on such recommendations. Bascom's first report of the same date merely proposed a few minor changes in the curriculum, a slight redistribution of labor among the professors, the repair of the buildings, an appropriation for a science hall and a library. "I draw attention," concluded Bascom, "to the necessity of a thorough inquiry into the sanitary state of the Female College, also of the privies of South Hall."⁹

Yet within another year the records showed various minor points of friction. Back of these small troubles was the real and important issue of the division of powers between the Board and the president. Neither the president nor the Board knew where the precise line was that separated the functions and jurisdiction of each.

⁷ C. H. Haskins to Keyes, June 18, 1884, in the Keyes Papers.

⁸ John E. Davies to Keyes, June 7, 1878, in the Keyes Papers; *Wisconsin Prohibitionist*, July 7, 1887, p. 4.

⁹ Report of the President, June 16, 1874, in Reports to the Regents, Vol. B, p. 244.

Since there were no positive rules for the employment of the instructional force, the president had acted without the knowledge of the regents. Bascom took the view that the regents should have no hand in the internal or purely academic affairs of the University, that they should, in brief, confine themselves to providing means for carrying out the educational objectives decided on by the faculty and the president. But the regents, fully cognizant of the fact that the law provided for their final authority, took a different view. In 1875, then, the executive committee recommended to the Board that in the matter of appointments the president's wings be clipped.¹⁰ The regents adopted thereupon a resolution providing that "when, in the opinion of the President of the University it is deemed advisable to make any change in the Instructional force of the University, he shall immediately report the same to the Board of Regents, if in session, and if not, to the Executive Committee, with such recommendations as he may deem advisable, stating the change proposed, and the salaries proposed to be paid."¹¹ That even this action did not settle the point at issue is suggested by the fact that in April, 1878, Bascom called the Board to task for violating the presidential prerogatives indicated in the bylaws by changing the occupants of professorships in the law school without his recommendation.¹²

On more than one occasion, certainly, the regents ignored Bascom's proposals for increases in the salary of the staff, for promotions, and for new appointments. According to the recollections of Regent William E. Carter, Bascom threatened to resign unless a chair were created for Instructor John M. Olin, who, like Bascom, was an ardent prohibitionist.¹³ When it was clear that the regents would refuse the recommendation, Bascom, apparently on the advice of Superintendent of Public Instruction Searing, withdrew his proposal.¹⁴ When the president urged that the regents replace the distinguished botanist,

¹⁰ Report of the executive committee, June 15, 1875, in Reports to the Regents, Vol. B, p. 260.

¹¹ Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. C, p. 234, June 16, 1875.

¹² Reports to the Regents, Vol. B, p. 285, April 26, 1876.

¹³ Carter to Keyes, March 4, 1897, in the Keyes Papers.

¹⁴ Edward Searing to Paul, February 19, 1876, in the Paul Papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

William Trelease, with Bailey, one of the four or five most able men in the field and one destined to achieve international distinction, Keyes replied, according to Bascom, that if he had his way not an additional dime would be expended on instruction in the next ten years. The president remarked that the other regents agreed with Keyes.¹⁵ Again, the executive committee was obviously upset when, in January, 1879, Bascom recommended the expansion of the instructional force and justified his request both on the ground of need and on the further score that "our funds may not be absorbed in the mere accidents of a University in oversight of the essentials."¹⁶ The executive committee, in its next report, came back at Bascom with the defiant declaration that "while the present force may not seem too much compared with other Colleges, yet, we have other expenses to pay just as necessary to the life of the Institution. As our Income is not elastic as our Salary and Expense accounts, true economy would seem to require that we plan according to *our own* means, rather than by apeing some more fortunate Institution of learning, exceed our means, and bring reproach upon ourselves for mismanagement."¹⁷

This stand only confirmed Bascom in his conviction that the regents should not be entrusted with unqualified control of the so-called external or business affairs of the University. In his mind, matters could be handled in such a way as to effect appreciable savings which might be put into the academic program. He questioned the enthusiasm of the regents for expanding the building program, though he himself had pointed out the great need of a library, an assembly hall and chapel, and a science building. Above all, he resented what seemed to him the careless if not the downright dishonest business methods of Regent Keyes. In his final indictment of this influential member of the executive committee Bascom declared that he had been "unscrupulous in small things, prodigal in large things, and negligent and dilatory in all things."¹⁸ Thus Bascom rejected

¹⁵ George Raymer to Paul, June 25, 1886, in the Paul Papers.

¹⁶ Reports to the Regents, Vol. B, p. 350, January 21, 1879.

¹⁷ Report of the executive committee, June 22, 1880, in Reports to the Regents, Vol. B, p. 368.

¹⁸ John Bascom, "To the Good People of Wisconsin," in the *Wisconsin Prohibitionist*, June 23, 1887, p. 1.

the theory that the functions of the president should be limited to the purely internal or academic aspects of the University. Admitting that the regents were invested with ultimate power, he insisted that wisdom dictated that this power be used sparingly. Unless the president had an important voice in the expenditure of funds, and in the closely related determination of policy in matters the regents regarded as being in the business or external sphere, he could not properly safeguard and strengthen the strictly academic program. Since he was on the ground all the time, the president could effect many little economies. He could and should check expenditures that might be made for the exterior aspects of the University at the expense of inner strength. In his report of 1879 Bascom deprecated the fact that out of every one hundred dollars expended, only fifty-five went for what could be called educational costs. At the end of the report he openly expressed his conviction that the presidency should be abolished unless its limited powers could be more liberally defined to enable him to do effectively the things he was employed to do.¹⁹

Bascom felt all the more strongly inasmuch as events proved that the regents were in no frame of mind to leave even the internal administration of the University to the president. He was forced to swallow the action of the Board in faculty appointments. The executive committee in 1876 instructed a committee to draw up a list of all textbooks in use in all courses, and then pushed through the Board a bylaw forbidding any changes in textbooks without the permission of the regents.²⁰ When Bascom maintained that it was his obligation to present to the governing board the needs of all the departments of the University, inasmuch as each professor naturally tended to emphasize his own department, he met with a rebuff.²¹ Even worse, the regents made it clear that they were unwilling to leave to the faculty and president the whole matter of stu-

¹⁹ *Ibid.* Bascom's departing version of the distribution of powers between president and regents was also elaborated in the *Wisconsin Prohibitionist*, February 10, 1887, p. 1, and in his last address to the alumni, *Wisconsin Prohibitionist*, July 7, 1887, p. 4.

²⁰ Report of the committee on textbooks, June 20, 1876, in Reports to the Regents, Vol. B, p. 298; Records of the Regents, Vol. C, p. 266, June 21, 1876.

²¹ John E. Davies to Keyes, June 7, 1878, in the Keyes Papers.

dent discipline. In 1876 the Board revised the bylaws, introducing the provision that no student could be expelled without the assent of the regents or of the executive committee.²² Bascom insisted at once that he could not act under any such provision; that not only was it alien to practice at Wisconsin, but that it was quite unknown at other institutions; and that great mischief could result if students knew in advance that they might appeal from presidential and faculty action to the regents.²³ The most that the regents were willing to concede was an arrangement by which no student could be expelled without previous notification to the executive committee.²⁴ In 1878 the Board went further in providing that the executive committee must be notified whenever the faculty sat to hear charges against a student serious enough to result in expulsion, and that the committee might participate and vote in the student's trial in exactly the same manner as members of the faculty.²⁵

Nor was the matter of student discipline the only thorn in Bascom's side arising from conflict over jurisdiction. He resented, among other things, the enactment of a bylaw augmenting the regents' control over the library.²⁶ With so many conflicts, the president indicated to the regents on January 16, 1877, his earnest desire that the duties and rights of his office be further clarified and defined. The request was accompanied by the proposal that the legislature be requested to make the president an *ex officio* member of the Board. Such an arrangement, Bascom maintained, would have the advantage of preventing conflicts and of promoting smooth administration, since the president would be "thoroughly aware" of the Board's intentions and feelings.²⁷

²² Report of the committee to revise the bylaws, June 20, 1876, in Reports to the Regents, Vol. B, pp. 300-302; Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. C, p. 266, June 21, 1876.

²³ Bascom to the executive committee of the Board of Regents, September 14, 1876, in the Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. C, p. 271, January 16, 1877; Report of the President, January 16, 1877, in Reports to the Regents, Vol. B, p. 307.

²⁴ Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. C, p. 272, January 16, 1877.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 318, 320, June 18, 19, 1878.

²⁶ Report of the President, April 26, 1876, in Reports to the Regents, Vol. B, p. 285.

²⁷ Report of the President, January 16, 1877, in Reports to the Regents, Vol. B, p. 307.

Thus challenged the regents took action. Bascom's accompanying proposal that the president nominate all professors, instructors, and other employees for whose acts he might in any way be held responsible was ignored. But the recommendation regarding presidential requests for appropriations for the library, the museum, and apparatus was accepted. On the main point, the regents decided to name a committee to study the whole matter of presidential membership on the Board. Two members of this committee reported in favor of Bascom's plan. Inquiry revealed that at Michigan, Iowa, Minnesota, and Kansas, the president was a member of the Board and in some cases the presiding officer. "The Committee believe that the important position of the President as executive head of the University makes it extremely desirable that his relations with the governing body should be of a most intimate character, entitling him to presence at its meetings, and the right of participating in the discussion of questions pertaining to the welfare of the institution."²⁸ One member of the committee, Chynoweth, took exception to this proposal on the score that such a change might frequently result in mutual inconvenience and displeasure.²⁹ For the time, nothing was done.³⁰ The president, as we have already noted, lent his support to a movement among the alumni to provide for regular alumni representation on the Board.³¹ The records also show that Bascom presented his reports in person to the Board with increasing frequency. Yet apparently he never remained throughout the entire session.³² Toward the end of his administration he felt unwelcome to attend at all and therefore stayed away.

It is possible that with a different Board of Regents many of the tussles and the major conflict itself might have been avoided. Bascom conceived an especial dislike for Regent Napoleon B. Van Slyke, a prominent banker, whom he regarded as both

²⁸ Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. C, pp. 273, 293, January 16, June 19, 1877.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 293-294, June 19, 1877.

³⁰ In 1889, by legislative act, the president was made ex officio member of the Board. Bascom's contention was thus satisfied.

³¹ See above, pp. 214-217.

³² Edward A. Birge to Joseph Schafer, November 14, 1931, in the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Miscellaneous File, 1931.

dictatorial and a narrow-minded businessman. Indeed, in his reminiscences, written many years after leaving Wisconsin, Bascom was less charitable toward Van Slyke than toward Boss Keyes, with whom he was barely on speaking terms and for whom he had no respect at all.³³ In pleading for the reconstruction of the Board in his farewell address to the people of Wisconsin, Bascom declared that of the thirty-four regents during his administration, eighteen were lawyers or businessmen, four were farmers, and only one was immediately interested in education. Very few, he continued, had shown any knowledge of higher education. The Board throughout had acted and felt as a political body; it had shown the politician's love of power. The regents had looked jealously on any exercise of power by those serving the University. And though presumably qualified to conduct the business of the University, Keyes had failed in the ordinary standards of honesty and economy, and his colleagues had whitewashed his malpractices.³⁴ It is not clear at what point in his administration Bascom came to these conclusions, but it seems likely that by 1875 or 1876 he was convinced that the personnel of the Board must be changed unless the University was to suffer.

It is impossible to say whether Bascom or Keyes fired the opening shot in the protracted duel between the two. The complete incompatibility of personalities and outlooks made conflict inevitable. Bascom no doubt viewed with concern the movement, which was well under way early in 1877, to get Keyes appointed a regent.³⁵ But there is evidence that Keyes himself probably "opened war" on Bascom.³⁶ By early March the *Wisconsin State Journal*, a Keyes organ, and the *Madison Democrat* were bitterly criticizing the president on the score that the enrollment had decreased in his administration from six hundred to half that number.³⁷ Bascom answered this charge

³³ John Bascom, *Things Learned by Living* (New York, 1913), 71.

³⁴ *Wisconsin Prohibitionist*, June 23, 1887, p. 1. For a discussion of the membership of the Board of Regents, see above, pp. 210-213.

³⁵ H. C. Payne to Keyes, January 27, 1877, and Keyes to Governor Ludington, February 1, 1877, both in the Keyes Papers.

³⁶ Joseph Keyes to Elisha W. Keyes, March 4, 1877, in the Keyes Papers.

³⁷ *Madison Democrat*, March 4, 1877, p. 1; *Wisconsin State Journal*, March 2, 1877, p. 1.

in the press.³⁸ Ex-Governor Washburn, in urging President Hayes not to reappoint Keyes as Madison's postmaster, stated that in his judgment the charges of Keyes's complicity in the Wisconsin Whisky Ring were well substantiated.³⁹ There is no available evidence as to whether or not Bascom used this and other information in an effort to dissuade Governor Ludington from naming Keyes to the Board of Regents. That considerable pressure was put on the governor not to appoint Keyes in the place of George H. Paul, whose term was about to expire, is apparent.⁴⁰ Regent Van Slyke concluded, on hearing that Keyes had at last been appointed, that the governor was "driven to it probably by the appointee."⁴¹

In any case Bascom was thoroughly aware of the widespread criticism occasioned by the appointment, even though he may not have known the strong words used by Professor Pickard in a letter to Paul. "What is the University coming to?" he demanded. "It gets on its legs, grows vigorous, is hailed as a rival of its elders—and 'Boss Keyes' becomes one of its directors! Pgh! . . . Now let Bascom resign and Ludington take his place. . . . I have no patience with such things."⁴² Distinguished citizens wrote to Paul in similar terms and some of the regents themselves were disturbed.⁴³ If Bascom did not know the contents of the letters that were coming to Paul, he was certainly aware of the verdict of the *Milwaukee Daily News*. The *News* declared that "the appointment of 'Boss' Keyes who is best known by his political trickery and profanity to the important position of a regent of a great university and in place of the able scholarly cultured and gentlemanly George H. Paul is an outrage on education and decency and a very great loss to the

³⁸ *Madison Democrat*, March 4, 1877, p. 1, *Wisconsin State Journal*, March 3, 1877, p. 1.

³⁹ Washburn to Hayes, April 16, 1877, in the Washburn Papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

⁴⁰ Writing to Keyes on October 9, 1877, H. C. Payne, postmaster of Milwaukee, advised that "the appointment should come immediately as some of your enemies are on the alert. . . . The Gov. dont want and you dont want any fuss about the thing—Cut off all question by acting—show the Gov. this if you desire but say nothing more about my having written." Keyes Papers.

⁴¹ Van Slyke to Paul, October 11, 1877, in the Paul Papers.

⁴² Pickard to Paul, October 22, 1877, in the Paul Papers.

⁴³ Lyman Draper to Paul, October 18, 1877, and J. C. Gregory to Paul, October 11, 1877, both in the Paul Papers.

people of the state and university."⁴⁴ In similar vein the *Chicago Times* called the appointment entirely unfit on the score that as a real partisan Keyes would certainly carry partisanship into the management of the University.⁴⁵

Bascom was determined to prevent the appointment of any more politicians to the Board. He interviewed Governor-elect Smith and undoubtedly told him of his conviction. He asked C. C. Washburn to urge the incoming governor to "appoint a *new kind* of Regent. . . . *Broad* men, men who do *not seek* the place, *educational* men are what are wanted."⁴⁶ If Keyes knew about this, and he learned a great deal, the stage was all the better set for conflict.

It is impossible, of course, to say whether the promise of the truce between the regents and the president, which had been arranged in the summer of 1877, would have succeeded had Keyes not at this point taken a place on the Board.⁴⁷ Keyes determined at once to clarify still further the respective powers of the Board and the president and to that end sent out several inquiries to learn how matters were arranged in other state universities.⁴⁸ By midsummer of 1880 Keyes was assuming that Bascom could not last much longer. "It is quite probable that a change will take place here," he wrote to Pickard, who was now president of the State University of Iowa. "Well how comes on the Ia. Unvty? Are you satisfied there? You ought

⁴⁴ *Milwaukee Daily News*, October 13, 1877, p. 2.

⁴⁵ *Chicago Times*, November 23, 1877, p. 4. The editor of the *University Press* took exception to the editorial in the *Times* and expressed approval of the appointment of Keyes. *University Press*, October 22, December 5, 1877. It is interesting to note that when the question of reappointing Keyes came up early in 1880, Regent J. R. Brigham was the only person who wrote to Governor Smith in protest. "Many," Smith wrote, "not only from Madison but elsewhere, have spoken in favor of it. I am told that he has been not only an active, but very useful member of the Board, and further that Prest. Bascom will be well pleased with his being retained on the Board. I understand also that he and Gov Washburn work together very pleasantly and harmoniously." William E. Smith to Brigham, February 3, 1880, in the Brigham Papers.

⁴⁶ Bascom to Washburn, November 12, 1877, in the Washburn Papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

⁴⁷ Writing to Paul on August 23, 1877, Regent Van Slyke remarked: "My letter to the President was received and answered in the same conciliatory spirit as written. He appears to realize now as never before that [the] Regents must control matters." Paul Papers.

⁴⁸ William J. Haddock, secretary of the University of Iowa, to Keyes, December 8, 1877, in the Keyes Papers.

to be here.”⁴⁹ But Pickard was satisfied where he was. Keyes also wrote to Chadbourne, who was now retiring from the presidency of Williams. “Does this mean,” inquired Keyes, “that you will go out of the business? Dr. B. of our U. I am afraid will never make a success of it in this latitude. It would be well, if he should be called home to Williams.”⁵⁰ The Republican boss must have felt keen disappointment when he learned that inasmuch as Bascom’s views did not accord with those of the trustees of Williams, there was little likelihood that he would be called.⁵¹

The personal controversy between the two men was rooted in part in Keyes’s bitter disapproval of the temperance activities of Bascom and of his participation in the fortunes of the Prohibition Party. On June 18, 1878, the president, in reporting to the regents, recommended that “the keepers of Saloons and billiard rooms in the City of Madison be notified by circular of the law of the State pertaining to minors.”⁵² Bascom became more and more outspoken in criticizing the municipal authorities for laxness in enforcing sumptuary legislation; and Keyes, as mayor of the city, regarded such criticisms as an unwarranted slap in the face.

The situation became tense when, late in March, 1884, Bascom addressed a letter to the *Wisconsin State Journal* in which he declared that while it was of no moment to at least two-thirds of the students that the saloon laws were disregarded, Madison’s open violation of the laws did offer temptation to a portion of the young men in the University.⁵³ The editor of the *Journal* rose to the defense of Madison and took Bascom to task for libeling the city. No college with four hundred or more students had a better record than Wisconsin in the matter of order and morality, the *Journal* contended. “Our state university is as peaceful as a Methodist camp meeting and quite as undemonstrative in its good work as the best theological semi-

⁴⁹ Keyes to Pickard, July 7, 1880, and Pickard to Keyes, July 9, 1880, both in the Keyes Papers.

⁵⁰ Keyes to Chadbourne, July 7, 1880, in the Keyes Papers.

⁵¹ Chadbourne to Keyes, July 9, 1880, in the Keyes Papers.

⁵² Report of the President, June 18, 1876, in Reports to the Regents, Vol. B, p. 335.

⁵³ *Wisconsin State Journal*, March 25, 1884, p. 4.

nary in the land." Bascom's letter in effect, concluded the *Journal*, advertised Madison to the parents of the state as a den of iniquity.⁵⁴ At a temperance rally in the Methodist church preceding a municipal election, the *Journal* was criticized for its attack on Bascom. The president not only spoke at this meeting on religion, temperance, and liberty, but addressed the Law and Order League, where he endorsed Breese Stevens, the Democratic candidate for the mayoralty.⁵⁵ The *Journal* thereupon quoted from the *St. Paul Pioneer-Press* and from several Wisconsin papers, all to the effect that Bascom had done Madison and the University great harm.⁵⁶

The *University Press* gallantly rose to the president's defense, maintaining that the *Journal* had grossly distorted Bascom's letter. "All over this state there are people who believe Madison an unusually immoral place and the University surroundings dangerous, not because President Bascom has said anything to that effect, but because the papers represent him as saying so."⁵⁷ The students, furthermore, were indignant when the *Wisconsin State Journal* represented them as up in arms against the president for his libel on them. In a mass meeting the undergraduates unanimously upheld Bascom and censured the *State Journal* and *Pioneer-Press*. "I was one of the committee of three which waited upon Pres. with the resolutions," wrote a student to his father, "and he was as tickled with them as a boy with a new pair of copper-toed boots."⁵⁸ But the whole affair, and particularly Bascom's championship of his rival, played into the hands of Boss Keyes.

Considerable evidence suggests that all through the years 1884 and 1885 Keyes, at least, was doing all he could to force Bascom out and that in these activities he was not alone. His papers include many letters expressing approval of his drive against Bascom. One correspondent confessed: "It does me particularly proud to see that you have taken the initiative in removing from the University that Pecksniffian vacancy that has

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, March 26, 27, 1884.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, March 31, 1884, p. 4.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, April 1, 1884, p. 1.

⁵⁷ *University Press*, April 5, 1884.

⁵⁸ William E. Aitchison to his father, April 6, 1884, in a private collection loaned to the authors.

so long defamed and disgraced the institution. . . . What that school needs," continued this recent alumnus of the law school, "is *men* not *dudes*, and if the President is a man and will attend to the legitimate duties of his position he will neither have time or occasion to go barn-storming on 'The Thingness of the Here' or maliciously and wantonly slander and defame the city and school."⁵⁹ Another correspondent congratulated Keyes for opposing "the pretentious and egotistical supernumerary of the University."⁶⁰ All this, of course, was music to the ears of the Boss. On June 17, 1884, Keyes read a long communication to the Board of Regents criticizing Bascom's actions as "detrimental to the interests of the University."⁶¹ This communication, together with memorials from the students, alumni, and faculty remonstrating against Keyes's criticism of Bascom, was referred to a special committee. The committee moved slowly, and Keyes became more and more convinced that there could be no marked progress of the University until "the political crank" at its head was superseded.⁶² "In the interest of 'God's poor,'" he wrote to Paul, "permit me to inquire the result up to date of your labors on Special Committee of Board of Regents on '*Prohibition*' of J. Bascom. From this end of the line we conclude your efforts have been unavailing."⁶³

Meantime Keyes, without waiting for the report of the special committee, was sounding out at least two educational leaders on the assumption that the Wisconsin presidency would be open in the very near future. In March, 1885, before the heated conflict between Keyes and Bascom over the former's alleged mismanagement of University affairs broke into the open, Keyes asked President Angell of Michigan for recommendations. "Our President, Mr. Bascom, is too much devoted to the crankiness of the age, to such an extent as to destroy his influence and usefulness. . . . In the estimation of our people, our Educationists, our Board of Regents and others interested in our University the time has come when it is absolutely neces-

⁵⁹ H. S. Comstock to Keyes, June 19, 1884, in the Keyes Papers.

⁶⁰ J. H. Waggoner to Keyes, June 23, 1884, in the Keyes Papers.

⁶¹ Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. C, p. 410, June 17, 1884.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 420, 425, June 18, September 3, 1884; Keyes to C. C. Todd, June 12, 1885, in the Keyes Papers.

⁶³ Keyes to Paul, September 8, 1885, in the Paul Papers.

sary to make a change in the head of our institution, and this time we are determined to make no mistake in the selection."⁶⁴ Keyes was properly rebuked. Having enjoyed friendly relations with Bascom for over thirty years and holding him in high esteem, Angell replied politely but firmly: "I am sure you will agree with me that it would be an act of questionable delicacy, if not of questionable propriety, for me to comply with your request at present. Whenever his chair is vacant, I shall be most happy to render you any assistance in my power in finding a successor."⁶⁵ A few weeks later Thomas C. Chamberlin, of the United States Geological Survey, informed Professor Holden that he was highly gratified to learn that his name was being considered for the Wisconsin presidency. Expressing his dislike of administrative friction and indicating that before accepting the appointment he would have to be assured of the attitude of the faculty toward it, Chamberlin further declared that he would "do nothing knowingly that will not be agreeable to Dr. Bascom and his friends."⁶⁶ This frank statement, together with the testimony of Chamberlin's son that his father was tentatively offered the presidency at this time,⁶⁷ indicates that the regents, or at least the Keyes group on the Board, went fairly far in negotiating for a new president before Bascom had given any recorded indication of his intention to resign.

As early as the spring of 1884 Bascom had pretty much settled on the policy that henceforth was to guide his actions. "I have got the whole pack of politicians barking at my heels," he wrote President Angell of Michigan. He believed that they would fail in the effort to force him out although it was possible, too, that they might succeed. "After they have been whipped once more into silence . . . say another year—I think I shall resign. This strife is not pleasing to me, and takes too

⁶⁴ Keyes to James B. Angell, March 30, 1885, in the Angell Papers, Michigan Historical Collection, Ann Arbor. For this reference and several others from the Michigan Historical Collection we are indebted to Dr. Thomas Le Duc of Oberlin College.

⁶⁵ Angell to Keyes, April 2, 1885, in the Keyes Papers.

⁶⁶ Chamberlin to Professor Edward S. Holden, May 16, 1885, in the Keyes Papers.

⁶⁷ Rollin T. Chamberlin, "Biographical Memoir of Thomas Chrowder Chamberlin, 1843-1928," in *National Academy of Sciences Biographical Memoirs* (24 vols., Washington, 1934), 15:321.

much strength." The seriousness of his mood was reflected in his inquiry as to whether George Sylvester Morris, the distinguished Hegelian philosopher at Michigan, had sufficient executive ability to "manage a Board of Regents."⁶⁸ A year later, in the spring of 1885, Bascom did, apparently, decide to resign. But when he learned that the regents had not really been whipped, that Keyes in fact was still bent on forcing him out, he changed his mind. "As soon as the report referred to was started, I laid aside the question of resignation, as I prefer dismissal to a resignation that would be regarded as coerced, or as an easy settlement on my part of any difficulties."⁶⁹

At the meeting of the Board in June, 1885, the whole subject of Bascom's relations with the regents, including his part in the prohibition crusade, was thoroughly canvassed. The Board, according to its president, George H. Paul, unanimously held that while there was no point of conflict between the regents and the president in the internal administration of the University, there was an important conflict with regard to his attitude toward politics. The Board admitted that Bascom had the right to "support and defend the virtue of temperance" just as any private citizen had that right. But the regents questioned the wisdom of an alliance with "partisan organizations . . . concerning which the people of the state are disagreed." The regents felt that in so doing the president was compromising his official influence and position as head of the University. "It is certainly a very palpable fact that the President of the University cannot actively participate in partisan politics, without detriment to the University itself, nor does the degree of conscientiousness with which his action is accompanied or the merit of the purpose sought to be accomplished mitigate the probably detrimental consequences to the institution."⁷⁰ The head of the University, a nonpartisan institution, the Board held, must act in a nonpartisan way. Paul informed Bascom that the regents did not question his integrity or sincerity, but did question his good judgment in making "entangling al-

⁶⁸ Bascom to Angell, May 25, 1884, in the Angell Papers, Michigan Historical Collection, Ann Arbor.

⁶⁹ Bascom to Paul, December 31, 1885, in Papers of the Board of Regents.

⁷⁰ Paul to Bascom, September 26, 1885, in Reports to the Regents, Vol. B, p. 460, January 19, 1886.

liances." Friendly relations might be established if Bascom could accept this view. "But if there is a serious difference in this respect between your own views of duty, and those of the Board as to the interests of the institution in this regard, it will be obviously difficult to reconcile that difference in the future administration of University affairs."⁷¹

Bascom regarded this as an improper rebuke in which the sight of any correct notion of personal liberty, duty, and power on the part of the president was entirely lost.⁷² Nevertheless in replying he remarked that he was able in part to agree with the contentions of the regents. Certainly the president should not insist on forcing students to accept his political or religious views; and this he had never done. He could also agree that time spent in any crusade should not "trespass" on the time he owed to the University; and against that he had always been on his guard. Bascom also admitted that he should not "betray a zeal in behalf of parties and persons that would raise up enemies for the University." He had, he continued, confined himself exclusively to "discussions of principles and their proper method of enforcement," and he contended that no one had any right to take offense at such discussions. "If, however, the regents can frame under these or any other heads," Bascom concluded, "a complaint which is worthy of them, of our country, and our age, I shall give it respectful consideration."⁷³

Bascom continued to speak before prohibition clubs.⁷⁴ But when the Prohibition Party, the following summer, proposed to nominate him for an office, he refused to permit his name to be used; there would be a conflict of duties to the University during the years ahead, and his acceptance of any nomination by the party would give weight to the charge that he had political aspirations.⁷⁵ Meantime, however, other conflicts had overshadowed that of prohibition.

Although President Paul of the Board of Regents believed that Bascom himself was of no account in comparison with the

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 461.

⁷² *Wisconsin Prohibitionist*, June 23, 1887, p. 1.

⁷³ Bascom to Paul, October 5, 1885, in Reports to the Regents, Vol. B, pp. 461-462, January 19, 1886.

⁷⁴ *Madison Daily Democrat*, April 20, 1886, p. 4.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, July 28, 1886, p. 1.

interests of the University,⁷⁶ he also felt that his services were of sufficient importance to warrant renewed efforts to bring about harmonious relations between him and the Board. Early in 1883 Paul therefore undertook to persuade Bascom that the interests of the University could not be served if the personal controversy with Keyes were continued.⁷⁷ But this overture was of no avail. The following year Governor Rusk, in asking Roujet D. Marshall to accept office on the Board, expressed the hope that he might bring peace between the president and Colonel Keyes. Marshall felt it had been unfortunate for the Board to relegate almost all its dealings with Bascom to Keyes, particularly since the two men were barely on speaking terms. Marshall called on Bascom at his home, and remembered later that he was received with "cold, dignified cordiality." After he had made known the purpose of his visit, Bascom replied, according to Marshall's recollection, that he could do nothing without sacrificing his convictions as to the proper role of the president.⁷⁸

The break between Bascom and Keyes became complete in the spring and early summer of 1885. The occasion was Bascom's resentment at the manner in which Keyes handled services pertaining to grounds and buildings. By resolution of the regents adopted in 1883, the president was responsible for the efficient superintendence of heating, the care of rooms, the removal of snow from walks, and other routine work of janitors who were to obey his orders without question, in the absence of the executive committee or special direction by them.⁷⁹ In April, 1885, Bascom recommended that University Hall and North and South Halls be put under Patrick Walsh and that Timothy Purcell be fired. The president maintained that Purcell, who was hand in glove with Regent Keyes, was dishonest and lacking in conscientiousness in little matters. He was, moreover, ready to take advantage of the University whenever opportunity offered. Bascom specified the charges, adding that

⁷⁶ Paul to Keyes, July 2, 1885, in the Keyes Papers.

⁷⁷ Paul to Keyes, January 20, 1883, in the Keyes Papers.

⁷⁸ Gilson G. Glasier, ed., *Autobiography of Roujet D. Marshall* (2 vols., Madison, 1923), 1:366-368.

⁷⁹ Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. C, p. 388, January 16, 1883.

Purcell, besides being incompetent and untrustworthy, was also abusive and profane in supervising the work done under him.⁸⁰

The most telling point in Bascom's indictment concerned the elms which had been supplied from Keyes's nursery for beautifying the University grounds. According to Bascom, an insufficient number of trees, with many of them dead or so improperly planted that they presently died, were sold to the University at the excessive price of \$396. Confronted by this charge Keyes apparently directed Purcell to replace the dead trees and to add a goodly number for generosity. Bascom was indignant at this effort at cover-up and asked two men, one of whom was Robert M. La Follette, to examine each tree carefully, and the sod surrounding it, to determine how many trees were freshly planted in the spring. The results bore out Bascom's suspicions.⁸¹ In addition to the matter of the trees, Bascom also contended that Purcell had sold dirt from the grading of streets bordering the University to Madison citizens, in one instance having received \$150. No less scandalous was the fact that he absented himself from the University to do other work, then collected from the University for time that had never been put in. As if this were not enough, the president charged that Purcell, with the approval of Keyes, had sold lots and given the purchasers jobs at the University to enable them to pay for their purchases. According to the testimony of janitor Pat Walsh, who stood firmly by Bascom, Purcell had sold a lot to an old German who could speak no English, promising him in return a job at the University. "He gave the old man work he could not spake English nor pursell duch so when he would send the old man to do anything he should send a man with him to show him what to do I have heard this Pursell sware by his Juasus christ that the old german was not worth 25 cents Per day yet the University Paid him \$1.50 cents Per day."⁸²

In marshaling his evidence Bascom called on Pat Walsh for further details. Pat told of Mr. Keyes's riding up to the building and telling him to discharge his assistant and henceforth to

⁸⁰ Papers of the Board of Regents, June 23, 1885.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² *Ibid.*

take care of University Hall alone, inasmuch as Purcell's son would look out for North. Pat replied that he was quite able himself to do the whole business and thus save money for the University. "He made answer to hell with the Expences he was chairman of the Executive Committee he could hire or discharge or give vacation to men just as he Pleased. I made him answer I thought the rest of the Commitee had something to say as well as him he asked me If I wanted [to] spake disrespectful to him I said not but I would spake the truth, he also mentioned that Bascom was for me so for the futhure he was against me he vexed me and I told him I did not care for him or Pursell, so we Parted."⁸³

The special committee of the regents appointed to investigate the charges—an action which Keyes resented—gave every appearance of making a thorough inquiry into the facts. Witnesses were summoned and testimony taken. But Keyes and Purcell had replanted the trees and the committee reported its inability to sustain Bascom's charges and demand that Purcell be fired. The committee added that very unpleasant relations existed between the president and some of the employees. It suggested that in the future, to avoid conflict of authority, the president be vested with sufficient powers in all matters affecting employees about the University that he might properly be held responsible in this sphere.⁸⁴ The *Milwaukee Sentinel*, which at first regarded the committee's report as a vindication of Keyes, on second thought took the position that in making this recommendation the committee in reality indirectly supported Bascom.⁸⁵ The truth was, however, that the victory was not with the president. At its meeting of June 24 the regents adopted a very significant resolution: "That it is the duty of the President . . . to devote his time and give his attention to the interests of the instructional department of the University and that to the Board of Regents belongs the duty of managing directing and controlling the general business affairs of the University, subject only to receiving recommendations from

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ Report of special investigating committee, June 23, 1885, in Reports to the Regents, Vol. B, p. 449.

⁸⁵ *Milwaukee Sentinel*, June 24, 1885, p. 1; June 25, 1885, p. 2.

the President from time to time, as in his judgment the interests of the University require."⁸⁶ Thus Keyes, who introduced this resolution, carried his main contention in the whole controversy.

But the reverberations of the Bascom-Keyes controversy continued. A few days after the June meeting of the regents, the *Milwaukee Sentinel* interviewed two members of the Board, Paul and Koeppen, both of whom emphasized the harmonious proceedings and insisted that Keyes had not tried to secure the removal of Bascom. But Paul was reported to have said he thought that Keyes's opposition to the president was "to a certain extent with the object of making political capital for himself with the saloon men. Mr. Keyes is a politician and he has taken his position against the president, I think, partially to make political capital."⁸⁷ Keyes was furious. "I have so long been villainously misrepresented as having 'motives' in the Bascom business, that I feel disposed to state the facts. . . . No one regrets this new phase of the matter more than I do, but I do not propose to be ground to powder between the upper and the nether millstone without a struggle."⁸⁸ Paul insisted that the matter was of little importance, that newspaper men would destroy the University and all of the regents, for the sake of seeing the regents squirm. "You are old enough in sin and iniquity," Paul wrote to Keyes, "*to know better* than to accept every statement of a newspaper reporter for fact." He denied that he had said the things about Keyes which the *Sentinel* had attributed to him. "That reporter talked to me half an hour, and then made up a report to serve his own purposes. I told him expressly that I was not to judge of any motives in the matter, and had no personal opinion on the point to which you refer."⁸⁹

The storm blew over. It did not, at least at once, weaken Keyes in the Board of Regents. But neither did it strengthen the cause of President Bascom. Feeling in some degree vindicated, recalling that at the outset he had planned to stay not

⁸⁶ Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. C, p. 452, June 24, 1885.

⁸⁷ *Milwaukee Sentinel*, June 29, 1885, p. 4.

⁸⁸ Keyes to Paul, June 29, 1885, in the Paul Papers.

⁸⁹ Paul to Keyes, June 29, 1885, in the Keyes Papers.

much longer than a dozen years, convinced that he could hardly expect to continue his work as president with any effectiveness, and determined to avoid an involuntary retirement, Bascom, in a carefully worded letter to Regent Paul on December 31, 1885, informed the president of the Board that he was contemplating a resignation, providing conditions allowed it, "in June, to be operative the following June-1887." He mentioned this, he continued, inasmuch as knowledge of his plan might contribute to more pleasant relations with the regents "while they last."⁹⁰

This was not an outright resignation. It left the door open in case the Board might, by some miracle, urge him to remain. But the regents were quick to interpret the letter as a resignation. At the meeting of January 19, 1886, the Board assured Bascom in a carefully phrased resolution that it appreciated his service to the University and regretted "that the conditions are such that he deems it for his best interests to withdraw from his present position." Bascom was further to be notified that "his resignation will be accepted by the Board to take effect at the end of the present collegiate year."⁹¹ The Board further slapped Bascom in accepting a report of the executive committee, obviously betraying the grammar of Keyes: "Application has been made by Prof. Irving, for leave of absence during the winter term, which was granted under the rules of the Board, it being the only application made for leave, but is not as the Committee is informed the only absence, as by the *press* the Committee has been advised, that the President of the Faculty has been absent in Indiana."⁹²

Although the January meeting of the Board was less than three weeks off at the time Paul received Bascom's letter indicating his "contemplated" resignation, the president of the Board spared no time in opening negotiations for a successor. His mind naturally turned to Chamberlin, who had been tentatively offered the place in 1885.⁹³ In a letter dated

⁹⁰ Bascom to Paul, December 31, 1885, in the Papers of the Board of Regents.

⁹¹ Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. C, p. 460, January 19, 1886.

⁹² Report of the executive committee, January 19, 1886, in Reports to the Regents, Vol. B, p. 456.

⁹³ Professor Edward S. Holden had informed Paul that he considered Chamberlin to be "the man (& so far as I know the *only* man) who would be en-

January 12, a week before the Board met, Paul informed Chamberlin that he was quite certain a formal invitation would be forthcoming in case he indicated any interest.⁹⁴ Negotiations continued after the January meeting of the Board, these now being conducted by Paul in behalf of a special committee of the Board. After raising many questions Chamberlin indicated, in the late spring of 1886, his willingness to accept the presidency and he was unanimously elected at the June meeting of the Board. In view of this it is somewhat surprising to find the Board, at that meeting, adopting by an eleven to one vote a curious resolution which declared that since nothing had happened to alter the circumstances to which Bascom had referred in his letter of December 31 to Paul, the Board felt free to proceed in the matter of selecting a successor. The resolution lamely expressed appreciation of Bascom's services to the University and repeated from the January statement the Board's regrets "that the conditions are such that he deems it for his best interests to withdraw from his present position."⁹⁵ After rejecting the resolution presented by Regent Williams to the effect that it was unwise to permit anything to be done that might result in the president's retirement, the Board, as if to vindicate itself and relieve a troubled conscience, assured Bascom that it had been the earnest purpose and desire of the regents to cooperate with him in all that affected the best interests of the University, and that it would similarly sustain him during the remainder of his administration!⁹⁶

Even in the last round of the fight the regents largely, but not entirely, had their way. They insisted that the interest of the University, not any fiat of Bascom, must determine at exactly what date his resignation was to take effect. It is likely that Keyes and his party in the Board tried to make the resignation effective immediately—or, at the latest, in June, 1886. In this they were balked by the refusal of President-elect Chamberlin to take office until he had completed the writing of his report on the research done under the auspices of the

tirely acceptable to the Scientific faculty." Holden to Paul, May 4, 1885, in the Paul Papers.

⁹⁴ Paul to Chamberlin, January 12, 1886, in Papers of the Board of Regents.

⁹⁵ Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. C, p. 481, June 23, 1886.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 482-483.

Geological Survey—and he set the date in the summer of 1887.

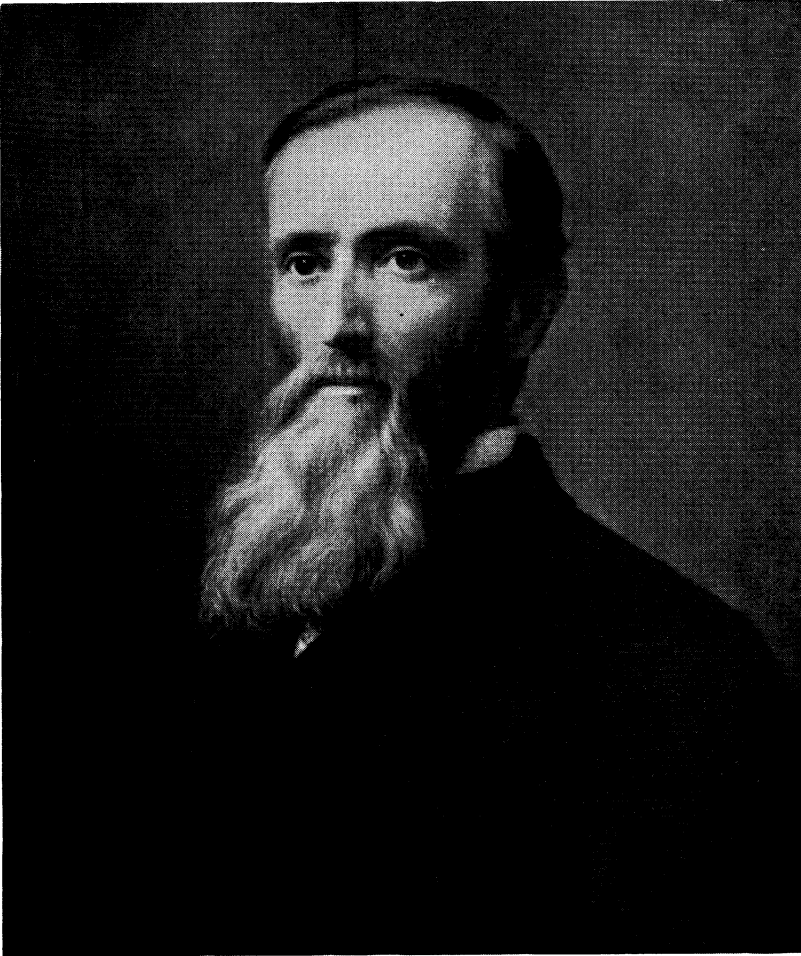
The opinion has been expressed that Bascom might, had he so elected, have won over the regents by continuing the fight.⁹⁷ Certainly considerable support from students, alumni, and others was brought to the attention of the regents even after they had offered the presidency to Chamberlin. Although Bascom was not, technically, forced out, he was correct in believing that his usefulness had ended.

Any hope that Bascom had for a final peaceful chapter at Wisconsin was a vain one indeed. The press insisted on misrepresenting him to his disadvantage. The *Milwaukee Sentinel* reported a heated controversy during a prayer meeting between Bascom and the Reverend Charles H. Richards of the First Congregational Church in Madison, a controversy in which Bascom was declared to have displayed an aggressive and ugly conduct toward the clergyman. In a letter to the *Sentinel* Richards denied flatly that the discussion had had anything of the characteristics imputed to it by the newspaper report, or that he and the president were on terms other than “the warmest friendship, which no political disagreement will be allowed to diminish. . . . I regret the more the unfortunate statement,” Richards continued, “because Dr. Bascom has often been maligned and misrepresented in a way that should make Wisconsin people thoroughly ashamed. . . . It is a melancholy indication of the condition of our public life, when such a man, on account of private grudge or partisan prejudice, is traduced and misrepresented as he has been for two years.”⁹⁸

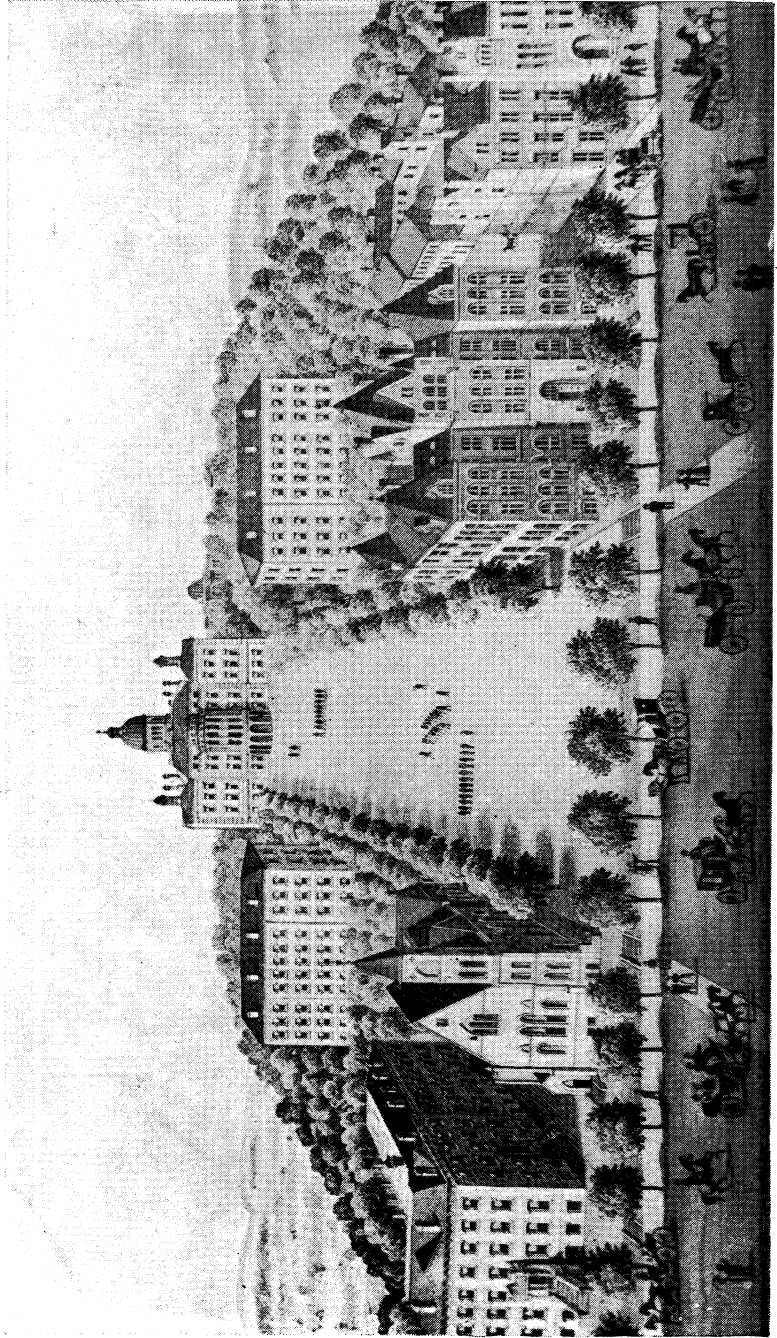
The attacks on and misrepresentation of Bascom must be kept in view, as well as his belief that it was his duty to speak his mind, in considering his final onslaught against the Board of Regents in the February tenth issue of the *Wisconsin Prohibitionist*. “No president can draw the free breath of manhood in the University of Wisconsin as it is now organized,” he stated. “The office of president of the University of Wisconsin ought to be abolished, or its circle of powers more accurately and more liberally defined. Under the present sys-

⁹⁷ James F. A. Pyre, *Wisconsin* (New York, 1920), 238.

⁹⁸ *Milwaukee Sentinel*, October 22, 1886, p. 8; October 25, 1886, p. 5.



John Bascom



The University at the End of Bascom's Administration

tem, the president is constantly and grievously shortened in doing the very thing he is employed to do. The method has no justification in common sense, and no basis in experience."⁹⁹ Bascom further took the regents to task for so managing the financial affairs of the University that little more than half the budget was spent directly for education.

Nor did Bascom stop with this criticism of the regents for opposing any reorganization of the Board making the president a member of it and for circumscribing his powers. In a much-publicized communication entitled "To the Good People of Wisconsin," which appeared in the *Wisconsin Prohibitionist* on June 23, 1887, the president insisted that the University throughout the past thirteen years had suffered from the composition of the Board. It was dominated by businessmen, few of whom had any knowledge of higher education, and it acted as a political body, particularly in demonstrating the love of power that characterizes the politician. "I leave the University of Wisconsin simply because I have had no sufficient liberty in doing my work," he said bluntly. Admitting that the regents were and must be the supreme ruling power, Bascom contended that this power should be sparingly and infrequently used. Beyond that, Keyes, in whose hands the regents placed their authority in large degree, had failed to show even the most ordinary standards of economy and honesty. The elm tree affair was again aired and the committee report termed a whitewashing job. The regents had put too much into buildings and too little into instruction. Bascom maintained that one of the most influential regents had actually spoken of teachers with contempt. Finally, Bascom condemned the regents for interfering with his personal liberty in the prohibition matter and for making him in the past two years as ineffective as possible.¹⁰⁰

In view of this blast the attitude of George H. Paul, who had been more friendly to Bascom than many of his fellow regents, is understandable. Inasmuch as the farewell banquet for Bascom fell at the time when it was the custom for the regents to

⁹⁹ *Wisconsin Prohibitionist*, February 10, 1887, p. 1.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, June 23, 1887, p. 1.

meet, Paul felt it was quite as well for the regents to be unrepresented at the meeting.¹⁰¹ Like the other members of the Board, Paul was undoubtedly smarting because of Bascom's leadership in supporting the alumni bill all that spring in the legislature. In view of the remarks of the president at the alumni farewell banquet, it is perhaps just as well that Paul and his fellows on the Board were not present.

The last farewell of Bascom expressed deep appreciation for the support he had received from alumni and students alike, love for the University, and regret at the circumstances under which he left. He reiterated his powerlessness to influence the "internal movements" of the University; his virtual exclusion during the past years from meetings of the Board; his certain knowledge that whatever he proposed would be turned down quite apart from its merits or its demerits. He pleaded for alumni representation and the membership of the president on the Board. "Four fifths of the vexation, anxiety, and wear for the thirteen years I have been at the head of the institution have been caused by the Regents."¹⁰² That evening the regents presented to the Alumni Association a flat denial of much that Bascom had said at the farewell banquet. Regent Hiram Smith answered Bascom's indictment to the best of his ability, and then the *Wisconsin Prohibitionist* tried to refute his exoneration of the regents.¹⁰³

The aftermath of Bascom's indictment of the regents and of his plea for the reorganization of the government of the University showed the divided state of opinion on the whole problem. Three years later, on returning to deliver the annual address before the graduating law class, Bascom received a great ovation from students and alumni. During the course of his address he took occasion, in his own outspoken way, to criticize the Wisconsin supreme court for having sustained the state in excluding the Bible from the public schools. He had once before, in 1876, aroused the ire of the bar in daring to question the integrity of the New York bar.¹⁰⁴ Now a considerable section

¹⁰¹ Paul to Keyes, June 18, 1887, in the Keyes Papers.

¹⁰² *Madison Daily Democrat*, June 22, 1887, p. 1.

¹⁰³ *Wisconsin Prohibitionist*, June 30, July 7, 21, 28, 1887.

¹⁰⁴ Clara L. Hayes, "William Penn Lyon," in the *Wisconsin Magazine of History*, 9:269-270 (March, 1926).

of the press, led by the *Wisconsin State Journal*, vigorously denounced Bascom for giving evidence—and that in an address before young lawyers—of his lack of reverence for the supreme tribunal of the state.¹⁰⁵ Without at all meaning “to stir things up” he had once again, thanks to his honesty and tactlessness, struck a chord that evoked all the old animosity of his enemies.

Years later, in 1905, Bascom returned to Madison, this time to be honored by a degree from the University over which he had once presided and to which he had contributed so much. Marshall, who had been on the Board of Regents during the latter part of the Bascom regime, felt that the former president had come to see that it was meet that he had retired when he did and that he was even grateful to the Board for making the retirement as dignified as possible under the circumstances.¹⁰⁶ Be that as it may, in the autobiography published after his death, Bascom gave no indication whatever that he had come to regard his actions as mistaken. The perspective of time had softened the bitterness he had shown in his last statements as president, but it had not altered his fundamental conviction that the fight he had made against what he thought was the incompetence, the pettiness, and the political-mindedness of the regents had been a necessary fight between good and evil.¹⁰⁷ When all was said and done, the chief reason for his resignation was the fact that Bascom had involved himself in political questions that tended to create a prejudice against the president and the University.

The statement of the complete innocence of the regents hardly stands up under all the evidence. But it is true that Bascom, while admitting the legal authority of the regents, failed to respect it. Nor did he fully appreciate the fact that in a state university the ruling representatives of the people who supported it not only were necessary but, even when mistaken and inept, made substantial contributions to the very ends that Bascom himself had so closely at heart. Without these contributions from the regents, the University could not have functioned at all. Bascom failed to see this. The inability of the

¹⁰⁵ *Wisconsin State Journal*, June 24, 25, 1890.

¹⁰⁶ Glasier, ed., *Autobiography of Roujet D. Marshall*, 1:383.

¹⁰⁷ Bascom, *Things Learned by Living*, 68 ff.

regents to place their confidence in him and to exercise their legal rights sparingly inevitably led to the clashes with Bascom as long as he adhered to his values and his conception of the University's interest. The conflict was certainly not entirely resolved with Bascom's retirement. But the basic position of the regents, founded both on law and on the necessities that framed a state institution, triumphed. No president thereafter could hope to succeed if, like Bascom, he took an open part in the political conflicts of the state and if, like Bascom, he challenged the implications of the regents' final authority. But as events in the Chamberlin administration were to show, the conflict with Bascom was not without its lessons for the regents.

11.

The Mind of John Bascom

REARED in the impoverished but genteel home of the widow of a Congregational minister of the strict Calvinistic school, John Bascom imbibed as a youth the Puritanical principles of his mother. Even after he had thrown off what he termed the "perverse theory of Calvinism" he continued to cherish the intense moral idealism of Puritanism. In his father's study he read Jonathan Edwards and other orthodox New England divines. Thanks to the sacrifices and determination of an elder sister, he was able to prepare for college at academies in the vicinity of his native village in upper New York and then to enter Williams, from which he was graduated in 1849. After a brief term at teaching school, he began reading law, but soon found himself repelled by its conventionality and its moral compromises. He turned to the study of theology, first at the Auburn Seminary and later at Andover, but this too failed to satisfy him. In 1855, after a brief interlude as a tutor, he decided to give up his plans for the ministry and to accept a professorship of rhetoric and oratory at Williams.

As an undergraduate at Williams, Bascom had come under the influence of the Scottish common-sense philosophy which enjoyed the upper hand in almost every American college. Sensitive as he was to things of the spirit, he found the dogmatism of the Scottish school distasteful. At Auburn he accepted the "conservative realism" of Laurens Hickok, one of the most technically competent philosophers in America. Although Bascom

subsequently departed to some extent from Hickok's philosophy, he never repudiated its epistemological dualism or its idealistic emphasis on a priori principles. He was likewise influenced by Emerson, Carlyle, and, especially, Horace Bushnell, the Congregationalist minister of Hartford, whose *Christian Nurture* (1846) taught that since character is shaped by environment, society must become permeated with Christian principles and ethics if the individual is to find salvation.

During the fifties and sixties Bascom followed closely the new developments in science. As a result of this interest and of his reading of such empiricists as John Stuart Mill and John Morley, he tempered his rationalism and his intuitionism by empiricism. Although he retained his association with Congregationalism, he became, by virtue of his sympathy with the new science and with a modified empiricism, a leader in the most liberal type of Christian apologetics.¹ In fact, it was clear that because of his religious liberalism Bascom stood little chance of succeeding Mark Hopkins in the chair of philosophy at Williams. Above all he wanted to teach philosophy, which he thought of as the vision of the rational life and as the foundation of ethics and social action. Thus he readily accepted the presidency at Wisconsin, where he might teach philosophy to his heart's content. And he was right in anticipating an atmosphere in Madison more congenial to a religious liberal than that of Williamstown.

Yet in modifying by empiricism the rationalism and the intuitive idealism of Hickok, Bascom in no sense gave up his basic dualism. Nor did he fail to reject what seemed to him—and to many others in his day—the materialistic implications of the science he could not ignore. What he wanted to do was so to widen the sphere of the supernatural both in theory and in practice that it might be closely affiliated everywhere with the natural. In reviewing John Fiske's *Cosmic Philosophy* Bascom rejected the Cambridge philosopher's "spiritual monism" and made clear his reasons for holding to dualism. The duality of mind and matter, he contended, must be accepted; Fiske, in

¹ Based on Bascom's, *Things Learned by Living* (New York, 1913), and on his essay "Books that Have Helped Me," in *The Forum*, 3:263-272 (May, 1887).

trying to dispense with it, not only failed to reconcile antitheses but in effect dispensed with thought itself, since he conceded that thought-process forces were actually phenomena. Bascom, on the other hand, insisted that the duality of mind and matter passes into unity at the all-comprehending vanishing point—Omnipotence. By upholding the dualistic concept Bascom believed that he could best combat the “materialistic tendency which has arisen from making physical facts and analogies the exclusive foundation of philosophy.”²

In a series of articles written in the late sixties and early seventies and, especially, in the Lowell lectures published under the title *Science, Philosophy, and Religion*, Bascom attempted to narrow the area of conflict between science and religion, to relegate to the former the factual data he deemed appropriate to it, and to posit the validity of the intuitional approach to values and truths and the a priori rational structure of the universe. Conceding that the scientist rejected with good reason the metaphysics that was all too often the last hiding place of blind beliefs, Bascom insisted that the reality of the spiritual world could be comprehended only by that element of rationality in the mind which corresponds to the rationality of the universe.³ In other words, reason comprehends the whole realm of being. What we need, Bascom insisted, is not a narrow, confining empiricism but a true, comprehensive empiricism, which takes the two-and-two of our experience and recognizes the sum as four without any misleading and sterile calculations and speculations concerning the nature of the unity. “Of all empirical things the intuitional philosophy is the most empirical, since it stands fast by those convictions which are planted in the soul of man, and which man fearlessly brings to the daily and successful discussion of affairs.”⁴ Science and philosophy, in Bascom’s opinion, start with certain common ideas and facts, and move along independent lines, meeting again in religion.

The effort to narrow the conflict between science and religion

² Manuscript sketch for a biography of John Bascom prepared for the Knickerbocker Publishing Company, in the State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

³ *Science, Philosophy, and Religion* (New York, 1872).

⁴ “Mind and Matter: Their Ultimate Reference,” in the *Journal of Christian Philosophy*, 2:470 (July, 1883).

imposed the task of discussing the doctrine of organic evolution. For Bascom it was impossible to accept an organic conception of the universe itself. Such a conception, he declared, simply did not square with experience. It was, moreover, too fatalistic, too much in opposition to the highest assertion of personal presence and the transcendent power of the divine presence. Thus he rejected essential parts of Darwinism and Spencerianism, insisting at the same time that evolution might still be accepted as one of the basic principles of the universe if it were thought of as a spiritual evolution that invokes individual growth, social growth, and the action and reaction of the two upon each other.⁵ Bascom elaborated his position in a period when many distinguished scientists, including Agassiz himself, had not accepted Darwinism and when the controversy over the theory was at its height.

In his essay on Darwin, Bascom cited many difficulties which he believed must be solved before the theory of organic evolution, despite its ability to explain a number of obscure facts, could be regarded as more than a hypothesis still awaiting confirmation. He gave many examples of alleged proofs which worked either way or were inconsistent with one another; he maintained that the theory did not sufficiently account for the symmetry of the animal kingdom; that Darwin had not explained the great inequality of development in the different lines of life; and that he had provided no adequate answer to the problem of why the lower organisms had failed to be as fruitful of change in later, as they must have been in earlier, times. He was prepared to pay respect to Darwin and Huxley so long as they talked of the lower forms of life, but he could not accept their discussions of the higher forms, especially man. Above all, he believed that the doctrine of evolution rested, in the last analysis, on fortuitous circumstances rather than on rational causes.⁶

In discussing the philosophy of Spencer, Bascom objected to the manner in which knowledge of the unknown force underly-

⁵ Bascom, "Darwin's Theory of the Origin of Species," in the *American Presbyterian Review*, n.s. 3:349-379 (July, 1871).

⁶ Bascom, *What is the World's Purpose?*, undated manuscript in the State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

ing all facts was grounded by Spencer in the forces of thought. He took unqualified exception to the Spencerian concept of the relativity of knowledge. Granted that relativity characterizes the judgments, the products of the thinking powers, it did not follow, Bascom asserted, that it similarly characterizes the action of the senses on intuition. Thus Spencer's method of arriving at the existence and nature of force appeared to Bascom defective and overstrained, and he was therefore unable to accept evolution in its absolute form as the continuous, progressive metamorphosis of definite forces. The theory failed to explain the transition from the unconscious to the conscious. In failing to provide for man's liberty it failed to provide adequately for man.

Only by keeping in mind Bascom's objections to the full-blown theory of evolution and to the all-inclusive claims of science can one understand his justification of faith. In his first baccalaureate sermon at Wisconsin he told his audience that he was not anxious that they believe this or that dogma, but that he was anxious that they should "deeply, strongly, devoutly believe." He distinguished between bigotry and faith. "Belief is the supreme power of the soul; unbelief is its supreme weakness. No faculty gives us the range of the spiritual universe but this, the faculty of faith." Truths, he went on, are all partial truths, having the diversity and changeableness of living things, being living things.⁷ Faith, he remarked on a later occasion, though rational, is not susceptible of proof; it is rather a hope, resting on both intellect and heart, just as knowledge itself does. Science can better handle skeletons than living powers. "We stand heartily with science when she says, Such facts we know and such remain to be known. We dissent only when she says, Knowledge abides with me, all else is illusion."⁸

In slightly different forms Bascom reiterated again and again his philosophy of religion and science. In 1881, in his baccalaureate, he insisted that there could be "no conflict between science and religion, save that which arises when one or the

⁷ *The Freedom of Faith* (Madison, 1874), 13, 16, and *passim*. A collection of Bascom's baccalaureate sermons is in the University of Wisconsin Library.

⁸ *Faith and Reason*, a baccalaureate sermon delivered June 13, 1875 (n.p., n.d.), 15.

other misconceives the truth, or misconceives its own relation to it, and so falls into its own special error of skepticism on the one hand, or bigotry on the other. If religion is to fulfill its constructive function, it plainly needs nothing more than it needs science, since it is under and by the facts and laws of the world that the world is to become the Kingdom of heaven."⁹ It was time, Bascom said, to cease thinking that science does not extend to all the facts or that religion is concerned with that which is not fact. Science must recognize that the entire physical universe is permeated by a coextensive spiritual one and that the scientific method has been peculiarly unsuccessful in its inquiries into the inner, spiritual universe. The proper balance between the scientific or natural on the one hand, and the spiritual or supernatural on the other, must be struck. Man could not live without both.

Such, in brief, was the philosophy Bascom taught to all seniors during the twelve and a half years he presided over the University. Despite his conviction that the remedy for skepticism was philosophy, it was not unnatural for undergraduates to wonder whether Bascom was himself orthodox. "For my own part," wrote a minister's son to his father, "I confess myself unable to judge, some of his sayings, especially in class, making me think he is, and others, in his books, making me think he is not. . . . I can't make him out."¹⁰ Yet others were less confused. "There is no part of the University work," wrote a typical admirer, "from which the student derives more real mental strength than from the course in Philosophy under President Bascom. . . . It is especially fortunate that Dr. Bascom is so thoroughly master of the subject; and along with a perfectly clear and adequate explanation of all obscure points, he imparts to the student a share of his own healthy enthusiasm."¹¹ President Van Hise, himself a student of Bascom and a devotee of science, declared in retrospect that his predecessor was "among the prophets who from

⁹ *Truth and Truthfulness* (Milwaukee, 1881), 18.

¹⁰ The student referred to was William E. Aitchison. This letter, written to his father on March 3, 1884, and the ones mentioned in note 14 were loaned by his brother, Clyde B. Aitchison, of the Interstate Commerce Commission, Washington, D.C.

¹¹ *University Press*, 16:8 (April 18, 1885).

time to time have appeared to rejuvenate man and to arouse in him the invincible determination so to live as to advance the human race toward the goal never attained and never attainable, of illimitable power, complete understanding, and spiritual perfection."¹² There can be no doubt that Bascom was highly effective in persuading students that it was possible to accept science without abandoning one's faith in a universe of spiritual reality and in the intuitional and rational approach to those realities. Among the "reconcilers" of science and religion in the seventies and eighties he stands high indeed by reason of the quality of his thought and the high plane of his moral idealism.

Bascom was the last president at the University of Wisconsin and one of the last in any American institution to represent the older concept of the cultured man as one at home in all fields of learning. "Professor Bascom," observed the editor of the *Williams Vidette* in 1872, "is a thorough scholar in more than one department of knowledge. As a mathematician he has few superiors; with all the recent investigations into physical science he is perfectly familiar; his studies in political economy have been extensive and profound; and he knows what the theologians have to say of fate, forewill, foreknowledge, and the absolute."¹³

This admirer might have added that Bascom's philosophy included psychology, which he considered a potentially autonomous if closely related field. In 1869 Bascom's *Principles of Psychology*, one of the first American textbooks in the field, appeared as an evidence of his long-sustained interest in the rationalistic and empirical psychology of his master, Laurens Hickok. In 1879 appeared his *Growth and Grades of Intelligence*, a pioneer effort in relating psychology to education, and in 1881 he gave the interested public his matured synthesis, *Science of the Mind*. In all his work in this field Bascom emphasized, as did any good Emersonian, freedom of the will and the potentially divine character of human nature: "There is no reason in any limitation of liberty why, under the laws of inheritance, man should not in time walk the earth with the

¹² *Memorial Service in Honor of John Bascom* (Madison, 1911), 9.

¹³ *Williams Vidette*, 6:129-130 (March 9, 1872).

bounding life of an archangel, govern it with the strength of an archangel, and take home its thoughts and feelings to the pure and serene experience of an archangel." At Wisconsin, Bascom's instruction in psychology baffled and intrigued more than one undergraduate. "Prex uses horrible big words in Psychology and they dont always mean the same thing in different places," wrote one student to his father, admitting at the same time that Bascom's instruction in this subject was something "meaty" that taxed both mind and patience.¹⁴

As professor of oratory and rhetoric at Williams, a chair in which he had little interest, Bascom broadened the scope of instruction by including aesthetics, art, and literature at a time when few American colleges gave much attention to these subjects. Out of his teaching developed a series of textbooks. *Esthetics, or the Science of Beauty* (1862) was based on the principles of Kames and Campbell, but Bascom applied their concepts in a fresh way to landscape gardening, architecture, poetry, and painting. "We know of no better work than this to assist and quicken the minds of those who would more thoroughly appreciate the beauties of nature and art," commented the *Congregationalist*. In 1865, close on the heels of the *Esthetics*, appeared *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*, a useful manual which the *Bibliotheca Sacra* praised for its marked condensation of thought, its concise style, and its just and appropriate definitions. In this manual Bascom attempted to relate rhetoric to thought rather than to mere form, and it thus marked an advance in its field. The year he accepted the presidency Bascom published his Lowell lectures under the title *Philosophy of English Literature*. Although critical of the lengths to which Taine pushed his materialistic interpretation of English belles-lettres, he himself emphasized the impact of technology and social forces. But his approach was essentially intellectual, inasmuch as he dwelt upon such factors as the revival of classical learning, the Puritan movement, and the growth of science in explaining English literature. And, inevitably, Bascom put pri-

¹⁴ "Freedom of Will Empirically Considered," in *Transactions of the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts, and Letters*, 6:20 (1881-1883); letters of William E. Aitchison, written on September 22 and 30, 1883.

mary emphasis on the ethical and religious element in English poetry and prose. The book, an American innovation in the field, was generally well received.¹⁵

In his Williams period Bascom had shown marked interest in still other fields. His very first book, *Political Economy* (1859), was used as a textbook at Yale and in other colleges. Based on standard English writers, this work, in the words of the leading authority on the history of American economic thought, "outdid its English models in its acceptance of the individual's pecuniary calculus as the sole guide of the general welfare."¹⁶ The chief function of government in relation to economy was, Bascom believed, the protection of property. In his view no regulation of corporations was necessary except to safeguard the currency and prevent misuse of the right of condemnation by railroads. Nor did he favor, in this early treatment of economics, any interference on behalf of labor. Denying that there was any basic class conflict in our economy, Bascom prescribed moral culture or self-culture as the proper remedy for any excessive acquisitiveness on the part of capitalists. The best remedy, too, for the recklessness, meanness, and improvidence of many in the laboring ranks was education and the improvement of the luxury-loving upper strata. The economic and social philosophy of Bascom in this, his first formal exposition of the subject, was obviously tinged strongly with laissez faire individualism and with an apologetic for capitalism that is suggestive of the elaborate rationale that was even then being formulated in business circles. We shall see that even before leaving Williams Bascom had begun to modify this essentially conservative economic theory and that at Wisconsin he came to repudiate it altogether.

Closely related to his interest in political economy was Bascom's concern with agriculture. In a notable address before the

¹⁵ The *Rhetoric* was used at Wisconsin prior to Bascom's coming. At least some students felt that the style was excessively flowery when, for instance, he spoke of letting "your foot fall silently on the fresh living lap of earth." *University Press*, 4:352 (October 17, 1873); for Bascom's critique of Taine's *English Literature* see *Bibliotheca Sacra*, 30:628-647 (October, 1873).

¹⁶ Joseph Dorfman, *The Economic Mind in American Civilization 1606-1865* (2 vols., New York, 1946), 2:752-755.

Berkshire Agricultural Society he advocated scientific farming and the wide, democratic distribution of freeholds. These ideas he developed in a series of addresses at Wisconsin. Shortly after his arrival in the state, in the very year of the triumph of the coalition that included the Grangers, Bascom publicly recognized the grounds for honest discontent and favored the organization of the agricultural interest politically to promote its objectives. Nor did he hesitate to tell the farmers that in his opinion they were not actually benefiting from the protective tariff; the high prices they had to pay for what they bought outweighed any advantages they might derive from a protected market. By and large Bascom emphasized the importance of mixed farming, the necessity of preventing needless waste, the use of the best tools and implements, and the constant improvement of stock and breed. "Let the farmer be intelligent," he insisted, "and all other essentials will follow in due order." And intelligence suggested, in his opinion, the general improvement of agricultural communities. Such improvement was possible if farmers would abandon their groundless prejudices against industry and the professional classes and encourage widely scattered industrial enterprises as well as cultural agencies in rural areas. Such institutions and agencies would, he contended, provide an outlet for farm youth who otherwise would continue to be drained off in alarming proportions. In short, Bascom's advice to Wisconsin farmers was to take their places as intelligent members of the community, to work for the good of all society in cooperation with industry and labor and the professional classes, and to demand equal justice for themselves and for everyone else.¹⁷

Thus when Bascom came to Wisconsin he was already nationally known in several fields, and he proceeded to enlarge his reputation by writing innumerable articles and an amazing number of books.¹⁸ His knowledge in many fields he shared with

¹⁷ *Transactions of the Berkshire Agricultural Society*, 1865 (Pittsfield, Massachusetts, 1866), 3-12; *Transactions of the Wisconsin State Agricultural Society*, 13:148-159 (1874-1875); 15:110-120 (1876); 22:226-236 (1884).

¹⁸ Bascom wrote and published at Wisconsin, in addition to many articles appearing in learned and semipopular journals, *A Philosophy of Religion* (1876), *Growth and Grades of Intelligence* (1878), *Ethics, the Science of Duty* (1879),

his students, in the senior classes he taught, in Sunday talks, and in the famous baccalaureate sermons. Yet, surprisingly catholic though his intellectual interests were, Bascom believed in a hierarchy of intellectual values. This creed he expressed on many occasions, nowhere more succinctly than in his report to the regents in 1886. "The center of university instruction is philosophy," he insisted. "This should be immediately supported by social philosophy, by historical, political and literary instruction and instruction in didactics. These studies constitute that body of knowledge which is centered in man and in the humanities, and they take to themselves in close fellowship all linguistic attainments." Recognizing the intellectual discipline of mathematics and its usefulness to the sciences, Bascom paid tribute to this branch of knowledge. But he believed that at Wisconsin the prevailing tendency was to overemphasize the sciences, a tendency natural enough in view of their command of so much that was deemed useful to man. The sciences, or at least an overemphasis of them, Bascom maintained, led the mind outward into the physical world in a measure detrimental to that complete education which in the long run fed not only the humanities but the sciences themselves and, most important of all, the intellectual and spiritual growth of man.¹⁹

Although Bascom, after coming to Wisconsin, modified his philosophy, theology, and ethics to make a larger place for empiricism, his ideas in this area did not change fundamentally. The most significant shift in the quality and direction of his thought took place in the field of social philosophy. Even before leaving Williams he had begun to modify his economic individualism—just why is not certain. Possibly his long devotion to the cause of temperance had something to do with it. At any rate he came more and more to believe that temperance could be best promoted by legislation restricting the manufacture and sale of alcoholic beverages, a position which of course presupposes a modification of the *laissez faire* he had so stoutly defended in 1859 in his *Political Economy*. If in the interest of the indi-

Natural Theology (1880), *Science of Mind* (1881), *Words of Christ* (1883), *Problems in Philosophy* (1885), and *Sociology* (1887).

¹⁹ Report of the president in *Regents' Biennial Report*, 1885-86, p. 36.

vidual's well-being it was proper for the community to curtail certain activities, then to promote social morality the community might legitimately exercise a still broader power over the individual. More and more Bascom was disposed to examine changing social and economic problems in the light of the Christian doctrine of human brotherhood. No doubt he began, as did Washington Gladden and other pioneers of the social gospel, to apply and to develop the implications of Bushnell's idea that salvation was no less a social than an individual matter. Intelligent and sensitive observer that he was, Bascom saw with growing concern the blight of city slums, the insecurity of masses of plain people, the advance of monopoly by any and every method, however questionable, and the prevalence of corruption in public life. He did not at once, to be sure, repudiate his early conviction that self-interest may engender social benefits and progress. But while admitting this, he likewise began to assert that self-interest also tends to create an irresponsible ruling class incapable of understanding and providing for the needs of the masses.²⁰ In 1872, in an important essay, he urged that religious principles be broadened to include all useful social theories, lest Christianity be left behind in the onward march of society. Unless both the natural and the supernatural elements in religion were concretely related here and now to "a life of love," both would lose their power.²¹

These ideas were developed at Wisconsin and strikingly applied on many occasions. In his baccalaureate sermon of 1876 Bascom declared that one of the most important seats of sin was the competitive, wealth-loving customs of our society and the associated love of power and position. Both church and state were largely under the spell of these sinister forces and false values. It was not enough to demand from business mere technical honesty; we must demand that it promote the general good. It was not enough to require of society the democratic gospel of equal rights; we must demand that it subject all undue

²⁰ Bascom, "The Natural Theology of Social Science," in the *Bibliotheca Sacra*, 24:722-744 (1867) and 25:1-23, 270-315, 645-686 (1868); "The Sphere of Civil Law in Social Reform" in the *American Presbyterian Review*, n.s. 3:40-51 (January, 1871).

²¹ "The Influence of the Pulpit," in the *Bibliotheca Sacra*, 29:698-719 (1872).

selfishness to a cheerful and large-hearted realization of the commonweal. Society must be converted to the Christian doctrine of One Shepherd and One Fold, where all are gathered together in love. "In other words," he concluded in words reminiscent of Horace Bushnell, "society must be converted, as distinctly and fully converted as the individual; and the conversion of the individual will be very partial till this conversion of the community."²²

These ideas were concretely illustrated in subsequent expositions, the most important of which was the baccalaureate of 1887, "The Christian State." In this address, Bascom declared all persons work together for the common good; the supreme law of love is the highest law; self-interest and good will are concurrent, one and the same; no one takes advantage of anyone else. In our industrial age business often gathers the honey that labor knows not how to save or is not permitted to save; hence an income tax is a step toward the Christian State. Gambling transactions on the Board of Trade must be outlawed. Society must control the franchises it grants to business. The accumulation of wealth in a few hands must give way to a more equitable distribution. Bascom recognized that this implied the extension of state control and was ready to deal with the objection that such an extension would undermine liberty. "Liberty stands for the use of powers, not for their abuse. . . . If we allow the individual to seek what he regards as his own liberty without relation to that of others . . . the commonwealth itself . . . crumbles away . . . and is at length dispersed to all winds of heaven."

But Bascom was not content with mere generalities. He was developing his conception, beautifully expressed in this, his last baccalaureate, that "the University of Wisconsin will be permanently great in the degree in which it understands the conditions of the prosperity and peace of the people, and helps to provide them; in the degree in which it enters into the revelation of truth, the law of righteousness, and the love of man, all gathered up and held firm in the constitution of the human soul and the counsel of God concerning it." In other words, the University had a sacred obligation to help realize the Christian State,

²² *The Seat of Sin* (n.p., n.d.), 14.

the blessed community of cooperation, of the sanctity of each individual, and of brotherly love.²³

It is little wonder that long after Bascom left Wisconsin he was recognized as the pioneer of the Wisconsin Idea, especially insofar as the faculty of the University undertook to give their services as experts to promote the well-being of the people. Robert La Follette, a student of Bascom, later wrote that to Bascom, the guiding spirit of his time, Wisconsin owed a greater debt than it could ever pay: ahead of his time in sensing the new social forces and in emphasizing the new social responsibilities, La Follette continued, Bascom was forever pointing out to the students all that the state was doing for them and urging them to repay the state with disinterested service. Bascom, La Follette concluded, encouraged the students of his day to develop a proper attitude toward public affairs; in Bascom's teaching was born the Wisconsin idea of education. Nor was it La Follette alone who held this view. "I question whether the history of any great commonwealth," declared President Birge, a pupil and colleague of Bascom, "can show so intimate a relation between the forces which have governed its social development and the principle expounded from a teacher's desk as that which exists between Wisconsin and the classroom of John Bascom."²⁴

This social philosophy Bascom translated into many specific applications. In his Sunday afternoon talks to students—talks which La Follette testified were among the most important influences in his life—the president explained why he favored trade unions and why he believed labor's right to strike must be recognized. Capital had already combined, he reminded the students, and unless labor followed suit, it would be helpless in its relations with management. No reform, he pointed out, had ever been accomplished without destruction of property and wealth. In articles for popular magazines he came out in favor of the Knights of Labor, asserting that labor could not permit wrongs to accumulate until they became irremediable. He welcomed the work of Richard Ely, the young Johns Hop-

²³ *A Christian State* (Milwaukee, 1887), 25, 31 and *passim*.

²⁴ Robert M. La Follette, Sr., *La Follette's Autobiography* (Madison, 1913), 26-27; *Bascom Memorial Service*, 41.

kins economist who was introducing American readers to European socialism and to a new conception of the modern labor movement. "I have now read your book, *The Labor Movement* etc., and can give it a very hearty endorsement," Bascom wrote to Ely in 1886. "I am quite in harmony with its aims and spirit, and regard it as a book much needed."

In his Sunday afternoon talks Bascom also emphasized the idea that government and society should devise an arrangement that would allow no man to become immensely rich and force no man to endure poverty and squalor. On one occasion he pointed out that machines were creating new economic and social problems and urged the importance of social control in the interest of human well-being. On another Sunday afternoon he lectured on competition as a social force and on its necessary corollary, cooperation. On still another occasion he argued against permitting capitalists to control prices by limiting production and urged the passage of legislation lightening the burden of taxation for the poor and increasing levies on those most able to pay.²⁵

To his pleas for a greater measure of cooperation and for social control of wealth, Bascom added arguments in support of other social reforms. We have seen that his championing of prohibition led to serious conflict with the governing board. Long an advocate of temperance, Bascom denied that the *laissez faire* theory of government was a valid basis for opposition to statutory prohibition. All civil law, he insisted, is a restraint of action. If one's neighbor is forbidden to sell liquor, his freedom is indeed checked; but if he is not so restrained, the freedom and safety of another's household is diminished. The real question, he urged, was whether a given restriction on the part of government actually contributed to the growth of human powers and the good of society.²⁶ "The fact that this problem in-

²⁵ Sidney Dean Townley, *Diary of a Student of the University of Wisconsin, 1886-1892* (mimeographed, Stanford University, 1939), 9, 11, 14; Bascom, "The Gist of the Labor Question" in *The Forum*, 4:87-95 (September, 1887); Bascom to Ely, October 14, December 6, 1886, in the Ely Papers, State Historical Society.

²⁶ For Bascom's most complete statement on this issue see *The Philosophy of Prohibition* (New York, 1884) and *Prohibition and Common Sense* (New York, 1885).

volves the most profound moral issues ought not to embarrass us in invoking the aid of the law in doing those things for which law is instituted. It is said that moral power must lie back of and sustain this movement. Certainly; but prohibitory law is the most direct and pertinent expression of that moral power."²⁷ Among the leaders of prohibition Bascom was acclaimed one of the most penetrating and most philosophical.

As Bascom had championed coeducation at Williams when to do so required the courage of a genuine pioneer, so he took an important part, as we shall see, in discrediting misinformed attacks on the coeducational system at Wisconsin. The championship of coeducation was part of a broader philosophy. In an article which appeared in *Putnam's Magazine* for December, 1869, just at the time the champions of women's rights were renewing the crusade that had been suspended during the Civil War, Bascom took the stand that men and women are equal in that the "superiority of neither at any one point is absolute and unapproachable, and is always balanced by some corresponding superiority at another." On every level, physical, intellectual, and social, women and men complemented each other in the special aptitudes and abilities they possessed, whether by nature or by nurture. That women were generally held in contempt, Bascom explained, could be laid to the restricted conditions under which they lived. Women should be independent of charity and secure against scorn. All tyranny, whether of man over man or of man over woman, must be fought at every point. "Let us abide patiently the new era announced," he concluded, "for if we as men cease to be the entire head of the race, we shall at least have larger sympathy and partnership in the angry scratches and staggering blows that shall come to our common physiognomy from the ills and evils of life."²⁸ In 1869 such a position was well in advance of much liberal opinion throughout the country.

In an address to Wisconsin advocates of woman suffrage Bascom related their cause to progress. Society, he held, was in the process of becoming better. Woman suffrage could no longer be

²⁷ *North American Review*, 147:135-140 (August, 1888).

²⁸ *Putnam's Magazine*, 14:714-725 (December, 1869).

denied, if one accepted the doctrine of progress which recognizes that "every human being has the right to the exercise of all the powers that belong to him, which he can exercise in consistency with the well-being of society." Each step in progress occasioned resistance and struggle; and advocates of improvement in individuals and in society must fight and fight hard for the rights of women. They must make suffrage rest on intelligence and virtue, not on sex! Point by point Bascom undertook to refute the arguments of the opponents: that women were not interested in politics; that they could not fight and therefore should not be entrusted with the vote, since it might affect the issue of war and peace; that woman suffrage would disrupt the home; and that the ideal of womanhood would be jeopardized by the corruption of the forum and the polling place.²⁹

A few years later Susan B. Anthony expressed publicly her appreciation and gratitude to Bascom for his support of her cause. The occasion was a Woman's Rights and Suffrage Convention being held in Madison, at which she was the chief speaker. Upon being introduced, Miss Anthony turned to the president and called him before the audience. It was a dramatic moment, of which he took full advantage. The time had passed, he assured the assembled crusaders, when the enemies of suffrage reform could rely merely on ridicule. The campaign of the champions of suffrage must inevitably result in victory, bringing with it the political and social improvements which he then went on to describe.³⁰

Bascom's pioneer championship of coeducation was equally forthright. We have seen that he was chiefly responsible for the minority report of a faculty committee at Williams which pointed out that if the mind of the woman were underfed and dwarfed, her progeny would be enfeebled. Thus society stood to gain as much as the woman herself if she were permitted a broad and ample education. Since the cost it would entail and the limited personnel prevented the establishment of a sufficient number of women's colleges of the caliber of Mount Holyoke and Vassar, coeducation was the obvious and inevitable answer.

²⁹ Bascom, *Woman Suffrage* (n.p., n.d.), 3.

³⁰ *Madison Daily Democrat*, December 3, 1886, p. 4.

Moreover coeducation provided stimulus and strength to both sexes. For vindication Bascom pointed to the success of coeducation at Oberlin and other institutions.³¹

The democracy inherent in Bascom's views of the status and potentialities of women and of their right to higher education is further exemplified in his over-all philosophy of education. Indeed, it is not too much to say that his addresses and articles on education entitle him to be ranked with Angell, Gilman, White, and Eliot as one of the leading philosophers of education in American institutions of higher learning. In and out of season Bascom urged that, if democracy were to be realized, all the doors of wealth, knowledge, and virtue must be open to every citizen. "The poor can only be permanently raised from their poverty, a poverty of internal even more than external resources, by effort and aid." There was far too much cant about the common school, America's peculiar hypocrisy and idol. It was not enough to "shout ourselves hoarse" with praises of the common school while begrudging it needed dollars for support. Every common school, Bascom insisted, must be a nursery of democracy and of moral training and of intellectual growth. It must be so good that the rich could have no excuse for sending their children to private institutions. "The communism of our time is not all an error," Bascom declared. Wealth and poverty must stand on more nearly equal terms than ever before and the public school must bridge the gap. Moreover, the public school must cease to be the plaything of politicians; it must be democratically administered from within; its teachers must take responsibility and be recognized as important persons in the community. Teachers must no longer be overworked and underpaid. "Till the life of the instructor is vindicated, the school will lack full vindication." Thus Bascom urged that instruction be recognized as skilled labor, having the rights of skilled labor and, in addition, wide public responsibilities.

The most inclusive test of any educational system, Bascom maintained, was the extent and character of its service to the state. It must harmonize the various interests of the state, it must strengthen all the liberties, it must promote the power of the state

³¹ *Williams Vidette*, 6:4-11 (July, 1872).

for all that is good. But no less important a test of a system of public education is the measure it takes of every human being and the help it gives him in developing his capacities for personal living and for the social good. And the final test is the degree to which it knits the people together in a common moral unity.

Bascom's democratic educational philosophy was also apparent in his discussions of the relations between the state university and the common and secondary schools. In a democracy, he believed, the state-supported higher institution must accommodate its terms of admission to the conditions prevailing in the public schools. It must maintain the closest possible contact with the high schools, gradually encouraging them to achieve better academic standards. "We should as soon think of making a tree taller by pulling it half way out of the ground, as to seek to add to the dignity of our State University by conditions of admission beyond the reach of her intermediate schools. We must abide with the people."

Bascom based his defense of state universities on the conception that the state, itself the offspring of human wants and needs, must provide not merely for those on the level of elementary and secondary instruction, but also for those seeking the highest values of mind and spirit. He felt this to be imperative because the education available in church colleges was uneconomical, feeble, inefficient, and limited. The small church college could not afford adequate libraries and laboratories. The need for state universities, he felt, was even greater in the West than in the East, for the new country had a less disciplined and stable cultural tradition to temper the passion for money-making. Even more important was the fact that any western state was made up of people of many nationalities, religions, and classes, and the state university could and did bring them together by providing a common experience, common ideals, a common conception of public responsibility and service. Bascom would not concede that the state university was necessarily less truly religious than the sectarian college. Granting that instruction without moral force was virtually useless, Bascom contended that convictions regarding moral standards, good citizenship, and the virtuous community pervaded the state uni-

versity quite as much as the private college. If a student now and again suffered because of a professor's "looseness of opinion," he was likely to suffer far more from the rigidity of sectarian views that so often endangered religious growth. That a state university would necessarily have less pronounced sectarian sentiment was obvious; but in being truly representative of the community in which young men and women would eventually live, it could better prepare them for the tests and temptations of the larger society. Besides, Bascom noted prophetically, any denomination might construct within the precincts of the state university a residence hall in which students of that faith could live and observe all the pious devotions.

Bascom conceded that the democracy of higher education was menaced by politics. But even this peril could easily be exaggerated, he added. The danger could be removed by continual resistance to undemocratic influences on all fronts. In fact, he said, instructors in the state university were frequently less repressed than those in private eastern colleges. "State institutions are just beginning to learn to run, and the incident friction will disappear as they acquire their lesson."³²

As president of an institution that included professional schools, Bascom emphasized his social and educational philosophy as it related to legal training. Paying tribute to the law for the discipline and strength it brought to the mind and for the social needs it met, Bascom urged the young lawyer to emphasize the public need and the dynamic nature of modern society. He exhorted the Wisconsin law students to guard against the temptation of making legal strife mere professional strife, instead of regarding it as one of life's important social conflicts. Although in Bascom's day the University had no school of journalism, its president frequently discussed the influence of the press, freedom of the press, and the social responsibilities of the press. He viewed the newspaper as essentially an educational

³² This discussion of Bascom's democratic educational philosophy has been based on three of his baccalaureate sermons: *The Common School* (Madison, 1878), 5, 6, 12; *Tests of a School-System* (Milwaukee, 1880), 8-10, 15, and *passim*; and *Education and the State*, delivered June 17, 1877 (n.p., n.d.), 11-12, and on his article, "The State Universities of the Northwestern States," in *The Western*, 7:134-135, 229-238 (March, May, 1881).

agency, for good or ill, and believed that as such it should not be indifferent to the training its directors received nor to the power it exerted over the minds of men.³³

Such, in brief, was the mind of John Bascom. It was a mind that held firmly to certain principles but at the same time had a remarkable capacity for growth. The views on social philosophy espoused by the young Williams professor differed greatly from those of the president of the University of Wisconsin. Bascom was, without doubt, one of the leading pioneers in the development of the social gospel. Few of his contemporaries at Harvard, Yale, Columbia, Hopkins, Michigan, or California possessed his insight into the new social problems of the nation, nor did any of them develop so well-rounded a democratic educational philosophy. In espousing a sort of evolutionary theism, Bascom in his own way "harmonized" science and religion, with the result that his religious faith was living and inspirational, fluid rather than dogmatic and narrow, and well calculated to help youth integrate the new science with a rationalistic, intuitive, and spiritual conception of Christian faith and Christian ethics. Wisconsin was fortunate indeed to have such a mind during so critical a period of her intellectual history.

³³ *The Lawyer and the Lawyer's Questions*, delivered June 18, 1882 (Milwaukee, 1882); "The Influence of the Press," in the *Bibliotheca Sacra*, 29:401-418 (July, 1872) and "Public Press and Personal Rights," in *Education* 4:604-611 (July, 1884).

12.

Financial Support from the State

IT WAS not until 1867 that Wisconsin gave financial assistance to the University. For eighteen years the University had depended for support on income from the University Fund and tuition fees. It had weathered the Civil War with a depleted and underpaid faculty, without a chancellor, and with a shrunken income fund. A normal department had been created and women admitted as a means of keeping the University open when many of the young men left to join the army. But by 1865 the worst seemed to be over. The Board of Regents, although still dominated by Madison men, included members powerful in state politics. The governor, James T. Lewis, was friendly. In February, 1865, he had given a small gift to the University—the first it had received. In the summer of 1865 the faculty, despite the shaky financial condition of the University, declared that sooner or later the state would come to the aid of the University. Two years later the state did make its first contribution to the support of the University. In the meantime, however, the University was reorganized and a new Board of Regents created.

The immediate occasion for the reorganization of 1866 was to secure the 240,000 acres of land—30,000 for each senator and representative—offered the state under the Morrill Act of 1862 for the endowment of a college of agriculture and mechanical arts. In order to get title to the land, the state was required to found a college within five years after the passage of

the act. The legislature voted to accept the land in 1863, but neither then nor in 1864 or 1865 was a college of agriculture founded.¹

When the legislature met in 1866 the lines were still not clearly drawn. It was apparent that the legislature would not found a new college. The alternative was to give the land grant to the University or to one of the sectarian colleges which offered to establish an agricultural department. There was little public sentiment favoring either course of action.

The Board of Regents, urged by the faculty, asked the legislature to attach the new college and land grant to the University. Governor Lucius Fairchild took no position except to urge that the legislature take some action. In February Dr. John W. Hoyt, joined by a group of distinguished citizens, issued a call for a convention to consider the land grant and the college. The convention met at the Capitol on February 7 and was attended by representatives from thirty-four counties. Twenty-six attended from Dane County. Among the various proposals presented and considered was one prepared by Dr. Hoyt himself, urging the legislature to give the land to the University on condition that Dane County provide not less than 300 acres of land for an experimental farm. Representatives of Lawrence Institute and Ripon College sought endorsement of recommendations that the land be given to their respective schools. The convention could not agree on a resolution, and all proposals were referred to the legislature.²

Early in March, Robert B. Sanderson of Poynette, chairman of the Assembly Committee on Agriculture and Commerce, introduced a bill for the reorganization of the University and the appropriation of the land grant to that institution. On his motion, the bill was referred to the Committees on Agriculture and Education sitting jointly. The chairman of the Committee on Education was Hanmer Robbins, who, it will be recalled, had

¹ In 1864 Dr. John W. Hoyt had attempted to get the legislature to pass a bill creating a separate college of agriculture. The bill passed in the Senate but died in the Assembly. *Senate Journal*, 1864, p. 298; *Assembly Journal*, 444, 582-584.

² Records of the Board of Regents (MS.), Vol. B., p. 404, January 15, 1866; *Assembly Journal*, 1866, p. 34; *Wisconsin State Journal*, February 7, 8, 9, 1866; *Milwaukee Sentinel*, February 8, 9, 1866.

worked hard for the reorganization of the University in 1858. On March 20 the joint committee, reporting the bill for passage, contended that provision must be made for agricultural and mechanical education, that it was now too late to establish a separate institution and that the new college should be a part of the University since it was the only institution over which the legislature had control and the only one "in which the whole people, without regard to locality or religious creed, can have a common interest." The bill provided that Dane County would contribute \$40,000 in bonds for the purchase of an experimental farm. This arrangement, the committee pointed out, would relieve the state of additional expenditure. The committee concluded: "The state should awake to a remembrance of her pledges and to a realization of how utterly she has failed of her duty in all educational matters. Congress, by a further act of liberality, has rendered it easy for the state, by judicious legislation, partially to atone [*sic*] for past errors, and the bill herewith reported presents a plan, which, if put in execution, will largely contribute to restore Wisconsin to an honorable rank among the enlightened and progressive states of the union."³

The measure finally came up for discussion and vote on April 6 and was temporarily lost by the close vote of 38 to 36. An attempt to substitute a bill giving the grant to Ripon College was thwarted when Benjamin F. Hopkins, a farmer representative from Dane County, moved for a call of the house. Adjournment followed. By the next day the Dane County lines had been formed. A motion was made to reconsider the vote by which the University bill was lost. The motion carried and the bill went to a third reading by a vote of 45 to 28. Immediate passage was blocked, but two days later, on April 9, the reorganization bill was approved in the Assembly by a vote of 49 to 21.⁴

Meanwhile, almost simultaneously, the Senate passed a bill awarding the agricultural college and land grant to Ripon College. The next day, however, the Senate passed the As-

³ Report of the Standing Committees on Agriculture and Education, Acting Jointly, in the *Assembly Journal*, 1866, pp. 674, 675-676.

⁴ *Assembly Journal*, 1866, pp. 666, 1003-1007, 1018-1020, 1054.

sembly reorganization bill by a vote of 22 to 4, thus demonstrating how lightly had been held the conviction that Ripon College was to have the grant. The law was approved by Governor Fairchild on April 12 and went into effect immediately, providing, however, that unless Dane County authorities delivered \$40,000 worth of Dane County bonds to the Board of Regents within a stipulated time, the whole act would be void.⁵

The legislature that adopted the University reorganization bill also passed an act providing for the sale of the agricultural college lands. The grant had been accepted by the state in 1863, and lands totaling 240,000 acres had been selected and reserved by January, 1866. Over half the land selected lay in Marathon and Polk Counties, the remainder in Chippewa, Clark, Dunn, Oconto, and Shawano.⁶

Long before the legislature received the bills assigning the agricultural land grant to the University, the lower house had acted on a proposition to provide for disposal of the land. Early in the session Henry D. Barron, speaker of the Assembly, member of the Board of Regents, and for many years general agent for Caleb Cushing in his speculative ventures in the St. Croix Valley, introduced a resolution directing the judiciary committee to report a bill placing these lands on the market at a minimum price of \$1.25 an acre. The Assembly passed the resolution without argument. The bill was reported to the Assembly by Angus Cameron, chairman of the judiciary committee, on March 2, three days before the University reorganization bill was introduced. Three weeks later it was passed by

⁵ *Senate Journal*, 1866, p. 1011; *General Laws*, 1866, pp. 153-158. It has been argued that the University stood in imminent danger of losing the agricultural college when the Assembly refused to vote the bill on April 6, 1866, and that only the quick parliamentary maneuver of Benjamin F. Hopkins saved the grant and college for the University. Charles S. Slichter, "Paul Ansel Chadbourne," in the *Wisconsin Alumnus*, 41:320-321 (July, 1940). Wilbur H. Glover, however, holds that this is doubtful and cites the opinion of the *Milwaukee Sentinel* reporter (April 9, 1866) that if the University had not received the grant, nothing would have been done about it. He suggests that the Senate may have passed the Ripon bill by way of encouraging Dane County authorities to get busy. Glover, "The Agricultural College Lands in Wisconsin," in the *Wisconsin Magazine of History*, 30:261-272 (March, 1947). From the *Assembly Journal* it is certainly not clear that the University bill had been definitely lost or that the Ripon bill would have carried on April 6.

⁶ *General Laws*, 1863, pp. 408-409; *Land Commissioners' Annual Report*, 1865-66, pp. 13, 14.

the Assembly without amendment and without a record vote. Its passage in the Senate was delayed until the University reorganization bill had been adopted, but there, too, it moved along a smooth course. The bill was signed by the governor on the day he approved the University reorganization bill. The administration of the lands was placed under the land commissioners as required by the Constitution. The minimum price was fixed at \$1.25 an acre. The purchaser was required to pay one-quarter of the price at the time of purchase and allowed ten years in which to pay the balance. The interest rate on the balance was set at seven per cent, the minimum fixed by the Constitution.⁷

In providing for disposition of the original University grant, it will be recalled, the legislature had first arranged for the land to be sold at a low minimum price. The Board of Regents, citing the example of Michigan and appealing to the high purposes for which the grant was made, got the legislature to fix a minimum price of \$10 an acre on the University lands. This had proved to be a heroic but ineffective gesture. Neither the regents, dominated by the desire to open and maintain the University, nor the legislature, sensitive to the demands of land-seekers, was willing to hold the lands off the market. Hence the price was reduced. In contrast, the legislature of 1866 encountered but little opposition toward putting the agricultural college lands on the market immediately at the minimum price of \$1.25 an acre. This price was permitted to stand, although Governor Fairchild protested that it was too low and the regents from time to time sought control of the lands. In short, there was no effective opposition in Wisconsin to the policy of selling the agricultural college lands at the minimum price established by Congress when it enacted the law offering these lands to the various states.

The absence of effective opposition to this policy reflected the dominance of that group which sought to get public lands into private hands as quickly as possible. While self-interest no

⁷ Alice E. Smith, "Caleb Cushing's Investments in the St. Croix Valley," in the *Wisconsin Magazine of History*, 28:7-19 (September, 1944); *Assembly Journal*, 1866, pp. 78, 83, 449-450, 699; *General Laws*, 1866, pp. 169-170. The bill was approved on April 12, 1866.

doubt furnished the principal motivation, a host of people not immediately concerned also lent their support to programs intended to assure prompt settlement of public lands. This group enjoyed its most conspicuous victory when the federal government adopted the Homestead Law in 1862. Its victory in the states was registered in the low prices fixed on school and other lands and in the establishment of various state immigration agencies. Each state aimed at getting a large population as quickly as possible, and cheap public land was a means to this end. The Homestead Law itself, offering to each settler one free quarter section of land from the public domain, was a strong argument against trying to hold state lands above the minimum price.

Although the law adopted by the legislature in 1866 was ostensibly drawn to favor the farmer settlers, most of Wisconsin's agricultural college lands were bought by speculators, lumber companies, and settlement-promotion companies. Two-thirds of the grant was sold between 1866 and 1872. The largest single sale during this period was made to Caleb Cushing, who purchased through his agent, Henry D. Barron, some thirty-three thousand acres in Polk County. Dr. Wilbur H. Glover, after a careful study of the sales made between 1866 and 1872, concluded that most of the land was bought by large buyers. Defining large buyers as those purchasing 800 acres or more, he found that only in Oconto County did small purchasers get more than 50 per cent of the agricultural college land. In all the other counties, the large buyers got more than half the land; in Clark County, 74 per cent; in Marathon, 82 per cent.⁸

By 1872 two-thirds of the land had been sold; by 1885 only a few thousand acres remained. In 1902 the fund derived from the sale of agricultural lands had reached \$302,000, and it has since remained around that figure. Thus the average price received for all these lands was approximately \$1.25 an acre. Only nine states received more than \$1.25 an acre for their agricul-

⁸ Original Sales Book, Agricultural College Lands, in the Office of the Commissioner of Public Lands, Wisconsin State Capitol; Smith, "Caleb Cushing's Investments," in the *Wisconsin Magazine of History*, 28:7-19 (September, 1944); Glover, "Agricultural College Lands," in the *Wisconsin Magazine of History*, 30:261-272 (March, 1947).

tural college lands, and only two received more than five dollars an acre. The average price received for all lands granted under the Morrill Act was around \$1.65 an acre.⁹

Wisconsin realized only the minimum sum from the sale of its agricultural college lands, a sum proportionately smaller than that realized from the earlier grants. This fact opened the way for University representatives to demand state support. They accused the state of failing to safeguard the University's interest, arguing that the state had failed in its trust because it did not take the necessary steps to get the largest possible endowment for the University. This argument actually proved more effective in bringing about eventual state support for the University than the contention that the state was obligated to contribute support because of its position as head of the public school system. Thus the land endowments which brought about the actual founding of the University later provided justification for its representatives seeking state support. This movement toward state support will be traced in the following pages.

Governor Fairchild had selected the new Board of Regents with care, and if but few of those chosen had large educational interests and experience, it could not be said that the Board lacked men with the capacity to attain prominence and power in politics. Ex-Governor Edward Salomon, who was elected president and spokesman of the new Board, and John G. McMynn had served on the previous Board, as had Henry D. Barron, who was appointed in 1867. Five members of the Board had served in the legislature that passed the reorganization bill and all had been active in pushing the measure through. Two were from the Assembly, Robert B. Sanderson of Poynette, who had introduced the measure in the lower house, and Angus Cameron of La Crosse. Cameron was elected speaker in 1867. Those from the Senate were Frederick O. Thorp of West Bend, Jackson Hadley of Milwaukee, and Augustus Ledyard Smith, who had been a tutor in the University ten years previously and was now a prominent businessman of Appleton. John B. Par-

⁹ *Land Commissioners' Biennial Report*, 1901-02, p. 30; 1919-20, p. 26; 1945-46, p. 4; Earle D. Ross, *Democracy's College* (Ames, Iowa, 1942), 84.

kinson and Samuel Fallows were well-known graduates of the University. Two others requiring special notice were Charles S. Hamilton of Fond du Lac, who eventually succeeded Salomon as president of the Board, and Napoleon Bonaparte Van Slyke of Madison. Van Slyke, a Madison banker, served for many years as chairman of the executive committee. Because of his vigorous and virtuous economy in that capacity and his "positive and tyrannical temper" he was remembered by Bascom in his autobiography with even greater disfavor than Boss Keyes.¹⁰

The new Board met as directed on June 27, 1866, assumed management of the University, and received the bonds from Dane County.¹¹ Unwilling to sell the bonds at twenty per cent discount, the Board borrowed \$28,800 on the security of the bonds, purchased land for the experimental farm, and asked the legislature for permission to invest University funds in the Dane County bonds at par. The hypothecation of the bonds, as Salomon called it, when approved by the legislature, enabled the Board to receive the full \$40,000, simply by adding the bonds to the investments of the University.

But beyond this transaction and purchase of the farm, the regents accomplished little. The reorganization was hampered both by the Board's inability to find a president and by the very small income of the University. Nevertheless Salomon reported that the regents at their first meeting had decided to proceed with the reorganization required under the law, "trusting that the people, through their legislature, would not withhold substantial aid from the university."¹² But failing to get a president, the Board had decided to continue the University on its present basis for another year.

The University needed financial assistance if it were to carry out the will of the legislature. The maximum income of the University from all sources, Salomon pointed out, would amount to no more than \$16,000, and the minimum expense

¹⁰ John Bascom, *Things Learned by Living* (New York, 1913), 71.

¹¹ The Dane County Board of Supervisors had agreed to issue the bonds on April 24, 1866. *Journal of the Board of Supervisors* (MS.), 3:209, in the Dane County courthouse.

¹² *Regents' Annual Report*, 1865-66, p. 9.

for the year was estimated at \$21,000. Although the agricultural college land had been selected and provision for its sale had been made, no income from this source could be expected soon. All this led Salomon to conclude that if the state wanted an institution of learning, it would have to supply \$5,000 to \$7,000 each year for the next five years. In justifying the request, Salomon pointed out that the state laws and Constitution had been violated when the permanent funds of the University were spent for buildings. He insisted that the state should have supplied the buildings, and that "the state has improperly caused or suffered the fund to be diverted. Hence the state owes the University over \$100,000 or at least the actual interest on that sum." He insisted further that the state's practice of charging the University Fund for its management had diverted an appreciable amount of the University's money before the practice was abandoned in 1866. The act of the state in joining the agricultural college to the University, and thus escaping the expense of providing additional buildings, was also advanced as a reason for the state now to contribute to the University. Salomon concluded with an appeal to state pride: "It is time that Wisconsin should cease standing behind so many of her sister states in regard to this, its highest institution of learning, which should be the pride of its citizens."¹³

In his message to the legislature Governor Fairchild repeated the arguments and request of the Board of Regents, adding that "a little timely assistance from the state each year will soon place it beyond the need of pecuniary help." Senator Frederick O. Thorp, a member of the Board, introduced a bill designed to permit refunding the amount taken from the University Fund for buildings and the amount charged for management of the Fund. This bill was referred to the Committee on Education, of which Augustus Ledyard Smith, another regent, was a member. After due consideration the committee brought in a substitute bill. The committee report, promptly given wide circulation by the Madison press, reviewed the history of the University, repeated most of Salomon's arguments, criticized former legislatures for neglect of the University and misuse of

¹³ *Ibid.*, 11-13.

the University Fund, and recommended payment by the state of a sum equal to the interest on the money which had "unconstitutionally" been taken from the Fund to pay for the building debt. The committee even argued that the Constitution obligated the legislature to support a university without reference to the federal land grant, but this contention of the committee was challenged by Senator Stoddard Judd of Fox Lake, who had been a member of the constitutional convention.¹⁴

In its course through the Senate, the bill was amended to relieve the state of refunding the money taken from the fund for its administration. Senator Judd also insisted on striking out those parts of the bill which described the expenditures from the University Fund for buildings as "violations" of the Constitution. Thus amended, the bill passed the Senate by a vote of 23 to 3. It went to the Assembly where, after minor amendments and under the watchful eye of Regent Henry D. Barron and Speaker Angus Cameron, it was adopted by a vote of 59 to 26. In its final form the bill provided for an annual appropriation of \$7,303.76 for a period of eleven years.¹⁵

Although the legislature had been unwilling to acknowledge in the words of the law that the grant was made in recognition of the impropriety on the part of a former legislature in expending part of the permanent University Fund for buildings, such an admission was implicit in its adoption of the act and in its specification of the amount to be given to the University each year. Acknowledgement of the obligation of the state to give financial support to the University thus derived primarily from the charge that the state had not fulfilled its responsibility to protect the property of the University. Although many argued then, and some had argued since the 1850's, that the state had the obligation to support the University because it was head of the public school system, this factor was less weighty than the charge of maladministration of the trust.

But any thought that the legislature, in this act of restoring income to the University, had accepted full responsibility for

¹⁴ *Senate Journal*, 1867, pp. 30, 181, 358-361; *Wisconsin State Journal*, February 26, 27, 1867.

¹⁵ *Senate Journal*, 1867, p. 389; *General Laws*, 1867, pp. 79-80.

the University was quickly dispelled. Later in 1867, when they requested funds for an additional building, the Board of Regents rehearsed the familiar arguments about the high cost of living in Madison. If the best use were to be made of the University, the regents pointed out, it would be necessary to expand the University accommodations now available. Since the Board had no means with which to do this, it was "*confidently expected*" that the state would provide for the erection of another building. A bill appropriating money for this purpose was introduced in the Assembly in 1868 by Henry D. Barron, but the regents were not so well organized nor did they have such a persuasive case as the year before. The bill never got through the lower house. The next year the regents repeated their plea for a new building, pointing out that it was to be used for women, but the request was not pushed very hard, perhaps because of the well-known antipathy of Chadbourne for female education. However, in 1869 the regents renewed their plea, this time asking specifically for \$50,000 for a building for the Female College.¹⁶

A bill appropriating \$50,000 to the University was introduced in the Assembly in January, 1870 and, having cleared both the Committee on Education and the Committee on Claims, was referred to a select committee. This committee, reporting late in February, recommended passage. The committee had "examined" the University carefully and reported that the increase in the number of students would soon fill all buildings with men and additional men should not be turned away. The appropriation called for by the regents was not "any special appropriation for females. They *must* have more room for males, and they judge it best to take the building now occupied by females for the men, and to give the new building to the women."

The committee also acknowledged that "the fund of the university is less than one-half what it ought to be, because its lands were sold cheap to encourage the settlement of the state." Here was the first official suggestion that the state was doubly cul-

¹⁶ *Regents' Annual Report*, 1866-67, p. 13; 1867-68, p. 20; 1868-69, p. 32; *Assembly Journal*, 1868, pp. 522, 776, 817-818.

pable in the administration of the University lands and the University Fund. Not only had the permanent fund been used "illegally" for the construction of buildings, but the maximum amount had not been realized from the land endowment. The land had been sold too cheaply. The inference, soon to be explicitly drawn, was that the state owed the University the difference between what had been realized from the sale of the lands and what might have been realized if the lands had been sold for their "real value." Since land values were continuing to rise, this was an effective argument. Wisconsin was not the only one to use it. In 1870, the same argument was advanced in Iowa in justification of a demand for a permanent appropriation from the state for the support of the state university there.

Although its course through the Assembly was devious, the appropriation bill was finally brought to a vote and passed 53 to 37. It reached the Senate on March 4 and after receiving only cursory attention was approved. The governor signed it on March 12. The law provided \$50,000 "to enable the regents of the University of Wisconsin to build an additional university edifice." The passage of this act constituted a more definite acknowledgement of the responsibility of the state to provide buildings for the University than had the law of 1867.¹⁷

The regents made no request for funds from the legislature of 1871, although plans for the future expansion of the University were discussed in the annual report. The Board asked for control over the sale of the agricultural college lands so that these lands might be held for higher prices. They realized, of course, that a constitutional amendment would be necessary to give them this control. "Had such a course been adopted on the organization of the University, we should now have had an ample endowment, and been saved from the necessity of begging at the doors of the State Councils for the meager sums necessary to make the institution one of even reasonable usefulness." A year later the Board repeated the request for control of the agricultural college lands. The regents cited the very favorable

¹⁷ *Assembly Journal*, 1870, pp. 57, 67, 273-275, 498-499, 627-628; *Senate Journal*, 357, 437-438; *General Laws*, 1870, p. 74.

treatment which Michigan had accorded its University, comparing it with the niggardly treatment given the University of Wisconsin. Michigan had already provided for an annual appropriation of \$20,000 for the University and had contributed \$75,000 for buildings, in addition to giving no less than \$390,000 in lands and money to the agricultural college. Wisconsin had contributed only a paltry \$50,000 for the Female College.¹⁸

At the dedication of the Female College building Lucius Fairchild, who was then completing his third term as governor, delivered an address in which he reviewed the history of the land grant, land sales, and the funds. A hero of Bull Run and Gettysburg and an immensely popular figure in the state, Fairchild spoke with authority. He proclaimed that if the University lands had been handled with the judgment ordinarily used by men of business, the endowment fund would have amounted to at least one million dollars. The conclusion was inescapable that the state was responsible for the loss of two-thirds of the value of the Fund. He recalled the rash expenditures for buildings and the state's practice of charging for the administration of the Fund, protested the sale of the agricultural lands at \$1.25, and declared he had repeatedly urged that the minimum price be increased. The land, he insisted with justification, was being purchased mostly by speculators who resold it to immigrants at large profits. The land remaining unsold should be withdrawn from sale.¹⁹

Governor C. C. Washburn, who succeeded Fairchild in January, 1872, also charged the state with responsibility for the smallness of the sum obtained through the sale of the lands. In his

¹⁸ *Regents' Annual Report*, 1869-70, pp. 32-33; 1870-71, pp. 7-8. The practice of citing the example of other states, it will be recalled, was begun almost at the beginning of the University's history. Michigan was the favorite example, until the 1890's, although other universities served their purposes. How common the practice was, and how useful, is suggested by a letter which James B. Angell, then president of the University of Michigan, wrote Keyes on March 7, 1885. "It is a little amusing to see how we are trying to persuade our Legislature to be liberal by reciting to them the generous things we are told your Legislature has done for your Univ'y., while you are seeking to encourage your Solons by the example of ours. Let us hope that we can make this reciprocal, double acting policy work for us both." Keyes Papers, in the State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

¹⁹ *University Press*, January 1, 1872.

first message to the legislature he pointed out that the University lands had been sold too soon and too cheap. More extravagant than Fairchild, he proclaimed that the lands if held until the present time "would have brought nearly ten-fold the sum that was realized for them; a sum sufficient to put the University on an equal footing with the best endowed institutions in the country." But unlike Fairchild, Washburn felt there was nothing to be salvaged. "But what has been done," he told the legislature, "cannot be recalled, and it remains now for the state to correct its error as it best can." Accordingly he urged only that the University be given "friendly consideration" by the legislature.²⁰

These acknowledgements by such prominent men as Fairchild and Washburn were nothing less than an invitation to the legislature for the state to "correct its error." The time was propitious. Early graduates of the University were already taking their places in public offices. Samuel Fallows, of the class of '59, had been elected state superintendent of public instruction and was anxious to serve the cause of the University. John C. Spooner, later a senator from Wisconsin, had been elected to the Assembly that year. The Alumni Association was ten years old.

On February 14 Spooner introduced a bill appropriating \$10,000 annually to the University; a day later a similar bill was introduced in the Senate by William Nelson. The Assembly bill was referred to the Committee on Education, of which Spooner was chairman, and was reported out for passage on February 29. It was then referred to the Committee on Claims, which reported it for passage on March 7. Taken up by the Assembly, the bill moved to a third reading and passage on March 20. With 13 absent or not voting, the final vote was 74 to 13. Without even sending it to committee, the Senate adopted the bill the next day by the overwhelming vote of 27 to 1.²¹

The bill which passed with such relative ease is noteworthy not only because it provided that the state should contribute \$10,000 annually for the support of the University and offered

²⁰ *Senate Journal*, 1872, appendix, 18.

²¹ *Assembly Journal*, 1872, pp. 282, 484, 577, 770; *Senate Journal*, 220, 564, 574, 581, 582. The vote on passage was first 25 to 3, but two senators asked and obtained leave to change their negative votes after the bill was adopted.

free tuition to all graduates of graded schools in Wisconsin, but also because of its preamble. The arguments of Fairchild and Washburn and the contentions of educators seeking state support for the University were here given official approval. The preamble acknowledged that the settled policy of the state had been to offer educational lands at a low price to induce immigration of settlers. While this policy had benefited the state, it had "prevented such an increase of the productive funds for which such grants were made as could have been realized if the same policy had been pursued which is usually practiced by individuals or corporations holding large tracts of land." Thus the University Fund had "suffered serious loss and impairment by such sale of its lands, so that its income is not at present sufficient to supply its wants, and cannot be made so by any present change of policy, inasmuch as the most valuable lands have already been sold."²² Thus the second appropriation for the continuing support of the University, like the first, was based not upon the obligation of the state to support higher education but upon the principle that the state had permitted spoliation of the endowment of its ward and was now making restitution.

It is noteworthy that neither Governor Washburn nor the legislature felt that anything could be done about the remaining lands. While it is true that a large portion of the land grants had been sold, of the original 330,000 acres, more than 9,000 acres still remained of the University land grant and almost 75,000 acres of the agricultural college grant.²³ These lands, along with others given the state for educational purposes, continued to be offered for sale at the old prices. It seems a little strange that the legislature subscribed wholeheartedly to the confession which prefaced the law of 1872 and yet made no move to change the land policy still in force. Besides the remaining University lands, there were more than two million acres of school lands still unsold. Surely there was enough land left to permit an experiment with higher prices if anyone really felt that higher prices could be obtained or if the acknowledgement of guilt

²² *General Laws*, 1872, Chapter 100, p. 114.

²³ *Land Commissioners' Annual Report*, 1871-72, p. 4.

was anything more than a justification for giving the state university additional financial aid.

The response of the press to this law was favorable. The student press naturally rejoiced in its passage, and the *Wisconsin Journal of Education* pronounced it a "tardy but nevertheless timely act of justice to the University." Yet it was nowhere suggested that the state should entirely support the University. President Twombly himself viewed such a possibility with disfavor. In his report to the regents in January, 1873, he asserted, "No university has ever been maintained on a high grade by direct taxation, and I am sure ours never can be." Although he acknowledged the necessity for an occasional "gift" from the legislature, he felt that the people would be unwilling to be taxed to build a state institution superior to their sectarian colleges.²⁴

During the years immediately following the reorganization, the University had experienced a limited but steady prosperity. In 1866 the Board estimated its total expenditures at \$21,000, of which \$16,000 was allotted for salaries of the president and professors. Three years later the Board anticipated receipts of \$30,000, of which \$20,000 was allotted to salaries. By the early 1870's cash balances occasionally were carried from one year to the next. By 1873 receipts passed \$50,000 and a year later they amounted to almost \$62,000, of which \$30,391.04 was set aside for salaries. Despite the increase in funds, it is obvious that the Board lacked the means for further building.²⁵

At the June meeting of the regents in 1874, John Bascom, who recently had become president of the University, presented plans for a new science building. The regents appointed a committee to examine the plans and to prepare a bill asking for the necessary appropriation. At the January meeting in 1875 the plans and bill were approved by the full Board. Another committee, composed of Edward Searing, state superintendent of public instruction, Napoleon B. Van Slyke, George H. Paul,

²⁴ *University Press*, April 5, 1872; *Wisconsin Journal of Education*, series 2, vol. 2, p. 200 (May, 1872); Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. B, pp. 202-203, January 21, 1873.

²⁵ *Regents' Annual Report*, 1865-66, p. 11; 1868-69, pp. 77-78; 1872-73, p. 61; 1873-74, p. 99.

and Jerome R. Brigham, was appointed to present the plans and the bill to the legislature then in session.²⁶ Although the legislature was largely made up of Granger representatives, and Governor William R. Taylor was committed to a program of reform and strict economy,²⁷ the regents' bill appropriating \$80,000 for the construction of a science building was carried through both houses with masterly dispatch. Introduced in the Senate on February 3 by the Committee on Education, the bill was adopted twelve days later by a vote of 23 to 1. On February 18 the house passed it by a vote of 74 to 13. It became law with the signature of the governor a week later.²⁸

This success, coupled with the fact that the grant made in 1867 would soon run out, spurred the regents the next year to ask that a regular tax be levied for the support of the University. President Bascom led the way. In his report to the Board in 1875 he pointed out the necessity for a greater and more elastic income, one that would grow with the University. He complained that the representatives of the University should not have "to come afresh to the State with each new need, knowing it in no other relation than this of constant supplication." The regents, taking Bascom's suggestion to heart, urged the legislature to meet the financial needs of the University in such a way as "to remove all doubt and embarrassment from the future." In arguing for more generous support George H. Paul, speaking for the regents, harked back to the argument presented in 1867 that the Constitution made the state responsible for the University. "No room remains for reasonable doubt, therefore, that the University is as much a legitimate object of State protection and care, as the common schools, or the State courts."²⁹

At the January meeting in 1876 the regents determined to

²⁶ Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. C, pp. 211, 215, June 17, 1874, January 19, 1875.

²⁷ *The Wisconsin Blue Book*, 1927 (Madison, 1927), 36-37.

²⁸ *Senate Journal*, 1875, pp. 86, 238; *Assembly Journal*, p. 325; *Laws of Wisconsin*, 1875, p. 139. Van Slyke was prominent among the University lobbyists. Either he underestimated the friendly feeling toward the University or played his part well. On February 13, 1875, he wrote to Brigham anxiously, warning that "the assembly will require all the attention possible to give." Brigham Papers, in the State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

²⁹ *Regents' Annual Report*, 1874-75, pp. 6-7, 9, 31.

ask for a law under which the University would receive the proceeds of an annual tax of one-tenth mill per dollar on the assessed value of the taxable property in the state. George H. Paul was asked to prepare such a bill. President Bascom, Edward Searing, and the executive committee were appointed "to look after the necessary legislation required at the present session of the Legislature."³⁰

Perhaps because the regents did not decide upon a specific program for a tax mill levy until after the legislature had come together, Governor Harrison Ludington, although friendly to the University, made no direct reference to the regents' request in his message to the legislature. The state superintendent of public instruction, Edward Searing, publicly appealed for passage of the act, citing the example of Michigan's liberality and again bringing up the matter of the Wisconsin land sales. "A very moderate sense of *justice*," he proclaimed, "would award to our own institution *more* than a tenth mill tax for the million dollars that is not, but ought to be in its fund today."³¹

The regents' bill was introduced in the Senate by Senator Henry D. Barron, still a regent and the veteran of earlier legislative campaigns to obtain funds for the University. The progress of the bill was anxiously watched by the regents.³² Yet the expected opposition never developed. The newspapers of the state, if they mentioned it at all, followed the lead of the Madison papers and supported the measure as an act of justice to the University. One provision of the bill, granting free tuition to all residents of the state, was generally singled out for favorable comment.³³

The progress of the bill through the legislature suggests the

³⁰ Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. C, pp. 242, 244, January 18, 19, 1876.

³¹ *Wisconsin State Journal*, March 1, 1876.

³² George H. Paul, although he was not in Madison during the session, kept in close touch. One correspondent wrote to him saying, "For the University Bill spoken of by you—I shall make the desired Propaganda and enlighten men that will listen to me—on its merits." William H. Lindwurm [?] to Paul, February 17, 1876, in the Paul Papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin. J. C. Gregory of Madison wrote, warning that the bill would provoke a fight in the Assembly and asking him to "come up and give us your help." Gregory to Paul, February 21, 1876. On the same day Senator Barron wrote him suggesting that he come to Madison to help push the bill through the Assembly. Barron to Paul, in the Paul Papers.

³³ *Milwaukee Sentinel*, February 22, 1876, p. 4.

shrewdness with which Paul and his associates planned and executed their campaign and the effectiveness of the "desired propaganda." Introduced in the Senate on February 2, the bill progressed quickly and smoothly to a third reading and passage by a vote of 27 to 3. Reported to the Assembly on February 14, the bill was modified slightly and then, under suspension of the rules, was adopted by a unanimous vote. On March 6 it was signed by the governor.

The bill was substantially the one written by George H. Paul. It levied a tax of one-tenth of a mill and appropriated the receipts to the University. The act stipulated that this appropriation was to be in lieu of all other appropriations and "shall be deemed a full compensation for all deficiencies in said income arising from the disposition of the lands donated to the state by congress." The sum of \$3,000 annually was to be used for the study and teaching of astronomy as soon as someone gave the University an observatory. The law also granted free tuition at the University to all residents of the state. No other restriction was placed on the use of the money.³⁴

The adoption of the bill was applauded on all sides. The *University Press* pronounced it appropriate to the centennial year and perceived that the people had at last come to rescue the University from the losses sustained in the past. The "prompt and hearty" support given the University by representatives from all parts of the state was viewed by the *Madison Daily Democrat* as evidence of the growing popularity of the University and a happy omen for the future. The legislature was assured that there is no tax the people of the state "pay so cheerfully as that imposed for educational purposes." The *Democrat* saw in this measure the creation of a unified system of education. "The common school and the University are indissolubly linked together. Each draws its life blood from the other." The justification of the law, in the mind of the

³⁴ *Senate Journal*, 1876, pp. 156, 249; *Assembly Journal*, 299, 491; *Laws of Wisconsin*, 1876, pp. 267-269. The special provision for the support of astronomy was included to satisfy ex-Governor C. C. Washburn, who contemplated giving the University an observatory. This he did after the bill was adopted. The legislature responded in 1879 by making him an honorary member of the Board of Regents for life, i.e., "for and during his good pleasure," *Laws of Wisconsin*, 1879, pp. 67-68.

editor of the *Democrat*, was the misuse of the land grant, for which "the State now seems willing to make ample reparation." The *Wisconsin Journal of Education* agreed. "Broadly and deeply are being laid the foundations of its future education eminence. Another great corner stone has just been finished and brought to its place, in a manner probably without parallel in the history of State Universities." The act "insures great and lasting prosperity, honor and usefulness to this head of our public school system." The correspondent of the *Waukesha County Democrat* informed his readers that the bill was "one of the most important measures of this or any other session." His judgment was echoed by other newspapers.

George H. Paul, in his September report as president of the regents, declared the law of "unusual interest." With its passage "the relations of the State to the University fund income have been wisely and permanently settled. . . . The compensation thus accorded by law for deficiencies arising from the disposition of the lands donated to the State by Congress in trust for the University, is not deemed to be in excess of the necessities of the University, or of the just and equitable obligations of the State. Nevertheless, the Regents have not hesitated to accept the conclusions of the State gratefully, as a final and satisfactory adjustment of the principal questions relating to such trust, hitherto in controversy."³⁵

Although the new law repealed the earlier laws granting over \$17,000 a year to the University, President Bascom estimated that it increased the income of the University about \$20,000 a year. This sum he felt would enable the regents to increase the faculty, provide additional apparatus, and erect a library and assembly hall without asking the legislature for appropriations. A building and improvement program was launched immediately. The Board decided to put steam-heating equipment in the new science building, gas lights were introduced into the women's hall, and a water system was devised and installed. The water system was to furnish water for the Univer-

³⁵ *University Press*, March 16, 1876; *Madison Daily Democrat*, March 2, 1876; *Wisconsin Journal of Education*, series 2, vol. 6, p. 123 (March, 1876); *Waukesha County Democrat*, March 11, 1876; *Wisconsin State Journal* (Madison), March 18, 1876; *Regents' Annual Report*, 1875-76, p. 3.

sity and fire protection for the science building. Within a few years water was piped from the University to the Capitol, a mile away. The regents also decided to build an assembly hall and library with surplus funds obtained through the new tax. This decision was made in 1876, but it was two years before the building committee of the Board and President Bascom could agree on the plan and location of the building. In 1878 the Board appropriated \$40,000 for the construction of the assembly hall and library (now Music Hall). A year later the regents were able to boast that they had constructed this new building and had made various other improvements without aid from the legislature.³⁶

Although President George H. Paul had indubitably been in earnest when he declared for the Board in 1876 that the appropriation of the mill tax was a "final and satisfactory" settlement, that did not mean that the Board would never again ask for financial assistance. The provision granting free tuition to all Wisconsin residents had deprived the regents of that source of income. By 1880 the Board complained that the income from the University funds had diminished by \$3,185.22 because of the failure of the state to keep all the money invested and because of the reduction in interest rates.³⁷ To increase the income and provide for improvements, the regents in the early 1880's decided to charge all students a fee. This act was

³⁶ *Regents' Annual Report*, 1875-76, pp. 4-5, 28-29; 1877-78, p. 7; 1878-79, p. 5; Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. C, pp. 264-265, 270, 319, 323, June 21, 1876, January 16, 1877, June 19, 1878. The editor of the *Wisconsin Journal of Education* was impressed with the "water works," a system "marvelous in any other age than ours." A pipe was laid from Lake Mendota to Science Hall, which housed the pumping station. From here the water was pumped to an iron tank under the dome of University Hall and distributed from there. The *Journal* reported that the water was to be used for fire protection and "for sanitary drainage purposes, for which the most complete arrangements have already been made in Ladies' Hall and Science Hall." *Wisconsin Journal of Education*, series 2, vol. 6, pp. 507-508 (December, 1876). The famous indoor privy of Ladies' Hall was supplanted by water toilets, and in 1877 the regents directed that the building committee construct "at least one commodious bathing room" in that building. Six years later the Board extended these improvements to North and South Halls, but the men who lived in these dormitories had little time to enjoy the new luxury. South Hall was partly taken over for laboratories and classrooms in 1883, North Hall two years later. Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. C, pp. 278, 388, January 17, 1877, January 16, 1883.

³⁷ *Regents' Annual Report*, 1879-80, p. 6.

contested by the students, carried to the courts, and there sustained. Again the regents returned to the legislature for additional funds.

In 1880 the Board reported that University Hall, which according to President Bascom was "never a fortunate building," had to be reconditioned. But the regents lacked enough money for the project. Therefore at the January meeting in 1881 the regents appointed a committee to prepare and present a bill to the legislature for remodeling University Hall, renovating the water works—built only a few years before and now in disrepair—and financing agricultural experiments.³⁸

The committee introduced a bill providing an appropriation of \$25,000 to the University—\$15,000 for the repair of University Hall and \$5,000 for each of the other two projects. But the supporters of the University did not command a solid front. Only the year before the University authorities, heeding the insistent demands of representatives of high schools, had reluctantly abolished the preparatory department. Besides, the relations between President Bascom and the members of the Board were anything but harmonious, and the committee in charge of the legislation engaged in little of Paul's careful and fruitful lobbying. The funds for agricultural experiments were approved in a special bill. For the rest, the Senate would approve only \$4,500 for reconstruction of the water works, and this was on the ground that the Capitol used more of the water than the University.³⁹

The regents appeared before the next legislature, their arguments for an appropriation supported by the Board of Visitors and faculty. The appropriation bill was introduced and its passage was placed largely in the hands of Elisha W. Keyes. Although it did not grant the full amount requested by the regents, the legislature did adopt a bill providing \$10,000. The funds provided by this act permitted renovation of the building but afforded nothing for ventilation and heating. The regents therefore returned to the legislature in 1883 to ask for additional funds. Because of the need for new buildings and the

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 27; Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. C, p. 354, January 18, 1881.

³⁹ *Senate Journal*, 1881, pp. 128, 236; *Laws of Wisconsin*, 1881, p. 354.

desire on the part of the new professor of agriculture to convert the Experimental Farm into an experiment station, the regents requested an increase in the tax levy. In his 1882 report to the Board of Regents, Bascom treated at length the subject of enlarging the income of the University. His argument was that the University should have additional support from the state either in direct appropriations or through an increase in the University tax rate. Reporting for the regents, George H. Paul contended that the University was established by the federal government and all the income now received for regular support was derived "directly or indirectly, from the original grant of lands by congress or from private endowments." It was time, he felt, for the state to make a generous provision for the University. "The establishment and maintenance of the University is made an imperative duty of the state, in the fundamental law creating the state, and . . . the support of the University is as much a public duty and obligation as the support of any other integral portion of the state government." At its January meeting the Board appointed the executive committee to present a request for a tax increase from one-tenth to one-eighth of a mill.⁴⁰

The University bill introduced in the Assembly by Robert J. MacBride of Neillsville, Clark County, on February 2 provided for the establishment of an agricultural experiment station and a chair of pharmacy and materia medica. Although the bill was designed to win the support of farm groups and pharmacists, some supporters of the University were not wholly in sympathy with it. A. C. Parkinson, brother of John C. Parkinson, who had been appointed to the Board of Regents that year, wrote to Keyes shortly after the bill was introduced saying that his brother feared it would be defeated. "I regret that the University has been compelled to ask for this increase. When we got the 1/10 mill bill through, we made good promises that the University would never come before the legislature asking for

⁴⁰ *Regents' Annual Report*, 1880-81, pp. 6, 24, 85; 1881-82, pp. 5-6, 24, 25-27; *Assembly Journal*, 1882, pp. 241, 772; *Laws of Wisconsin*, 1882, p. 923; Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. C, pp. 387-388, January 16, 1883. Elisha W. Keyes was chairman of the executive committee. The other two members were William F. Vilas of Madison and W. E. Carter of Platteville.

any more money. However if this increase is needed the bill ought to pass." Parkinson promised to come to Madison soon on other business and at that time to do what he could to help the University bill along.⁴¹

The bill moved through the Assembly with reasonable smoothness. Keyes was assisted by William F. Vilas, who already was a potent influence in Democratic politics and two years later was to become a member of Cleveland's cabinet. Assistance also was offered by that effective University lobbyist, Professor Henry. On March 27, its friends having blocked all efforts to change or kill it, the bill was passed by the Assembly. In the Senate an attempt to send the bill to its death in committee was blocked, and on March 31 it was approved by a substantial majority. On April 2 Governor Rusk signed it.

As in the case of the law of 1876, the appropriation was justified in terms of the failure of the state to protect the University land endowment. This appropriation was in "full compensation for all deficiencies in said income, arising from the disposition of the lands donated to the state by congress, in trust, for the benefit of said income."⁴²

The changed tax rate provided an immediate increase in the income of the University. The regents reported receipts of \$87,000 for 1882-83; the next year, when the proceeds of the larger tax became known, the total receipts amounted to more than \$100,000, over half of which was contributed by the state.⁴³ In comparison with the other state universities in the Middle West, Wisconsin was indeed prosperous. Only Michigan, with a student enrollment of more than twice that of Wisconsin, now had a larger income. The demands of the University seemed to have been satisfied, but not for long.

On the evening of December 1, 1884, Science Hall burned. Since its completion in 1876, this plain four-story building had

⁴¹ *Assembly Journal*, 1883, p. 114; A. C. Parkinson, Columbus, Wisconsin, to Elisha W. Keyes, February 10, 1883, in the Keyes Papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

⁴² *Assembly Journal*, 1883, pp. 114, 258, 680; *Senate Journal*, 413, 433, 472, 482; *Laws of Wisconsin*, 1883, p. 249.

⁴³ *Regents' Biennial Report*, 1883-84, pp. 17, 25. Beginning in 1884, the reports of the regents are presented biennially and cover a two-year period ending September 30.

been the pride of the regents and the officers of the University. When it was first completed the legislature had been invited to visit it, and the University catalogues carried sketches of the floor plans. Into its fourth-floor museum had gone the famous Lapham collection, purchased for the University by the legislature, and a host of other geological and botanical specimens. The whitened bones of General Sherman's horse had an honored place among the relics. Here too the small art collection was housed. Located on the site of the present Science Hall, it was a conspicuous and useful building equipped with gas lights and flushing toilets; it was heated with steam instead of with the potbellied stoves used in the older buildings on the hill. But Science Hall was not perfect. The boilers did not always furnish enough heat, and the floors were weak and shaky. In December, 1883 Professor Conover had warned the executive committee that the floors would have to be shored up or they would collapse.⁴⁴

On the night of the fire, the alarm sounded about eight o'clock. When the first spectators arrived the fire was confined to the engine room, but no one could find the fire hose and no one could uncap the fire hydrants that had been installed for fire protection. The fire slowly ate its way through the building. An hour and a half after the fire was discovered, students attempted to save as much as could be safely carried out of the building. The museum and art gallery could not be reached, but the libraries of Professors Van Hise and Daniells and some of the chemical apparatus were saved. Professors Birge, Irving, and Davis lost their books and papers, while many science and engineering students lost their instruments. The *University Press* reported that the damage amounted to \$200,000. Elisha W. Keyes, chairman of the executive committee, reported bluntly that "owing to the fact that the appliances at the building for putting out fires could not be reached by those persons who were early at the fire, and the utterly useless help afforded

⁴⁴ Minutes of the Executive Committee of the Board of Regents, Vol. A, p. 379, December 4, 1883. The committee had directed Conover to take up the matter with the architect and then do whatever was necessary. Two months later the *University Press* reported that one of the ceiling supports had given way and crushed the desk at which Major Chase, the battalion commandant, was lecturing. *University Press*, February 2, 1884.

by the fire department of the City of Madison, nothing was done to stay the progress of the fire, and it simply burned out. The cause of the fire is entirely unknown to your committee." Keyes reported that the building had been insured for \$38,000 and the machinery for \$3,000. The insurance payments, he felt, could finance scientific instruction until the regents could present their "claims" to the legislature for relief.⁴⁵

On the day after the fire the faculty arranged to hold classes in other buildings, then started answering letters of condolence and sympathy from other universities and pressing claims for losses sustained by the students. The executive committee of the Board, meeting the same day, directed that North Hall be converted immediately to classroom use, that machine shops in the city be rented for instructional purposes, that an attempt be made to salvage machinery and tools from the ruins, and that steps be taken to collect the insurance on the building. The students, appalled at the inefficiency of the fire department and the lack of safety provisions for University buildings, agitated for the organization of a University fire department equipped with a fire truck, hose, and keys to the hydrants.⁴⁶ All these activities, however, were only incidental to the principal object; plans were quickly crystallized for seeking an appropriation from the legislature to replace all that was lost and more.

The Board of Regents at a special meeting on December 30 adopted resolutions calling for the preparation of plans for building a new science hall and for the construction of separate buildings to house a chemical laboratory, machine shops, and a heating plant. The burning of Science Hall was also made the occasion for requesting appropriations for a gymnasium. The Board approved the following requests for funds from the

⁴⁵ *University Press*, December 6, 1884; Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. B, p. 440, December 30, 1884.

⁴⁶ Minutes of the Meetings of the Faculty (MS.), Vol. 2, pp. 269, 270-271, 277, December, 1884; Minutes of the Executive Committee of the Board of Regents, Vol. A, pp. 395-396, December 2, 1884; *University Press*, December 13, 1884. In January the *University Press* was able to report some measure of success in establishing a University fire department. The Board of Regents, in response to student petitions, had agreed to furnish three hose carts, each with 150 to 200 feet of three-inch hose, and companies to man each cart were being organized. It was shortly discovered that the hydrant connections of the city system differed from those of the University and some of the hose fitted each type of hydrant. *Ibid.*, January 17, 24, 1885.

legislature: \$150,000 for the science building, \$28,000 for a new chemical building, \$25,000 for a heating plant to serve all buildings, and \$90,000 to replace the equipment and apparatus lost by various departments. The total amount could be reduced by \$35,000 if the legislature decided that fireproof buildings were not necessary. In addition, the Board asked \$45,000 for a gymnasium and armory.⁴⁷

These requests were submitted to the legislature in a special communication several days later. A bill to provide the appropriations was introduced by William F. Vilas, a member of the executive committee then serving his only term as assemblyman. Although Vilas and Keyes, the state Democratic and Republican leaders, were able to bring the bill through the Assembly, the Senate dropped some items and reduced others before adopting the measure. The bill, as approved by the governor, provided \$150,000 for the new science building, \$20,000 for a heating plant, and \$20,000 for a chemistry building, all to be fireproof. The regents were directed to replace the lost equipment and apparatus with the money received from the insurance on the old building.⁴⁸

The Board of Regents decided to construct the smaller buildings first. Accordingly, at the June meeting in 1885, a contract was let for construction of the heating plant, machine and carpentry shops, and chemistry building. The amount involved was somewhat larger than that appropriated by the legislature; the balance, presumably, was to be made up by taking funds either from the appropriation for the new science building or from the regular income of the University. Paul, Keyes, Parkinson, Spooner, and Hitt were named to the building committee. Paul, the chairman of this committee, and Professor Allen Conover were sent east in the spring of 1885 to study plans of other buildings.⁴⁹

After plans for the science building were completed and bids were received the committee, with Board approval, decided that

⁴⁷ Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. C, pp. 429-430, 434-435, December 30, 1884, January 20, 1885.

⁴⁸ *Assembly Journal*, 1885, pp. 81, 84; *Laws of Wisconsin*, 1885, p. 308.

⁴⁹ Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. C, pp. 441, 444, April 14, June 23, 1885; *University Press*, May 2, 1885.

all bids were too high. The work was begun, therefore, without a contractor. The architect and Professor Conover were to supervise the laborers. Whether by design or otherwise, the completion of the science hall, planned by the building committee and approved by the Board, required more funds than the legislature's appropriation allowed for. Accordingly, the regents returned to the legislature in 1887, stating, in the words of George H. Paul, "It still remains for the State . . . to appropriate whatever may be esteemed judiciously necessary to complete a plan so judiciously initiated and already so nearly completed." A bill, drawn by the executive committee at the direction of the Board and introduced in the Assembly, appropriated \$200,000 for the completion of the science hall and other purposes. In February, Senator Henry A. Cooper, a graduate of Northwestern University and the Chicago Law School and later a congressman and supporter of La Follette, introduced a resolution listing the expenditures which had already been made, describing the condition of the science building and calling for an investigation by a joint legislative committee of the way in which the appropriation of 1885 had been spent. The resolution was readily approved. Paul was indignant and defiant when he learned of this resolution. The committee investigation held up action on the University appropriation bill until all testimony had been taken, although \$20,000 was appropriated for roofing and enclosing the building.⁵⁰

The investigation was not free from political uses, but the investigators did discover that the building committee had maintained a primitive bookkeeping system which failed to reveal how much had been spent, and that it not only had used up the full \$190,000 appropriated by the legislature and \$41,000 received in insurance payments, but had incurred debts amount-

⁵⁰ *Regents' Biennial Report*, 1885-86, p. 6; Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. C, p. 495, January 18, 1887; *Assembly Journal*, 1887, pp. 88, 390; *Senate Journal*, 184-185, 221-222; *Laws of Wisconsin*, 1887, p. 32. On February 22, the day after the Cooper resolution was introduced, Paul wrote to Keyes asking what it meant. "Do they mean fight? If they do, let me know, so that we can take a hand in all around." Paul to Keyes, February 22, 1887, in the Keyes Papers. Paul remained indignant throughout the investigation. On April 12, the day the committee presented its report, he offered his resignation if the legislature should exhibit a want of confidence because of the report.

ing to \$30,000 in the form of loans from Madison banks. And the science hall was not yet finished. The investigating committee sought to show that the workers had been improperly and incompetently directed. President Bascom volunteered that there was no immediate necessity for a building "so large and expensive." He added that although he had advised the building committee of this fact, nothing had come of his recommendations. Some of the testimony insinuated that the building was more improvised than planned.

From Elisha Keyes and the president of the regents, George H. Paul, the legislative committee elicited declarations indicating that these two regents regarded the University as an institution entitled to support, not a supplicant before the legislature; they regarded the Board of Regents as an agency possessed of independent power, not as a creature of the legislature. Keyes, on the witness stand, was criticized because the building committee had not made a perceptible effort to keep the cost of the building within the appropriation made by the legislature. Keyes responded, "We have always thought that we had the power under the statute . . . to go on with the work and plan the buildings as seem necessary to us for the present and future needs of the University; that we were not tied down to an appropriation made by the legislature; that we were not compelled, in the exercise of our duty, to cut our garment according to the cloth which the legislature, in these appropriations, furnished us." When asked how he expected the buildings to be paid for, he calmly declared that "we expected that in the great liberality of the legislature of this state that it was quite probable that they would make an additional appropriation." Paul was equally emphatic on the stand, holding that the legislature was obligated to furnish the means asked by the regents. When asked if he thought the regents had the power to construct a building at the cost of a million dollars, Paul answered, "If the board of regents is of the opinion that it ought to lay out a million dollars for the University, within the limits of the law, it has a perfect right to do it; and no man ought to question that right without changing the law." To the charge that the conduct of the building committee forced the legislature to make an

additional appropriation to the University, Paul replied, "If the legislature wants to properly equip the University and preserve its usefulness, it is necessary to make the appropriation, unquestionably; but you ought not to hold the regents responsible for that. . . . That is a matter within the discretion of the state entirely, whether it will take care of its University or not. We neither as a board of regents or as individuals, are responsible. We do not ask anything. It is you asking of yourselves that you make appropriations. It is you acting for the state and not for the board of regents. It is a misapprehension about that matter entirely."

After concluding the investigation, the committee denounced the "carelessness and negligence evinced by the building committee" and deplored the "utter and manifest disregard of the legislative intent" and the "monstrous perversion of the spirit of the law," but recommended approval of the appropriation. A bill providing an additional \$170,000 for the completion of the science hall and other purposes passed the Assembly on the day the committee stopped taking testimony. On April 12, the day the committee report was presented to the Senate, the bill was taken up by that body and, after minor amendments, was passed. One of the amendments gave the governor a measure of control over the expenditure of the funds. The seriousness with which the Senate regarded the charge of mismanagement might be judged by the fact that only two senators voted against the measure on final passage. The governor signed the bill two days later. It provided, in final form, \$125,000 for the completion of Science Hall, \$10,000 for furnishing the building, and \$40,000 for apparatus. This appropriation, in addition to the emergency appropriation of \$20,000 made early in the session, amounted to only \$5,000 less than the whole amount originally asked by the regents.⁵¹

The destruction of the first science hall no doubt disrupted science teaching for several years, and much time and money which might profitably have been expended elsewhere was used in replacing the building and reassembling the apparatus and

⁵¹ *Senate Journal*, 1887, pp. 719, 720, 721, 730-731, 732, 742, 743, 744; *Assembly Journal*, 1019, 1051; *Laws of Wisconsin*, 1887, p. 570.

museum specimens. But on the other hand, the calamity brought about generous appropriations from the legislature which otherwise might never have been made at all.

While the legislature was often accused of being niggardly in its treatment of the University, the fact remains that in comparison with its neighboring institutions the University of Wisconsin was actually quite prosperous in the middle 1880's. A committee of the regents appointed to study University expenditures, and perhaps incidentally to embarrass President Bascom, compiled various data comparing the University of Wisconsin with the Universities of Michigan, Illinois, and Iowa. The comparison was not wholly fair since neither the University of Michigan nor the University of Iowa included an agricultural college, but the results were illuminating. Only Michigan enjoyed a larger annual income than Wisconsin, but it had a student body of 1,295 compared to 387 at Wisconsin, 479 at Iowa, and 362 at Illinois. Wisconsin spent more per student, and the number of professors in proportion to the number of students was greater than in any of the other universities. Between 1876 and 1885, the committee reported, the amount spent per student had almost doubled.⁵²

Subsequent demands by the University for funds from the legislature will be discussed later. It should be observed here, however, that in the period from 1866 on, the state moved gradually and by somewhat devious ways toward assuming financial responsibility for the University. The ward of the 1850's had become the adopted child of the state. The rise of the public school system and the recognition of the service which the University could offer contributed to this transformation, but general acceptance of the thesis that the state had failed to protect the land endowments of its ward had played the most emphatic part.

⁵² Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. B, pp. 479-490, June 22, 1886.

13.

The Organization of the Faculty

THE reorganization act of 1866 vested the government of the University in the hands of the regents, but the actual administration of the several colleges was delegated to their respective faculties. Throughout the years from 1866 to 1887 the regents regulated expenditures and fixed salaries, made appointments to the instructional staff, determined courses and degrees, and approved textbooks and teaching materials. The faculty made recommendations through the president to the regents on all these matters and in addition concerned itself with the discipline and academic standards of the student body and with a great many other details. Yet the line separating the spheres of regents and faculty was not clearly drawn, as the regents noted in 1877. They observed that clearer definition was desirable, but nothing was done at this time.¹

The lack of delimitation of their respective spheres was especially unfortunate because of the fact that the two bodies had little direct contact with each other. During the interregnum (1860-1867) the professors had discussed broad educational policy in their reports to the regents and had presented the specific needs of their departments in direct communications. But from the time of Chadbourne on, members of the faculty communicated with the regents only through the president. In 1882, when one professor did send directly to the regents a report on the needs of his department, he was reprimanded.² Yet,

¹ *Regents' Annual Report*, 1876-77, p. 11.

² Records of the Board of Regents (MS.), Vol. C, p. 385, January 16, 1883.

in view of the tension that existed between the regents and President Bascom, it was natural for faculty members to feel that their needs and requests might be slighted if they came to the attention of the Board through the president. Some professors made their wants known to individual members of the Board. The fact that Bascom did not have the complete confidence of all the scientists and that he often made recommendations for new appointments without the knowledge of the faculty tended to encourage this practice.³

In one vital matter, that of salaries, the faculty found the regents quite indifferent. The refusal of the regents in 1866 to pay four retiring members of the faculty for the term ending in September resulted in much ill-feeling. The regents took the view that inasmuch as the University had been reorganized, the new Board was not responsible for claims against its predecessor and that it was not the new Board's fault if professors had signed salary receipts in which the former regents had inserted the words "paid in full." Professors Joseph C. Pickard and James Butler brought suit against the regents, and the supreme court compelled the Board to make good the default.⁴ Since the entire amount involved for all four professors was little more than a thousand dollars, the regents might well have spared themselves the publicity of a lawsuit. Had they done so, they would almost certainly have won the approval of the faculty.

At the time of the reorganization in 1866 the average salary seems to have been twelve hundred dollars. In July, 1866, the new Board fixed the pay of professors at two thousand dollars and that of tutors at half that sum. However it was some time before such salaries were actually paid. In 1870 the regents set the pay of a professor at eighteen hundred dollars but provided that this sum was "subject to such modifications as may be required by any rearrangement of the classes." Even this scale did not go into operation at once. In 1872, however, the Board

³ J. B. Parkinson to George H. Paul, June 12, 1885, in the Paul Papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin; John E. Davies to Elisha W. Keyes, June 7, 1878, in the Keyes Papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

⁴ Reports to the Regents, Vol. B, pp. 122, 133, 210, January 17, 1871; Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. C, p. 160, January 16, 1872.

again increased the pay of professors to two thousand dollars, declaring that this placed them on equal footing with the professors of other colleges and that the increase was necessary in order to retain the ablest men whose services were sought by other institutions. Even after this, President Bascom—in virtually every report—continued to urge the increase of salaries; President Chadbourne, on the other hand, pleaded that the regents were doing all they could under the circumstances. The continued discussion of salaries was entirely natural in view of the fact, which Chadbourne himself noted, that in general the professors carried twice as heavy a teaching load as their colleagues in eastern institutions. Furthermore, professors were leaving Wisconsin for better-paying positions, especially toward the end of the Bascom period. In his report of 1886 Bascom asserted that the prevailing low salaries threatened to narrow instruction, to confine the faculty to routine work, and to curtail the higher attainments of men eager to conduct fresh research. Such men, he insisted, would not be attracted to the University or at least would leave it when a better field was offered.⁵

It was clear, as Regent McMynn admitted in 1885, that “a man with a family cannot from that sum [\$2,000] spare anything for books and travel.” Indeed, he had to use his head to piece out a living at all. Professor Williams, in accepting Regent Keyes’s offer to secure him a railway pass to Racine, could not resist saying “University salaries are so high that I will have a road of my own soon, and then I will return your favor.”⁶ But such minor boons did not go far and many professors sought to supplement their income by outside activity of one sort or another.

An action taken by the regents in 1872, however, put a stop to such expedients. Members of the instructional staff were forbidden to augment their income by outside activities; hence-

⁵ Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. C, pp. 135-136, June 22, 1870; *Regents' Annual Report*, 1872, p. 7; President Chadbourne's report to the Board of Regents, in Reports to the Regents, Vol. B, p. 38, June 23, 1868; President Bascom's report to the Board, in *Regent's Biennial Report*, 1885-86, p. 37.

⁶ McMynn to Paul, June 12, 1885, in the Paul Papers; Williams to Keyes, February 18, 1887, in the Keyes Papers.

forth any compensation for tasks other than regular academic duties was to be paid into the treasury of the University unless such services had been rendered with the permission of the Board or its executive committee. This must have caused some discussion, for in his next report to the regents President Twombly said: "I have no doubt that all the professors and teachers agree with what the Board evidently intended by the vote, *viz*: that every instructor should attend faithfully to his appropriate duties, and that no one should engage in outside services, so as to waste his energies, or divert from the University its legitimate supplies. More than this is not required by the Regents of any University in the country, nor could it be unless the salaries paid were such as to compensate educated men for their services and leave a little surplus for the necessities of old age. There is no particular chafing under the rule in question, yet, I think it might be modified so as to express fully the intention of the Board, and be more satisfactory to all concerned."⁷

The issue nevertheless remained a live and controversial one. In 1885 the Board adopted a resolution, introduced by Regent Paul, which declared it to be the duty of professors and instructors to devote their time and attention to the duties of their departments and to engage in no employment for compensation "which would in any way interfere with their obligations to the University." Professor John B. Parkinson, who had succeeded at Sterling's death to the vice-presidency of the University, believed that professors in some departments might properly accept outside employment. Early in January, 1886 the regents referred to the committee on bylaws the question whether professors might work as agents of manufacturers without detriment to the University.⁸ That outside employment might affect academic work or influence a professor's point of view seems to have been implicit.

This was not the only matter in which the regents kept a restraining hand on the faculty. In 1885 the Board adopted a

⁷ Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. C, pp. 176, 178, June 20, 21, 1872; Reports to the Regents, Vol. B, p. 201, January 21, 1873.

⁸ Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. C, pp. 454-455, 460, June 24, 1885, January 19, 1886; Parkinson to Paul, June 12, 1885, in the Paul Papers.

resolution forbidding professors or instructors to absent themselves from the University without the written permission of the executive committee. The penalty was to be the forfeiting of all compensation for the period of absence. Sometimes such permission was refused: Professor Hermitage, for example, was denied a four-day leave to act as an official visitor at the White-water Normal School. Faculty freedom was still further limited by the provision that the regents must consent to any change in textbooks.⁹

The professors apparently had little voice in the matter of new appointments, at least in Bascom's time. New professors were generally appointed on the nomination of the president. Some applicants, however, addressed themselves directly to the regents. When Regent McMynn decided that the institution needed a professorship in geography, he admitted to a fellow member of the Board that "it would seem proper that the preliminary steps should be taken by the Faculty of the University, but my experience has taught me that reforms usually commence outside the Church rather than within." No doubt there was some point to this attitude. However, it meant that the regents did not leave to the faculty the unrestricted determination of academic policy. The Board also rejected nominations from time to time, although this was usually because of limited resources rather than personal objection to the candidate.¹⁰ The chief exception was the case of John Olin, whom Bascom long sought to have promoted and whom the regents turned down, partly at least on the charge of prohibitionist activities. Inasmuch as Bascom himself was a teacher as well as the president, the objection of the regents to his outspoken championship of prohibition, as we have seen, was regarded by some as an interference with freedom of teaching.

The regents did exert their legal control over the faculty in the case of John Freeman, professor of English. In 1888 Freeman sent a postcard to the supreme court of Michigan criticiz-

⁹ Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. C, pp. 452, 574, June 24, 1885, September 4, 1888.

¹⁰ For example, H. K. Wolfe to Keyes, August 19, 1887, in the Keyes Papers; McMynn to Paul, February 7, 1889, and George Raymer to Paul, June 25, 1886, in the Paul Papers.

ing one of its opinions. Regent Keyes felt that this "deserved to be stamped with the strongest seal of condemnation," and he therefore wrote or inspired harsh criticisms in the local press. "The big wheel which turns the University," he wrote to Paul, "should be relieved of a few more of its cranks, or we shall sink lower in public estimation." But the regents contented themselves with calling Freeman on the carpet. He read them the letter he had received from the chief justice of the Michigan supreme court accepting his explanation of the postcard. The regents thereupon resolved that "the recent criticism of the Supreme Court by a Professor of this University over his official signature as Secretary of the Library Committee was unauthorized by this Board or the faculty and was contrary to the rules of the Board and that such an offense against the rules of the institution and manifest propriety is condoned only because of the explanations of the criticisms, accepted as satisfactory by the Supreme Court of Michigan, and the regret for the offense expressed by the author of said criticism in the presence of the faculty and of this board."¹¹

Even in discussions of academic policy the faculty was aware of the restricting hand of the regents. In considering whether or not it was wise to continue to have a professor of elocution dependent solely on student fees, the faculty decided that such a system was undignified; it added that it might favor the appointment of a regular professor of elocution when the finances of the University warranted it, but that "of this matter the regents are the proper judges." On the other hand, the request of Instructor Rasmus Anderson that the faculty recommend the establishment of a department of Scandinavian was freely debated, and the faculty ultimately made the recommendation.¹² Thus in setting up the first permanent Scandinavian chair in an American institution of higher learning, the University was influenced by faculty recommendation rather than by an arbitrary act of the regents or by pressure from the Scandinavian population of the state.

¹¹ Keyes to Paul, May 28, 1888, in the Paul Papers; Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. C, pp. 565-566, June 19, 1888.

¹² Minutes of the Meetings of the Faculty (MS.), vol. 1, pp. 207, 334, 285, December 12, 1871, March 3, 1873, May 31, 1875.

Most of the faculty meetings throughout this period were taken up with academic trivia. In Chadbourne's time, it is true, the members led discussions on the objectives of their particular disciplines and the methods best calculated to achieve them. It is also true that on one occasion the faculty carefully considered the evidence in the case of an instructor alleged to be incompetent and then recommended to the regents that there be no reappointment. But for the most part, the time of faculty meetings was spent in deciding whether or not to grant the students a holiday to attend the state fair or some G.A.R. function; in meting out discipline to recalcitrants—though this occurred far less frequently after President Bascom took the matter of discipline much into his own hands; in fixing the time and place of classes, examinations, and orations; in passing on students' requests to substitute one course for another; in discussing grades, credits, entrance requirements, and similar matters. Only occasionally did the faculty show any dissatisfaction with the limits of the sphere in which it operated. In 1878 it did unanimously adopt a resolution, which President Bascom presented to the regents, expressing regret "that in a matter, which so immediately concerns the Faculty in their daily duties and enjoyments as does the location of the Assembly Hall and Library, no opportunity has been given them by the regents to express their preference or of laying the grounds of it before the Board. In view of this and like facts we urge upon the Board the fitness of frequent consultations, which shall make the experience and judgment of the Faculty fully available for the service of the University."¹³

It appears, in short, that the regents were not always at pains to consult the faculty even on those matters on which they were competent to make recommendations. The regents kept their eyes on the handling of student discipline, on the choice of textbooks, and on the activities of professors outside the classroom. Yet the faculty seldom complained that their work and freedom were unduly interfered with, though there must have been many who agreed with President Bascom that the

¹³ *Ibid.*, 144, 146, 183, 255, December, 1867–December, 1870, January 19, 1874; vol. 2, p. 22, October 7, 1878.

regents should put less money into buildings, upkeep, and administration generally and more into salaries and the enrichment of the curriculum. At that, it seems fair to say that the faculty, other than the president, did not criticize the regents openly and that the limited relations between the two were on the whole cordial.

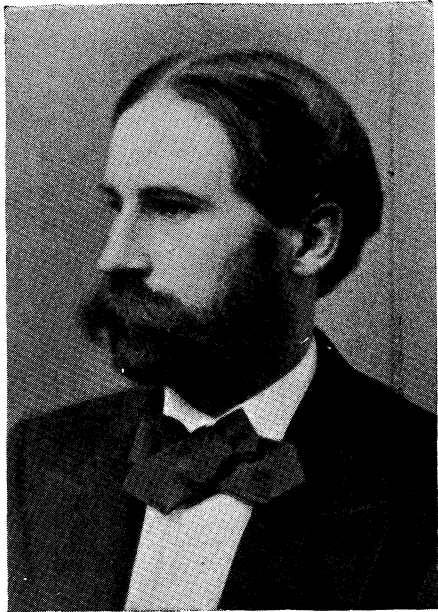
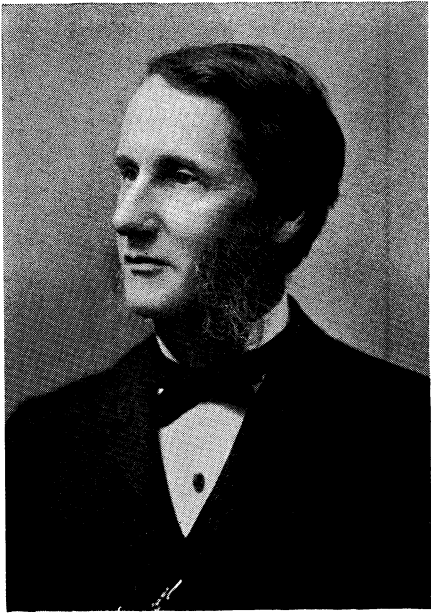


THE faculty which President Chadbourne appointed was, as he himself remarked, one of young men "with ability to distinguish themselves and to bring honor to the University. . . . We have neither the money nor the reputation which will enable us to secure men who have already become celebrated."¹⁴ And Chadbourne was correct in predicting that the University might soon have a faculty that would do it honor. The number of scholars of reputation in the University by 1887 was impressive.

This improvement may be attributed in large measure to the growing tendency to allocate a single field to a professor rather than to expect him to embrace the whole domain of knowledge. President Bascom worked hard, in and out of season, to achieve this end. In his annual report for 1876 he noted with pride that chemistry, physics, natural history, and civil polity had each been placed in the hands of a single professor. Each instructor, he reiterated time and again, must be given opportunity to master his subject. "It is in vain to look for superior instruction without an extended subdivision of labor." Yet it was not easy to break down the broad, almost eclectic professorships in the face of the limited resources of the University and the slow growth of the student body. "Not till the present year," he reported in 1882, "have we been able to assign so important a department of instruction as that of botany the uninterrupted services of one man. Such an incongruous admixture of work as Latin, political economy and logic still remains uncorrected."¹⁵

¹⁴ Reports to the Regents, Vol. B, p. 63, February 10, 1869.

¹⁵ *Regents' Annual Report*, 1877-78, p. 27; 1881-82, p. 28.



William F. Allen and Roland D. Irving

The tendency toward specialization was evident in both the sciences and humanities. As early as 1869 the full time of W. W. Daniells, who had been appointed the year before in agriculture and analytical chemistry, was allocated to chemistry alone. In 1878 the duties of John E. Davies, who for ten years had been covering the whole field of natural history and physics, were limited to the field of physics. In 1883 Roland Irving, who had come in 1870 as professor of geology, mining, and metallurgy, was relieved of some of his responsibilities by the appointment of his student, Charles Van Hise, as assistant professor of metallurgy. In 1878 a separate professorship in astronomy was authorized. The large field of biology was divided when Edward A. Birge was appointed in 1879 as professor of zoology and when William Trelease was called in 1881 to teach botany.

In much the same way the humanities were delimited. In 1871 the teaching of William Allen, who had been in charge of the ancient languages and history since his arrival in 1867, was limited to Latin and history, and in 1886 it was limited to history alone. The historical field was further broken down that year by the allocation of half the time of Frederick Jackson Turner, an instructor in elocution. In the field of language and literature, specialization resulted from the establishment of a chair in Greek in 1871, a chair in French eight years later, and the gradual subdivision of English studies, a subject which in 1868 had been covered in its entirety by Stephen H. Carpenter. In 1884 the regents created a chair of pedagogy and four years later established a chair of psychology. In addition to promoting specialization, Bascom also hammered away at the rule requiring each professor to hear three recitations a day—a custom which frequently necessitated instruction in more than one department.¹⁶

The scholarship of the faculty and the instruction they gave were by no means free from criticism throughout the period. True, no one ventured to compare the University, as Carl Schurz had done in 1858, to a German gymnasium. But that was

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 1878–79, p. 25.

scarcely to be expected. Professor Feuling was probably on solid ground in 1871 when he observed that Wisconsin could not be compared with the eastern colleges, because the East, unlike the West, had excellent preparatory schools. If the instruction in western institutions were carried on at the same level as in eastern colleges, he maintained, four-fifths of the student body would have to withdraw. Florence Bascom, of the class of 1882, later recalled that textbooks and recitations were the order of the day, that there was little collateral reading and no manifestation of the spirit of research. Those devoted to the classical curriculum felt that the English course, launched in the mid-eighties, was of little importance. One student voiced his opinion that some instructors who read the same lectures year after year were unfit for their posts and that the lecture system was in many instances a farce.¹⁷

Such criticisms were not confined to an inner circle. In 1878 the author of several articles in the *Milwaukee Christian Statesman* declared that the academic standards at the University were lower than at the private colleges, an indictment to which the *Chicago Evening Journal* gave further publicity. Bascom publicly denied the charge, stating that "we believe our classical instruction to be equal in quantity and quality to any given in the state, and our scientific instruction to be decisively superior in these respects." He concluded by inviting all critics to visit the University and see for themselves whether their views were correct. The editor of the *Wisconsin Journal of Education* deplored the "unfair and reckless" attacks on the University, agreeing with Bascom as to the quality of the University instruction.¹⁸

These contradictory claims may be assessed by examining the scholarship and teaching talents of representative members of

¹⁷ Carl Schurz to Friedrich Althaus in *Speeches, Correspondence, and Political Papers of Carl Schurz* (6 vols., New York, 1913), 1:38; *University Press*, January 15 and May 15, 1871, quoting Professor Feuling and the student mentioned above; Florence Bascom "The University in 1874-1887," in the *Wisconsin Magazine of History*, 8:305 (March, 1925); McMynn to Paul, January 2, 1888, in the Paul Papers.

¹⁸ Bascom's letter to the *Chicago Evening Journal* (May 8, 1878) was quoted and commented upon in the *Wisconsin Journal of Education*, series 2, vol. 8, pp. 276-278 (June, 1878).

the faculty. Such a one was the Scottish-born Alexander Kerr, who had graduated with highest honors from Beloit College and had served as superintendent of public schools in Beloit before accepting the chair of Greek at the University in 1871. Kerr's training was limited to his undergraduate study; he had never drunk at the fountains of classical scholarship in the East or in the Old World. At the University he carried his full share of academic duties, yet he edited the Greek testament and translated the *Bacchae* of Euripides. His greatest contribution, a translation of *The Republic*, was begun only in 1910, six years before his retirement. In the face of almost total blindness, he kept at this labor of love, finishing it the year before his death in 1919. It took its place, a respectable place, among the translations of Plato's great work; it was accurate and felicitous. About his instruction, judgments differed. Some students felt he was too easygoing in his classes. One of them, remarking that Kerr would go so far as to dismiss the class if some boy took out his watch and yawned, felt that the alumni would have done well to have "fired him out"; but even he subsequently testified that Kerr had "picked up some and really gives us a decent sort of recitation." From President Birge we have the testimony that Kerr gave himself to teaching with singular devotion. Certainly he was better liked than his colleague William H. Williams, who despite his competence was regarded as both a martinet and a cynic.¹⁹

Throughout this period Latin was in the hands of two gifted scholars and teachers, William F. Allen and Lucius Hermitage. Allen, whom Chadbourne brought to Wisconsin in 1867, had received his training at Harvard and at Berlin and Göttingen and had traveled widely in Italy and Greece. He was a man of profound scholarship and broad culture. Although he had a greater reputation in history than in the classics, Allen edited many scholarly and valuable Latin texts. In 1861 he published with his brother Prentiss, a *Classical Handbook* and with his brother Joseph, a *Latin Reader*, *Latin Lessons*, and a *Manual*

¹⁹ *Madison Democrat*, September 27, 1919, p. 8; Letters of William E. Aitchison to his father, October 3, 10, 15, November 15, 1880, September 11, 1881, in a private collection lent to the authors.

of *Latin Grammar*. In 1870, three years after arriving in Madison, he published a Latin composition book and the *Germania and Agricola of Tacitus*. He also furnished the historical material for a series of Caesar, Cicero, Sallust, Ovid, and Vergil, published by himself in collaboration with his brother Joseph and Professor Greenough. A few weeks before his death he completed an edition of the *Annals of Tacitus* for the college series edited by Tracy Peck of Yale and Clement Smith of Harvard. Allen was a thorough humanist, a scholar sensitive and exact rather than robust, profound and farseeing rather than facile.²⁰ He made Wisconsin known to all American classicists who appreciated his extensive and intensive knowledge of Roman history, archaeology, and related subjects. Students loved and trusted him, sought his advice, respected his amazing versatility, his genius for classifying and arranging facts and principles, his rare power of exact statement, and his simple sincerity, love of truth, and power of inspiration.²¹

Allen had a worthy younger colleague in Lucius Hermitage, a graduate of Milton and a student for three years at Göttingen, Halle, Leipzig, and Athens. Although before his early death he edited the dialogues of Tacitus, Hermitage won his spurs chiefly as a great teacher of Latin. Without sacrificing the highest standards of intellectual discipline he aroused enthusiasm for Latin literature among his students and won their confidence and affection. On Friday afternoons the best of his students took pleasure in sitting in his study reading Latin without translating it and then discussing what had been read. After this the master explained in Latin what the students had missed or misapprehended. "We shall do wonders in Livy yet this term," wrote a youthful admirer, "for what a man can't do under Mr. Hermitage, he can do under no one."²²

²⁰ This was the judgment of Dean E. A. Birge. See his address, "President Bascom and the University of Wisconsin," in *Memorial Service in Honor of John Bascom* (Madison, 1911), 19.

²¹ The best brief appreciation of Allen, from which this account has borrowed heavily, is the memoir of D. B. Frankenburger in the *Essays and Monographs by William Francis Allen* (Boston, 1890). See also the statement of James Butler in *Transactions of the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts, and Letters*, 1888-91, pp. 439-441.

²² William E. Aitchison to his father, December 4, 1880, in a private collection.

John B. Feuling, who became professor of modern languages and comparative philology in 1868, was a staunch supporter of the classics. German-born, Feuling had taken his doctorate at Giessen and had studied philology at Paris before he migrated to the United States in 1865. Until his visit home in 1876 Feuling felt that German methods of scholarship and instruction ought to be introduced into American institutions; but he returned to the United States thoroughly in sympathy with American education. Shortly after coming to America he brought out his admirable edition of the *Poema Admonitorium* of Phocylides, prefacing the Greek text with a critical essay in fluid Latin. This was dedicated to the American Philological Association, of which he was a leading member and to which he presented several papers. He also contributed to the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts, and Letters. Feuling left several works in manuscript, including "the Homeric hymns" with careful and erudite notes, a text of Montesquieu's *Considerations* with notes and glossary, and a "historical outline of German Accidence." His colleague, Professor Stephen H. Carpenter, testified that "all these works show on every page his profound and thorough scholarship, and leave no room for doubt that had he lived he would have gained a lasting reputation in his chosen field of study." To Feuling teaching was no mere drudgery but a privilege to be discharged conscientiously and with enthusiasm. His death in 1878 deprived the University and the humanities of a scholar who, in the words of another colleague, was "satisfied with knowledge only as it reached down to the very foundation of the subject in hand." Feuling was, without doubt, one of the ablest scholars in comparative philology in the country.²³

At Feuling's death the modern language field was divided. Edward T. Owen took charge of French. Of the Yale class of '72, Owen was subsequently awarded a doctorate by his alma mater. Before coming to Wisconsin he spent three years in

²³ *Transactions of the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts, and Letters*, 1876-77, pp. 316-318; *Madison Democrat*, March 12, 1878, p. 1. The editor of the *University Press* (November 1, 1872) announced with justifiable pride that few American institutions possessed the personnel to give instruction in Sanskrit—a subject with which Feuling was thoroughly familiar.

travel and study abroad. He was tall, stately, and distinguished and was affectionately called "Buck" by his students. Owen contributed to the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts, and Letters a number of scholarly papers dealing with linguistics.²⁴

Although William H. Rosenstengel, professor of German, disgusted at least one undergraduate by what appeared to be egotism, prejudice, and incompetence, he did much to advance German studies. It is true that he was in no sense the scholar that Feuling was: he did not have a doctorate and his teaching prior to his coming to Wisconsin had been only in high schools. His publications disseminated rather than advanced knowledge. But he made several contributions to teaching methods in his manual on German irregular verbs, his German reader for high school students, and his *Hilfs-und-Uebungsbuch beim Unterrichts in der Deutschen Sprache*. Professor Rosenstengel spoke in broken English and his manner was abrupt. He was a sharp critic of students he considered insufficiently serious. Nevertheless he aroused in many a genuine love of German literature and enriched the German collection in the library by initiating in 1885 a campaign among Wisconsin Germans for funds to purchase books. At his death in 1900 Professor Emil Dopprich of the German-English Academy in Milwaukee spoke of him as one of the foremost German educators in America.²⁵

Wisconsin during this period pioneered in the introduction of Scandinavian studies. Attracted by the energy and ability of Rasmus B. Anderson, whom he first saw at Albion Academy, President Chadbourne brought him to Wisconsin in 1869. While still studying for his degree, Anderson taught a variety of subjects. The idea of giving instruction in the Scandinavian field gradually took shape in his mind. But it was no easy task to translate the idea into actuality. For a variety of reasons Anderson had made bitter enemies among Norwegian-Americans during his student days at both Luther College and Albion Academy, and President Chadbourne received many vigorous protests from Wisconsin Norwegians against Anderson's being

²⁴ *Wisconsin State Journal*, November 10, 1931, p. 1.

²⁵ William E. Aitchison to his father, March 4, 1883, in a private collection; *Milwaukee Sentinel*, November 13, 1900, p. 1; *University Press and Badger*, September 25, 1885. For more detailed biographical data see *Trochos*, 1885, p. 22.

permitted to give any instruction at all. Except for Chadbourne himself, who had visited Denmark and Iceland, the faculty knew little or nothing of Scandinavian studies and at first opposed the suggestion that a course in Dano-Norwegian be offered as an elective. "Imagine," Anderson wrote much later, "a man coming to the University today and insisting it was absolutely necessary to establish a chair in Patagonian, imagine him claiming that Patagonia is the cradle of all our liberties and of the laws out of which all modern civilization has poured." Prospects for the establishment of a Scandinavian chair were even less bright after Chadbourne left, for neither Twombly nor Sterling was interested in the field. But Anderson succeeded in making Norse a popular elective study. Gradually the faculty and regents realized that it might be politic to recognize Scandinavian studies in view of the large Norwegian population in the state. Thus opposition to Anderson's ambition broke down, and in 1875 he was recommended by the faculty for an appointment in Scandinavian language and literature.²⁶

Anderson was a propagandist for Scandinavian studies rather than a scholar. His principal service was to stimulate interest and to lay the foundations for subsequent scholarship. Little had been done in the United States by the time Anderson began his pioneer activities. George Perkins Marsh, the erudite Vermont congressman and diplomat, had translated Rask's *Icelandic Grammar*; Longfellow had put into English verse Tegnér's "The Children of the Lord's Supper"; Bayard Taylor had published his book on travels in Scandinavia; and an obscure Dane had brought out in New York a "flimsy" history of Scandinavia. Far from being anxious to gain University recognition of Scandinavian culture, most Scandinavian-Americans were indifferent to their heritage. Anderson set about correcting this and in so doing made his name known to almost every Norwegian family in the state by his teaching, his writing, and his lecturing. In 1872 he published *Julegave*, a collection of folklore stories designed to be read by Norwegian-American

²⁶ *Life Story of Rasmus B. Anderson*, written by himself with the assistance of Albert O. Barton (Madison, 1915), 141. In 1869 Anderson translated Chadbourne's "Relations between Science and Christianity" into Norse, and the brochure occasioned considerable discussion.

children and by University students of Norse. He missed no opportunity to promote his objective. He might stop a student he recognized as Norwegian, stare at him a moment through his gold-rimmed spectacles, then pointedly introduce himself as the professor of Scandinavian languages and remark, "Young man, you ought to be in my class studying the language of your ancestors."²⁷ He encouraged John A. Johnson, a prominent Madison industrialist, to establish a fund of \$5,000 to help students of Norwegian ancestry attend the University. However, Anderson did not limit his efforts to Wisconsin. He had much to do with organizing the pressure that resulted in the establishment of Scandinavian studies at the University of Minnesota, and he carried the gospel further by lecturing in Norwegian communities in the Dakotas.²⁸

Anderson likewise spared no efforts to interest others than Scandinavian-Americans in his field. With funds raised at a concert given by Ole Bull in 1872 in Madison, Anderson purchased in Norway an admirable collection of Scandinavian books for the University library. He lectured wherever he could on such subjects as "Our Teutonic Epic" and on Leif Ericson. He led a movement for the erection of a monument to the Norse discoverer of America. A specially prepared pamphlet on the historical, linguistic, and literary values of Scandinavian languages furthered his campaign, as did his widely discussed *America Not Discovered by Columbus*. Encouraged by President Bascom, Anderson brought out in 1875 his *Norse Mythology*, a volume which was praised by Longfellow and by such distinguished scholars as William Dwight Whitney and Max Müller. It was published in a Dano-Norwegian translation in Christiania and Copenhagen. On one of his early visits to Norway, Anderson met distinguished scholars and literary figures, including Björnstjerne Björnson, whose writings he eventually translated. Much to the regret of President Bascom, Anderson resigned his professorship in 1883 for a lucrative position with an insurance company. He was succeeded by Julius E. Olson, a versatile and widely read young scholar who provided more

²⁷ James A. Peterson, *Hjalmar* (Minneapolis, 1922), 172.

²⁸ *University Press*, March 17, 1883.

solid scholarly foundations for the work Anderson had begun.²⁹

In the early years relatively little attention was given to English studies. The Board of Visitors in its report in 1874 expressed regret that the University shared with other institutions the common indifference toward English. "Our students ought to know, when they graduate," they remarked, "at least as much of their own language as of the ancient and modern languages." This had also been the burden of many student complaints.³⁰ By 1882 the Board of Visitors, in its report, could note with pleasure several improvements introduced during recent years in the study of English; these improvements were the result of the labors of three men. Stephen H. Carpenter, a graduate of the University of Rochester and a tutor at Wisconsin from 1858 to 1860, had been a printer, a superintendent of country schools, and the city clerk of Madison before his appointment in 1868 to the chair of logic, rhetoric, and English literature. He maintained his interest in education but elected to stay at Wisconsin when offered the presidency of the University of Kansas. An ardent admirer of the Greek and Latin classics and of French literature, Carpenter was also an enthusiastic champion of the study of the English language. On taking over his chair in 1868 he found the course on English literature altogether unsatisfactory. When he proposed that the mother tongue could be studied with as much precise scholarship as the ancient classics and with comparable value in mental discipline, he was looked on in certain circles as somewhat presumptuous, but he pointed to the pioneer labor in the English language field of such scholars as George Perkins Marsh of Columbia and Max Müller of Oxford.³¹ Carpenter's courses in Anglo-Saxon and Chaucer were very popular, and his pupils warmly admired him. In 1872 he brought out his *English of the Fourteenth Century*, a book that enjoyed several editions and that elicited favorable comment in both England and America. Carpenter's other texts,

²⁹ *Life Story of Rasmus B. Anderson*, 147; *University Press*, December 4, 1872; Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. C, pp. 185-186, June 17, 1873.

³⁰ Report of the Visitors to the regents in *Regents' Annual Report*, 1873-74, pp. 9-10; *University Press*, March 15, 1871, May 1, 1871, November 2, 1875.

³¹ *Wisconsin State Journal*, December 7, 1878; Reports to the Regents, Vol. B, p. 81, June 1, 1869. Carpenter wrote a history of the University.

especially his *Elements of English Analysis*, likewise extended his influence beyond the University. In no sense a great scholar or even one whose minor contributions enjoyed lasting reputation, Carpenter nevertheless was one of the American pioneers in the philological approach to the study of English, and he did much to give it status and popularity.

Carpenter's work was carried on by John C. Freeman, who had taught Greek at the old University of Chicago. Freeman soon won an enviable reputation for exciting in his students a love of English literature. "He is simply grand, profound in his knowledge," wrote one student after a class in which the *Faerie Queene* had been discussed. "Every word bears on the subject and imparts instruction." His broad and abundant learning, his grace, wit, and ability to evoke a leisurely sense of contemplation in one class and an eloquent liveliness in another lay at the basis of his popularity. The work of Carpenter and Freeman was supplemented by that of David Bower Frankenburger, a member of the class of '69 and a graduate of the law school. Appointed professor of rhetoric and oratory in 1878, Frankenburger was an unusually popular reader, lecturer, and speaker, a prominent Unitarian and disciple of Emerson. He was deeply revered and warmly loved for his generous devotion to students both in and out of classes. His most distinguished work was the training he gave students in preparation for the joint debates and oratorical contests.³²

Frankenburger's interest in debate made him a natural link between the humanities and the social studies. One of the greatest influences in both fields was President Bascom himself, but inasmuch as his interests and instruction touched on everything under the sun, we may well consider his scholarship and his teaching as a unit.

John B. Parkinson, of the class of '60 and a former regent, was transferred from mathematics to civil polity and international law in 1872. Two years later, much to the regret of the students, he resigned his chair to edit the *Madison Democrat*, but he returned in 1876 as professor of civil polity and political

³² William E. Aitchison to his father, April 16, October 1, 1882, in a private collection; *Madison Democrat*, February 7, 1906, p. 1.

economy. A zealous and efficient friend of the University, Parkinson was given the title of vice-president in 1885. He was a skillful teacher and loyal friend of youth as well as a public-spirited citizen, but he lacked profound scholarship and had little contact with many of the new developments in his field.³³

Of a different build was William F. Allen, whom we have already met in our discussion of classical scholarship. Allen came to Wisconsin in 1867 as admirably equipped to build up historical study as to advance the classics. After his studies in Latin and ancient history at the German universities, he had served with the Freedmen's Aid Commission and the United States Sanitary Commission, helping to build an educational program for the freedmen in the South. With his cousin and associate, Charles Ware, he took down from the lips of the freedmen the music and words of the songs they sang as they planted cotton or weaved to and fro in religious ecstasy; and Allen's introduction to this pioneer collection of work songs and spirituals bore the marks of scholarship, sensitiveness, and imagination. When Allen came to Madison, it was just ten years after Andrew D. White had begun historical instruction at Michigan. In that time Harvard and Cornell had come to recognize the importance of history, but in general the situation in American institutions resembled that which Allen found at Wisconsin, where instruction was confined to a single term of Guizot in the senior year and one on Taylor's *Handbook* in the junior year.³⁴

When Allen died in 1889 he left a well-organized sequence of historical courses which incorporated two of his pioneer contributions, the topical or problem approach rather than the merely chronological, and the use of primary sources by undergraduate students. He had expounded his principles of historical study not only in his classes and in articles in the student press, but also to the larger world of historical scholarship. He had given to countless students some familiarity with the new scientific methodology in historical study and he had trained

³³ *Madison Democrat*, April 2, 1927, p. 1.

³⁴ William F. Allen and others, *Slave Songs of the United States* (New York, 1867); W. Stull Holt, ed., *Historical Scholarship in the United States, 1876-1901* (Baltimore, 1938), 87-88.

Frederick Jackson Turner, who was already assisting him with instruction. In his teaching and in his writing Allen had called attention to the importance of the history of the West; his influence on Turner was profound.³⁵ In addition to all this, Allen had written hundreds of reviews and critical articles in *The Nation* and in other periodicals. He had published his Johns Hopkins lectures on the institutions and culture of the fourteenth century, papers on medieval parliaments and on agriculture in the Middle Ages; he had written his half of the *Ancient History for Colleges and Schools* which pioneered in emphasizing the economic, social, religious, and cultural as well as the political aspects of Roman life, each integrated with the others; and he had finished the very night before his death his *Short History of the Roman People*, his part in the venture.

We must examine more closely Allen's role in American historical studies for it was indeed important. In addition to organizing material in topical and problem approaches and training students in the critical use of primary sources, Allen conceived of history in terms far broader than those prevailing in his time. He saw the importance of geography to the expansion of Rome and to the westward movement of population in America. He related the growth of self-government, whether in Rome, in England, or in America, to geographical, economic, and social factors. Above all, he recognized the significance of the role of land in all the cultures he examined. Allen also emphasized the cause-effect relationship in history, the interplay of human passions, the complexity of man's interests and ideas and of what he termed "historical forces." At the same time, he integrated social, economic, and political forces into a synthesis that was alive for his students. In discussing agriculture in the Middle Ages he was not content unless he made apt and stimulating comparisons with current agricultural problems about him. His approach was in more than one sense the comparative. His knowledge of Roman history fertilized his studies in

³⁵ See articles in the *University Press* throughout the year 1874 and especially "Gradation and the Topical Method of Historical Study" in G. Stanley Hall, *Methods of Teaching History* (Boston, 1889), 231-237; William F. Allen, "The Place of the Northwest in General History," in *Papers of the American Historical Association* (New York, 1889), 3:251, 331-348.

the medieval field, and both enriched his fresh approach to American history. G. Stanley Hall did not exaggerate when he wrote that Allen's work was an "almost epoch-making modification" of traditional historical instruction and scholarship. It realized to an amazing degree his precept that no historical fact is of any value unless it helps understand human nature and historical forces.³⁶

Allen was a prolific essayist and critic in the historical, literary, and social fields; his versatility was no less remarkable than his industry was prodigious. An editor of *The Nation* remarked that it was unusual for scholars to give public expression to their political ideas and to engage editorially in debate. Yet Allen did just that in a great many of his articles in *The Nation*; he contributed to almost every issue of the magazine from its establishment in 1865 to his death in 1889. He could and did write scholarly studies for his profession, and he could and did share his scholarship and his ideas with a wider public. *The Nation*, in commenting on the amazing scope of his articles on such subjects as ornithology, political economy, history, literature, philology, and ethics, remarked that at Allen's death it had "lost a part of itself." Allen was a prominent leader in the National Free Religious Association as well as in the Unitarian Church in Madison; in a notable essay he examined the implications of the doctrine of human brotherhood for some of the social and economic issues of the day.³⁷

The career of William F. Allen at Wisconsin launched the historical school which was to help make the University nationally famous. A great teacher, beloved by his pupils; a simple, generous, noble personality, respected by all who knew him; an original scholar and writer, Allen towered above most of his contemporaries on the faculty. An undergraduate, on learning of Professor Allen's death, wrote in his diary that he deserved much credit for "bringing the institution to the position that it now holds. . . . His work in history has been very extensive

³⁶ Quoted by D. B. Frankenburger in the introductory memoir in *Essays and Monographs by William Francis Allen*, 14.

³⁷ *The Nation*, 49:480 (December 12, 1889); *Address of Prof. William F. Allen Before the Free Religious Association of the University of Wisconsin* (Madison, 1881).

and he was probably the best authority in America on ancient history. . . . Professor Allen's place will be hard to fill, both his place as an instructor in the University and his place as a man of learning. . . . He was a warm and trusted friend of the students, one on whom they could depend, one whose advice was desired and which was always worthy to be followed."³⁸ His place was indeed hard to fill, but his most promising pupil, Frederick Jackson Turner, who was presently to take his doctorate at Johns Hopkins, would carry on the great tradition.

Of especial importance was Allen's interest in the library, which obviously affected work in the humanities and the social studies. The comment made by Professor James Butler on the eve of the Civil War was still appropriate at the time of the reorganization of the University in 1866. "I have been acquainted with many *poor* colleges," Butler wrote to a colleague in 1859, "but with none without a history of the U.S.—or on the whole so poor in books." In 1868 the University library numbered 3,767 books; in the words of Professor Parkinson, the librarian, many of these were valuable and many were "comparatively worthless." The slender list of periodicals to which the library had once subscribed was discontinued because of the financial straits of the University. Although the general condition was considerably better by 1874, in that year one of the Visitors summarized his impressions: "I think the library of the University is a disgrace to the state." According to the *University Press* the library at this time included slightly more than 4,000 books, while Michigan boasted 22,000 and Harvard 118,000. In spite of this inadequacy the catalogue for 1871 declared that the library facilities, including as they did the Wisconsin State Historical Society and the State Library, were "unsurpassed in the West and equalled in very few institutions in the country." The State Historical Society at this time held some 35,000 books—a notable collection indeed; and this, together with the University's books and those available to students in other Madison libraries, provided some 60,000 volumes.³⁹

³⁸ Sidney Dean Townley, *Diary of a Student of the University of Wisconsin, 1886-1892* (mimeographed, Stanford University, 1939), 74.

³⁹ Butler to O. M. Conover, February 14, 1859, in the Conover Papers, State

The deplorable state of the University library was, nevertheless, a stimulus for improvement. Parkinson, who became librarian in 1866, arranged the books and made a catalogue. Allen, who took over in 1871, at once took steps to provide a reading room and to augment the resources of the library. In that year only 151 new books were bought, but in 1873 some 1,200 volumes were added. This record was by no means sustained, but on the average 600 accessions were made annually, and by 1888 the holdings were listed as 16,508. Although this was still approximately only one-third the size of the library at Ann Arbor and one-twelfth that at Harvard, the record was not too mean a one. A really important collection of Norwegian books and a fair beginning of a German collection added distinction, and the library had begun to build up its list of periodicals. These achievements were largely the result of the efforts of Professor Allen and Professor Anderson and of the library committee. But President Bascom also deserves credit, especially for his insistence on the need of a larger appropriation for books and for a library building. In 1879 Assembly Hall was completed and the library found a home of its own.⁴⁰

Much was done also to improve the services of the library. In 1871 the library was open for half an hour, beginning at two o'clock, on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday. But only gentlemen could use the library on two of these days, and only ladies on the other two. By 1875 the library was open for two hours each afternoon, with the restrictions regarding the sexes still in force. In 1881 the *University Press*, the student organ, expressed the wish that the library might be open every afternoon from two to five-thirty instead of from half-past two until four-thirty, that it might be open again in the evening, and, especially, that it be made available for student use on

Historical Society of Wisconsin; Parkinson's report in Reports to the Regents, Vol. B, p. 27, February 12, 1868; Report of the Visitors to the regents in *Regents' Annual Report*, 1873-74, p. 14; *University Press*, October 1, 1871; *Catalogue of the University of Wisconsin*, 1870-71, p. 63. These catalogues, the title of which varies from year to year, are cited hereafter as *University Catalogue*. Until the academic year 1860-61 they were published as an appendix to the annual report of the Board of Regents.

⁴⁰ This is based on a study of the catalogues and of the reports to the Board of Regents (Vol. B). See also the *University Press*, October 16, 1885.

Saturday afternoons. The editor could think of no logical rule for making the library so inaccessible during week ends unless "it may be to avoid the clamor of the crowd which would rush in at that time and break the monotonous precedent of church-like stillness." In 1884 the situation improved with the extension of library hours from nine until five-thirty.

The rules of the University library made many prefer to use the Madison Free Library. "The library, though not as large as it should be," declared the report of the Visitors in 1880, "is yet something of a wilderness to the student who consults it for light on most any subject." Six years later the Visitors recommended the removal of irritating restrictions and suggested that in every way possible the use of the library be made convenient and agreeable. Students rebelled at the regulation forbidding a reader to examine any book unless it was handed to him by the attendant in charge. The *University Press* noted that the same rule prevailed at the Milwaukee House of Correction and wondered why it should be enforced when the library patrons were ladies and gentlemen of the University. Later the editor grumbled that the administration of the library seemed designed to maintain the books in an unused and entirely safe condition.⁴¹ Students especially disliked the library fee, which they looked upon as an unjustifiable nuisance. Yet despite such complaints the library had come to be not only far richer in books and periodicals but far more useful a place for reference and study than it was in the late 1860's.

Not all subjects, to be sure, were dependent on library resources. In 1870 the Board of Visitors expressed its especial satisfaction with the instruction in mathematics and natural science, and this commendation was frequently reiterated. At the beginning of the period the field of natural philosophy (physics and chemistry) and astronomy was in the hands of Professor John Sterling, the virtual father of the University and the only member of the old faculty to survive the reorganization of 1866. In 1874 Sterling was made professor of mathematics, which he continued to teach until his retirement ten

⁴¹ *University Press*, October 1, 1871, March 4, 1880, October 28, 1881, February 23, 1884, September 27, 1884; Report of the Visitors to the regents in *Regents' Annual Report*, 1879-80, p. 25 and *Regents' Biennial Report*, 1885-86, p. 53.

years later. Sterling had taken his first degree with honors at Princeton in 1840 and then had acted as a tutor while studying theology at his alma mater. He launched the first class at the University of Wisconsin on February 5, 1849, a class of preparatory students. When collegiate work was undertaken, he provided a large share of the instruction. As steward during the first decade he administered the boardinghouse, purchased wood, took care of the furnaces, inspected the buildings and directed repairs, assessed and collected students' fines, and exchanged secondhand furniture and books for the undergraduates. He virtually managed the institution during Barnard's chancellorship and, as acting chancellor from Barnard's retirement until the coming of Chadbourne in 1867, Sterling also taught five classes a day. Through thick and thin he stood by the institution he fathered, and he acted as vice-president after the reorganization of 1866. In spite of the great demands on him, Sterling demonstrated to Samuel Fallows, one of his pupils and subsequently a religious leader, that "a man may have his finger in forty pies at once and still be a credit to society." At Sterling's death in 1885 the Assembly deplored the loss of what it considered the oldest and staunchest friend of higher education, a faithful official, and a wise, learned, and exemplary tutor.⁴²

It is altogether understandable, in view of the many diverse tasks that fell to Sterling, that he represented the old order in scholarship. On only one occasion, apparently, did he win any commendation outside the confines of the University for an academic exercise. His paper on lightning and lightning rods, delivered in 1875 before the Wisconsin Agricultural Society and printed in the *Madison Democrat*, won the praise of Professor Joseph Henry of the Smithsonian Institution as "a valuable exposition of the subject; both as regards the principles which it enunciates, and the clearness of their statement and application." Sterling had no sympathy with the newer scientific developments which he failed to grasp. In his baccalaureate ser-

⁴² Report of the Visitors to the regents in *Regents' Annual Report*, 1869-70, p. 37; Minutes of the Executive Committee of the Board of Regents, Vol. A, pp. 62-63, November 29, 1856; Alice K. Fallows, *Everybody's Bishop* (New York, 1927), 102; *Assembly Journal*, 1885, p. 540.

mon of 1871 he ridiculed scientists who in the name of science questioned the Scriptures. "On such a subject the testimony of the humblest Christian, is worth more than the opinions of all the Darwins and Huxleys in the world. I tell you this is the word of God and it will abide forever. Take it then as your only guide." Such piety and orthodoxy could be understood. But even in mathematics, which was noncontroversial, Sterling did not keep abreast of developments. He continued, for example, to use the Loomis textbooks he had adopted in 1849 although they were sadly out-of-date. He was a great personality and a great tradition, but scholarship in mathematics lagged badly at the University during the 1870's.⁴³

A new order began in 1881 when young Charles A. Van Velzer was appointed instructor in mathematics. He at once dropped the outdated Loomis texts and replaced them with Wheeler's *Trigonometry* and Byerly's *Differential and Integral Calculus*. The students responded to his scholarship and competence as a teacher; trained at Cornell and at Johns Hopkins, Van Velzer brought to Wisconsin the best of recent developments in mathematics. Within a few years he was publishing papers on "compound determinates" and on other subjects. Van Velzer also organized the Mathematical Club, which at once made a place for itself. Papers treating of theory and propounding and solving problems were presented and discussed there. Van Velzer stimulated additional interest by giving popular lectures on the history and significance of mathematics. Before the period ended, work in this field was further strengthened by the arrival of Charles S. Slichter, with whom Van Velzer prepared textbooks in higher algebra.⁴⁴

The physical sciences enjoyed a remarkable development, thanks to the ability of a group of young men appointed by Chadbourne and Bascom. In 1868 William W. Daniells, then

⁴³ Professor Henry was quoted in the *University Press*, May 19, 1875; the baccalaureate sermon report was in the *University Press*, July 1, 1871. There is a manuscript biographical sketch of Sterling, prepared by the W.P.A., in the State Historical Society of Wisconsin. See also *State Journal*, March 9, 1885.

⁴⁴ *University Press*, December 9, 23, 1881, March 17, 31, 1882. Van Velzer later went into the coal business and devoted so much of his time to it that President Van Hise insisted that he choose between his business and academic interests. After leaving the University he taught for many years at Illinois College.

in his twenty-eighth year, came as professor of agriculture and chemistry. A country boy, familiar with the practical aspects of farming, Daniells had gone to the new Michigan State Agricultural College and from there to Harvard, where he studied for three years at the Lawrence Scientific School. On arriving in Madison he fitted up in the cellar of the old Main Hall a little laboratory for the course in analytical chemistry. This was in itself a pioneer contribution, and although his first class consisted of a single student, Daniells proceeded to place the teaching of chemistry on a solid basis. Pyre has characterized him as a "plodding thinker, of no discursive liveliness" and as a "confused and absentminded lecturer." Students, however, were quick to pay tribute to Daniells' readiness to give them individual help. "There was never a more perfect master of his vocation," testified one undergraduate. Whatever Daniells' strength and limitations as an instructor were, he contributed to the new spirit of research which was to win renown far and wide for the University. At the Experimental Farm he was largely responsible for the demonstration of the outstanding virtues of Manshury barley and for its dissemination throughout the Northwest. But this was only a part of his work. He instituted a series of observations of meteorological phenomena, taken three times daily; the observations continued until a United States Signal Service station was established at Madison. In 1873 he accepted an appointment as chemist for the new state geological survey, and a few years later he became state analyst. Meantime Daniells began to publish papers in the *Transactions* of the Wisconsin State Agricultural Society and elsewhere. These included pieces on the relation of chemistry to agriculture, the chemistry of stockbreeding, health in the homes of farmers, and the chemistry of breadmaking.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ James F. A. Pyre, *Wisconsin* (New York, 1920), 182; *University Press*, February 15, 1861; *Wisconsin State Journal*, October 14, 1912, p. 4. A detailed description of the work in chemistry under Daniells from a student's point of view was found in the letters of William E. Aitchison to his father, February 11, 25, April 15, September 30, 1883, in a private collection. The scope of Daniells' activities at the University farm is shown in his reports to the regents in the annual and biennial reports of the Board for the years 1868-79. See also W. A. Henry's comments on his predecessor's work in *Regents' Annual Report*, 1880-81, p. 65; *Regents' Biennial Report*, 1885-86, p. 37.

The work of Daniells in agricultural chemistry was carried to new levels by Henry Prentiss Armsby. Trained at the Sheffield School and Leipzig, Armsby came to Wisconsin in 1883 from the agricultural experiment station in Connecticut. While there he began a translation of Wolff's *Feeding of Farm Animals* to make available in English a greatly needed manual, but so many changes were necessary to adapt Wolff to American conditions that he set to work on a new book. In 1880 his *Manual of Cattle Feeding*, making use of Wolff and other authorities, provided the first English summary of existing knowledge about animal nutrition with a critical analysis of research methods in the field. The volume was epoch-making in its influence. Armsby remained at Wisconsin only until 1887, when he left to organize the experiment station of Pennsylvania. But while he was still at Wisconsin he began his basic research in animal nutrition. Through controlled feeding experiments Armsby laid the ground for his highly significant work in determining the relative value of foods through studies of their fuel and energy attributes.⁴⁶

This period saw also the establishment of the School of Pharmacy and the beginning of a new chapter in pharmaceutical chemistry. In 1883 Frederick Belding Power, who had studied chemistry in Germany with Fittig and Rose and pharmacognosy and pharmacology with Flückiger and Schmiedeberg, was appointed professor of pharmacy and materia medica. During his ten years at Wisconsin, Power published research articles on essential oils and alkaloids and translated two of Flückiger's books. His work was continued when he left in 1892 to win laurels in the East and in England; through his contributions to the knowledge of various organic compounds in plants Power won recognition as one of the world's leading authorities in his field.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ The best brief evaluation of Armsby's work is in the *United States Department of Agriculture Experiment Station Record*, 45:601-609 (November, 1921).

⁴⁷ For evaluations see C. A. Browne, memorial pamphlet, United States Department of Agriculture, n.p., n.d.; *Journal of the American Pharmaceutical Association*, 16:380, 487 (April, May, 1927); Ivor Griffith, "A Half-Century of Research in Plant Chemistry," in the *American Journal of Pharmacy*, 96:601-614 (August, 1924); Griffith, "Obituary of Power," in the *American Journal of Pharmacy*, 99:250-252 (April, 1927).

The study of modern physics at Wisconsin began with the appointment of John E. Davies in the same year that Daniells came—1868. Of Welsh background, Davies was graduated from the Free Academy in New York City before he came to Wisconsin in 1855 to work on farms in the summers and to teach school during the winters. In 1862, after graduating with honors from Lawrence, he enlisted as a private in the army. After the war he studied at the Chicago Medical College, taking his degree in 1868. At Wisconsin, Davies quickly showed that he was imbued with the true scientific spirit. Some of his publications attracted the attention of Benjamin Peirce, superintendent of the Coast and Geodetic Survey, and in consequence Davies was put in charge of the trigonometrical survey of Wisconsin. Devoting his summers to this work, he contributed many volumes to the records of the survey. Thanks to his efforts, the Coast Survey and the regents established at the University a magnetic observatory, which he supervised. Since a similar institution at Washington had been abandoned because it was in the same longitude as the magnetic observatory in Toronto, the new observatory in Madison was the only one of its kind in the country. By means of photographic self-registration a continuous and reliable record of the variations in the direction and intensity of the earth's magnetic force was now made available. Davies became an ardent student of the pioneer work of Clerk-Maxwell on electricity and magnetism and likewise experienced an intellectual revolution through reading Sir William Thompson's papers on the discovery of the continuous current dynamo. With a pattern borrowed from Cornell, Davies had constructed one of the earliest Gramme dynamos in the United States. In the new Science Hall, Davies built up what was generally conceded to be one of the best electrical experimental laboratories. Here he spent much time in the careful determination of the constants of instruments. His publications in the *Wisconsin Academy Transactions* and elsewhere had given him by 1889 a nation-wide reputation as an authority on potentials and the magnetic polarization of light; and his work for the Geodetic Survey likewise was highly esteemed.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ For sketches of Davies see *The Badger*, 1892, pp. 63-65, and the obituary by

The establishment of the magnetic observatory in 1876 reinforced the arguments of those who had long desired an astronomical observatory at the University. In 1869 the regents noted that there was not even a single good telescope in the state and that without the means of teaching astronomy an institution could hardly merit the title of university. The regents, the faculty, and the students looked to Alexander Mitchell, the wealthy railroad and insurance and banking magnate of Milwaukee, to establish an observatory, but they looked in vain. Nevertheless the regents did not despair of developing, sooner or later, the most "ennobling" and "liberalizing" of studies. In 1876 the legislature set apart a yearly sum of \$3,000 for the maintenance of an observatory provided one would be established without expense to the state within a three-year period. Ex-Governor Washburn thereupon donated funds for an observatory, an act which, in President Bascom's words, met an urgent need, gave the University higher standing, and promised to make the institution known in the scientific world as a research center. "We hope," Bascom added, "this liberality, so commendable in itself, will prove contagious, and that many of our citizens will, in a like way, identify themselves with the progress of higher education in the State." When the observatory was almost ready in 1878 the regents proudly announced that it would be inferior to no other observatory in the United States in equipment, convenience, or adaptability to the purposes sought. Shortly afterward it was endowed by Washburn's partner, Cyrus Woodman, with a fund for the maintenance of an astronomical library.⁴⁹

To head the new observatory Bascom brought to Wisconsin one of the most distinguished astronomers in the country. James C. Watson had been trained at Ann Arbor under Francis Brunnnow and at seventeen had mastered Laplace's *Mécanique céleste*. Before his twenty-first birthday he had con-

John B. Parkinson in the *Transactions of the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts, and Letters*, 1901, pp. 614-617; *Regents' Annual Report*, 1875-76, pp. 5-6; 1876-77, frontispiece, 7, 31, 33; *University Press*, January 20, 1877.

⁴⁹ *Regents' Annual Report*, 1868-69, p. 29; 1875-76, pp. 29, 39; 1876-77, p. 36; 1877-78, p. 7; Paul to Alexander Mitchell, December 10, 1874, in the Paul Papers; Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. C, pp. 385-386, January 16, 1883.

tributed fifteen pieces to astronomical journals. When he was appointed professor of astronomy at Michigan in 1859, Watson began a series of highly important studies of comets and asteroids. In 1863 he discovered "Eurynome"; this was the first of his twenty-two asteroid discoveries. In 1868 he undertook the preparation of a series of ecliptic star charts to forward his work in asteroids. In that year he also published his *Theoretical Astronomy*, an authoritative text which was quickly adopted in most American colleges and which was used in translation in many German and French universities. Watson was widely recognized for his accurate and rapid computations, for his mathematical intuition, for his analytical power, as well as for his contributions in the field of asteroids. He observed and reported on eclipses of the sun in Iowa and in Sicily. In 1874 he headed an American expedition to Peking to observe the transit of Venus, and his observations were widely acclaimed for their thoroughness and accuracy. On his return to America he was feted in many cultural centers. The khedive of Egypt asked him to survey the Pyramids. He received decorations from learned societies. In 1878 the evidence he presented for his belief that he had discovered a new planet, Vulcan, occasioned much controversy.⁵⁰

Although Michigan made every effort to keep Watson, the opportunities of the new Washburn Observatory could not be resisted. He at once began improvements, rigging up all sorts of new devices designed to promote research. Witty, entertaining, and instructive, he quickly became an idol of his students. "Professor Watson has taken the hearts of the students in Astronomy by storm" declared the *University Press*. "His lectures are instructive, and that too, which few college professors' lectures are, intensely interesting." His untimely death in 1880, when he was but forty-two, was recognized as a great loss to the University.⁵¹

Work at the observatory continued under the direction of Edward S. Holden, who had been astronomer at the Naval

⁵⁰ This is based on the sketch in the *Dictionary of American Biography* and on one in the *State Journal*, November 24, 1880.

⁵¹ *University Press*, April 24, 1880; *Madison Democrat*, November 24, 1880, p. 2.

Observatory and who had headed government expeditions to observe total eclipses in Colorado. At Wisconsin he published a catalogue of double stars. "I have material on hand for 2 more vols. like this," he wrote to Regent Paul on sending him the first volume of astronomical reports printed at state expense, "and more to come!" But, despite his conviction that the Washburn Observatory was second to none—a conclusion arrived at following a visit to observatories throughout the country, Holden could not resist a call to the new Lick Observatory and to the presidency of the University of California. But in leaving Wisconsin he set himself against the pressure to call a "cheap" man as his successor, pointing out that an able man alone could keep the observatory from becoming a mere show place. To clinch his argument, Holden urged the regents to remember that if research were maintained at the observatory, a substantial income might be secured from railroads and other business firms desiring the verification of standard measures of length. The observatory had indeed turned the eyes of eastern scientists toward Wisconsin. "You would be surprised," wrote one of Watson's friends to Regent Keyes, "to find what a very excellent reputation the University has among college men in the east. Already, this is particularly true among scientific men." The writer went on to say that the observatory was mostly responsible for this. Since the observatory had already commanded the services of two of the most widely known American astronomers—men with European reputations, it would be better, this scientist concluded, to close the observatory altogether rather than to put it in charge of any but a first-rate man. The regents did not close the observatory. In George C. Comstock, whom Watson had brought as his assistant, the University found an astronomer who continued the publication series and who contributed to the scientific journals many new findings, especially in the field of the so-called astronomy of precision. His first study of the aberration of light presaged a career notable for experimentation, observation, and theorization.⁵²

⁵² Holden to Paul, September 11, November 15, 1885, in the Paul Papers; Roland Irving to Keyes, March 5, 1886, in the Keyes Papers; *The Badger*, 1897, p. 86. See also the *Dictionary of American Biography*, 21:186–187. Keyes a few

In geology, no less than in astronomy, this era marked the beginnings of important investigation. Indeed, Chadbourne's appointment of Professor Roland D. Irving in 1868 was a great stimulus to the development of scientific studies at Wisconsin. Broadly educated and thoroughly trained in geology at the Columbia School of Mines, Irving was, as President Birge has so well said, "thoroughly scientific in temper" and gifted with the ability to see and deal with fundamental problems. His work was "large in volume and represented marked advances in his science." As an assistant of Thomas C. Chamberlin, director of the new Wisconsin Geological Survey, Irving had surveyed the lithographical character of the rocks and reported the results with great distinction. His reports, according to George P. Merrill, the historian of American geology, were notable for the beauty of their colored plates which "were by far the best that had been prepared and published by an American up to that date." Irving also described glacial drift in detail and was the first to announce that the Kettle Range of central Wisconsin was continuous terminal moraine. His work also revealed that the Baraboo quartzites were much older than the adjacent upper Cambrian sandstone. Investigating the Penokee Iron Range, Irving rightly challenged the prevailing expectations regarding the richness of the deposits. However, the storm of protest that arose threatened for a time the very existence of the survey; but Irving's candor and honesty prevailed, and he proceeded to study Paleozoic and Archean strata in the central part of the state. In his last years Irving went back to the Superior area and laid the broad foundations on which nearly all subsequent geological investigation has rested. An important monograph reported his findings in the copper-bearing series as "the first approach to a unified and systematic discussion of this great formation occupying a tract of 40,000 square miles embracing portions of Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Canada." It was, in the words of Thomas C. Chamberlin, "a monument of industrious and able investigation and of candid

years later used his influence to prevent the Chicago, Milwaukee, and St. Paul Railroad from discontinuing the standard time-determination services of the University in favor of a proposed nation-wide time service to be sponsored by Western Union. Keyes to Paul, July 27, 1888, in the Paul Papers.

and careful induction." Irving's contributions to structural geology and genetic petrography were of the first order. A man of brusque humor, modest, sincere, and devoted to science, Irving achieved a world reputation during the eighteen years he was associated with the University. His death at the age of forty-one was indeed a great blow.⁵³

The beginnings of the new biology studies at Wisconsin date from the lectures given during the winters of 1868, 1869, and 1870 by Addison E. Verrill, professor of zoology at Yale. As a student of Agassiz, he had already begun his investigation of the vertebrates of Long Island Sound. His report on these researches, published in 1873, has become recognized as the first extensive ecological survey of New England waters. At the conclusion of Verrill's course of lectures, the editor of the *University Press* declared that the lectures ought to be written up in book form. "The science deserves it, and the world needs it, and perhaps no man now living is more capable of writing a work upon Zoology than is Professor Verrill." From Verrill's diary we may gather some idea of the lectures he gave during the winter seasons of his professorship. "Lectured at 2 P.M. A general sketch of the Ani. kingdom. 80 or 90 present, about half ladies. All attention. . . . Physiology of digestion. . . . Lectured on reproduction. Ladies not in."⁵⁴ But Verrill found it too taxing to continue the Wisconsin connection after 1870. He returned to Yale, where through further research he discovered many new forms of animal life and won a reputation as one of America's greatest systematic zoologists.

The work in zoology at Wisconsin was resumed by young Edwin Birge, another student of Agassiz, who came from Williams in 1875. Although it was some time before he was able to give all his time to collegiate instruction, his influence was felt almost from the start. During a leave of absence in 1880 he

⁵³ Birge, "President Bascom and the University of Wisconsin," in *Memorial Service in Honor of John Bascom*, 19; George P. Merrill, *The First One Hundred Years of American Geology* (New Haven, 1924), 489; Thomas C. Chamberlin, "Roland Duer Irving," in the *Transactions of the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts, and Letters*, 1888-91, pp. 443-447.

⁵⁴ *University Press*, June, 1870, p. 2; Extracts from the diary of Professor Addison E. Verrill in the manuscript division of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

studied bacteriology and pathology at Leipzig and at other German centers and thus put himself in touch with the most advanced work in this field. In his report to President Bascom for the years 1884-1886, Birge spoke of the poverty of the University in respect to specimens and pointed out that for the first time the institution was without microscopes. Birge in these years revised Orton's *Zoology*, published in the *Transactions* of the Wisconsin Academy notes on the Cladocera, and contributed to the publications of the Johns Hopkins biological laboratory and to other learned journals several research papers on the embryology of *Panopaeus*. But this was the mere threshold of a distinguished career in science.⁵⁵

Verrill had found the natural history collections fairly adequate in birds and mammals; and the purchase in 1876 of the Increase Allen Lapham cabinet greatly augmented the resources of the University in botany as well as in geology. This collection of Wisconsin's leading pioneer naturalist contained botanical specimens representing almost every Wisconsin variety.⁵⁶ Botanical research at the University had its real beginning with the appointment of William Trelease in 1881. Trained at Harvard and at Johns Hopkins, Trelease was thoroughly abreast of the most advanced work in botany. He had already taken part in an important study of cotton insects and had published a significant paper on pollination, an area in which he was to become the leading authority. During the brief four years Trelease stayed at the University, he accomplished an amazing amount of work. When he arrived botany was a minor part of a composite department devoted to agriculture and botany; there were few facilities for instruction, let alone research.⁵⁷ He at once remedied the situation and introduced several laboratory courses on the elementary and advanced level. One of his students in these years has recalled his instruction in cryptogamic botany, in flower ecology, and in systematic botany. He also gave work in bacteriology, and this may well have been

⁵⁵ Birge to John Bascom, October 7, 1886, in the Paul Papers; *Trochos*, 1885, p. 27.

⁵⁶ *University Press*, April 19, 1876, p. 4.

⁵⁷ Report of the professor of botany in *Regents' Biennial Report*, 1883-84, pp. 41-42.

the first course in an American university.⁵⁸ At his instance the Natural History Society was organized and the herbarium enlarged.

But this was not all. In addition to organizing botanical work and inspiring several students subsequently to win distinction in the field, Trelease brought out his translation of Poulon's *Botanical Micro-Chemistry* (1884), worked with Asa Gray on an edition of the works of George Englemann (1887), and inaugurated a whole series of significant researches. These included studies of the water bloom and "workings" of the Madison lakes; studies of morels and puff-balls in the Madison area; and a very important preliminary history of Wisconsin parasitic fungi, a work that was continued by others. Trelease also prepared a paper on North American geraniaceae which was well received by the Boston Society of Natural History. He was in no sense unmindful of the uses to which scientific research in his field might be put. He paid attention to the apple scab, the onion mold, wax-bean fungus, grape rot, and spot diseases of the strawberry plant, communicating his observations to the reports of the Wisconsin Agricultural Experiment Station. It was a great loss to Wisconsin when Trelease left in 1885 to become director of the Missouri Botanical Garden. Shortly afterward he was elected president of the newly organized Botanical Society of America, and he received many other coveted honors in the scientific world. Much to Bascom's regret and even disgust, the regents did not seek the best possible successor and for a time the admirable beginnings of botanical research lagged.

Yet it was clear that by 1887 the University of Wisconsin had become a center of scientific investigation that could not be overlooked in any evaluation of the scientific resources of the nation. The second Science Hall, completed in 1887, was generally regarded as the best building of its kind in the whole country. Scientific research, largely inspired by the awareness of what it might mean in the improvement of the material conditions of the state, was based on solid foundations. Under

⁵⁸ L. H. Pammel, *Prominent Men I Have Met: Dr. William Trelease* (Ames, Iowa, 1927), 6, 9.

the stimulus of President Chamberlin, himself a great scientist, the University was to win new laurels. But Chamberlin did not give any instruction in his special subject or, indeed, in the philosophical studies all his predecessors had presented to seniors.

Presidents Chadbourne, Twombly, and Bascom, in accordance with the tradition that had long prevailed in American colleges, taught moral and mental philosophy to the senior class. We know that Chadbourne used the orthodox Scottish common-sense philosophy, as represented in the manuals of Haven and Hopkins. We know that Twombly was ill-prepared to give any instruction at all and that his teaching was disliked. But in President Bascom philosophical studies at Wisconsin came into their own, for his influence as an instructor of philosophy was pervasive, deep-rooted, and inspiring.

14.

The Student Body

AS COMPARED with enrollments at eastern institutions, at the neighboring University of Michigan, and even at denominational colleges in the state, the student body at the University of Wisconsin remained a small one for a quarter of a century after the Civil War. In the academic year 1866-67 the total number of students was only 304. By the end of the Chadbourne administration in 1870 enrollments were approaching 500, but this level was not long sustained. By 1876-77 the registration had again dropped to 316, and it was not until ten years later, in Bascom's last academic year, that it again exceeded 500. A considerable proportion of the students, moreover, were not pursuing studies of collegiate rank. The preparatory department, until its abolition in 1880, represented a large section of the student body, ranging from 15 to 30 per cent in various years; another 15 to 30 per cent were irregular students—students who were in residence for only brief periods or who lacked the preparation necessary for admission to full academic standing as candidates for degrees. Until the normal department was abolished in 1868 and the Female College was absorbed in 1874, a large proportion of the women were following courses considerably less advanced than those leading to a degree. Thus during the early years of the postwar period the total number of students of actual college standing was even smaller than the enrollment figures would suggest.

For this slow growth of the University a number of reasons were cited: the continued suspicion that state universities were

godless institutions, the increasingly high standards for admission to the preparatory school before its abolition in 1880, the lack of a sufficient number of high schools equipped to prepare students for the University, and the higher standards of achievement that were gradually imposed.¹ Some of the regents insisted that the actual decline of enrollments during part of Bascom's administration was attributable to his own ineptness.² But the marked increase of students during the last years of his presidency, when his controversy with the regents was most acrimonious and most publicized, leaves this interpretation open to question, as does also the fact that he was much liked by students and alumni and that his idealism appealed to many of New England–New York background.

It is true that Bascom's belief in the traditionally academic program and his indifference to the more utilitarian courses may have tended to curtail enrollments. After the normal department was abolished, little effort was made to provide teacher-training, and thus many who would otherwise have availed themselves of the University's advantages were diverted to the normal schools. Many other practical-minded young men were probably alienated by the slow headway being made in developing the mechanical and the agricultural programs. That practical training was in demand is suggested by the fact that the vocational type of courses in the College of Arts attracted more students, by and large, than did the traditionally academic College of Letters, at least until the influence of Bascom was thrown on the cultural side. In 1871–72, for example, more than twice as many were registered in the Arts college as in Letters: 93 and 43, respectively.³ Bascom himself ascribed the more rapid growth of the University of Michigan not only to its greater financial resources—two and a half times those of Wisconsin—but to its professional schools, to which many out-of-state students were attracted and in which lay most of the numerical strength of the institution.⁴

¹ *Regents' Annual Report*, 1869–70, pp. 28–30.

² See above, 249 ff.

³ *University Catalogue*, 1872, p. 25.

⁴ Report of the President, appendix to the *Regents' Biennial Report*, 1883–84, p. 37.

Closely related to the discontent over the University's limited provision for practical training was the fact that many students were too poor to meet the living expenses and fees, low as they were. In 1866 tuition was only six dollars a term, room in a college hall three dollars a term, and the diploma fee five dollars. Even with the additional fees that were imposed for the heating and lighting of rooms, including the so-called public rooms, and for library service the cost of attendance at the University was low. But it was too burdensome for many who would have liked to come.⁵ The slump in registration at the turn of the seventies was attributed to "the stringency of the times" and to the low prices farmers obtained for their produce. Even in a given year attendance varied from one term to the next, for many students had to drop out for a time to earn the money they needed to continue their education. In the late sixties and early seventies a large number of students supported themselves by working on the University farm or in the town of Madison and reduced expenses by cooking simple food in their college rooms. By 1875 the proportion of self-supporting students had apparently declined, for in that year the *University Press* lamented that the time seemed unfortunately to have passed when college boys worked their way, unashamed of their shabby clothes and their poverty. A new tendency toward extravagance and display had set in. A substantial proportion of students, the writer continued, were now the sons of rich men able to indulge in luxuries that many could not afford. But many of the students continued to earn their way. Robert M. La Follette, of the class of 1879, supported himself and also helped his mother and sister financially throughout his college career, by teaching school, by publishing and editing a student paper, and by doing odd jobs.⁶

Partly to reduce the cost of attendance at the University and thus to augment its enrollment, and partly to connect it more intimately with the high schools, the legislature in 1872 pro-

⁵ Records of the Board of Regents (MS.), Vol. C, pp. 46, 55, 77, 83, 100, 115, 152, 176, 182, 183, 191, 200, 242, 291, 300, 301, 306, August 24, 1866–January 18, 1876.

⁶ *Regents' Annual Report*, 1868–69, p. 27; 1869–70, pp. 29–30; *University Press*, June 2, 1875; *La Follette's Autobiography* (Madison, 1913), 6.

GRAND CANINE ABORTION,

AT THE



UNIVERSITY KENNELS and EVERGREEN NURSERY.

Nine Slinks in the Litter and the Old Slurt Doing Well.

Accouchee :---P. ALMIGHTY CHADBOURNE.

Chief Assistant :---Prof. T. N. RASKELL, Late of Jeusalem.

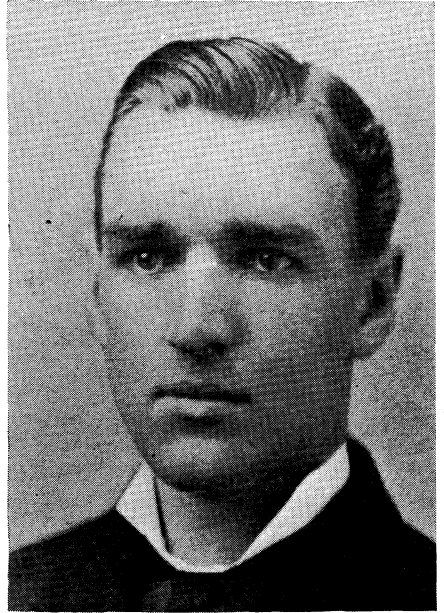
MOTTO.---“ANSWER A FOOL ACCORDING TO HIS FOLLY”

GRAND MARSHAL.--Col. Peas, alias Beans, alias Croquet.

MADISON, WISCONSIN, JUNE 24, P. b. 1868.

MUSIC BY THE STOUGHTON SWINETT BAND.

University Bean Press.



Classmates of 1879

Robert M. La Follette and Charles R. Van Hise

vided that graduates of Wisconsin high schools should be admitted without payment of tuition. Both the Visitors and the regents applauded the act on the ground that it placed a University education within the reach of all high school students, that it would raise the level of popular education, and that it would make the University, actually as well as nominally, the head of a unified system of public instruction. At the same time the regents pointed out that if any great number of high school graduates took advantage of the new provision, tuition-paying students would be crowded out, for the buildings were already occupied to capacity. Should that happen, a grave financial problem would be created, inasmuch as the fees represented an important source of income. If the policy was to be maintained and extended, obviously the state must provide more liberal appropriations. In 1876 the legislature did extend the policy by abolishing tuitions for all residents of the state, but without increasing the appropriation to the level regarded as adequate by the regents. A few years later the regents adopted a resolution requiring every student to pay an incidental fee of ten dollars.⁷ At once the question arose whether this new fee was not tantamount to tuition.

A student revolt ensued, which was led by the *University Press*. On the ground that the legislature had abolished all fees for tuition, the editor of the *Press* argued that the incidental fee was illegal. If the regents had the authority to impose an assessment of ten dollars, they had equal authority to increase it to twenty-five or even fifty dollars. The editor announced that the students intended, without offense to the regents, "quietly and peacefully" to test the action by judicial appeal. Meetings were held on the campus, and an anti-tuition league was organized. Many students paid the fee on the assumption that they must do so to gain admission, but some two hundred made their payments under protest. One senior, E. B. Priest, refused to pay at all and was suspended. He gladly permitted his name

⁷ *General Laws*, 1872, p. 66; 1876, pp. 267-269; *Regents' Annual Report*, 1871-72, pp. 5, 6; Report of the Board of Visitors in the appendix, pp. 17-18; Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. C, p. 366, June 21, 1881. See also Attorney General A. Scott Sloan to Elisha Keyes, December 13, 1877, in the Keyes Papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

to be used in the test case which J. M. Olin and S. U. Pinney agreed to see through the courts. The position of the regents was defended by William F. Vilas. The supreme court ruled in favor of the Board, holding that a corporation had the right to decide what means were reasonably adapted to the ends for which it had been created. Priest paid his fees and was re-admitted to the University, but the editor of the *University Press* declared that the decision enabled the regents to raise the already "prohibitive fees" and defeated the ideal of the University as the apex of the state's free educational system.⁸ To what extent the incidental fee kept students from coming to the University cannot, of course, be determined, but it can scarcely have been a negligible factor. The fact remains, however, that in the eyes of students a ten-dollar fee was not only unjust but a financial burden of some magnitude.

Other characteristics of the student body during this period are revealed by some of the statistics assembled by the graduating classes. Of the senior class of 1872 a good majority were Wisconsin-born. Five were born in New York, two in Illinois, and one each in Pennsylvania, Iowa, Indiana, Ohio, Vermont, and Massachusetts. Two had come from Germany, two from Ireland, and one each from Austria, Wales, Bohemia, and Norway. Fourteen expressed no religious preference; eight were Episcopalians; three, Roman Catholics; two, Methodists; two, Jewish; one, Christian Universalist; and one, Congregationalist. Eighteen were Republicans; fourteen, Democrats; and three, independents. Twenty-two were free traders; seven, protectionists; and six were independent on this issue. Eighteen stated that they did not use tobacco and thirteen that they smoked only occasionally; thirty-two refrained from spirituous liquors, and only three admitted using them on occasion. Twenty were self-dependent; fifteen were not. Expenses for an academic year, as reported by the students, ranged from \$150 to \$700, the average being \$363.43. Eleven planned to become lawyers; three,

⁸ *University Press*, September 30, 1881, January 20, 1882; Record of the Board of Regents, Vol. C, p. 370, January 17, 1882; *Reports... in the Supreme Court of the State of Wisconsin*, 54:159-172 (1882). Bascom defended the fee as the only way the regents could meet a deficit. William E. Aitchison to his father, September 18, 1881, in a private collection loaned to the authors.

editors; two, doctors; two, druggists; and four looked forward to careers in the ministry, politics, printing, and distilling. All expected to become "noted."⁹

The graduating class of 1877 did not differ significantly from that of 1872. All were American-born, twenty-one being natives of Wisconsin and one each of Michigan, New York, Vermont, New Hampshire, Maine, Ohio, Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Illinois. Nine belonged to secret societies. Five had followed the ancient classical course, two the modern classical, and eighteen the general science; six were civil engineers and one a student of mining and metallurgy. Twenty-one were Republicans, five were Democrats, and five were neutral in politics. Six confessed to occasional use of alcohol and five to the use of tobacco; the rest asserted they were strictly temperate. Religious affiliations were dispersed: the Congregationalists numbered three; the Presbyterians, Baptists, and Unitarians each two; one was a Roman Catholic, and one an Episcopalian. The rest disclaimed any denominational preferences. A larger number than in 1872 had not decided upon their future careers. Only four planned to become lawyers, one a doctor, one a journalist, and one a minister; three looked forward to engineering and three to business as their life work; two planned to teach; and the rest were undecided.¹⁰

Throughout this period the large majority of students came from Wisconsin homes, the town of Madison furnishing the largest number. For a great proportion of them the University was a substitute for the private institution which they could not afford to attend. In short, as the editor of the *University Press* noted in 1882, the student body was middle class, "the backbone of our political, social, and moral institutions."¹¹



WISCONSIN, like other state universities in this period, faced the issue of coeducation. Before the Civil War women had been admitted to only a few colleges, among which were Oberlin and

⁹ *University Press*, August 15, 1871.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, June 30, 1877.

¹¹ *Regents' Annual Report*, 1875-76, p. 30; *University Press*, October 7, 1882.

Antioch. Iowa was the only state university which had been co-educational from the beginning. In 1857 the Board of Regents at Wisconsin contemplated the admission of women, possibly in response to a report of a recent educational convention. At that convention, held at Watertown the year before under the auspices of the Congregational and Presbyterian Churches, resolutions had been adopted urging the establishment of denominational female colleges with the support of state funds. The regents tabled the question of educational facilities for women at this time, but as the Civil War drained away the young men of the state, they began to fear that the University might be left without any students at all. In part to prevent such depletion and in part to extend the normal work already begun, the Board started a full normal department in 1863, open to both men and women, and set aside South Dormitory for the girls.¹²

Some members of the faculty disapproved of the new experiment, but most of them, including acting-Chancellor Sterling, sought to make things as pleasant as possible for the young women. Not so the handful of young men still left in the University. Most of these felt deeply humiliated and refused to recognize the presence of the young women in any way. "And we," wrote one of the first coeds years later, "were just as oblivious of theirs." But gradually the ice was broken. In the spring of 1864 the first mixed social gathering took place after the "exhibition" of the Castalian, the new literary society of the women, when Mrs. Sterling invited everyone to her rooms for conversation and refreshment. A few months later, when all but one senior boy enlisted in the 40th Regiment, the girls were present at the farewell gathering and presented the tyro soldiers with the needle books they had made for them.¹³

The prospects seemed bright for the coeducational experiment thus begun in a limited and *ad hoc* fashion. In 1865 eighteen ladies were following special courses in addition to normal work. As if to anticipate objections, the faculty in 1865

¹² *Wisconsin Journal of Education*, 1:86-87 (May 18, 1856); Helen M. Olin, "Coeducation at the University of Wisconsin," in *Woman's Progress*, 3 (1894): 167-177.

¹³ Mrs. Lathrop E. Smith, "My Recollections of Civil War Days," in the *Wisconsin Magazine of History*, 2:30-31 (September, 1918).

gave assurance that academic standards would in no way be lowered. The next year, as we have seen, the reorganization act provided that the University should be "open alike" to both sexes.

But the victory was not yet won. Chadbourne's opposition to coeducation, it will be recalled, was the principal reason for the modification of the coeducational feature by the legislature of 1867. This provided that the University was to be open to female as well as to male students "under such regulations and restrictions as the board of regents may deem proper." In accordance with Chadbourne's recommendation the normal department was abolished and the Female College organized in 1867. The next year the Board of Regents reported that the new institution was designed to provide a thorough education for ladies, that the college had its own building and separate classes under the direction of a preceptress, that the president and the regular faculty would give special instruction to the girls, and that they might even attend University lectures for which they were prepared. Degrees were to be granted that were appropriate to the courses followed. The prescribed course of study was on a definitely lower academic level than that provided for the boys: the mathematics courses were elementary, modern languages were substituted for Greek and Latin, and a good deal of emphasis was put on music and the fine arts. As it turned out, however, no women were graduated from the prescribed course of study in the Female College. The question of an appropriate degree for the six women who completed their course in 1869 occasioned considerable discussion. On June 22, 1869, the regents named a committee, of which Samuel Fallows was chairman, to consider President Chadbourne's recommendations on the award of degrees to women. The committee recommended that the six women be granted the same degree as the men if their program had been an equivalent one. According to Fallows, President Chadbourne firmly refused, two or three days before commencement, to graduate the girls. "Never," he was reported to have said, "will I be guilty of the absurdity of calling young women bachelors." The day before commencement Fallows and a member of the faculty looked up

the word "bachelor" in Webster's dictionary and found there, among other items, the definition "an unmarried woman. Ben Johnson, Obs." No college president, Fallows remarked, could repudiate Webster. Thus the six girls were graduated with the degree Ph.B.¹⁴

In 1870 the Board, calling attention to the fifty-thousand-dollar appropriation which had been made for a Female College building, declared that Wisconsin was far in advance of her sister states "in the noble provision she is making for the higher education of the daughters of the State." In carrying out the wise policy of the legislature "it is the purpose of the regents to do all in their power to provide for ladies the same facilities for college education enjoyed by gentlemen." The next year, when Chadbourne was no longer on the scene, the regents went even further. The new Female College system, they pointed out, enabled ladies to take full advantage of all the privileges of the University if they chose to do so or, alternatively, to select studies taught by "lady teachers" within the limits of the Female College. But it was not feasible to abolish the distinctions between the sexes in outlining the educational program. "This course . . . will commend itself to the friends of education, for while it complies fully with the organic law of the University, in extending equal privileges to male and female students, it is yet a conservative course, midway between the theories of those who would ride a hobby to personal popularity, and that of fogyism which yields nothing to the demands of a growing public opinion."¹⁵

Yet the Wisconsin compromise did not actually provide equal opportunities for women. The new Female College building, admirable though it was with its porticos, piazzas, furnaces, laundry, conveniences for water distribution, and inside privy, nevertheless emphasized the corporate separateness of its residents, who attended their own chapel and recited in their own classrooms. In 1872 the regents resolved that although the distinctive features of the Female College were to be preserved, no

¹⁴ *General Laws*, 1867, pp. 114-115; *Regents' Annual Report*, 1867-68, p. 16; Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. C, pp. 112-113, June 22, 1869; Alice K. Fallows, *Everybody's Bishop* (New York, 1927), 230.

¹⁵ *Regents' Annual Report*, 1869-70, pp. 30, 49; 1870-71, pp. 5-6.

student was to be debarred from electing courses of instruction established in any department of the University. But when women did so elect, they found that they were admitted only if there was room for them; they were made to feel they were not wanted and were in fact trespassing on the rights of others; and at the end of the term they discovered that they were expected to write their examinations in an adjoining room. "At present," concluded the editor of the *University Press*, "while it is assumed that each has equal advantage in the university, it must be admitted that this is by no means the exact state of affairs."¹⁶

Several factors contributed to the gradual abolition of the dual system. President Twombly, champion of full coeducation, came out strongly in favor of it in the address he gave at the formal opening of the new Female College building. He emphasized the inalienable right of every individual to full equality of cultural opportunity, cited the achievements of women in art, literature, politics, and war, called attention to the fact that at least thirty college presidents had already testified to the intellectual capacity of women, and in conclusion stated that at Wisconsin, too, the ladies had shown themselves fully capable of pursuing the higher studies with men. In its annual report to the regents in 1871 the Board of Visitors suggested the propriety of allowing men and women pursuing the same studies to recite in classes together. "Accepting the fact that they are to be educated together, we fail to see the necessity of having a distinct department known as the 'Female College.'" The next year the Visitors reported that after careful study of the question they were "convinced that any apprehension of danger or difficulty from the coeducation of the sexes, are groundless. The evils feared are imaginary; the benefits, substantial."¹⁷

Another important factor in extending coeducation was the waste of time and effort entailed in holding separate recitations in a single subject. On January 18, 1871, the Board, thanks to the efforts of Samuel Fallows, chairman of a special commit-

¹⁶ Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. C, pp. 163, 180, January 17, 1872, January 21, 1873; *University Press*, March 15, 1871.

¹⁷ *University Press*, December 20, 1871; Report of the Visitors, in *Regents' Annual Report*, 1870-71, p. 43; *ibid.*, 1871-72, appendix, p. 17.

tee, decided to permit joint recitations whenever they were deemed necessary. A few days later Rasmus B. Anderson asked permission of the faculty to have two of his Latin classes, one for men, the other for women, recite together, and after some hesitation the faculty granted the request.¹⁸

The Board of Regents, while maintaining the Female College as a distinct unit, adopted a series of resolutions to make it easier for women to enter classes with the men, and on January 21, 1874 finally passed a resolution embracing full coeducation. "The University shall be open to female as well as male students, with no other regulations or restriction on the part of the Board of Regents, than those that may be deemed necessary and proper for the preservation of order and discipline." A few months later the *University Press* called attention to the "significant omission of the obnoxious term 'female college' in the advertisement of the University in this issue." The commencement held on July 1, 1874 was the last in which men and women were graduated separately. Even so, the fourteen women granted degrees took them not from the Female College but from the College of Arts. And every honor had been captured by one woman, Jennie Field!¹⁹

By the early seventies the opposition of the male students to the presence of women had largely disappeared. The sixteen women members of the class of 1874 who were in full standing seem to have been accepted by their twenty-six masculine classmates with no resentment. Throughout the academic year the *University Press* had commented with satisfaction upon the appearance of the women at the chapel rhetoricals and their active participation in the exercises. "Gradually the ladies are being admitted to every department of the University and the right to bear arms is no longer denied them. Soon we shall see the 'Amazonian Brigade' present arms and right-shoulder-shift at the voice of command." In the autumn of 1874 the request

¹⁸ Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. C, p. 147, January 18, 1871; Minutes of the Meetings of the Faculty (MS.), vol. 1, p. 185, January 30, 1871.

¹⁹ Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. C, pp. 162-163, 180, 201-202, January 17, 1872, January 21, 1873, January 21, 1874; *University Press*, May 16, July 1, 1874; note on Jennie Field in the *Wisconsin Magazine of History*, 2:483 (June, 1919).

of the coeds for the privilege of using the gymnasium two days a week was granted with the approval of the student press. "Co-education has reached such a high state of development at the University," declared the *University Press*, "that the Castalians speak of putting on their 'best men' for such and such positions." The freshmen even petitioned the faculty to permit women to attend class meetings. But this was going too far. The faculty turned down the request. The only recorded evidence of masculine resentment was an editorial in the *University Press* in 1876, which took exception to the unequal representation of the sexes on the stage at the recent commencement. Inasmuch as class standing was the basis for commencement appointments and the women outranked the men in scholastic achievement, more women than men had appeared on the platform. "Woman naturally excels man in gift of gab and quickness of perception. While these qualities insure success in the class room, they may be, and often are, wholly divorced from genuine intellectual power." The *Press* demanded that appointments be made in proportion to enrollment by sex.²⁰

The social relations between the sexes occasioned some problems, which in 1871 were referred to a faculty committee for consideration. The committee's report, which was adopted, stipulated that the gentlemen might visit the ladies in their reception room at South Dormitory from four to six o'clock daily and from two to six on Saturday, but only after permission had been granted by the preceptress. The faculty in accepting the report forbade visits between the male and female literary societies except at a single public meeting in the chapel each term. A few years later, in 1878, Regent Winslow was greatly exercised over what he regarded as a lax method of selecting young gentlemen for a party at Ladies Hall. He proceeded to take President Bascom roundly to task, asserting that his was the responsibility for everything connected with the management of the University. This reprimand "slid off like water from a duck's back" and the subject was dismissed. By and

²⁰ History of the Class of 1874 (MS.), in the University Collection, University of Wisconsin Library; *University Press*, October 17, November 2, December 3, 1874; July, 1876; Minutes of the Faculty, vol. 1, p. 239, March 17, 1873.

large no one objected to the pattern of social relationships that existed, which by general testimony had proved the practicality of full coeducation. In 1876 the regents declared that the experiment in coeducation had been successful, in both an academic and a moral sense. The men showed more courtesy and subordination; the ladies derived from the association a thoughtful disposition and serious purpose and a desire to be respected.²¹

Yet in this very year in which President Bascom proudly announced that women now constituted a fourth of the student population, certain signs portended that a die-hard faction would oppose the full coeducational program on which the University had embarked. Even the report of the regents testifying to the beneficial results of the presence of women and unequivocally declaring the experiment a success, added that "the Regents do not understand that the law, in providing an equality of educational privileges, contemplates any special experiments in the matter of coeducation, or the adoption of any rules or regulations founded upon any novel or theoretic view of the personal and social relations of the sexes." Regent Winslow frankly urged that Ladies Hall be converted into a true female college, with a program appropriate to feminine culture, manners, and character, a female faculty, separate classes, and a chapel for the exclusive use of the women residents. At a Board meeting held on January 17, 1877, he introduced a resolution to repeal the basic decision of 1874. The resolution was referred to the committee on library, course of study, and textbooks, which had it under consideration for several months. In June the committee reported to the Board that it could not approve the establishment of a separate female college, for it would entail an increased expenditure, lower the standards of scholarship, degrade the University in the eyes of educators, and be out of harmony with progressive educational movements. There was no general demand for such a backward step, said the committee. The desirability of coedu-

²¹ Minutes of the Faculty, vol. 1, pp. 195-196, September 4, 1871; H. W. Winslow to George H. Paul, November 17, 1876, in the Paul Papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin; *Regents' Annual Report*, 1875-76, p. 36.

cation had been demonstrated by other institutions, notably Michigan, Cornell, Antioch, and Oberlin.

The whole matter might have ended right there had the Board not had before it a report of the Board of Visitors, who had recently attended final examinations. The 1877 Board of Visitors, which differed in membership from that which had earlier championed coeducation, admitted that the women passed the examinations as well as or even better than the men, but they were nevertheless "deeply impressed with the appearance of ill-health which most of them presented." The cause must be sought, they continued, less in any unhealthful conditions prevailing in Ladies Hall than in the physical make-up of women. "Every physiologist is well aware, that at stated times, nature makes a great demand upon the energies of early womanhood, and that at these times great caution must be exercised lest injury be done—an injury which, it is well known, may prove permanent." A woman was at a disadvantage at certain times and had therefore to work so much the harder at other times in order to regain lost ground. "It is also well known that overwork, in whatever way induced, at the times indicated, will produce deterioration of the system, which generally manifests itself by bloodlessness, followed by a train of evils which it is not necessary here to enumerate. It is this very condition of bloodlessness which is so noticeable in the women of the University at this time; the sallow features, the pearly whiteness of the eye, the lack of color, the want of physical development in the majority, and an absolute expression of anaemia in very many of the women students, all indicate that demands are made upon them which they cannot meet." Granted that education was greatly to be desired, it was better that the future matrons of the state remain without it than that it "should be procured at the fearful expense of ruined health; better that the future mothers of the state should be robust, hearty, healthy women, than that, by over study, they entail upon their descendants the germs of disease."²²

²² *Regents' Annual Report*, 1875-76, pp. 10-11; 1876-77, pp. 44-45; Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. C, pp. 277-279, January 17, 1877; Reports to the Regents, Vol. B, p. 315, June 19, 1877.

The regents, with the two antithetical reports in hand, decided to refer the problem to the faculty with a request that it consider whether some arrangement might be made "to relieve ladies from some of the severer studies, and take others in lieu thereof."²³

Meanwhile the regents, in their own annual report, noted that the Visitors had questioned the wisdom and propriety of coeducation. All the results, they said, must be taken into account. The University of Wisconsin must maintain its standards. If certain classes of students could not meet these standards, their place was elsewhere. By law and theory of organization, the University had a definite place in the educational system. In the personal and social relations of the sexes, however, ordinary prudence suggested considerable conservatism and conformity with the views of parents and public.²⁴

President Bascom, on the other hand, met the challenge of the Visitors with no mincing of words. Conceding that a few women, not naturally strong, had studied too hard, he maintained that the broad conclusions of the Board of Visitors were based on very limited observation and had not been approved by all the members. He protested that the Visitors had opened a controversy that had just been closed. "To be pushed back into the water, when we have just reached shore, is trying." Most of the faculty, Bascom continued, had opposed coeducation at the beginning but were now earnestly and unanimously in favor of it. The women carried on their work with less labor than the men and were their equal in scholarly ability. Their health, far from being impaired, had actually improved. The young women whose health had been deplored had taken on too many responsibilities. But the physical functions of women, Bascom maintained, had no relation whatever to the problem of coeducation or separate education. The health of the women was, in his opinion, better than that of the men, who lost three times as many days because of illness as the women. "The young men are not accustomed to confinement, and though sun-browned and apparently robust, they do not

²³ Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. C, pp. 296-297, June 20, 1877.

²⁴ *Regents' Annual Report*, 1876-77, pp. 12-13.

endure the violent transition as well as women." Many men had, in fact, been compelled to leave the University because of their health.²⁵

The publication of these reports caused widespread discussion. Boston and New York newspapers spoke sensationally of the situation that had arisen in Madison. The *New York Herald*, the *New York World*, and the leading Chicago papers published long editorials. The report of the Visitors had, in the words of the *University Press*, carried "terror to every hearth in Illinois, with its ghastly account of 'attenuated forms, hollow cheeks and white eyes.'" The *Press* believed that this publicity did great harm to the University. It severely criticized the Visitors and warmly applauded President Bascom, whom it called one of the ablest defenders of coeducation in the country.²⁶

On November 20, 1877, President Bascom transmitted to the regents with his approval the report of the special faculty committee to which the matter had been referred. The committee, consisting of Carpenter, Allen, Daniells, Parkinson, and Irving, declared that a complete separation of male and female students would be impracticable, and that a partial separation would be injudicious. Complete separation "would be impracticable in that it would duplicate the work of instruction for which our present force is none too great." To make a distinction between the sexes in the recitation room would be construed to imply either a difference in mental or physical ability or that in the experience of the faculty it had proved unsuccessful and unwise to unite the sexes in the classroom. "Our experience has not warranted any such conclusion. The young women are at least equal to the young men in the class room. This has been the unanimous testimony of the Faculty." As for the health of the young women, the committee was sure that it was as good on the average as that of the young men. The Visitors had seen the young women at the close of the year, after ten months of continuous study and some weeks of severe examinations. "We by no means assume that the physical

²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 37-39.

²⁶ *University Press*, November 7, December 19, 1877.

strength of the young women is equal to that of young men; but we do assume that it is equal to the task of maintaining a creditable standing in any of our courses of study." As for the moral effects of coeducation, it was sufficient, the faculty committee believed, to note that never had there been so few occasions for discipline. Any change would "be fraught with grave consequences." No general demand for change, either from students or patrons, had come to the attention of the faculty. But the committee did think it desirable to permit students, male and female alike, to take longer than the stipulated four years to complete their studies, especially if they elected to include music and the arts. This might be accomplished by offering a six-year course, comprising the same work and leading to the same degrees as the four-year course, as an *option* to all students. The standards of the University would thus be upheld and special needs reasonably met.²⁷

The report of the faculty committee settled the matter. The next year another Board of Visitors pointed out, with only one member dissenting, that its views on the education of the sexes accorded with those of the regents. Since men and women "associate together in almost every other walk in life, in the social and domestic relations, it would seem to be more in accord with Providential design and the laws which society has framed for them, that they should be educated together. At all events the attempt should be thoroughly tested before it is abandoned." In the ensuing years there was less and less comment on the presence of women at the University except to emphasize their scholarly achievements, their excellent health, and the satisfactory moral conditions in their relations with the men. In 1883, when one of the student papers, *The Badger*, declared that the evils of coeducation overbalanced its benefits, the *University Press* was ready with counterarguments. The *Press* had already expressed regret over the opening of Smith College on the segregation principle and the hope that even Harvard and Yale might soon "intersperse their black coat monotony with a little feminine life and color," and it now met the

²⁷ Minutes of the Faculty, vol. 2, pp. 5-8, November 5, 1877.

challenge of the *Badger* in spirited, good-humored, and highly effective fashion.²⁸

Thus Wisconsin, which in 1874 had decided to abandon the dual system, an expensive, cumbersome, and illogical arrangement, weathered the lingering opposition to full coeducation. It thus came fully abreast of its sister state universities in offering equal educational opportunity to students of both sexes.



THE fear that coeducation would accentuate the general disciplinary problem did not materialize. Apparently only one instance of impropriety in the relations of the sexes occasioned drastic action. In 1878 four students, two men and two women, were expelled by unanimous vote of the faculty for "repeatedly, secretly, and at late hours in the night seeking each others' society in excursions on the lake or elsewhere against the rules of Ladies Hall." A few years later an editorial in the *University Press* commented, apropos of the sleighing parties which were proving so popular, that "recklessness seems to be the striking feature of our Hall girls, and some dire results may yet be the consequence."²⁹ But apparently the girls were quite able to take care of themselves and the dour prophecy was not fulfilled, so far as the records show. In fact, no one seems to have taken exception to the repeated observation of President Bascom that the presence of women students had admirable effects on the manners of the men.

Whatever the cause, there is considerable evidence to support the opinion expressed in 1887 by Pat Walsh, famous janitor-functionary: "The byes are gintlemin all now. Ye should'a seen thim twinty years ago. Ah they were woild injins thin!"³⁰ Certainly in the postwar years the undergraduate did give vent to his emotions in the sort of rowdyism, hazing, and playing of pranks that was so common in American colleges of

²⁸ *Regents' Annual Report*, 1875-76, p. 6; *The Badger*, March 24, 1883; *University Press*, October 1, 1873; March 3, April 7, 1883.

²⁹ *Minutes of the Faculty*, vol. 2, p. 15, May 20, 1878; *Reports to the Regents*, Vol. B, p. 336, June 18, 1878; *University Press*, January 20, 1883.

³⁰ *Wisconsin Prohibitionist*, June 30, 1887.

the day. This disposition of the old-time collegian to indulge in nonsense and even in violence against property and persons has been interpreted, on the one hand, as a form of academic relaxation and of defiance against the prevailing paternalism and, on the other, as a manifestation of the animal aggressiveness characteristic of late adolescence, accentuated by inadequate conceptions of play.³¹ Breaches of discipline seem to have been more frequent and more vexing during the administrations of Chadbourne and Twombly than in those of Sterling and Bascom. Twombly tried unsuccessfully to enlist the faculty as spies on the students.³² Sterling, on the other hand, believed that rules should be kept to a minimum and that students ought to be treated as gentlemen on whose honor the University could rely. Although Harvard University had published rules governing student behavior, Sterling insisted that at Wisconsin this was unnecessary and undesirable.³³ Bascom shared Sterling's view and did much to amplify it without abandoning his conviction that it was the duty of the faculty to develop in a positive way the consciences and characters of students.

But the rules that existed were broken and the faculty penalized the culprits. Many were guilty of cutting classes. In 1873 students who had missed the recitations of Professor Kerr and refused to apologize were required to sign a written apology and to promise to observe University rules in the future. But as time passed less and less effort was made to enforce the faculty rule that ten absences in an academic year would result in expulsion. "There never has been a case of it yet," observed one student in writing home about such matters. "One fellow had over 40 in one term and nothing was said about it. They may call a fellow up, lecture him, excuse all but 9 of his absences, and let him go." Yet the *University Press* was virtuously critical of Harvard for introducing the free cut system, arguing that students were not wise or mature enough for such freedom.³⁴

³¹ G. Stanley Hall, "Student Customs," in the *American Antiquarian Society Proceedings*, n.s., 14:85-117 (October, 1900).

³² Mrs. William F. Allen, "The University of Wisconsin Soon after Civil War," in the *Wisconsin Magazine of History*, 7:26 (September, 1923).

³³ Minutes of the Faculty, vol. 1, pp. 199-200, September 25, 1871; *University Press*, May 15, 1871.

³⁴ Minutes of the Faculty, vol. 1, p. 342, May 6, 1873; letter of William E.

Cheating was a more serious problem. "We are infested with a tendency to cheat in recitations and in examinations," President Bascom reported in 1875. "This evil may have been spawned in part of a marking system badly administered, but it is perpetuated and increased by a dishonest nature." The records do not indicate that the faculty made any very serious effort at this time to correct the situation. The most publicized instance of plagiarism in Bascom's day was the publication in the *University Press* of an essay which, much to the embarrassment of the editor, was promptly and mercilessly exposed by the Beloit College *Round Table* as an outright steal from Emilio Castelar and Victor Hugo.³⁵

Wisconsin was less troubled by pranks and violent disturbances than were many other institutions during this period. Nothing occurred that was comparable to the exodus of the Williams students to Amherst, for instance, or to the expulsion of a whole senior class from another state university. In 1871 a prominent visitor observed that pranks and tricks were less frequently indulged in at Wisconsin than at any other college with which he was familiar—a circumstance he attributed to the fact that rules and regulations were few and to the emphasis put on honorable behavior. A few years later the *University Press* declared that the institution was largely undisturbed by impish pranks and gross misconduct and again ascribed this to the absence of undue surveillance.³⁶

Yet occasional incidents of violence against persons and property did occur. On June 13, 1867, the faculty unanimously resolved that "student Henry A. Harriman, having been guilty of burglariously entering the South Hall, and of an aggravated assault on a member of the Faculty, be visited with the highest penalty known to our University code, namely, dismissal from the institution." Two other students guilty of aiding and abetting the "burglarious" entry were suspended. Before the summer was over, however, all three were reinstated on promise of

Aitchison, April 23, 1882, in a private collection; *University Press*, January 8, 1873.

³⁵ *Regents' Annual Report*, 1874-75, p. 30; *University Press*, December 24, 1875.

³⁶ Hall, "Student Customs," in *American Antiquarian Society Proceedings*, n.s., 14:107; *University Press*, December 20, 1871; January 17, 1876.

good behavior. A few years later fifteen students who had created some sort of disturbance appeared before the faculty and signed a paper expressing their regret, agreeing to pay a fine sufficient to cover the damages, and promising to abide thereafter by the rules of the University. Another prank for which punishment was administered was one which has been duplicated elsewhere many times if college legends are to be credited. One bright Sunday morning in November a cow was taken into South Chapel and tied to a center pillar. When someone untied her, she ran down the hall, jumped through a window to the ground, and broke her leg. A student collection was taken up to reimburse the owner and pay janitor Pat Walsh for his services in cleaning up the mess in the chapel.³⁷

In 1876 more embarrassing and more serious violations of good taste and decency occasioned special action by the Board of Regents. A member of the graduating class had from the platform denounced the members of one of the two leading political parties as "a horde of thieves, blacklegs, scoundrels." Apparently other scandals marred this commencement exercise, for the regents resolved "that any student who shall be guilty of making, printing, writing, or issuing scurrilous or indecent programmes, papers, or compositions, or making disrespectful, abusive, or improper allusions to the President, Professors, Tutors, or other officers of the University, in speeches, essays, or otherwise, publicly, during examination and commencement weeks, shall not be graduated from the University, and that said party may be liable to expulsion by the Board." Subsequent action by the Board required every student to submit to a member of the faculty for approval every paper he intended to present at any public exercise of the University.³⁸ Such censorship was justified on the ground that no discussion of sectarian or partisan matters should be permitted which was in any way contrary to the spirit of the constitution or laws under which the University was established.

³⁷ Minutes of the Faculty, vol. 1, pp. 136, 341, June 13, 1867; May 19, 1873; John C. Rathun to George Haight, June 1, 1925, in University of Wisconsin Alumni Association Papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

³⁸ *University Press*, August, 1876; Records of the Regents, Vol. C, pp. 268-269, 308, June 21, 1875; January 15, 1878.

During Bascom's regime considerable emphasis was placed on the idea that the University had a positive obligation to inculcate good morals in its students and to combat such evils in the community as were apt to lead young men astray. Bascom had the backing of the Board of Visitors, who in 1879 declared that state institutions, such as the University, "must teach with clearness and force the obligation of obedience to law, human and divine, and show the grounds of the guilt and folly of those who would destroy the rights of persons and property." In a subsequent report the Visitors emphasized the duty of the University to mold character as well as minds.³⁹

Strongly as President Bascom felt it to be the University's duty to foster a wholesome moral life among the students, he did not believe that the faculty should "follow the student, and intercept him in any mischief." Even if this were not impossible, it would be a less wise and effective discipline than to rely on the self-respect and the sentiment of the students themselves. The students believed, and in the main rightly so, that they were old enough to direct their own actions. They would resent interference and resist it, so that transgression would be encouraged as an act of freedom, and sound and kind counsels would become the advice of the adversary. "If a mistake is made, it is better to make it on the side of undue freedom, rather than on that of undue restraint." Above all, as we have seen, Bascom opposed any assumption by the regents of responsibility for student discipline. He believed that this would constitute interference with the prerogatives of the faculty and that it would unduly magnify student breaches of discipline with altogether unfortunate effects.⁴⁰

Thus Bascom took a position which, although somewhat less liberal than that which had made student government the order of the day at the University of Virginia, was nevertheless more advanced than the one in effect at Princeton, where President McCosh maintained a fairly severe discipline. Occasionally he recommended the suspension of a student who was neglecting

³⁹ *Regents' Annual Report*, 1878-79, p. 35; 1880-81, p. 84.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 1878-79, pp. 27, 29-30. For Bascom and the regents on student discipline, see above, 253 ff.

his studies in order to frequent taverns, and he urged the enforcement of municipal ordinances prohibiting the presence of minors in saloons and billiard halls. With respect to actual policing Bascom went no further than to employ a watchman to protect the grounds and buildings "only on pleasant summer Sabbath afternoons." By and large he sought to make the students feel that he was friend, not disciplinarian; that he had useful and wise counsel to give them, individually and collectively; and that he counted on their gentlemanly and responsible behavior. The Board of Visitors, in commending students for their deportment and in observing how rarely penal discipline was resorted to, aptly described Bascom's attitude: "here is gratifyingly exemplified the high skill of governing best, in seeming to govern least."⁴¹

Bascom took firm measures against hazing, but he did not succeed in abolishing it. This custom, a common one in eastern institutions, seems to have gained ground at Wisconsin during the seventies. The *University Press* lamented this adoption of half-civilized and puerile eastern custom. "We heartily commend the energetic and decided stand taken by the President against 'hazing,'" the *Press* stated in 1882. "If there is any one thing more nonsensical and foolish than every other, it is this meaningless, purposeless, idiotic legacy of antiquated college sports. . . . We do not believe in the principle of making the freshman's life as wretched as possible but rather on the contrary of helping him along and of extending to him a friendly hand and a kindly heart. This is the true American spirit." Yet hazing did occur. Freshmen were made to jig, to sing, to prance about, and to submit to having their heads held under a pump. Moot courts tried and fined freshmen deemed to be in need of a lesson in humility. Cane fights sometimes became near riots. "The hazing is going on yet," wrote a freshman to his father in the autumn of 1880. "They have stunk Boorman and Camp out twice with some villainous mixture, and tied them in once. The law students had one of the boys up in the moot-court

⁴¹ *Badger*, April 24, 1884; Minutes of the Faculty, vol. 1, p. 264, May 27, 1874; *University Press*, April 5, May 3, 1884; Records of the Boards of Regents, Vol. C, p. 291, June 19, 1877; Report of the Visitors, in *Regents' Annual Report*, 1875-76, p. 35.

last week. Fined him 65 cents. He had to pay it or they would have put him into a cistern, or 20 minutes under the pump." Bascom pointed out that hazing was a silly custom, unfair to the freshman and destructive of property. On one occasion, when a freshman was subjected to a mock trial, the President warned the ringleaders that it would go hard with them if there was any more hazing. "I believe I told you that hazing was done away with entirely by Prex," wrote a student in 1882. "Four fellows are held as hostages for the whole three higher classes, to be put through in the police court and afterward in the Univ. if any more hazing is done."⁴² Still hazing did not cease. Indeed, after Bascom left the University it was to become an even more notorious issue.



PARTLY because the student body was a small one, partly because of President Bascom's attitude, Wisconsin took little interest in the movement for organized athletics which was developing in many colleges in the seventies and early eighties. President Bascom was not opposed to recreational sports; he agreed that moderate physical activity, if inspired by a recreational aim and if accompanied by "mental repose," was conducive both to intellectual achievement and to general well-being. But he was impatient at the "absurd enthusiasm with which college officers have rung bells and pronounced orations over the victories of muscles." Severe muscular exertion, such as was demanded by the regatta races at Yale and Harvard and by competitive football and baseball, he disapproved of as too exhausting and as subversive of intellectual pursuits. If organized athletics were really desired, Bascom favored the employment of a few persons whose sole function it would be to amuse the rest. In brief, Bascom doubted whether organized athletics of a competitive nature was likely to promote the "symmetrical mastery of the whole man."⁴³

In large measure it was the program approved by Bascom

⁴² *University Press*, September 23, 1882; William E. Aitchison to his father, October 3, 1880, September 4, 1884, in a private collection.

⁴³ John Bascom, *The Seat of Sin*, baccalaureate sermon delivered at the University of Wisconsin, June 18, 1876 (n.p., n.d.), pp. 7-9.

that was in effect at Wisconsin. The young ladies played croquet, and the young men played a highly informal brand of baseball and football. The latter seemed an odd affair to some. In 1871 the student press observed that football had "reached its zenith at the University. What a scientific game! One man kicks the ball, falls down, and 40 or more, yell at the top of their voices. Captain shouts, 'Change sides for another game,' and so it goes!" A decade later William E. Aitchison wrote his father that the South Dorm boys were beginning to play with the law class. An hour of playing just before supper "gives us a grand appetite and sore shins. . . . We began playing last Wednesday and played with a will for an hour. There were hardly any of us tough enough to stand the exercise, and so it made us so stiff and sore that we could hardly move and we went limping around, groaning every time a foot touched ground. What with the barked shins and sore muscles we got, the Dormitory has looked as if it were peopled with pensioners, or rheumatic convalescents, for the last three days." In the autumn of 1882 the Dorm men were playing with the University Eleven. "We beat them," reported Aitchison, "5 to 4 in a well-conducted game. It is fine exercise. I got the back peeled off me in about 10 different places."⁴⁴ Baseball, too, was played informally on an intramural basis, and many of the men made use of Lake Mendota for boating, with or without young ladies.

Both the student press and the Board of Visitors looked with favor on gymnastic exercises and commented repeatedly on the inadequacy of the facilities available for the pursuit of this interest. In 1873 the *University Press* caustically declared that the gymnasium, when it was open at all, was open by virtue of the fact that some favored person held the keys and might thus go in when he chose. It was urged that the gymnasium be made available to students at least from four to six every afternoon. Four years later the *Press* remarked that strangers were eager to see the gymnasium, "a place entirely forgotten by students until recalled by visitors," and suggested emulation of Racine

⁴⁴ *University Press*, November 1, 1871; William E. Aitchison to his father, October 31, November 5, 1882, in a private collection.

and Beloit, which required daily practice with Indian clubs.⁴⁵

In 1876 the Board of Visitors, too, after expressing approval of the recent installation of a "health-lift" in Ladies Hall, noted with regret "the very slight evidences of proper valuation by the students of physical culture." It urged that more ample opportunities be provided for such training, that a suitable teacher be hired, and that an attractive program be developed. Physical training would promote grace, punctuality, self-control, self-reliance, courage, concentration, and teamwork as well as healthy bodies.⁴⁶ The regents were unmoved.

In 1881 the newly launched University Athletic Organization petitioned the regents to purchase ground for a new gymnasium. The proposal was referred to a special committee, which reported favorably.⁴⁷ But the destruction of Science Hall by fire and the necessity of asking for large appropriations for its replacement convinced the regents that it would be difficult to get funds from the legislature for a new gymnasium.⁴⁸ Regent Keyes set himself to the task, but it was not until 1894 that the new armory-and-gymnasium was opened. Meantime Keyes had helped a group of students construct a boathouse.⁴⁹

Organized intercollegiate athletics gradually assumed increasing importance in student opinion and life. Little, it is true, was done in football. "We have seen a football on the campus but one afternoon this term," reported the editor of the *University Press and Badger* in November of 1885. And since there were no uniforms, no money, and virtually no players, it was impossible to accept the invitation of Racine College for a game. Nor was anything done to develop a crew competent to meet rivals in an intercollegiate contest. Baseball fared better. On June 3, 1873, the faculty granted certain students permission to visit Beloit College "for the purpose of playing a game of baseball," the first intercollegiate game, apparently, in which

⁴⁵ *University Press*, June 17, 1873; July 4, 1877.

⁴⁶ *Regents' Annual Report*, 1875-76, pp. 35-36.

⁴⁷ Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. C, pp. 360, 364, 370, January 21, June 21, 1881, January 17, 1882.

⁴⁸ Paul to Keyes, March 20, 1885, in the Keyes Papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

⁴⁹ *Madison Daily Democrat*, April 21, 1886.

Wisconsin took part. But baseball did not immediately win the popularity and support some students thought it should have. The situation was improved, however, with the formation of an athletic association in 1881 and the affiliation of Wisconsin with the newly organized Northwestern College League. The new league encountered difficulties from the start, which were attributed by Wisconsin partisans to Michigan's insistence on having the presidency and on employing a professional player on its team. But whatever the difficulties, intercollegiate baseball was now on an organized basis. In 1884 Wisconsin won five of six games and the championship; and the next year its record was even better, every one of the six games played resulting in victory. These auspicious beginnings helped to counteract the "lack of college spirit" which the *University Press* had long deplored and promised to achieve for the institution a reputation in intercollegiate athletics.⁵⁰



DESPITE the regretful observation of President Twombly and the *University Press* in the early seventies that a new and more aristocratic tone had appeared with an increasing number of well-to-do undergraduates, living conditions remained simple, even Spartan. The notable exception, of course, was Ladies Hall. The University took pride in the atmosphere that pervaded it, at once homelike and elegant. During the days of the Female College the women teachers were required to live at the Hall in order to "judge of the fitness of the management of the boarding department as well as the propriety of deportment in the students." In 1881 Professor and Mrs. Sterling gave up their home on State Street to preside over the Hall, to make it less a hotel and more a home. Although there continued to be complaints about the vexatious controls over the women's social life, it was generally conceded that in respect to the material aspects of life they fared well.⁵¹

⁵⁰ *University Press*, March 24, 1877, March, 1880, March 24, 1883, April 12, 1884; *Badger*, April 12, 1884; *University Press and Badger*, October 9, November 6, 1885; Minutes of the Faculty, vol. 1, p. 242, June 3, 1873.

⁵¹ Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. C, pp. 231, 236-237, June 16, 1875; *University Press*, October 28, 1881.

North Hall was maintained as a dormitory for men until 1885, when it was converted to class use. In 1866 an entering student wrote in detail of the coziness and warmth of his dormitory room, with its sofa, desk, pictures, round table, and three easy chairs, all of which he had purchased at second hand, the University having provided only a stove. The sanitary conveniences were primitive: boys lugged in the water they used from a near-by well and used outdoor privies, the perennially bad condition of which was the subject of many a weighty discussion by faculty and regents. Naturally the privies were upset annually by the students, often with the assistance of some of Madison's young bloods. Sometimes a lad and his roommate felled a tree on the campus to provide themselves with fuel. And there was bitter complaint in 1879 when the authorities, after repapering and repainting the rooms, nearly doubled the rent by advancing it from three to five dollars a term.⁵²

During this period the University maintained no commons for men. In the postwar years some continued, as students before them had done, to prepare their own food in their rooms. But the general practice was to form an eating club and contract with some woman to provide meals. "He who has never dined at a regular old genuine boarding club, has not been introduced into all the mysteries of college life," declared the *University Press* in 1874. "Those of you who have never had the exquisite felicity of seeing sixteen lean, lank students dispose of potatoes and hot cakes, on some cold frosty morning, can have no idea of what a terrible thing a famine would be. Who would exchange his place at his old boarding club for the formalities of boarding out? College life is nothing but a great race anyhow, and how in keeping with it is this race for 'hash'!"⁵³ The cost of board ranged from two to three dollars a week, according to the student's talent for successful haggling and the prevailing price level. Despite the low cost of food and housing, at least as compared with that at eastern institutions, there was constant talk of the high cost of living in Madison and of the inability of

⁵² William Huntington to "Helen and Katie," September 18, 1866, in the Samuel Fallows Papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin; *University Press*, September 30, 1879.

⁵³ *University Press*, October 17, 1874.

many Wisconsin sons and daughters to come to the University. Some families moved to the capital to give their children the opportunity to attend the University, but for the most part rooming houses and boardinghouses continued to supply the living needs of the undergraduates.

The day was yet in the future when the Greek-letter fraternities were to establish houses for their members. President Bascom, before coming to Wisconsin, had outspokenly opposed such societies on the ground that they restricted the development of true individuality, injured the moral and intellectual character of their members, and, in creating artificial barriers, operated against democracy. Such was the general opinion at Wisconsin in the late sixties and early seventies. The *University Press* cited approvingly the condemnation of secret societies by President Noah Porter of Yale and declared it was "heartily glad that no such society exists at the University" and "sure students will not encourage such a society should an attempt be made to establish one." But within three years, in 1875, three chapters of national Greek-letter organizations had been established. The editor of the *Press*, Robert M. La Follette, had no objection to the societies "so long as secret societies attend solely to their own concerns." But he was a vigorous opponent of the tendency of the fraternities to disregard all candidates save their own members in student elections. By the spring of 1876, however, an Anti-Secret Society, with which some hundred students had become affiliated, was making its influence felt. That autumn the *Press* informed its readers that no systematic action would be taken against the fraternities so long as they played fair. "But should a gobbling spirit manifest itself in our midst this year, as it did last, opposition will again arise. Let us have fairness and equity and all will be well, otherwise there will be fun in camp." The fraternities had come to stay, but some students continued to object to their childish, selfish, and undemocratic character. In 1883 the Board of Regents denied the Greek-letter societies the use of Assembly Hall for their annual reception. The *Press* no doubt represented a considerable body of opinion when it charged that this action was discriminatory in that it did not apply to other societies. But

the prohibition did not last; in 1886 Regent Keyes, no doubt with a twinkle in his eye, recommended that the Young Men's Christian Association and each of the Greek-letter fraternities be given the use of Library Hall for social purposes for one evening, the rules of Ladies Hall to be suspended on the evening allotted to the Greek-letter fraternities.⁵⁴ The fraternities came to be accepted in the Bascom era, but many regretted the cleavage they produced, which marked a departure from the old days of democratic simplicity.

⁵⁴ John Bascom, *Secret Societies in College* (Pittsfield, Massachusetts, 1868), *passim*; *University Press*, September 3, 1872, April 5, 1876, October 17, 1876, March 15, 1884; William E. Aitchison to his father, January 23, 1881, October 13, 1883, in a private collection; *Badger*, October 18, 1883; Minutes of the Executive Committee of the Board of Regents, Vol. A, p. 428, January 13, 1886.

15.

The Student Mind

THE object of the University of Wisconsin," declared the reorganization act of 1866, "shall be to provide the means of acquiring a thorough knowledge of the various branches of learning connected with the scientific, industrial and professional pursuits; and to this end it shall consist of the following colleges, to wit: 1st. The college of arts. 2nd. The college of letters. 3rd. Such professional and other colleges as from time to time may be added thereto or connected therewith."

The organization and functions of each of these three main divisions of the University were specified in some detail. The College of Arts was to embrace instruction in the mathematical, physical, and natural sciences, with their applications to the industrial arts of agriculture, architecture, commerce, and military tactics. When the income of the University permitted, and when the needs of the state seemed to require such action, these departments were to be expanded into distinct colleges, each with its own faculty and appropriate title. The College of Letters was to embrace instruction in the languages, literature, and philosophy and such courses in the College of Arts as the authorities of the University prescribed. The Normal School was at the moment the only professional school, and it was dropped in 1867. The next year the law school was organized and for some time it continued to be the only separate professional college. The three-year course in the College of Arts, which was expanded in 1869 into a four-year program,

led to the degree of bachelor of philosophy. The four-year course in the College of Letters qualified the students completing it for the bachelor of arts. In accordance with the broad outlines laid down in 1866, the department of engineering and military science and the department of agriculture were launched within the College of Arts in 1868. Broadly speaking, this general organization continued until about 1887.



Two issues troubled college faculties and administrations in the United States for several decades after 1860: the conflict between the classical curriculum and the newer subjects, especially the sciences, and the related question of the elective system. These issues were present at Wisconsin also, but neither occasioned conflicts comparable to those elsewhere. For one thing, the classical department was less well entrenched than in many institutions. From the start, it had been impossible to insist on the full classical curriculum for all students. Many who came to the University were not prepared in Latin and Greek to take advantage of a collegiate four-year program in those subjects; Wisconsin high schools and academies were too few and too weak in the classics to provide such preparation. True, the preparatory department at the University did in some measure make up for this, but only partially. Then again, from the very beginning the ideal of a university in which all sorts of practical subjects were available had exerted considerable influence in theory if not always in fact. With the exception of Professor Allen, whose interests after all were divided between Latin and history, the University was not, as the new period was initiated in 1866, strong in classicists. For all these reasons there was no last-ditch fight against the modification of the classical course and the introduction of alternative programs as there was in so many institutions, especially in the East and the South.

It is true that the values allegedly inherent in the classical and the nonclassical types of education were occasionally debated. But such discussions occurred only rarely and were never acrimonious. In 1873 an editorial in the *University Press* took

the traditional ground that no education could be complete without a study of Latin. "The regular classical course should be pursued, despite the argument made against it that it is not practical." Eleven years later another editor, after weighing the mental discipline and the utility of the classics and of the sciences, concluded that the classicists were on weak ground when they contended that the classical languages provided all one needed to know of literature, of the laws, and of the civilizations of the ancients. The classical languages were valuable, the argument continued, only in providing mental discipline; the study of the sciences, on the other hand, was more than a mental discipline; it exercised the "faculties" of observation as well, and the capacity to make logical deductions. We have seen that on occasion the Board of Visitors spoke a good word for the classics and that individual regents disparaged them. Regent McMynn, himself a product of classical training, did indeed feel that the English course was of little importance and traced the decline of the classics at Wisconsin with considerable poignancy. But by and large the concessions to the nonclassical subjects were made with few protests and with little discussion.¹

Until 1873 candidates for the bachelor of arts degree were required to follow the classical course, which permitted almost no electives. But the classical program at Wisconsin was somewhat less exclusively devoted to Latin, Greek, and mathematics than in many institutions. True, freshmen and sophomores had to devote themselves almost entirely to the classics and to mathematics; only a smattering of botany and zoology crept in during the first two years. But in the junior year mechanics, physics, chemistry, and astronomy were studied in addition to the required Greek and Latin; rhetoric, English literature, history, and French were prescribed. In the senior year the sciences were represented by geology; the social studies by international law, constitutional law, and political economy; and the humanistic studies by rhetoric, the science of language,

¹ *University Press*, June 17, 1873, January 26, 1884; John McMynn to George H. Paul, January 2, 1888, in the Paul Papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin. The subsequent discussion of the changes made in the curriculum in the seventies and eighties is based primarily on the catalogues of the University.

logic, aesthetics, natural theology, and mental and moral philosophy. If a student did not choose to take the prescribed classical course, or if he were disqualified for it by reason of his academic background, his only alternative was to enter as an irregular or special student, or to matriculate in the College of Arts.

In the College of Letters the first real break in the classical curriculum came in the academic year 1873-74, when the modern classical course was launched. In this program, leading to the degree of bachelor of letters, German and French took the place of Greek, and English literature and Anglo-Saxon were introduced in the second year. Norse and Icelandic were optional. Minor changes were made in this program from time to time, and in the ancient classical, all of which were designed, as President Bascom reported in 1878, to emphasize the distinctive features of each course and to provide for a freer choice between studies of a comparable nature. In the year of its installation the modern classical course was chosen by six freshmen, the ancient classical by nine. The ancient classical continued to enjoy favor until 1877-78, when for the first time a slightly larger number of freshmen chose the modern classical program. In 1884 thirteen freshmen chose the modern classical course, eleven the ancient classical. In 1886 forty students in the College of Letters were following the ancient classical program, seventy-four the modern classical.

In June, 1886, the regents still further modified the program in the direction of modern studies by establishing a new English course. In this new program, which led to the degree of bachelor of letters, the major emphasis was laid upon the English studies—philosophy, history, political science, and English language and literature. "The object of the establishment," wrote Professor Allen, "is to have a course which can be brought into relation with every well-taught high school in the state. It is observed that a large proportion of the high schools in smaller towns do not, and probably never will give instruction in any foreign language. It is thought best, therefore, to provide a course in the preparation of which no foreign language shall be required." The new English course did, however, require a

foreign language in the first two years in addition to science, mathematics, and history.² When the freshman class entered in the fall of 1886, the English course was elected by twelve students, the ancient classical by fifteen, and the modern classical by nineteen.

Prior to the establishment of the new science course in the same year, 1886, students unequipped or unwilling to follow either the ancient or the modern classical program registered in the College of Arts. In general this college aimed to provide a sound education in the elements of science and in its applications to agriculture, the mechanical and commercial pursuits, and the "strictly scientific" professions. The general course adopted in 1867 was also designed to give the individual great freedom in the selection of his studies. Besides mathematics and the sciences, which were begun in the freshman year, the course prescribed French and German, civil polity, rhetoric, mental philosophy, logic, and English literature. The electives embraced agriculture, geography, entomology, soil science, forestry, and mineralogy. By 1871 the College of Arts had been expanded to include departments of military science, mining and metallurgy, engineering, and agriculture. With slight modifications this program was continued until 1886: the student with a scientific interest received a grounding in all the branches of science, with the alternative of specializing in one of them or in one of the applied sciences. Students completing the general science course were awarded the degree of bachelor of science; those finishing the course in the technical programs received the appropriate degrees—bachelor of agriculture, bachelor of civil engineering, and bachelor of mining and mining engineering. The science courses in the College of Arts were far more popular than the ancient and modern classical courses in the College of Letters, either because students were unprepared for the latter or because they believed the science program better designed to fit them for "practical" pursuits. In 1875-76, for example, 135 of 249 collegiate students were following scientific courses, and four years later 82 of the 324 were so listed, with approximately the

² *The Aegis*, September 15, 1886.

same number in the modern classical course and an appreciably smaller number in the ancient classical. But a great many of the special students, who numbered 49 in 1875-76 and 91 four years later, were taking many of the sciences. And of the class of 1890 only seven fewer students were following the science course than the ancient classical, modern classical, and English courses combined. The inclusion of the civil, mechanical, and metallurgical engineering and pharmacy students definitely gave predominance to the scientific and technical program.

In 1886, when the new English course removed from the general scientific course the students who had taken the scientific subjects prescribed as a minimum, it was possible to revamp the scientific program. Students of a genuinely scientific bent now began their science training in the freshman year and continued it throughout the course. Either German or French was prescribed in addition to English. The emphasis on science was increased by requiring, instead of twenty-four courses in this field, as in the old general science program, from twenty-seven to thirty courses.³ Thus greater specialization in the sciences was offered at the same time that students previously compelled to follow a scientific program were free to choose the new English curriculum.

Thus there developed at Wisconsin, bit by bit and with no major conflict, something closely akin to a modified elective system. The first step was taken as a means of providing for the many students who had not had the proper preparation in high school or academy to meet the requirements of the stipulated program at the University. To such students the faculty made all sorts of special concessions. Thus in 1869 the regents authorized the faculty to "excuse any student in the College classes from any study in the course, on the condition that he elects another in the optional courses of equal educational value, such action always to be a matter of record." This was justified on the ground that it was the University's function to meet the educational wants of every student in the state, and that the courses of studies as laid down were therefore intended

³ *Ibid.*

to serve merely as outlines of work. The same pragmatic approach was manifest in President Bascom's report of the secondary changes made in the curricula of 1877: the changes, he noted, would give students in each program more freedom in selecting courses and making substitutions from other programs. Between 1879 and 1881 the free election of studies in the junior and senior years was again broadened.⁴

Still further extension of the elective system resulted from the presence of a large number of special or irregular students. Many of these were so classified because they could not meet the requirements of one of the regular programs, which they entered as soon as possible; others continued to sample courses to their hearts' content. "There is a large liberty in choosing studies," wrote Professor Frankenburger in 1883 to the father of a prospective freshman, "if you do not want her to take the full course."⁵ Thus in 1875, 49 of a total of 249 collegiate students were listed as special; four years later, 91 of a total of 324. Of the entering class of 1888 some 41 per cent were specials, and of the class of 1890, about 45 per cent.

The gradual, *ad hoc* approach to the problem of electives which characterized the attitude of the regents did not, of course, preclude all general discussion of the issue, which was hotly debated in many institutions. In this, as in so many other things, President Bascom took the lead. In his annual reports for 1881 and 1882 he described the road that had been followed at Wisconsin and fully developed his own position. It was clearly an advantage, he said, for the student to study what interested him and what he was equipped to study; it was likewise desirable that he learn one branch fully and prepare himself adequately for his special walk of life. No course of study could be equally well suited to all minds. "A general and fixed method overlooks individual tastes and individual aims." This was not to say that he was unaware of the dangers in overspecialization at too early a point in an academic career. Stu-

⁴ Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. C, p. 115, June 22, 1869; *Regents' Annual Report*, 1868-69, p. 25; 1877-78, p. 26; Report of the President, in the *Regents' Annual Report*, 1880-81, pp. 25-26.

⁵ David B. Frankenburger to John Orton, December 27, 1883, in the Orton Papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

dents given free choice might well elect the easier studies to the neglect of the more solid branches. They might scatter their courses to such an extent that mere superficiality resulted. The student should be given the liberty necessary to sustain his own enthusiasm, but he could hardly be left wholly to that enthusiasm. Especially in our time, continued Bascom, is there great need for general knowledge, general convictions, general manhood. On every hand perverse social and spiritual judgments were springing up which were the fruit of the narrow and opinionated conclusions of specialists. The University had generally been thought to be in advance of the opinion of the state in moving toward a modified elective system. In doing so, concluded Bascom, it had striven to grant that measure of election in studies which quickens the student without distracting his efforts and so reducing their value; it had given the undergraduate a considerable circle of electives but had not left him entirely at sea.⁶ The faculty on the whole seems to have shared Bascom's position, though there is little explicit evidence on this point.

It is hard to arrive at student opinion, but there is considerable evidence to suggest that it went further in supporting the elective system than President Bascom, the faculty, and the regents. At the beginning of the period the editor of the *University Press* had, to be sure, maintained that optional studies were unprofitable because the student did not know what to select and that in exercising free choice he made his mind "a mere storehouse of rubbish." But in 1876 the *Press* declared that if there were a Wisconsin institution with the elective system, half the junior and senior classes in the University would leave for it at once. The University ought to follow the example of the eastern institutions which had inaugurated the elective system, inasmuch as a student knew best what he needed and did far better if he were not forced to do something less to his liking. Student opinion, so far as it was reflected in the *University Press*, emphasized the practical value of the elective system. To achieve any measure of success one must in the new practical age become a specialist. The elective system, in

⁶ *Regents' Annual Report*, 1880-81, pp. 25-26; 1881-82, pp. 29-30.

enabling a student who had tentatively decided on his vocation to pursue the studies that would prepare him for it, fulfilled the idea that the University existed for the students rather than the students for the University. Hence each concession the faculty made to the elective system won applause among the students. Thus in 1882 the *Badger* commended the University for making the courses in mechanics and analytical geometry elective for students in the classical courses. Three years later, in reviewing the steps Harvard had taken to effect a free elective system operative throughout the four years, the *Badger* recognized the significance of this experiment for every American institution of higher learning and suggested that its challenge could not be disregarded at Wisconsin.⁷ But the needs of students had been largely met by the establishment of the several programs, by the increasing number of options within these programs, and by the concessions given to special students.



IN THE early seventies the lecture method of instruction began to supplant the textbook recitation in many courses. This shift represented a movement prevalent in the European universities and becoming increasingly common in the larger eastern institutions. The student reaction was mixed. Some students believed that the lectures generally given were either too elementary or too advanced.⁸ One student charged that professors read lectures year after year from the same manuscript. "Every student who has at heart his own improvement would hail with delight the banishment of the lecture system of teaching from our colleges, and the substitution of that system which requires preparation previous to recitation." The want of suitable textbooks, he continued, could no longer be cited in favor of the lecture system, since admirable treatises on every subject were available.⁹ Another undergraduate regarded the lecture system as the very worst classroom procedure. The professor talked glibly, the class having no understanding of

⁷ *University Press*, August, 1870, November 3, 17, 1876; *The Badger*, September 30, 1882, May 8, 1885.

⁸ *University Press*, January 1, 1874.

⁹ *Ibid.*, January 15, 1871.

what he was saying. Unable to make any headway in note-taking, this student gave it up. "We passed partly on the strength of what we acquired, in spite of this method of teaching, and partly in accordance with a law, (must be a law) whose wondrous working forms one of the sure comforts of the blockhead, though to him, as well as to all other uninitiated, it is an impenetrable mystery of the 'Course.'"¹⁰ But the lecture system had its defenders, who argued that no textbook could be kept as up-to-date as lectures; that botany and chemistry, which made extensive use of the lecture system, were taught as thoroughly and effectively as any subject could be taught.¹¹ As time went on, the combined lecture and recitation system that was coming to prevail at the University grew in favor.¹²

To broaden the educational program a so-called free lecture course was instituted. On alternate Thursday evenings throughout the academic year 1881-82 lectures were given by members of the faculty on some aspect of their field. The experiment appealed strongly to many students, who felt that the lectures opened up new fields, acquainted undergraduates with important personalities and authorities, and took the place of the former series of town lectures, for which fees had been paid to remunerate the visiting lecturer. President Bascom's opening lecture on the Rocky Mountains was well attended. "There was none at all of that tag-rag class which crowd in upon and disturb free lectures down town, with no desire for good and no respect for others," declared a writer in the student paper. But the experiment was not continued. Some felt that a student had neglected his work quite enough when he took an evening off for his Greek-letter fraternity, another for his literary society, and a third for the Christian Society; that on the evenings which remained he had better wrestle with his textbook in his own room. It was also said that to be of value the lectures were perforce too technical to be followed, that to be interesting they were necessarily too superficial to be useful. Despite editorials in both the *Badger* and the *Aegis* urging the re-establishment of the free lecture system, nothing more

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, December 19, 1877.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, February 15, 1871.

¹² *Ibid.*, January 1, 1874.

seems to have been done once the initial experiment was abandoned.¹³

The marking system occasioned a great deal of student criticism, and from time to time the faculty set itself the task of improving procedure. Thus in 1871 it was decided that marking was henceforth to be based not on department but on scholarship alone; that marks were to be given on the scale of 100; that professors were to report student standing once a month as well as at the final examination; that reports were to be submitted on a standardized form and read at faculty meetings; and that a minimum of 65 would be regarded as passing. Ten years later, in an effort to raise standards, the faculty set 70 as the passing grade in any course and 75 as the minimum average for the year. Students were no longer to be allowed to take four studies in any term unless they had achieved a grade of at least 85 in every course the term before.¹⁴ Meantime action had been taken to grant honors only for additional study in some department and for outstanding achievement in a special examination. Students whose average exceeded 93 in any study were to be awarded honorable mention.¹⁵

In 1872 the editor of the *University Press* expressed his gratification that thus far Wisconsin had not placed undue emphasis on marks, which encouraged students to work principally for grades. The growing tendency to emphasize marks was to be deplored. A few years later an editorial went even further. It stated that the students had long recognized the need for a change in the marking system; as things stood, the examination tended to be regarded as the most important part of college. Many professors slighted the daily recitation, thus encouraging the class to cram for the final examination. William E. Aitchison probably expressed a common view when he wrote to his father that the marking system was "the greatest abomination of the University." "Every man," he declared, "is against it. It all depends on a teacher's goodwill to a pupil and

¹³ *Ibid.*, September 30, 1881, January 20, 1883; *Badger*, November 29, 1883; *Aegis*, November 12, 1886.

¹⁴ Minutes of the Meetings of the Faculty, vol. 1, p. 203, October 3, 1871; vol. 2, p. 142, October 3, 1881.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 269, June 8, 1874.

as likes and dislikes are easily formed, the system is no censure."¹⁶ It was indeed rare for a student to express approval of the emphasis placed on marks, though an occasional one did insist that it was necessary to the maintenance of standards.

What can be said of the academic achievements and the quality of mind of Wisconsin students in this period? In reporting their impressions of the examinations at the end of the academic year in 1874, the Visitors praised the frankness and independence of the students and "the freedom with which they ventured to differ from the author, and even the professors." This was pleasing evidence that students had been "taught to think for themselves—the most valuable thing in education." Subsequently the Visitors reported a tendency on the part of examiners to ask leading questions and to display their own learning rather than to bring out the progress of the scholars. "We would suggest that it is more satisfactory to the examiners that the scholar should be left unaided to pass or fail, as the case may be, rather than to derive instruction in the hours devoted to examination."¹⁷

The students themselves, so far as one can generalize from available evidence, seem on the whole to have felt that their education was of great benefit to them. To quote William E. Aitchison again: "I have thoroughly enjoyed my term's work. . . . I have to *think*, and I begin to feel the effects of thinking for myself. The Junior year is the one in which the Faculty expect a man to begin his original work, and in that respect is very different from the other years of the course." The opinion was more than once expressed that the University, in contrast with the denominational colleges, stimulated independence of thought.¹⁸ Certainly in commenting on the textbooks used and on the instructors, students did exercise considerable critical judgment. For example, such an article as that published in the *University Press* in 1871, evaluating Haven's *Moral Philosophy*,

¹⁶ *University Press*, February 15, 1872, February 6, 1878; William E. Aitchison to his father, February 13, 1881, in a private collection loaned to the authors.

¹⁷ *Regents' Annual Report*, 1873-74, p. 8; 1877-78, p. 31.

¹⁸ Aitchison to his father, December 10, 1882, in a private collection; *University Press*, April 1, 1871.

Bascom's *Philosophy of Rhetoric*, Whately's *Logic*, and Dana's *Geology*, testifies to an informed, thoughtful mind. An editorial in the same paper criticizing President Bascom's senior psychology course took especial exception to his presentation of the intuitional system to the exclusion of others. "Spencer, Bain, Comte, Fichte, and a host of other metaphysicians are just as much entitled to write their philosophies on the minds of our students as are the Intuitionalists. . . . Plainly there is not the slightest reason that President Bascom's Philosophy should prevail in our State University, more than should the Democratic doctrine of State Sovereignty."¹⁹

Perhaps the principal weakness in the education that students obtained was in the aesthetic sphere. It is true that as time went on more emphasis was put, in all programs, on English literature; and it is also true that many seniors derived inspiration from the somewhat abstract course in aesthetics which President Bascom offered and which for most students was a requirement. But this was almost all that was available. The students themselves associated music and French with a merely "fashionable" education.²⁰ According to Regent Van Slyke, who was eager that provision be made for musical instruction, President Bascom regarded music, and art as well, as "outside of a *man's* wants in education." Van Slyke was not alone in favoring some emphasis on the arts. The Visitors, in 1878, urged that instruction in music was desirable "to develop and strengthen the vocal muscles and give sweetness, softness, and power to speech, and aid to overcome the bad habit of nasal, flat, and mouthing utterances, which are too common characteristics of the American youth." In the same year Fletcher Parker was appointed instructor in vocal and instrumental music. He set about organizing musical societies and giving special instruction, and met with prompt and enthusiastic response, but he was nevertheless allowed to leave the University after two years' service and for the time being was not replaced. In 1880 James Stuart was permitted to occupy the Art Gallery in Science Hall as a studio for instruction in art. The University was to be put to no expense, save for the heat, and Stuart was to retain all the

¹⁹ *University Press*, March 15, 1871, November 4, 1879.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, June 17, 1873.

student fees. But the arrangement did not work out well.²¹ All in all, then, the aesthetic sphere was more or less neglected at Wisconsin, as it was in other institutions; and few seem even to have felt the need for it.



DESPITE the constitutional provision requiring the University to eschew all sectarianism, a strongly religious atmosphere pervaded the institution in the late 1860's. Many of the books in the library dealt with theological matters.²² During President Chadbourne's administration daily attendance at prayers was compulsory,²³ and the chapel was so crowded that many were forced to stand. The prayer meetings which Professor Sterling held in his lecture room were also well attended.²⁴ In the Female College the religious supervision was very strict. A student who entered the college in 1868, in recalling her experiences many years later, spoke of compulsory attendance both at church and at evening devotions. "I shall never forget," she remarked, "my first evening in South Hall and the sweet, impressive voice of the Preceptress as she led the kneeling girls in prayer. Sunday afternoons we learned a Bible lesson which we recited in the evening. Public sentiment was opposed to preparation of week-day lessons on Sunday. We had numerous prayer-meetings which were usually well attended."²⁵ In President Chadbourne's time all students were required not only to attend chapel but to study Natural Theology and Evidences of Christianity under his tutelage. The Board of Visitors expressed approval of this requirement, declaring that no school in which the principles of "our common Christianity" were neglected could enjoy the confidence and patronage of the people. Four years later, in denying that an undenominational state institu-

²¹ Van Slyke to Paul, August 23, 1877, in the Paul Papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin; *Regents' Annual Report*, 1877-78, p. 32; Minutes of the Executive Committee of the Board of Regents, November 8, 1880, p. 340.

²² H. B. Lathrop, "The Progress of Half a Century," in *The Badger*, 1905, p. 16; Samuel Fallows, "An Interregnum," *The Badger*, 1898, pp. 269, 270.

²³ James D. Butler, "An Early Decade of Wisconsin University," in *The Badger*, 1890, p. 86.

²⁴ William Huntington to his brother and sister, January 21, 1866, August 29, 1868, in the Samuel Fallows Papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

²⁵ "Girls at the University in Early Days," in the *Aegis*, February, 1896.

tion was necessarily wanting in positive and helpful religious influence, the Visitors asserted that any education which left uncultivated and unfed the spiritual and moral nature was defective.²⁶

Yet, great as was their pride in the religious atmosphere of the University, the Visitors, the regents, and the faculty made a great point of the institution's freedom from all sectarianism. Although the faculty was selected from various denominations, including the Catholic, "the utmost harmony" was preserved, the Visitors stated in 1872. "Every father may rest assured that our State University belonging to the whole people, knows no party, no sect, makes no distinction on account of class or color, creed or condition." The regents likewise stated that great pains had been taken to prevent any denominational preponderance in the instructional force. When the Methodists tried to have President Twombly retained, and when a movement was launched to have regents as well as professors appointed on the basis of their sectarian affiliations, the Board declared that such a policy would "effectively sap the foundation of usefulness for the University." It proudly asserted that no professor or employee had ever been questioned respecting his religious beliefs.²⁷

By and large few questioned the nonsectarian character of the University. At least once, however, a Roman Catholic criticized the institution for its essential Protestantism. In 1877 Father J. W. Vahey of Milwaukee cited the fact that at commencement the University choir had sung a denominational hymn and that President Bascom had not only invoked the blessing according to Protestant form but had preached a "pious" sermon in defense of compulsory education "which greatly edified those of his audience whose intellects inclined toward Puritanism." The *University Press* took Father Vahey roundly to task for so weakly labeling as piety and Puritanism a civic-minded plea for the diffusion of knowledge.²⁸

If few charged the University with sectarianism, it was com-

²⁶ Reports to the Regents, Vol. B, p. 55, June 24, 1868; *Regents' Annual Report*, 1873-74, p. 12.

²⁷ *Regents' Annual Report*, 1871-72, pp. 8, 14; 1873-74, pp. 5-6.

²⁸ *University Press*, August 13, 1877.

mon for ardent denominational Christians to denounce it as a godless institution. This was not, of course, a new accusation. During the Civil War a Madison minister asserted that he would continue to fight the University because of its atheism. In the summer of 1875 the Presbyterian Synod in Baraboo asserted that a considerable number of the instructors were either infidels or opposed to evangelical religion, and that a portion of the students were likewise atheistic.²⁹ The charge was repeated, at least by implication, in 1881.

Although President Bascom succeeded in refuting this indictment there is no question that the secular tendency had made progress at the University during the seventies. The catalogue for the academic year 1868-69 announced that "no student is required to attend any religious exercise of any kind, but all directions in regard to this matter, given by parents or guardians, will be cheerfully followed." In shifting chapel attendance from a compulsory to a voluntary basis the University was in advance both of the normal schools, which ten years later were still requiring attendance, and of many state universities. At Minnesota, for example, attendance at chapel was still compulsory as late as 1887. Two years later, when students attending Ohio State were expelled for refusing to attend chapel, the university's position was tested in the state courts. Similar litigation took place in Illinois in 1890. The University of Missouri did not abolish compulsory attendance at chapel until 1896.³⁰

Not only did Wisconsin lead in the abolition of compulsory attendance at chapel; she was one of the very first universities to dispense with chapel altogether. As early as 1874 President Bascom observed that chapel was not as well attended as he desired, and that the Sabbath was less strictly kept than it should be. Chapel attendance was discussed in faculty meetings, but little could be done to improve the situation. On one occasion in 1877 President Bascom was requested to interview a senior with regard to his failure to attend chapel. In 1880 the

²⁹ James L. High, "The University of Wisconsin during the Civil War," in *A Great Chancellor and Other Papers* (Chicago, 1901), 229.

³⁰ *University Catalogue*, 1868-69, p. 83; *University Press*, January 17, 1879; *Aegis*, November 4, 1887, April 12, 1889, April 18, 1890, March, 1896.

Visitors declared that "those who were on the grounds during morning prayers were impressed by what seemed to them a prevailing sentiment of disregard, if not disrespect, to those exercises." Of almost five hundred students less than thirty were in attendance, and many lounging, loud-talking, and playing students outside the chapel created a disturbing element. The Visitors concluded that if attendance could not be improved, chapel should be discontinued altogether. The extent of the secular tendency was also manifest when the new chapel and assembly hall, long desired, was completed and plans for its dedication were under discussion. Some were horrified at the suggestion that the dedication include a dance. If the chapel was really a church, the *University Press* conceded, such an opening would be outside the bounds of good taste; but despite its ecclesiastical appearance, it had been built by a corporation specifically disclaiming any religious or sectarian connections and therefore must be a schoolhouse rather than a church! By 1885 voluntary attendance at chapel had become so feeble that President Bascom discontinued it altogether. Ten years later the Christian Association asked to have voluntary chapel exercises restored, but no action was taken.³¹

The abolition of compulsory chapel and the subsequent decline in attendance was not the only thing that horrified the orthodox critics of the University. As early as 1871, when the Darwinian controversy was hot, the *University Press* included extracts from the *Descent of Man* and essays from *Appleton's Journal* favorable to the evolutionary position. That some students entertained skeptical or atheistical views, there can be no doubt. Of the twenty-six men graduating in 1874, for example, thirteen professed no religious belief. Six years later William E. Aitchison wrote to his father: "I am almost disgusted with some of the boys down here; boys perfectly rational in everything else and those who in any other matter would not be content to sift the arguments and so-called facts to the bottom, will read Bob Ingersoll through time after time and gass about him

³¹ Minutes of the Faculty, vol. 1, p. 260, April 1, 1874; vol. 2, p. 10, December 2, 1877; *Regents' Annual Report*, 1879-80, p. 24; *University Press*, November 20, 1879, January 25, 1880, March 7, 1885; *Aegis*, June 7, 1895.

everywhere. There are lots of bright, intelligent young men here who are being ruined by Bob Ingersoll and Tom Paine's *Age of Reason*."³²

Yet the University was certainly no hotbed of atheism. President Bascom was right in denying the charge made in 1876 at the synod in Baraboo that "a considerable number of the instructors in our State University at Madison are either infidels, or opposed to evangelical religion" and the implication that an education at the University was likely to issue in infidelity and open immorality. Most of the professors and instructors, Bascom pointed out, were members of orthodox churches. He did not know of a single one who was an infidel, openly or secretly. The *University Press* seconded the president, insisting that there was no more skepticism among the students at Wisconsin than might be expected in any university of its size. "No churchman need fear the influence of the State University; and the public may accept President Bascom's assurance that there is nothing in our curriculum or our surroundings that will interfere with Christian faith or Christian practice." Subsequent refutations, inspired by evidence that the charge was taken very seriously throughout the state, emphasized the fact that every class which had been graduated from the University, except the first one or two, had given its quota of ministers of every denomination. The *University Press* took special pleasure in announcing, in due time, that the minister who had made the charge at the Baraboo synod had, at the request of his flock, resigned his pastorate.³³ The storm blew over. But it was not quickly forgotten. Indeed, the student press even helped to keep it alive by fighting a guerrilla war with the periodicals of the denominational colleges, in which each side claimed superiority in scholarship and moral leadership.³⁴ Religious life in the University found expression more and more in such voluntary organizations as the Christian Association

³² *University Press*, February 15, August 1, 1871; History of the Class of 1874 (MS.), 27, in the University Collection, University of Wisconsin Library; Aitchison to his father, September 26, 1880, in a private collection.

³³ *University Press*, January 4, 17, 1876, August 13, 1877.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, March 10, June 4, September 19, 1877; *Aegis*, November 12, 1886, January 7, 1887.

(1871) and the Y.M.C.A. (1881) and, ultimately, in the denominational centers that sprang up in the neighborhood of the campus. Prayers continued to have a place in commencement exercises, but this was almost the only evidence of religious practice in the official life of the University. A very considerable change indeed had taken place since the days shortly after the Civil War when Professor Sterling held prayer meetings in his lecture room, when attendance at chapel was compulsory, and when all students were required to study Natural Theology and Evidences of Christianity.



IN THE minds of the male students military drill was a scarcely less important issue than religion. During the Civil War steps had been taken to follow Michigan's example "engrafting upon the University some provision for military education," but it was not until 1866 that the legislature required military training of all able-bodied men in all colleges of the University.³⁵ Regent Van Slyke conferred with the War Department, and in 1868 Colonel W. R. Pease was named professor of military science and civil engineering. The regents provided an armory, prescribed a uniform, and adopted the regulations drawn up by the new commandant. Colonel Pease acquitted himself well and elicited praise from the regents in their next annual report.³⁶ But it was clear from the start that military drill was unpopular. One sophomore, rather than submit to the requirement, withdrew from the University. Other students absented themselves from drill and were warned by the faculty that any repetition would be considered a serious matter. In his report to the regents in June, 1868, Chadbourne frankly faced the fact that "the drill is not popular with the mass of the students and if it is made obligatory to drill from three to five times a week

³⁵ *Assembly Journal*, 1862, vol. 1, p. 29; *University Catalogue*, 1866-67, p. 22. For interesting material on the beginnings of the movement for military training at Wisconsin see also Marie Jussen Monroe's "Biographical Sketch of Edmund Jussen," in the *Wisconsin Magazine of History*, 12:146-175 (December, 1928).

³⁶ Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. C, pp. 31, 35, 38 (July 18, 31, August 1, 1866), 59, 60-61, 68 (February 13, April 24, 1867), 90, 97, 100-101 (February 14, June 23, 25, 1868); Minutes of the Faculty, vol. 1, p. 152, May 11, 1868.

... it will drive away the older and better portion of our students." In his opinion the drill should be made as light as possible until a change of law could be effected which would put military exercises on a voluntary basis. It was unrealistic, he concluded, to give orders to men from twenty-one to twenty-seven years of age who regarded drill as a hardship when other institutions were open to them. Somewhat later the regents requested that the law be modified to give them power to exempt law students and others at their discretion.³⁷ This change was in due time accomplished.

But the opposition of the students did not diminish despite the regents' continued approval of military drill. The congestion and confusion resulting from the holding of drill in University Hall stimulated an effort to provide a separate building for military exercises and for a gymnasium. This was opened in 1871, but without significantly lessening the general undertone of student resentment. The arguments that drill was necessary in the interest of physical culture, that it promoted vigor, grace, firmness, and manliness of bearing, and that it prepared for "the noble profession of arms" had relatively little appeal; nor did the contention that every citizen should be able to handle arms in the defense of the state and nation stir up any enthusiasm. Despite the fact that the student press on occasion repeated these arguments with approval, military drill remained unacceptable to a great many students. In 1870 an editorial in the *University Press* justified the opposition of students to compulsory drill on the ground that American tradition opposed militarism. "We don't attempt to deny that we abhor everything of a military name, as nature abhors a vacuum." Yet the editor prophesied that the military department would doubtless become a success "when the students get accustomed to it and lay aside some of their Americanism."³⁸ The popularity of Major Nicodemus did, in fact, break down some of the resistance. But the Visitors continued to find much indifference. President Bascom declared that he had tried to encourage the proper military spirit, but that many difficulties stood in the

³⁷ *Regents' Annual Report*, 1867-68, pp. 34-35; 1869-70, pp. 30-31.

³⁸ Report of the Visitors, appendix to *Regents' Annual Report*, 1873-74, p. 10; *University Press*, October, 1870.

way. Early in 1877 the *University Press*, in announcing a re-organization of military drill, declared that this was indeed very necessary, for it had "degenerated into almost a farce," and three years later the new commandant found the military department in "the slough of despond."³⁹

Student opposition to compulsory military drill was vigorously expressed when Senator George Burrows introduced in the legislative session in 1881 a bill providing that all members of the University Battalion "be deemed duly enlisted and enrolled in the Wisconsin National Guard." Senator George Sutherland presented a petition against the passage of the bill, which was signed by 147 male students. "The unanimity with which the protest against the bill is being signed," declared the *University Press*, proved that although the bill had originated with persons connected with the Battalion, the great majority of undergraduates were actively opposed to it. They "object to being dragged en masse into five years of military service for the sake of the designing few, who seek to gain some paltry honor as officers: and they object to turning 'University Hill' into a camping ground. . . . Such drill is plainly incompatible with the best performance of our college duties, and no real benefit could come from it, which we do not already gain by our drill in the University Battalion. . . . We recognize gratefully the liberality of the state toward us, but we fail to see that she has any especial claim upon us for military service. If her educational expenditures are not met by the intellectual and moral improvement of society, then let her abandon public education as a failure." The bill passed the Senate, but to the students' joy it was defeated in the Assembly.⁴⁰

In 1881 the regents boasted that military discipline had improved and that students were acquiescing cheerfully in drill. But their optimism was not borne out by subsequent events. In 1882 Commandant King reported disorders in the

³⁹ Report of the Visitors, appendix to *Regents' Annual Report*, 1873-74, p. 10; report of President Bascom, *ibid.*, 1876-77, p. 37; Charles King to George H. Paul, July 3, 1886, in the Paul Papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

⁴⁰ *Senate Journal*, 1881, pp. 157, 280, 555; *Assembly Journal*, 714; *University Press*, March 5, 1881. William E. Aitchison to his father, December 4, 1880, in a private collection.

Battalion. The *Badger* objected editorially to the regulation requiring drill the year around. "The system established of late," it maintained, "has given rise to a semi-West Point military despotism directly opposed to the liberal policy of our institution." "This is no place," it concluded, "for subordinating one man . . . to another and allowing that one to command him as if he were his master." In 1883 all pharmacy students were exempted from military exercises, and two years later similar action was taken in regard to postgraduate students. These concessions did not silence the opposition. The *University Press*, conceding that military training had its value, asserted that too much time and money went into it. In announcing that sophomore and freshman boys attending Professor Parker's music class would be excused from drill on the evenings the class met, the *Press* laconically remarked: "The class promises to be large."⁴¹ To meet the problem of repeated absences from drill, the faculty penalized any student who cut military exercises ten times or more without excuse by requiring from him an additional term of drill. President Bascom recommended that no student be excused from drill without a certificate from Dr. Favill, the physician of the Board of Regents. According to Keyes, this rule was "absolutely necessary, because if it had not been adopted, there would have been no students to drill at all." It was a rule that was not always easy to enforce, for occasionally a lad brought a certificate of physical disability from his home physician. Regent Paul himself requested Bascom to exempt one such boy, but the president insisted upon submitting the case to Dr. Favill. That highly conscientious gentleman, who excused no one "for fear, favor, or hope of reward," found that the excuse had been written by a homeopathic colleague, and that there was no earthly reason why the poor sickly boy could not drill!⁴²

The unpopularity of Lieutenant Lomia added fuel to the

⁴¹ *Regents' Annual Report*, 1880-81, p. 7; Minutes of the Faculty, vol. 2, pp. 196, 238, 293, June 12, 1882, October 8, 1883, September 20, 1885; *Badger*, September 12, 1882; *University Press*, September 22 1883, May 10, 1884.

⁴² Minutes of the Faculty, vol. 2, p. 259, June 16, 1884; Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. C, p. 449, June 23, 1885; Keyes to Paul, October 1, 4, 1886, in the Paul Papers.

fire. The students seem to have regarded him as arbitrary and despotic. At least once a cadet was forced to offer him an apology for having used "language of insubordination."⁴⁸ Lomia for his part felt that President Bascom excused students from a particular drill without proper justification. Toward the close of the fall term, in the academic year 1885-86, about twenty students deliberately cut drill. Bascom intervened and the students returned. But on the night of February 1, 1886, the gymnasium was broken open and the bands holding together the stocks and barrels of about a hundred muskets were mysteriously removed and carried away. To prevent the students from escaping drill for lack of muskets, Regents Keyes and Raymer borrowed weapons from the state authorities and drill continued. At about the same time several anonymous letters were received by the executive committee; but every effort to discover the author of them or to get at the root of the musket-stealing episode proved fruitless. At this point one dramatic and humorous event tumbled rapidly on the heels of another. On the memorable evening of February 11 Lieutenant Lomia received by United States Express a box purporting to contain the missing bands, only to find that it was full of scrap iron, old bones, and sundry other items. It turned out that the box had been sent from Edgerton at the instigation of two seniors. On the evening of February 11 students also broke into the office of the lieutenant in South Dormitory and took several articles of his clothing. In a most indelicate fashion his trousers were suspended at the front doorway of Ladies Hall. A crudely forged letter purporting to have been written by the matron of the hall was sent to Lomia. It capped the climax of this series of pranks, and it reveals the earthy quality of student humor of the time: "In departing so hastily Thursday eve, your military trousers were left hanging on the door knob, apparently waiting to be picked. I fear that in exposing your lower extremities, and your globular appendages, on that inclement night, you contracted a cold, which has confined you to your room. Please let me hear from you at once to dispel my anxiety. Next time you call, please do not depart in a nude state. Yours

⁴⁸ Minutes of the Faculty, vol. 3, p. 29, May 16, 1887.

in great haste and evil forbodings . . ." The executive committee grilled several students, hired a private detective to work on the case, and got nowhere.⁴⁴

Nor was this the end of the revolt against the military drill of Lieutenant Lomia. Many students continued to cut drill, and the executive committee of the Board of Regents drew up new and stricter rules. But the pot was kept boiling by the upper-classmen, who were not required to drill. They appeared at the gymnasium during drill hours, yelled at the men in the ranks, threw dumbbells into the battalion, and otherwise made discipline impossible. Having been advised by the executive committee that he had the authority to do so, Lomia issued a general order excluding the intruders. But the students had no notion of complying. About twenty-five nondrilling juniors and seniors turned up at military exercises and refused to obey the order to leave. This was indeed revolt!

A special meeting of the Board of Regents was summoned for March 23 to deal with the crisis. Most of the students admitted having defied Lieutenant Lomia; but they insisted that they had not known he was acting on the authority of the regents. The students chosen to defend the recalcitrants in the public press declared that Lieutenant Lomia's statements of the affair were untrue. They insisted that he had issued his orders not to prevent disturbance but to display his own arbitrary power. They apologized to the regents, but refused to make an apology to Lieutenant Lomia.⁴⁵ The regents were perplexed. But it was decided to permit the boys to remain in the University so long as they bowed to the authority of the regents, and to turn over to the faculty questions of future discipline.⁴⁶ Thus the authority of the regents was upheld. The departure of Lomia in 1888 ended an unfortunate episode in the history of military training at the University. But the students did not again defy the established order. Their opposition had been less ideological than personal: they resented the time spent in

⁴⁴ Reports to the Regents, Vol. B, pp. 463 ff., March 23, 1886; Minutes of the Faculty, vol. 2, pp. 306-307, March 29, 1886.

⁴⁵ *Madison Daily Democrat*, March 24, 25, 1886.

⁴⁶ University Executive Records, 1848-1888, March 27, 1886, State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

drill, were antagonistic to the officer caste system, which ran counter to democratic conceptions, and disliked greatly some of the commandants. Grumbling continued here and there, but in general the students at Wisconsin conformed to the regulation governing military drill as did those at other institutions.



EXCEPT for the literary societies and the joint debate, no extracurricular activity in the intellectual sphere was so important in undergraduate life as collegiate journalism. The *University Press*, though it was not the first student organ at Wisconsin,⁴⁷ was the first to survive for any length of time. Its first editors and publishers, J. W. Bashford and George W. Raymer, assumed financial responsibility for the periodical, and for seventeen years it continued to be operated as a private enterprise. Its most notable editor and publisher was Robert M. La Follette, who took over the paper in 1876 and operated it for four years. The initial number, which appeared in June, 1870, announced that the paper was to be devoted to the interests of the fast-growing University; it would make its needs known and endeavor to win support for it, serve as a medium for the publication of contributions from faculty and students, and give undergraduates training in journalism, including the art of printing. The *Press* received some support from the regents in the form of advertisements of the University, support which occasioned, as we have seen, some discussion of the whole problem of freedom of expression and censorship. In 1880 the editor declared that its staff recognized the demands of good taste and the need for substantiating opinions with factual data. In true La Follette fashion it was insisted that controversial reporting and critical editorializing did not necessarily reflect on the institution. If it refrained from all criticism it would exist for no greater purpose than to glorify the institution regardless of its merits.⁴⁸ By and large the *University Press* was a free organ which did not hesitate to criticize presidents, faculty, student body, and Boards of Regents. It was thus an admirable stimulus to independent thought.

⁴⁷ See above, pp. 191 ff. ⁴⁸ *University Press*, June, 1870, February 20, 1880.

The *Press* greatly broadened the intellectual horizons of the student body, for its coverage was wide. It included selections from the leading magazines on subjects of current interest. By making liberal use of the exchanges it informed its readers of the issues other American colleges were facing. Members of the faculty contributed essays on their several disciplines, on the main controversies in educational theory and practice, and on their travels. Rasmus B. Anderson, for example, sent from Norway articles on the life and literature of that country, and Feuling described at length the educational organization of Germany and the influence of German science and scholarship upon American learning. Many of these essays from faculty pens were stimulating; all were informative.

But by far the greater part of each issue of the *Press* was written by students. The staff covered the plays staged in the Madison theaters and wrote critiques that were often thoughtful and informed. It summarized and often interpreted the lectures of such nationally known figures as Frederick Douglass, John Fiske, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Julia Ward Howe, Wendell Phillips, Henry Ward Beecher, Matthew Arnold, Mark Twain, and James T. Fields. Editorials commented not only on University policies but on politics—local, state, and national; and both foreign relations and important events abroad received attention. The *Press* also published many “commencement parts” and essays on a variety of subjects which had been read at the literary societies. Among the topics presented were the Shakespeare-Bacon controversy, aesthetic principles in classical and romantic literature, natural scenery, the origin of boulders, the popular world, scientific apparatus, inventions and scientific discoveries, the tariff, immigration, the labor problem, cruelty to animals, prohibition, women’s rights, and war. Original verse and the poems of well-known writers also found a place in the *University Press*. The result was that the students who wrote for the periodical and who read it supplemented the knowledge they obtained in the classroom, sharpened their wits, and were familiarized with some of the principal movements of thought and controversy in the larger world.

Until 1882 the *University Press* had no rival. In that year

the first issue of the *Badger* appeared, precipitating at once a feud between the two papers. The new organ claimed to be more democratic and more representative of student opinion, being "student owned and student operated." All persons accepting responsibility for operating deficits became voting members of the Badger Association, which elected its officers, editors, and business manager.

But the *Badger* did not fare too well. In 1885 the two organs effected a union under the joint title *The University Press and The Badger*. This step was described as "an act of expediency in the case of both, of necessity in the case of neither." But the student-ownership-managership of which the *Badger* had boasted was at an end. It was this, perhaps, which explained the appearance in 1886 of the *Aegis*, which from the start emphasized that, unlike the older paper, it was owned and published by students. The *Aegis* also claimed to have virtually the unanimous support of all the classes, of the resident alumni, and of the faculty and the Board of Regents. The rivalry between the *Press* and the *Aegis* was a bitter one, which eventuated, in the autumn of 1886, in the sale of the *Press* to the *Aegis* for \$650 and a promise on the part of its owners and publishers never to enter the field of collegiate journalism at Wisconsin again. Until the appearance of the *Cardinal* in 1892, the *Aegis* enjoyed a monopoly of Wisconsin journalism.⁴⁹ The *Badger* and the *Aegis* did not differ essentially in content from the *University Press*, though they gave somewhat more space to personal news of the faculty and alumni and to sports. All indulged their sense of fun in jokes and clever remarks. All included articles on political and literary topics from student pens. The newer papers, however, did not sustain the high literary standards of the *Press*, which were maintained especially in its earlier years. Both nevertheless compared favorably with college papers elsewhere.

One cannot judge, of course, how far the opinions expressed in the student papers represented those of the majority of the students. What evidence there is suggests that their attitudes on

⁴⁹ *University Press and Badger*, September 25, 1885; *Aegis*, September 15, 24, October 15, 1886. The *Cardinal* is discussed in connection with student life of the nineties.

social and political issues were fairly well represented. Relatively few objections to editorial comments took the form of students' protests, nor were many recorded privately in the few student diaries and letters that are available.

By and large the editors of the college papers, with the possible exception of Robert M. La Follette, and the essays they published, reflect an essentially conservative position on political and economic issues. In 1874 the *University Press* condemned the Granger movement on the ground that its advocacy of government control of railroads portended the "Europeanizing" of our democracy. Eight years later, it is true, the *Press* viewed with sympathy the objectives of the Grangers, but by this time the organization had become essentially respectable. In the early eighties the *Press* defended Boss Keyes against the criticism of those who advocated his removal from the Madison post office and his defeat for the office of United States senator. There was no adverse criticism in 1873 of the commencement address of H. W. Hewett, who openly opposed government regulation of hours, wages, and conditions of labor. We shall note that shortly after his arrival President Bascom defended the right of labor to organize, against the majority sentiment of one of the literary societies. Only on the issue of tariffs versus free trade was the student body apparently in favor of a position that might be deemed liberal. In 1870 a class in political economy, composed of eleven Democrats and eleven Republicans, a group familiar with the arguments of Carey, Mill, Wayland, Perry, and Greeley, voted nineteen to one in favor of free trade. Later polls reflected a similar alignment. Indeed, tariff versus free trade was so burning an issue that in 1883, when the joint debate was decided in favor of free trade, Jack Hinton, a paid lobbyist of the Milwaukee Iron Workers Association, attacked the University, and especially Professor Parkinson, in a scurrilous pamphlet scattered broadcast among the legislators, and two hundred students, in their turn, burned Hinton in effigy in front of the Park Hotel.⁵⁰

But it was in the literary societies and the joint debate that

⁵⁰ *University Press*, July, 1870, July 7, 1873, August 3, 1874, December 16, 1880, February 3, December 9, 1882; William E. Aitchison to his father, March 18, 1883, in a private collection.

student attitudes on current issues were best expressed, for it was there that the extracurricular intellectual life of the students reached its highest level.



IN DISCUSSING the work of a university John Henry Newman declared that if he were forced to choose between a university which gave its degrees to any person who passed an examination in a wide range of subjects and a university "which had no professors or examinations at all, but merely brought a number of young men together for three or four years, and then sent them away," he would choose the latter. "When a multitude of young men, keen, open-hearted, sympathetic, and observant, as young men are, come together and freely mix with one another, they are sure to learn one from another, even if there be no one to teach them, the conversation of all is a series of lectures to each, and they gain for themselves new ideas and views, fresh matter of thought, and distinct principles for judging and acting, day by day." Such a young community, he felt, would constitute a whole: "It will embody a specific idea, it will represent a doctrine, it will administer a code of conduct, and it will furnish principles of thought and action. It will give birth to a living teaching, which in the course of time will take the shape of a self-perpetuating tradition, or a *genius loci*, as it is sometimes called, which haunts the home where it has been born, and which imbues and forms, more or less, and one by one, every individual who is successively brought under its shadow."⁵¹ There is no evidence that the Board of Regents wanted a university such as Newman extolled, but in a limited way the literary societies of the University brought young men and women together in the young community. Contemporary records and the recollections of old graduates attest that in the free association of the literary society a tradition was shaped which, like Newman's *genius loci*, imbued and formed the individuals who were successively brought under its shadow.⁵²

⁵¹ John Henry Newman, *The Idea of a University* (New York, 1947), 128-130.

⁵² See Emery R. Johnson, *Life of a University Professor: An Autobiography* (Philadelphia, 1943), 11.

In the eastern colleges literary societies had reached their full strength and had already begun to decline by the time of the Civil War, but in western institutions they did not attain their greatest strength until some time later.⁵³ In many western institutions these societies became the most vital part of the college. Members of the societies imposed upon themselves a discipline fully as rigorous and often more purposeful than the discipline of the classroom. While their elders might talk in generalities about modifying the course of study and the internal organization of the college or university to meet the current educational demands, the students in their literary societies tried to provide what they felt to be important to their education.

The aims of the literary societies at Wisconsin, like those in other western institutions, were quite numerous. All sought the improvement of the members. In a day when most students felt that they would sometime be called upon to serve in a post of civic responsibility, it behooved each to prepare himself for such service by mastering the rules of parliamentary practice and the skills of debate and extemporaneous speaking. The societies were forums in which the issues of the day were discussed and debated, thus offering escape from the unreality of the college curriculum. They established libraries for the use of their members. They brought lecturers to the campus and in some measure contributed to adult education by presenting periodic exhibitions featuring debates and orations on subjects of general interest. Moreover, they offered the companionship that the fraternities were later to supply.

The first literary society established at the University of Wisconsin was organized at a meeting called by Professor Sterling in October, 1850. Its name, the Athenaeum, was selected by Chancellor John Lathrop "at the Solicitation of the Society." Members were required, according to the original constitution, to present readings, original orations and compositions, declamations, and extemporaneous debates. Two years

⁵³ David Potter, *Debating in the Colonial Charter Colleges: An Historical Survey, 1642 to 1900* (Teachers College, Columbia University, *Contributions to Education*, no. 899, New York, 1944), 89-93.

after it was organized the Athenaeum Society secured a charter from the state legislature.⁵⁴

The second society to be formed was the Hesperian. Although its antecedents are shrouded in its own ill-kept records, it seems to have been created from two other societies, the main elements of which had seceded from the Athenaeum in 1853. One of these was the Polymnian Order, which also called itself the Secret Order of Friendly Brothers. The other was the Philomathean Society. In 1854 these two joined under the name of Hesperian. The next year, in emulation of the Athenaeum, the Hesperians obtained a charter from the legislature.⁵⁵ In 1864 Castalia, the first women's society, was organized, and nine years later the second, Laurea. Numerous short-lived men's societies were also organized in the 1870's and 1880's, prominent among which were the Calliope, the Linonia, the Adelpia, and the Philomathean. The law students organized their own debating club; in the early 1880's a German literary society, *Der Bildungsverein*, was established, and a few years later a Scandinavian society, *Nora Samlag*. Societies were also launched in the Colleges of Agriculture and Engineering.

The oldest society, the Athenaeum, held its first meeting in the Female Academy, which, until the completion of North Hall, housed all University activities. Upon the completion of University Hall (now Bascom) the societies were given rooms on the fourth floor of that building, and the Board of Regents, in a burst of unexpected generosity, allowed each of the two

⁵⁴ Athenaeum Records, 1850-60 (MS.), pp. 1-2, on deposit in the State Historical Society of Wisconsin; *Session Laws*, 1852, pp. 424-426. No records were kept until 1852 when a book was bought and the early history put down as recalled by the members. The act granting the charter created a "body corporate" of six persons specified by name and their associates under the name Athenaeum Society "to remain in perpetual succession, for the purpose of establishing and maintaining a library, instituting literary and scientific lectures and debates, and providing other means of moral and intellectual improvement." The association was authorized to hold up to twenty-five thousand dollars worth of property and was accorded the right to sue and be sued, to prepare and impose by-laws, and to elect directors. The association was specifically restricted to the activities enumerated and was exempted from paying taxes.

⁵⁵ *Private and Local Laws*, 1855, pp. 103-105. William F. Vilas, then a boy of fifteen, was one of a committee of three instructed to draw up the charter and manage its passage. Hesperian Records (MS.), January 12, 1855, on deposit in the State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

societies then in existence a hundred and thirty dollars for fitting up its hall.⁵⁶

The weekly meetings were held on Friday night. During the first few years the societies convened at six o'clock in the evening. Later, when they had become affluent enough to use oil lamps instead of candles, they met between seven and eight o'clock. Ordinarily all the business, oratory, and debate had been finished by eleven o'clock, but on one occasion during the sixties one of the societies remained in session until six o'clock in the morning. During 1866-67 the Hesperians had notable difficulty in completing their sessions before midnight. The faculty did not concern itself much with the societies during the fifties and sixties, but with the arrival of John Bascom this indifference ceased. Bascom felt that even the twelve o'clock closing hour provided in the bylaws of the men's societies was too late. He directed the societies to amend their bylaws to provide for adjournment by eleven o'clock. The Athenaeon Society acceded to the president's decree without recording opposition or resentment, the Hesperians with some show of reluctance. Less than a year later the Athenaeans broke the rule. There were, of course, extenuating circumstances: on the night in question they had debated the subject of secret societies, and apparently not all that needed to be said on the matter could be said before closing time. Bascom promptly suspended the officers for "keeping the society open until after eleven o'clock." This arbitrary act so incensed the society that it adopted a resolution pointing out to the president and faculty that its officers acted "only by order of the society." The society was of the opinion that it had the right to so direct its officers. Hence if the officers had violated a rule, all the members were equally guilty. The Athenaeans accordingly petitioned the faculty and president either to reinstate the officers "in their previous standing in the University or allow us to share their punishment."⁵⁷ The officers were reinstated, and thereafter

⁵⁶ Athenaeon Records, December 9, 1859; Hesperian Records, March 2, 1860. The Athenaeans reported that they spent \$3.35 more than had been allowed by the Board, but the society willingly contributed this sum.

⁵⁷ Hesperian Records, April 27-28, 1866, November 6, 1874; Athenaeon Records, November 20, 1874, May 15, 1875.

there were apparently no violations of the eleven o'clock rule.

Until the end of the Civil War any student enrolled in the University seems to have been eligible for membership in one of the literary societies. But with the increased enrollment after 1865, a movement was launched to exclude preparatory students from the societies. In 1867 the two men's societies sponsored the organization of a literary society for the students of the preparatory department. A few years later the societies agreed to exclude all special students from membership, but they did not always abide by their agreement. By the seventies membership in the societies, which until the close of the Civil War seldom exceeded thirty, had increased to the point of unwieldiness. In 1873 the *University Press* reported that the four societies on the campus, the Athenaeon, the Hesperian, the Castalian, and the law class society were flourishing, each having a membership of from sixty to seventy. During the next few years several other societies were formed, but in 1876 the faculty went on record as opposing the establishment of any more.⁵⁸

The work of the several societies was much the same, and the order of business transacted in the weekly meetings varied little throughout the years. In 1857, for example, the bylaws of the Hesperians provided the following order of business for each regular weekly meeting: roll call, the reading and adoption of the secretary's report of the previous meeting, miscellaneous business, arrangement of the program for the next week

⁵⁸ Hesperian Records, August 30, September 6, 1867; Athenaeon Records, September 23, 1870; Minutes of the Faculty, vol. 1, p. 306, March 20, 1876. Besides their active members paying dues, several of the societies, especially during the early decades, had on their rolls a large number of honorary members selected from among local and national celebrities. The Hesperians, for instance, elected to honorary membership C. C. Washburn, Levi Vilas, A. C. Dodge, and President Franklin Pierce. The name of Stephen A. Douglas was presented in 1855, but the society refused to accept him, as it did again on a later occasion. Hesperian Records, May 4, 1855. There is no record that Pierce ever accepted the honor or that Douglas was aware of his unpopularity with the Hesperians. The same apparently anti-Democratic bias which made Douglas distasteful to the majority of the society's membership explains its refusal to purchase George Bancroft's *History of the United States*. Hildreth's *History* was bought instead. *Ibid.*, April 29, May 6, 1859. But if the Hesperians could pride themselves upon having the president of the United States as an honorary member, the Athenaeons could boast that they were the first to elect women to honorary membership. In 1858 Miss Fannie Lathrop and Miss Alice Read were made honorary members of the society, and a little later Miss Marelta A. Gaskins was elected. Athenaeon Records, November 19, 1858, January 21, 1859.

and appointment of participants, and the presentation of the program of the evening, which was to include a declamation, an essay, and a debate. A second roll call preceded adjournment. The principal interest of the men's societies was debating. The women, although they too held frequent debates, more often presented essays and declamations on their programs.

Although some of the subjects chosen for debate permitted little more than a formal discussion of some problem in which nobody was interested, most of them dealt with political and social problems which were of great current interest. Bishop Samuel Fallows, who graduated in 1859, recalled later that his society debated almost every subject. "If the boys overlooked any subject which would have floored the world's wisest, it was not intentional." Fallows perceived one of the primary attractions of the literary societies. "Courses might be as set as the laws of the Medes and Persians," he said. "Professors might whip their students along the same old round of Greek, Latin, Mathematics and Logic to their heart's content. But, lo! in Ath[enaeon] the intellectual slave became a despot."⁵⁹

In the 1850's the societies debated such problems as the Maine liquor law, the propriety of permitting Kossuth "to excite the Americans to arms against Austria," territorial expansion, the tariff, the adoption of a homestead law, the various aspects of the slavery issue and of secession, the compatibility of Catholicism with representative government, socialism, woman suffrage, coeducation, and a host of other important questions of the day. Although much of the talk reflected both a vigorous optimism and idealism, there was no lofty impracticality about it. When the Athenaeans debated whether "four years spent in the University of Wisconsin be of more benefit to a young man than two thousand dollars at twelve per cent," the society voted decisively for the two thousand dollars.⁶⁰

During the ensuing decades subjects continued to be debated which show that in the literary societies, if nowhere else in the University, contemporary problems were followed with keen interest. If these problems were not always discussed with the utmost enlightenment, none could complain of a lack of en-

⁵⁹ Alice K. Fallows, *Everybody's Bishop* (New York, 1927), 130.

⁶⁰ Athenaeon Records, May 7, 1852.

thusiasm or independence of spirit. In the spring of 1874, when the newly elected president of the University, John Bascom, was visiting in Madison, he attended a meeting of the Athenaeum Society. The subject for debate that evening was "Resolved that workingmen's unions are combinations for the best interest of the laborer." The affirmative being open to volunteers, President Bascom offered arguments for that side. But the society, unimpressed by Bascom's position or arguments, gave the decision to the negative.⁶¹

So long as the membership of the societies was still small the debate teams usually consisted of from three to five people. After the Civil War, however, the number of participants increased. In the late sixties the Athenaeans divided into two sections so that each member might have an opportunity to debate every two weeks, but even then as many as fifteen would sometimes be listed for each side.⁶² If each debater took the full ten minutes to which he was entitled, the debate was long enough to satisfy even a generation with a keen appetite for solid and lengthy discussion. Some students did become impatient with the endless debates. In 1873 the editor of the *University Press* suggested that it might be a good plan to limit the time of each debater to eight minutes.⁶³

Besides the debates, the societies invited orations, declamations, and original essays, and all of them placed great emphasis upon training in parliamentary practice. Many a graduate of a literary society could boast without exaggeration that he knew Robert's *Rules of Order* by heart. The emphasis upon parliamentary practice rested upon the assumption that this skill was necessary for anyone who intended to lead or participate in group action.

Although almost completely free from faculty control, the societies had their own devices for self-discipline. They had a sergeant at arms, who maintained order, and a critic, or censor, who commented upon the work of each student who spoke or presented a paper before the society. The critic, usually an upperclassman, pointed out the weaknesses in the contribution,

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, May 15, 1874.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 1861-71, *passim*.

⁶³ *University Press*, October 1, 1873.

often with brutal candor. Indeed, the classroom had no terrors for a freshman comparable to the report of a stern, able, and conscientious critic in a literary society.⁶⁴

Both the Hesperians and the Athenaeans established libraries for the use of their members, the books for which were obtained either by purchase or as gifts. By the close of the 1850's both societies boasted of libraries containing upward of three hundred volumes. A large proportion seem to have been publications of the state and federal governments, but this was no source of regret to the members. Indeed, in 1862 the Hesperians purchased from the Wisconsin Historical Society forty-one volumes of the *Annals of Congress* at seventy-five cents a volume. The societies usually approved for purchase the books recommended by their library committees, but in 1867 it was only after spirited and prolonged debate that the Hesperians agreed to buy Paine's *Age of Reason*. The societies also subscribed to various newspapers and magazines. In 1873 the Athenaeans received the following: *The New York Evening Post*, *The Good Templar*, the *New York Herald*, the *St. Paul Press*, the *Madison Democrat*, the *State Journal*, the *University Press*, the *Nation*, *Harper's Illustrated Weekly*, the *New Orleans Picayune*, the *Milwaukee Sentinel*, *Interocean*, and the *Toledo Blade*.⁶⁵ In the early 1870's the society's library, then containing over eight hundred volumes, was still a matter of pride. By the end of the decade, however, although the University library was still far from a satisfactory institution, the usefulness of the society libraries began to be questioned.⁶⁶

In 1853 the Athenaeum Society staged its first public exhibition to which students and the general public were invited. Included on the program were several orations, the reading of an "original" essay, and a debate. Thereafter at least once a year,

⁶⁴ Among the papers of the Hesperian Society are a large number of the written reports of the critic or, more often, the criticizing committee. Some reveal a lack of energy on the part of the disciplining agency, but others show that the critic's work was carefully and thoroughly done, that many papers were subjected to microscopic examination, and that it went hard with the unfortunate member who submitted a piece marred by errors in grammar, spelling, punctuation, or faulty organization.

⁶⁵ Hesperian Records, November 7, December 12, 1862, April 12, June 14, 1867.

⁶⁶ *University Press*, June, 1870, October 20, 1879.

and sometimes oftener, the students and townspeople were invited to be present at these exhibitions. They were first held in North Hall, but as they became more popular they were moved to one of the local churches or to the Assembly Hall of the Capitol building. In 1870 the *University Press* reported that the anniversary program of the Hesperians had drawn so large a crowd that the gallery of the Assembly Hall was filled "almost to suffocation."⁶⁷

The societies likewise began early the practice of bringing visiting lecturers to the University, funds for which were derived from the sale of tickets to other students and to the citizens of Madison. In 1854 the first such visitor was invited to lecture before the joint societies. Thereafter one or more lecturers appeared in Madison each year under the sponsorship of the societies. James D. Butler owed his appointment to the post of professor of classical languages and literature in 1858 largely to the highly favorable impression made by his lecture series the year before.

The societies seldom did more than clear expenses, but occasionally they were in a position to exult over a profit. In 1875 the committee of the Athenaeum Society reported a net profit of \$85.05 on a lecture delivered by Bayard Taylor. Unfortunately they were forced to acknowledge, only a month later, a deficit of a few dollars on a lecture delivered by J. G. Saxe.⁶⁸ However precarious their financial arrangements, the literary societies did continue for two decades after the Civil War to bring prominent men of letters, scholars, and others to the University to deliver lectures.

It was the literary societies which were in large measure responsible for the participation of the University in the state and interstate oratorical contests. The first interstate oratorical contest in the Middle West was held at Galesburg, Illinois, in February, 1874. The affair was arranged by simply inviting various colleges and universities in the Middle West to send representatives. No one from the University of Wisconsin appears to have attended, but at that meeting the representatives

⁶⁷ Athenaeum Records, June 24, 1853; *University Press*, June, 1870.

⁶⁸ Athenaeum Records, January 8, February 12, 1875.

of the several schools agreed to include six or seven states in the next contest. To reduce the number of contestants, it was decided that each state should organize a state association, hold an elimination contest, and send the winner to the next interstate contest.⁶⁹

In accordance with this agreement and in response to the invitation of the men's literary societies at Wisconsin, representatives of Lawrence Institute, Beloit College, and Milton College met on May 8, 1874, to adopt a constitution for a Wisconsin contest association. Having formed such a state association, the societies jointly sent a delegate to Chicago early in June to help draft a constitution for the interstate oratorical association.⁷⁰

Neither the state nor the interstate oratorical contests were wholly satisfactory so far as the University was concerned. Competition with the sectarian colleges of the state was not regarded as a true test of the University orators, and hence the victories the University won in the first two such contests meant little. But if the University orators met with too little competition worthy of their mettle in the state contests, they met with too much in the Northwestern Interstate Collegiate Association. In 1875 the Wisconsin representative received next to last place. Perhaps it was because of this poor showing that the *University Press* argued in 1879 that there was little justification for the state or interstate contests.⁷¹

The criticism was premature. Several months later another editor of the *University Press*, Robert M. La Follette, having won the Wisconsin oratorical contest, went on to win first place in the interstate contest held at Iowa City on May 7. La Follette's victory was greeted with wild enthusiasm by the students. His return to Madison inspired a public celebration such as was later to be reserved for gladiators of the gridiron.⁷²

⁶⁹ Vernon Carstensen, *The History of the University of Iowa: The Collegiate Department from the Beginning to 1878*, pp. 401-402, manuscript doctoral dissertation, 1936, in the Library of the University of Iowa.

⁷⁰ *Hesperian Records*, March 13, April 10, May 1, 15, 1874; *Athenaeum Records*, March 20, April 10, May 1, 15, June 12, 1874; *University Press*, May 16, 1874.

⁷¹ *University Press*, September, 1876, February 6, 1877, February 26, 1879.

⁷² La Follette's victory was announced proudly by the *Wisconsin State Journal* on May 8, and the complete text of the oration was published in the same

Yet not even La Follette's victory was sufficient to sustain the interest of the societies in the interstate contest. The next year the University withdrew from the association, and not until the middle 1880's did interest in the contest revive.⁷³ When representatives again began to participate in intercollegiate forensic competition, in the 1890's, it was not strictly under the sponsorship of the literary societies.

Although the literary societies were by all odds the most popular and powerful student organizations in the University for at least two decades after the Civil War, they did not escape the criticism of the student press. In 1873 the editor of the student paper complained of a lack of decorum in the men's societies and noted that it was the prevailing opinion that the present "state of affairs is the result of debarring the ladies from our sessions." Before the end of the seventies one student editor perceived evidences of decline in the literary societies and urged that a revolution was needed to save them, and during the next few years numerous suggestions for improvement were made. In 1880 an editor urged that a new society be organized for upperclassmen only. Some, on the other hand, did not agree that the societies were declining and needed to be completely reformed. One student contended that they offered virtually the only real benefits to be obtained from attending college. If they were declining, it was not the fault of the societies themselves, but of the present generation of students, who were not the equal of those who had attended

issue. The *Journal* reported that news of the victory had been received at about ten-thirty the evening before by a large group of students waiting in front of the telegraph office. "Cheers and shouts immediately rent the air, while a procession was formed and the line of march to University Hill was taken up." The students then built a bonfire on the baseball field and despite "unwelcome visitations from Prof. Sterling and other members of the faculty" the celebration continued until early morning. Plans were immediately made for a public welcome. La Follette returned to Madison on Saturday afternoon and was met at the depot by some 250 students and as many townspeople. He was borne off at the head of a procession to be welcomed with great ceremony on the lower campus. In the evening he was given a public reception in the Assembly Hall, at which Regent E. W. Keyes presided, George B. Smith, Professor Frankenburg, and William F. Vilas extolled his virtues, and, by demand of the audience, he repeated his prize-winning oration. The reception concluded with an hour or so of dancing. *Ibid.*, May 9, 10, 12, 1879. See also *La Follette's Autobiography* (Madison, 1913), 7-8.

⁷³ *University Press*, April 5, 1884.

the University ten years before. A year later the editor of the *University Press*, acknowledging that the secret fraternities were growing in popularity at the expense of the literary societies, expressed his deep regret. The fraternities, said he, offered only social advantages, whereas the literary society offered educational advantages as well. "The time spent at second-class theaters and other worthless entertainments would," the editor moralized without regard to syntax, "if employed in literary society work, find them well prepared, and when their college days are over they would be qualified by a qualification that will give them a position in society of a kind that will be of advantage to them and not a hinderance to their true development."⁷⁴

Despite the frequent insistence that interest in the literary societies ought to surpass interest in any other activity, the rise of intercollegiate athletics, the increase in the number and popularity of social fraternities, and changes in the student body and the course of study all conspired to reduce the once dominant position of the literary societies. Perhaps the principal reason that they endured at Wisconsin much longer than at most of the Midwestern universities was that they were sustained during their last years by the popularity of the joint debate.

If in most respects the literary societies of the University differed little from similar societies in other Midwestern institutions, in their creation of the joint debate the men's societies were unique. The joint debate was an outgrowth of a practice initiated before the Civil War, the presentation of public debates between teams representing two of the societies. After 1867 one such debate was usually offered annually. By the eighties the joint debate had become one of the outstanding events of the school year, and membership on the team the highest honor to which a student could aspire. Between 1867 and 1926 fifty-six such debates were held.⁷⁵

So long as there were only two men's societies there was, of

⁷⁴ *University Press*, May 1, 1873; October 22, 1877; March 6, 1878; January 25, February 20, 1880; November 25, 1881.

⁷⁵ Dorothy Janet Holt, *The History of the Wisconsin Joint Debate*, pp. 8-25, bachelor's thesis, 1930, in the Library of the University of Wisconsin.

course, no question of which organizations would be represented in the joint debate. When other societies entered the field in the late seventies, provision was made to give each an opportunity to participate. The winner of a given joint debate became the defending champion the next year. The challenger proposed the question to be debated, the society challenged chose the side it preferred to defend. Shortly after the conclusion of a joint debate, the question for the next year would be agreed upon and the teams selected. Thus each team had almost a year for preparation. Judges were selected by the contesting societies if they could agree; if not, the selection of judges was left to the faculty. Joseph E. Davies, ex-ambassador to Russia, who was a student at the University in the 1890's, recalled that the framing of the question for debate was "the subject of the most intensive thought and care." In 1893 the *Daily Cardinal* declared that the joint debate was intended to present discussion of "some economic, social, political, administrative, or governmental question, one which is broad enough and deep enough to permit of the most careful and comprehensive investigation, as well as a minute and exhaustive study of the sources. As a result the debates have invariably proved to be a veritable mine of reliable information, statistics and conclusions." These claims are borne out by the debate topics. In 1874, and again ten years later, the societies debated the regulation of railroad rates. Bimetallism, prohibition, and labor organization were among the other subjects debated in the 1880's. In the 1890's such subjects as the restriction of immigration, the free coinage of silver, public ownership of municipal power and street railway systems, and government ownership of railroads were discussed. In 1903 the societies debated the question: "Is the present concentration of vast aggregations of capital in the U.S., in single, private manufacturing corporations, inimical to the public welfare."⁷⁶

The members of the teams were selected by the competing societies, usually from among the juniors, who had behind them two years of debating experience in their respective societies.

⁷⁶ *Hesperian Records*, March 26, 1880; Holt, *Wisconsin Joint Debate*, 16, 28-29, from which the quotations are taken.

That the societies chose wisely is attested by the subsequent attainments of the men who participated in the joint debates. Of the three hundred and thirty-six men who participated in the fifty-six debates, a surprisingly large number achieved distinguished careers. Two became governors of Wisconsin; two became presidents of great state universities; and a number became college and university professors, state and federal judges, prominent business executives, or successful lawyers. It is doubtful whether any other list of students compiled on the basis of their participation in a particular activity would contain as large a percentage of men who attained distinction after graduation.⁷⁷

There is no evidence that the preparation made for the joint debate was unusually extensive during the first decade or so, but by the 1880's it had come to represent a great cooperative research project in which the members of the teams and the societies' entire membership participated. Not only was all printed matter on the subject investigated, but often extensive correspondence was carried on with all the known authorities on the subject. In 1893, when the municipal ownership of street railway and electric power companies was under discussion, no source of information was neglected. The *Daily Cardinal* reported that "letters have been received from municipal officials of all the larger cities of Europe, Australia, and South America describing the peculiarities of the particular municipal administrations. The Athenaeum team have spent considerable time in personal and original investigation in Chicago where they have visited and inspected the power houses of the street railway lines, electric light and gas plants, etc., and made a most thorough investigation of all departments of municipal administration of the city." In 1894 the *Aegis* proudly reported that the postage and stationery bill for one of the teams amounted to nearly one hundred dollars, and in 1895 the *Cardinal* boasted

⁷⁷ See Holt, *Wisconsin Joint Debate*, 29-34, for a brief discussion of the training these men frequently had before being elected to the joint debate teams. See pages 66-120 for the members of the teams. It is not to be inferred, of course, that the training in the joint debate can be credited with these results, but rather that this activity, above all others, attracted many of the ablest young men in the University.

that almost five thousand letters had been received by the members of that year's teams.⁷⁸

Not content with printed materials and correspondence, members of the teams frequently traveled about the country to interview experts or to collect data at first hand. Thus when prohibition was under discussion, some debaters went to Maine to observe how the prohibition law worked there. W. S. Kies, who was a member of Athenaea's winning team in 1899, recalled that in the preparation of the debate on the subject of the municipal ownership of the Chicago Street Railway system, one member of the team went to Toronto, whose street railway system was municipally owned, and spent several weeks interviewing prominent men in that city. "I personally went to Chicago and stayed there six weeks. The question was a political one in Chicago at the time, and a very strong civic federation was advocating ownership of street railways. I studied all their data and was then given special help by the Chicago Street Railway people and spent weeks in their offices going through files and getting an idea of operating cost, and in effect when I got through I knew a very great deal about the operation of street railways and its various problems. . . . I think I may safely say," Kies continued, "that there was no country that had experimented in government ownership of utilities of any kind that we did not obtain information from. I recall we gave to the University Library a very large trunk full of pamphlets, books, reports and data of various kinds after the debate. The debate aroused a great deal of interest in Chicago. There were leading articles in all daily papers, and the municipal ownership side of the debate was separately published, and several thousand copies sold to the Civic Federation. The street railway side was likewise published, and an equal number sold to the Street Railway Company."⁷⁹

In 1881 the student press arranged to publish a transcript of that year's joint debate. Thereafter the debates were published annually until 1900. After a lapse of eight years the

⁷⁸ *Daily Cardinal*, February 7, 1893, quoted in Holt, Wisconsin Joint Debate, 39; *ibid.*, December 11, 1895.

⁷⁹ Quoted in Holt, Wisconsin Joint Debate, 42-43.

University assumed the expense of printing the debates for distribution to the high schools and libraries of the state. The published debates, together with the exhaustive bibliographies which had been compiled, represented a substantial work of scholarship. Richard T. Ely, an alert academic entrepreneur, announced in 1893 that the investigation of municipal ownership of public utilities made by the debaters was "as extensive as has ever been made." According to the *Daily Cardinal*, he offered to aid the societies "in publishing a book containing the results of their work. He offered to write an introduction, to edit, and direct the publishing himself."⁸⁰ The published debates enjoyed a fairly wide circulation and were favorably reviewed, to the gratification of the debaters and the student body, by such magazines as the *Review of Reviews*, the *Outlook*, and the *Independent*.⁸¹ It is also noteworthy that the brilliantly successful Legislative Reference Library of Wisconsin, fathered by Frank Hutchins and developed by Charles McCarthy, used the methods of getting information on controversial questions which had been worked out by the literary societies in the preparation for their joint debates.

Until the completion of what is now Music Hall, the debates were usually held in the Assembly Hall of the state Capitol, and seldom, during the eighties and nineties, was there room for all the students and townspeople who wanted to attend. In 1895 a small admission charge of fifteen cents was imposed, but this did not reduce attendance; more than twelve hundred people came to hear the debate. According to Burr W. Jones, who as a student had participated in a joint debate and who was for many years on the law faculty, the joint debate was so popular that some people, to be sure of a good seat, went to the hall in the late afternoon and brought their lunches.⁸²

The popularity of the joint debate began to decrease in the 1890's, but the event continued to hold a place in the college calendar until 1926. Perhaps it was responsible for sustaining the literary societies during the last years, for in most state

⁸⁰ Holt, Wisconsin Joint Debate, 39-40, 122.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 124-125.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 54, 62.

universities they virtually disappeared during the World War. The passing of the societies, like the passing of their most popular feature, the joint debate, has been lamented and deplored by many an old graduate who felt that the literary society had provided the most important part of his college education. Certainly in their heyday the societies were an important part of college life. That they have disappeared is perhaps regrettable, but it was inevitable, for the milieu that fostered them and made them profitable has also passed. The changes in and enlargement of the student body, the rise of social fraternities, the appearance of organized athletics, all contributed to the decline of the literary societies. An even more important reason for their decline, perhaps, is that most of their educational features were incorporated in the course of study. Perhaps the remarkable thing is not that the literary societies at the University have virtually disappeared but that they managed to sustain themselves as long as they did.

16.

The Rise of Specialized Education

THE early plans for specialized programs of professional and vocational training were never lost sight of, but little was done until after the Civil War to put them into operation. The delay was the result in part of financial difficulties, but there were other factors. The state was largely in the pioneer stage, dependent on the importation of specialized skills and knowledge from older regions. Lawyers, doctors, and engineers already established in their professions came to Wisconsin along with farmers, artisans, merchants, and teachers.

Moreover, until the close of the Civil War the old apprenticeship system of training was still considered adequate in the fields of teaching, law, engineering, and medicine. Normal schools were still new, even in the East. At Rensselaer, West Point, and Norwich, and at the Lawrence and Sheffield Scientific Schools at Harvard and Yale, training in civil engineering was available, but most young Americans picked up their working knowledge from established practitioners, many of whom were immigrants trained in the technical schools of Europe. By and large the young men learned by doing the tasks at hand in the army, by constructing roadbeds and bridges for the new railroads, and by participating in the feverish activities incidental to the growth of urban centers. Similarly, the great majority of lawyers were recruited from the law offices of practicing attorneys. To be sure, law schools, both those under private direction and those under university auspices, offered specialized training in the older sections of the country and in some of the

larger cities of the West. But of the newer state institutions Michigan alone pioneered in this field. The medical schools at Harvard, Columbia, Pennsylvania, and a few other institutions enjoyed considerable prestige; and here and there private medical schools offered short courses. But many doctors owed at least part of their training to the apprenticeship system. The movement for scientific agriculture was well under way, but few professors of agriculture were available when the land-grant institutions turned their attention to this matter during the Civil War. Moreover, the rank and file of the farmers everywhere disparaged "book farming" and exerted little or no pressure for specialized agricultural training within university walls.

By the end of the sixties, however, a new movement in specialized education was clearly under way. The rapid expansion of urban life, of railroads, and of industry created new demands for technical engineering training. The growing specialization of intellectual life, the rapid advance of the natural sciences, and the influence of Herbert Spencer's educational philosophy all made themselves felt. Exponents of the classical and humanistic concepts of collegiate education damned Spencer's widely read tract *What Knowledge Is of Most Worth?*, but they were unable to stem the tide toward a more "useful" education. All these forces had their influence on the University of Wisconsin, where the idea had long been entertained that the institution should provide opportunities for special training in all the useful walks of life.



THE act establishing the University specified that one of its four departments was to be devoted to medical training. Two years later the State Medical Society, at that time in its ninth year, expressed concern that nothing had been done toward establishing such a department. Conferences took place between representatives of the society and the University, but the committee of the Medical Society finally reported that the immediate organization of the medical department was impracticable.¹

¹ William F. Norwood, *Medical Education in the United States before the Civil War* (Philadelphia, 1944), 346; William S. Miller, "Medical Schools in Wisconsin: Past and Present," in the *Wisconsin Medical Journal*, 35:472-486 (June, 1936).

A member of the committee, Dr. E. B. Wolcott of Milwaukee, organized a medical school under the state university charter in April, 1850. Officers were chosen and meetings held, but the institution died stillborn.² In 1855 the regents did actually create a department of medicine, but it failed to materialize beyond the paper stage.³ In 1859 a new department, or school, of physiology and hygiene was established under the direction of David Boswell Reid, who had received the degree of doctor of medicine from the University of Edinburgh in 1830, and who had taught practical chemistry and sanitation at Edinburgh. In the interest of public health he had instituted a system of ventilation in the new houses of Parliament in Westminster and in numerous other public buildings in Great Britain. But financial stringency led to the abolition of his chair at Wisconsin after one brief year. This was all that had been accomplished when, in 1866, the reorganization act again directed that a medical school be established when conditions warranted it.

Early in 1868 the regents appointed a committee to consider the establishment of a medical school at Milwaukee. In June of that year President Chadbourne informed the regents that the subject had been discussed at the meeting of the State Medical Society, but that no action had yet been taken. Chadbourne, as a doctor of medicine and a former instructor in medical schools, must have had some sympathy with the proposal, but he knew that a medical department could not operate without "the concurrence and assistance" of the State Medical Society. Until that association asked for such a department the University had best spend its money on other undertakings.⁴

The regents did not abandon the idea. In 1875 they appointed a committee, including President Bascom, to confer with the State Medical Society on the matter.⁵ The legislature transferred to the regents the property of the Soldiers' Orphans Home in Madison, directing that it be used for a medical school.⁶ Another committee consulted with the State Medical

² L. F. Frank, *The Medical History of Milwaukee* (Milwaukee, 1915), 215.

³ *Regents' Annual Report*, 1854, p. 48.

⁴ Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. C, p. 90, February 14, 1868; Reports to the Regents, Vol. B, p. 36, June 23, 1866.

⁵ Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. C, p. 220, March 11, 1875.

⁶ *Regents' Annual Report*, 1874-75, pp. 4-5.

Society and also with prominent members of the profession. This committee reported that the founding of a medical college was, for the time being, impracticable but expressed the hope that as soon as conditions warranted, a medical school might be established. Since the Constitution required that the school be located in Madison, where no clinical facilities were available, it seemed best, at least to some of the regents, to let the Milwaukee medical community found a school entirely independent of the University.⁷

Nevertheless the idea of a University medical school refused to die. In 1877 a group of Milwaukee physicians asked the regents to appoint a committee to confer with them regarding the organization of a medical college. A committee empowered to prepare the necessary bylaws permitting the new college to be set up in Milwaukee was duly named.⁸ But the majority of the regents seem to have shared the views of Van Slyke, who was convinced that the proposed venture would embarrass the University in its legal and financial relations. Under the law the regents were responsible for all colleges of the University. They must not only elect professors and fix their salaries but also find the means to pay them. All University government must emanate from them, and they must not bargain away this power or permit dualistic authority over colleges under their authority. An independent college such as that proposed would lead to confusion and trouble. Michigan's experience, Van Slyke insisted, ought to serve as a warning. The State Medical Society also discouraged the establishment of a University medical college. The profession was at war with itself. The homeopaths made it clear that if a University medical college under the auspices of allopaths were established, they would insist on being represented in the school. The troubles which such professional conflict had occasioned at the Universities of Ohio and Iowa gave point to Van Slyke's fears. It would be better, he insisted, to permit an independent medical school at Milwaukee to es-

⁷ J. C. Gregory to J. R. Brigham, March 22, 1875, in the Brigham Papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin; G. W. Bartlett to George H. Paul, January 11, 1877, in the Paul Papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

⁸ Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. C, pp. 271, 274, January 16, 1877.

establish a reputation and then to consider at some future time whether or not it would be advantageous for the state to incorporate such a school in the University.⁹

A decade later when Dr. Birge, in association with other scientists on the faculty, had offered premedical work in histology, bacteriology, and related subjects, the whole question of medical education at the University was again explored. The State Medical Society now took the initiative in asking the regents to develop a premedical course. The regents took the position that if anything were done it must involve no expense to the University.¹⁰ President Chamberlin headed a subcommittee which, in January of 1888, submitted a proposed premedical course for the consideration of the regents. The College of Physicians and Surgeons in Chicago cordially agreed to accept it as the equivalent of one year's study of medicine.¹¹ In this way recognized premedical education made its debut at the University. It was not the full medical school that the founders of the institution had envisioned and that many had long hoped for, but it was a beginning, and a beginning solidly based on excellent instruction. Students from this premedical course were so well trained in histology and certain other subjects that when they migrated to established medical schools to finish their studies, they were frequently invited to give instruction in these pioneer fields.¹²

Medical studies had also been strengthened by the establishment in 1883 of the new department of pharmacy. Early in that year the officers of the State Board of Pharmacy and of the State Association of Pharmacy urged the regents to establish a chair of pharmacy and materia medica. The regents thereupon asked the faculty to set up such a department of instruction as soon as the revenue permitted payment of a professor.¹³ In June, Frederick B. Power was elected the new professor in this field.¹⁴ His excellent equipment for the post and his admirable record

⁹ Van Slyke to Paul, March 9, 1877, in the Paul Papers.

¹⁰ *Aegis*, May 27, 1888; Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. C, pp. 480, 496-497, June 23, 1886, January 18, 1887.

¹¹ Chamberlin to Paul, January 20, 1888, in the Paul Papers.

¹² Interview, Merle Curti with Dr. Edward A. Birge, 1945.

¹³ Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. C, p. 387, January 16, 1883.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 393, June 19, 1883.

in research and publication during his ten years' service have already been noted. In cooperation with the State Association of Pharmacy, Professor Power and President Bascom fixed the terms of admission, the course of study, and the appropriate degree. Some thirty students enrolled in the course at its opening, most of whom had entered the University for this express purpose.¹⁵ The program not only provided trained pharmacists for Wisconsin and neighboring states; the school itself gave the University prestige in the nation, for Professor Power's contributions to knowledge were quickly recognized. The professors of chemistry, botany, and physics cooperated in the new program. In his first report Professor Power said that the department would try "to elevate the standard of pharmacy throughout the Northwest and to arrive at the highest attainable degree of efficiency."¹⁶ The pharmacists of the state had taken the initiative in the establishment of the school. Concrete evidence was at hand that the idea of a service institution, in this sphere at least, was to be translated into an actuality.



IN PROVIDING for a department of the theory and practice of elementary instruction the charter of the University broke new ground. Not until early in 1856 was the normal department organized. Professor Daniel Read was put in charge. In the summer of that year eighteen teachers enrolled in the classes in normal instruction; by the next summer there were twenty-eight. But in spite of the fact that teacher-training had now made a start, and that it was a cause dear to Chancellor Barnard's heart, the real beginnings of the normal department did not come until the Civil War years. Under the leadership of Professor Charles H. Allen the normal department flourished. It might well have become an important part of the University had not the state excluded it from the benefits of the newly established Normal School Fund created in 1857. After the reorganization in 1866 the regents tried to persuade the Board of Normal School Regents to give an annual appropriation for the normal

¹⁵ *University Press*, October 6, 1883.

¹⁶ *Regents' Biennial Report*, 1883-84, p. 48.

department.¹⁷ The failure of this overture strengthened the hand of President Chadbourne, who had little sympathy with this part of the University. In his mind such a department was appropriate enough in a high school or even in a denominational college, where the system of constant supervision was in vogue, but it had no place in a state university in which "the students are, and ought to be treated like men, rather than like boys."¹⁸ Chadbourne had his way, and the normal department was transformed into the Female College.

But since many graduates of the University went into school work, the need for some sort of training in the art of teaching continued to be felt. In the autumn term of 1872 Twombly, Kerr, Allen, and Daniells instituted a series of lectures on pedagogy in their several fields.¹⁹ The *University Press* welcomed this innovation but believed that much remained to be done. Its editor maintained that few college professors knew how to teach. "The art of instruction, the how to present facts, the how to impress truths upon his pupils is sadly in need of reform in our colleges. More thorough drill is necessary, more genuine *teaching* and less of *hearing* a recitation is called for and we will not then send out so many superficial students."²⁰ The *Press* did not contend that the re-establishment of a normal department would improve instruction on the college level, but that greater attention to the whole problem of pedagogy would meet a genuine student need.

Had it been possible for the Board to get funds from the normal school regents, it is likely that the pedagogical department would have been reconstituted in the middle seventies. But the effort to connect the University with the normal schools of the state failed.²¹ Yet the normal schools were not opposed to the establishment of a chair of pedagogy in the University—in fact, the Board of Normal School Regents in 1879 favored such action.²² The *Wisconsin Journal of Education* called attention to

¹⁷ Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. C, p. 39, August 1, 1866.

¹⁸ Reports to the Regents, Vol. B, pp. 36-37, June 23, 1868.

¹⁹ *University Press*, November 19, 1872.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, October 3, 1874.

²¹ Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. C, pp. 218, 235-236, 244, January 20, June 17, 1875, January 19, 1876.

²² *Wisconsin Journal of Education*, 9:445 (1879).

the fact that Michigan had broken entirely new ground in 1878 in establishing the first chair of pedagogy in an American university and reprinted articles written by its incumbent, William H. Payne, on "The Study of Pedagogics in the University of Michigan" and "Education as a University Study."²³ In 1884 the Visitors, after pointing out that Iowa and Missouri had followed the example of Michigan in giving specific training in education, urged a similar course at Wisconsin.²⁴ The Visitors were supported by the *University Press*, which estimated that more than one-fifth of the graduates went into teaching.²⁵ In the same year, as a result of this discussion, the regents called John W. Stearns from the Stillwater Normal School to the newly established professorship in the science and art of teaching. One of his students, himself a gifted teacher, testified that no one whom he had ever seen at work, with the possible exception of Dr. Birge, equaled Stearns "in conveying to his students the ability to see the implications of a text and to advance a subject by process of reasoning."²⁶ Gradually Professor Stearns built up the offerings in pedagogy, but the University had lost its early opportunity to take the lead in the education of teachers in the state.



IN 1851, when the University of Wisconsin was in its swaddling clothes, Henry P. Tappan, professor at the University of Michigan and soon to become its president, asked whether there was any good reason why the United States should not have at least one great institution with full-fledged professional schools and with the facilities for the deepening as well as the dissemination of knowledge. Tappan made valiant efforts to realize this ideal. In 1858 Andrew D. White and Francis Brunnow, a distinguished astronomer, were appointed to provide advanced work for graduate students. Brunnow began a career in advanced teaching and research that was to bear rich fruit. But

²³ *Ibid.*, 13:230-237 (1883); 14:49-68 (1884).

²⁴ Report of the Visitors, in the appendix to the *Regents' Biennial Report*, 1883-84, p. 52.

²⁵ *University Press*, February 16, 1884.

²⁶ James F. A. Pyre, *Wisconsin* (New York, 1920), 297-298.

true graduate work did not begin at Michigan. Neither can Harvard claim that laurel, in spite of the fact that in 1871 it authorized a graduate department and advanced degrees. Yale had offered graduate work in 1860, and a decade later a number of graduate students were listed. But the real distinction of inaugurating graduate work belongs to Johns Hopkins University. Founded in 1876, it began a program of advanced studies essentially different from anything hitherto done in an American university.²⁷

Wisconsin was ill-equipped throughout Bascom's administration to enter upon graduate studies. Bascom, moreover, believed that collegiate instruction was the "very soul and body of a university."²⁸ Nevertheless, even in his time the beginnings of graduate studies may be traced. In 1869 the Board of Regents announced a postgraduate course leading to the doctorate of philosophy. Candidates for the degree were to devote two years of study to the program and to pass a satisfactory examination before the Board of Examiners appointed by the regents.²⁹ Two years later the faculty voted that henceforth the master of arts and the master of science degrees be given only on special application and on evidence of suitable proficiency. In the same year it advised an inquirer interested in the master's degree that he must spend one year in making up deficiencies in his undergraduate training and two additional years in advanced study. From time to time the committee on the postgraduate course discussed the requisites for advanced degrees and advised applicants on the program of study. Not until 1881, however, did a committee headed by Professor Birge indicate that the discussion was anything more than perfunctory.³⁰ To regularize the degree the faculty requested the regents to grant no degree of doctor of philosophy except in course; recipients of honorary degrees were, in other words, no longer to receive this degree.³¹

²⁷ W. Carson Ryan, *Studies in Early Graduate Education* (New York, 1939), *passim*.

²⁸ Report of the President in *Regents' Biennial Report*, 1883-84, p. 37.

²⁹ *Regents' Annual Report*, 1868-69, p. 24.

³⁰ Minutes of the Meetings of the Faculty (MS.), vol. 1, pp. 192, 238, June 19, 1871, March 10, 1873; vol. 2, p. 150, December 5, 1881.

³¹ Reports to the Regents, Vol. B, p. 414, June 20, 1882.

In 1883 the faculty voted to strike out of the catalogue the statement that "the University does not give the degree of Ph.D."³² All this was largely in expectation of future developments.

In connection with the work of the Geological Survey, however, research was an actuality. In 1882 the faculty recommended that Charles Van Hise, a student assistant of Professor Irving's in field work, be given the master of science degree.³³ In 1886 master's degrees were given to the first two non-Wisconsin graduates.

But it was clear that if graduate study was to develop, it must receive encouragement and support. In 1888 President Chamberlin proposed the establishment of eight University fellowships of four hundred dollars each, to be given graduating seniors in return for teaching or laboratory assistance. Such fellowships would enable their holders to pursue advanced study. No other state universities were as yet granting such fellowships, although Harvard, Columbia, Cornell, and Johns Hopkins did so. The Board of Regents adopted the proposal, and the first fellowships were established.³⁴ In encouraging graduate work Chamberlin had initiated some drastic changes. The undergraduate curriculum had to be modified; the teaching program of professors had to be reduced, and the methods of investigation requisite for graduate study had to be introduced in undergraduate instruction. These developments, together with the insistence that the doctor's degree be made a condition for the advancement of younger members of the faculty, were among the principal contributions of President Chamberlin to the development of the University.

Graduate work in a state university was so novel that it was necessary to justify expenditures for it. In urging the establishment of graduate fellowships the committee of the Board of Regents declared that "our state, in common with others, needs men of superior attainments, to investigate, to invent, to discover, to direct and superintend in connection with our great material interests. Two years spent in study and in teaching in

³² Minutes of the Faculty, vol. 2, p. 37, September 17, 1883.

³³ *Ibid.*, 191, May 15, 1882.

³⁴ Reports to the Regents, Vol. B, pp. 538-539, 543, April 4, 1888.

the University, after graduation, will equip a man to do better work than four as ordinarily spent in supplementing the limited knowledge he possesses when he obtains his first honor.”³⁵ In other words the University, in supporting graduate work, would contribute to the well-being of the state in a way it could hardly do in providing merely for collegiate instruction. In this spirit and for these reasons the foundation was laid for the truly notable structure of advanced studies that developed during the administrations of Adams and Van Hise.



AWARENESS of the University's obligation to serve the state in practical ways was of long standing. As an idea it had emerged with the University itself, but little had been done before the Civil War in the obviously important field of engineering. In 1857, as we have seen, a new department of theoretical and practical engineering was created. Thomas D. Coryell began a two-year service as instructor in surveying and civil engineering, and for one year Dr. David Boswell Reid, whom Barnard was chiefly responsible for bringing to Wisconsin, served on the faculty. This curious and gifted Scottish proponent of sanitary engineering hoped to establish a great polytechnical school with a museum of industry. But financial stringencies ended his professorship before he had been on the ground long enough to accomplish much. He moved to the still newer frontier of Minnesota and presently, during the Civil War, found opportunities to carry out some of his bold ideas.

Wisconsin's failure to realize an engineering department before 1870 was only in part the result of that academic conservatism which in older institutions looked with suspicion or hostility upon training which touched material things. Inadequate funds, the lack of qualified instructors, and the absence of well-organized special-interest groups explain in part the failure to open such a department. A new stimulus came, of course, with the Morrill Act, which required land-grant colleges to offer instruction in the mechanic arts. At Wisconsin, as at similar in-

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 543.

stitutions, it was at first expected that officers detailed by the War Department to offer military training might also give instruction in engineering. Colonel W. R. Pease was named professor of military science and civil engineering in 1868, but he remained only a year; he was succeeded by Colonel Walter S. Franklin, a graduate of the Lawrence Scientific School at Harvard. It was clear that civil engineering must not depend merely on the War Department, and thus in 1870 the regents created the department of civil engineering within the College of Arts.³⁶ Colonel William J. L. Nicodemus, a retired army officer, assumed charge of the new department with the same tenure and salary as other members of the faculty. In remodeling and strengthening the course this able and popular recruit put the civil engineering course, which embraced the junior and senior years in the College of Arts, on a par with similar courses in other institutions.³⁷ Five men enrolled in the new course, three of whom took their degrees in 1873. One of the members of the original class, Allan D. Conover, became assistant in civil engineering in 1875 and instructor in 1878 and, after the death of Nicodemus in 1879, succeeded him.

In establishing a machine shop and instruction in practical mechanics in 1877, Wisconsin was keeping abreast of educational developments elsewhere. Beginning with only one drilling machine and one sixteen-inch engine lathe, the equipment was increased to include three lathes, one iron-planer, one milling machine, and one grinding lathe. The director of the machine shop, Charles I. King, provided instruction for first-year students in practice work in iron with the chisel and file, in woodwork for patterns, and in molding and forging. In the second, third, and fourth years the program consisted of practical work, including the construction of parts and the fitting together of them into complete machines. Two students enrolled in the course in 1878; by 1884 there were 45.³⁸ The Board of Visitors supported King when he pleaded for more adequate equipment and an expansion of the program in mechanical en-

³⁶ Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. C, p. 135, June 22, 1870.

³⁷ *University Press*, March 2, 1874.

³⁸ Report of the superintendent of the department of practical mechanics in the *Regents' Biennial Report*, 1883-84, p. 46.

gineering.³⁹ In 1886 Storm Bull, who had been acting as an instructor since 1879, was made professor of mechanical engineering. Nephew of the famous Norwegian musician and himself a man of broad intellectual and cultural interests, Bull had received excellent training at the Federal Swiss Polytechnic Institute in Zurich and in the practice of his profession in Europe. Under his direction the work in mechanical engineering was competently developed, on both the theoretical and the practical side.

The course was both exacting and time-consuming. It was not unnatural that the stiff program in both civil and mechanical engineering occasioned complaint. In the fall term of his sophomore year, for example, a student was required to spend from eight o'clock in the morning until one o'clock reciting in descriptive and analytical geometry, in an elective in elementary construction, and in drafting. In the afternoon he took chemistry lectures and laboratory work from two to four o'clock, and military drill from five to six. On Fridays the spare hour in the afternoon was devoted to rhetoricals. Thus class, shop, and laboratory work and preparation consumed from thirteen to fourteen hours a day for five days a week.⁴⁰

The new program occasioned several problems. One of these, the necessity for more adequate space and equipment, was solved when a new machine shop in the rear of the new chemical laboratory provided a forge, foundry, carpenter shop, and machine shop.⁴¹ Another was the issue of the supplementary, outside income of members of the engineering staff. Allan D. Conover, professor of civil and mechanical engineering, conducted a private engineering office and therefore expected additional compensation from the University for superintending the building of the new Science Hall. Regent Paul took the view that a professor of engineering could not legitimately divide his time between the University and others while receiving pay from both. In answer to the objection made by Keyes that Professor Freeman took fees for lectures, Paul insisted that the two

³⁹ Report of the Visitors, June, 1884, in *Regents' Biennial Report*, 1883-84, p. 54.

⁴⁰ *University Press*, February 7, 1885.

⁴¹ *University Catalogue*, 1885-86, p. 101; *Madison Daily Democrat*, April 11, 1886, p. 4.

cases were not comparable. Freeman devoted very little time to these outside lectures, which in any case reflected scholarly credit on the University.⁴² The problem thus brought to the fore was one of major importance in a state-supported institution. It will be recalled that the regents had earlier taken the position that professors must hand over to the University any supplementary earnings. This decision was apparently never enforced, but it continued to be a favored idea among some regents and in certain public quarters. The issue was not clearly resolved at this time.

But the development of a program of engineering education sufficiently mature to provide not only Wisconsin but other states with trained technicians to exploit natural resources and to build railways and bridges, electrical plants, and machines and machine shops for the growing industry of the state and the nation, had to await the arrival of a new president.



THE original charter of the University provided for a law department, and one was actually organized on paper in 1857. But the organization proceeded no further than the naming of two professors and an announcement in the catalogue. It was not until the first year of Chadbourne's administration that the law department became a reality.⁴³ Jairus H. Carpenter was appointed dean and professor at a salary of two thousand dollars, the total annual appropriation of the new department. William F. Vilas was appointed professor at a salary of five hundred dollars a year, to be paid from students' fees or, if these were insufficient, from the stipend of Dean Carpenter. In addition, all the members of the Wisconsin supreme court were designated lecturers without pay, to give instruction as their other duties permitted. There were no admission requirements save character testimonials, and the course was to take one year. In addition to the customary lectures and textbook discussions, the

⁴² Paul to Keyes, April 15, 20, 1885, in the Paul Papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin. For Conover's trip east to inspect science and engineering laboratories in the older institutions in reference to needs at Wisconsin, see his interesting reports to Paul in the Paul Papers, April 22, May 7, 1885.

⁴³ Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. C, pp. 94-95, February 14, 1868.

course included weekly moot courts for the argument of cases.⁴⁴

All this corresponded fairly closely to existing law schools, including the Iowa law school, which the state university took over the very year the Wisconsin department was opened. Governor Fairchild found a room for the law department in the Capitol, but it was presently forced to migrate to two dingy back rooms over a Main Street saloon. The library grew with painful slowness as compared with the one at Iowa City. In 1872 the regents appropriated a thousand dollars for books. But the students could use the State Library and the State Historical Society Library in the Capitol. In 1876 the annual appropriation for the department was increased to three thousand dollars with five hundred allotted for books. In 1881 the regents increased the amount to forty-five hundred dollars. It is true that the department also had the student fees, when these were paid. But at best the support was meager.

It was expected that the school would strengthen the University by giving it a rapidly growing number of influential alumni. The year after the school was started twelve men received degrees. Presently the annual number of graduates exceeded that of any other department in the University. The law school was hailed as second to none and as a great asset to the University. But it did not rank with the best schools. The professors gave only part of their time to instruction and were poorly paid. None of them could compare as a teacher with Cooley of Michigan, Langdell of Harvard, Dwight of Columbia, or Minor of Virginia. The standards were, from the standpoint of today, scandalously low. In 1873 President Twombly, in expressing gratification over the recently inaugurated admission examination, declared that students unable to pass the examinations for entrance into the preparatory department were still being taken into the law school.⁴⁵

But the new entrance examinations at first called for nothing more than the ability to demonstrate some competence in the use of English. Students who were unable to maintain their standing in other departments continued to be received into the

⁴⁴ Reports to the Regents, Vol. B, pp. 57-60, June 24, 1868.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 200, January 21, 1873.

law classes.⁴⁶ Indeed, as late as 1890 Wisconsin required only English, history, and some knowledge of the federal constitution for admission. In that year Iowa stipulated high school graduation as a prerequisite for admission and, in addition to the subjects required at Wisconsin, Michigan, Harvard, and Pennsylvania, a knowledge of a foreign language and familiarity with Blackstone.⁴⁷ In 1870, shortly after the school had opened, it was one of twelve that offered a degree at the end of a single year; seventeen required a two-year course for the degree. In 1876 the course was strengthened by requiring that no student be graduated who had not devoted two years to legal studies, one of which was to be under the direction of the faculty. Two years later it was stipulated that the second year must be spent under the supervision of a reputable practicing attorney.⁴⁸ This action did not quite put Wisconsin in the category of the twenty-nine schools which in 1880 were requiring a full two-year course for the degree, but it was a step in that direction. In 1889, five years after Iowa had set up a two-year curriculum, Wisconsin followed her example. Indeed, it was not until that year that the lax administration was tightened and preparations were begun for moving the College of Law to the campus to tie it more closely to the rest of the University.

Meantime several improvements besides the important provision for two years of legal study had strengthened the school and increased its prestige. In 1872 the regents stipulated that, in addition to passing course examinations each term, the recipient of the law degree must have prepared and read before the faculty, six weeks before the close of the college year, a dissertation on some legal subject, written by himself and approved by the staff. In 1876 the regents further stiffened the requirements for a degree by insisting upon a final examination by the law faculty in the presence of the Board of Visitors.⁴⁹ Nothing, however, did more to give prestige to the school than the law

⁴⁶ Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. C, pp. 164-165, January 17, 1872.

⁴⁷ A. Z. Reed, *Training for the Public Profession of the Law* (Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, *Bulletin 15*, New York, 1921), 171, 319.

⁴⁸ Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. C, pp. 265, 320, June 21, 1876, June 19, 1878.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 165, 265, January 17, 1872, June 21, 1876. See also *University Press*, July, August, 1876.

of 1870 which admitted its graduates to the bar of all courts of the state.

The first faculty included, at least nominally, Chief Justice Luther S. Dixon, an exceptionally sound, though not a brilliant, judge. In the conflict between the state and the federal government over the enforcement of the Fugitive Slave Law, Dixon resisted the powerful influences favoring a states' rights decision and in a masterly opinion upheld the appellate jurisdiction of the United States Supreme Court. Dixon became nationally known when he successfully upheld the constitutionality of the celebrated Granger Laws in the early 1870's.⁵⁰ Associate Justice Orsamus Cole, who held a connection with the law department from 1868 to 1877, and his colleague, Associate Justice Byron Paine, added prestige to the faculty. Paine, a leader in the famous Glover fugitive slave case, had upheld the doctrine of states' rights when it coincided with abolitionist convictions. Despite his liberalism on this issue, Paine was devoted to the long-established system of equity and common law jurisprudence.⁵¹ Another associate justice who presumably gave occasional lectures was William Penn Lyon, a man of keen mind and great erudition. In 1876 Chief Justice Edward G. Ryan was listed on the law faculty. His high professional ideals were engagingly expounded, notably in an address before a graduating law class in which he spoke vigorously against the "barnacles" and "parasites" in the profession and minced no words in denouncing grasping corporations.⁵²

It is debatable, however, whether the nominal association of these eminent jurists with the faculty actually amounted to much. The *University Press* declared in 1876 that one of the justices whose name appeared in the catalogue delivered no lectures whatever and objected to the use of his name to give prestige to the faculty. The *Press* remarked that such a listing of

⁵⁰ Memorials to Luther S. Dixon are found in Wisconsin Supreme Court, *Reports*, 81:xxxii-lv; Colorado Supreme Court, *Reports*, 17:xix-xxxv; G. E. Roe, ed., *Selected Opinions of Luther S. Dixon and Edward G. Ryan* (Chicago, 1907), 1-9.

⁵¹ WPA Sketch of Byron Paine (MS.), in the State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

⁵² Edward G. Ryan, *Address . . . Before the Law Class of the University of Wisconsin* (Madison, 1873).

distinguished names on a merely nominal basis was an unwarranted deception of the sort a small theological school might practice.⁵³

The core of the instruction was in the hands of a small group of Madison attorneys. Of these, the first dean, Judge Jairus H. Carpenter, who continued on the faculty for thirty years, deserves especial mention. One of his students and later a colleague, Burr Jones described him as well-read, painstaking, and accurate.⁵⁴ William F. Vilas, an alumnus of the University and a graduate of the Albany law school—the only Madison attorney, in fact, who had been trained in a law school—gave instruction from 1868 to 1885, when he became a member of Cleveland's cabinet. Vilas was a man of great learning, of first-rate intellectual ability, and of a marked grasp of practical affairs. He supplemented the texts and decisions he asked his students to read by illustrations from his own experiences. In his students he excited an admiration for the great figures in legal history; he ridiculed shysters; and by letting his students know that he expected a good deal from them he stimulated them to put forth their best efforts. Hundreds of Wisconsin lawyers were trained in his classroom.⁵⁵ Harlow S. Orton, a brilliant and energetic man and one of the best lawyers in the state, supplemented Carpenter and Vilas in many ways. An associate of Boss Keyes, Orton knew his way about in the tangled politics of the state. In 1878 he was elected to the Wisconsin supreme court and distinguished himself as a reviser of the state statutes. Burr Jones has testified to his eloquence and earnestness and to the joy he found in expounding the law to youngsters.⁵⁶ Judge Philip L. Spooner, the father of John C. Spooner, taught from 1871 to 1877. Spooner was quiet and modest. His reasoning processes impressed one of his able students as crystal-clear. Ithamar C. Sloan, who took a prominent part in the prosecution of the

⁵³ *University Press*, September, 1876.

⁵⁴ Burr Jones, "Reminiscences of Nine Decades," in the *Wisconsin Magazine of History*, 20:279 (March, 1937).

⁵⁵ *Memorial Service in Honor of William Freeman Vilas at the University of Wisconsin* (Madison, 1908), 17 ff.

⁵⁶ Jones, "Reminiscences," in the *Wisconsin Magazine of History*, 20:279 (March, 1937).

railroads under the Potter Law by filing a bill in the Supreme Court asking for an injunction against railroads threatening to disregard the legislation, gave instruction from 1875 to 1894. A man of considerable legal talent, an excellent speaker, and a competent teacher, Sloan must have been a liberal influence.⁵⁷

But other men, too, contributed a good deal to the growing law school. Among these special mention must be made of Burr Jones, an alumnus of the school and, after 1885, a member of the faculty. The Harvard method of using case books was not in vogue at Wisconsin; but Jones, without adopting the system outright, assigned both cases and portions of related discussions in textbooks for mastery and subsequent class discussion. John M. Olin, who had given instruction in rhetoric and oratory in the seventies, was appointed to the law faculty in 1886. An ardent prohibitionist and admirer of President Bascom, Olin was a rigorous disciplinarian. Pyre has recalled his "almost awesome severity and power" and noted that any enticement to recreation was quickly quashed by the remark "I have Olin tomorrow."⁵⁸

Something of the political pressures that played on the law faculty is revealed in the Olin case. In 1885, when several vacancies occurred in the law faculty, his name was included in the list of new appointees. But Regent Keyes, who hated Olin because of his friendship for Bascom and his championship of prohibition, strenuously objected to the appointment, and in order to avoid a row his name was left out of the list. In the autumn of that year it was necessary to replace another departing member of the law faculty. On the recommendation of that body the regents appointed Olin for the remainder of the year, and in June, 1886, he was appointed for another year. Olin, just prior to his first appointment, had appeared in behalf of a client who had brought suit against the regents for condemning his land for University purposes. In the winter of 1886-87 he appeared before a legislative committee as attorney for a number of people who had claims against the University and had been unable to

⁵⁷ WPA Sketch of Ithamar C. Sloan (MS.), in the State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

⁵⁸ Jones, "Reminiscences," in the *Wisconsin Magazine of History*, 20:433 (June, 1937); Pyre, *Wisconsin*, 266.

obtain their pay. Olin asked the legislature to appropriate funds for paying the men who were out of pocket. These activities and his ardent prohibitionism led the regents to initiate a movement for dropping Olin from the faculty. The students got up a petition in Olin's behalf,⁵⁹ and Professor Sloan of the law faculty indicated that since his work was entirely satisfactory, it would be unwise to drop him. But the law committee of the Board of Regents was unconvinced. At the annual June meeting the Board divided, but the majority decided to accept the committee's recommendation.⁶⁰ According to Olin, Regent Marshall the next morning told Judge George H. Noyes of Milwaukee that Olin was dropped because he was less popular among the Republicans of the state than was desirable.⁶¹ The *Prohibitionist* reported that the interests of the University had been shamelessly ignored in the action of the regents and that to pay off political heelers and to satisfy political grudges Olin had been sacrificed. The editor questioned whether this established a precedent for removing professors for political reasons.⁶² The *Brewer's Gazette*, on the other hand, upheld the regents for firing a professor who was "guilty" of meddling in religious and political issues.⁶³ But in 1893 Olin was elected to a professorship in the College of Law and served a long term with distinction.

The student body was hardly less important than the faculty in making the law school what it was. In general the law students felt that the faculty did a better job in theoretical instruction than in providing practical training in the moot court.⁶⁴ On the whole students appreciated the personal interest their teachers took in them and returned that interest with affection. Many were extremely poor and had difficulty, despite the work

⁵⁹ Pyre, *Wisconsin*, 266.

⁶⁰ This account is based on a letter from Olin to William Irle of Shell Lake, Wisconsin, written on February 25, 1888, in the Olin Papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

⁶¹ Olin to Irle, March 19, 1888, in the Olin Papers.

⁶² *Wisconsin Prohibitionist*, June 23, 1887; June 30, 1887; July 7, 1887.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, July 21, 1887, p. 4.

⁶⁴ *University Press*, June 3, 1882; Jones, "Reminiscences," in the *Wisconsin Magazine of History*, 20:280 (March, 1937).

they did outside, in paying their fees.⁶⁵ The faculty tended to be lenient in the matter of forcing such students to pay. La Follette, for instance, was permitted to enter the school without paying the usual matriculation fee.⁶⁶ Many of the poorer students who were working their way through the school and who in consequence did not succeed too well in their class and examination work, subsequently achieved outstanding success.⁶⁷ Some of the alumni, like Burr Jones, took an active part in raising the standards of the law school. In the course of time the graduates of the law department exerted great influence in the state, and, in consequence, the standards of the profession were raised. Certainly the feeble beginnings of 1868 had more than justified the experiment when, in 1889, the law department was revamped in the College of Law, with a reorganized and lengthened curriculum, a full-time dean, and more adequate funds.



AS EARLY as 1851 Chancellor Lathrop had urged that the University provide agricultural education. Lathrop's proposal, which embraced both the desire to bring the emerging sciences of chemistry, botany, and zoology to the service of agriculture and a noble if somewhat vague aspiration for the social improvement of farmers, won the approval of the Board of Regents, the mild support of the press, and even the endorsement of a legislative committee or two. But the legislature itself would vote no money for this purpose. The chancellor had to be content with a few brief series of lectures on agricultural chemistry. Meanwhile Michigan, in 1857, and Iowa, in 1858, made provision for state colleges of agriculture.

In 1866 the legislature had adopted the bill which enlarged the functions of the University to include the teaching of agricultural and mechanic arts. The land grant received under the Morrill Act of 1862 was appropriated to the University for this

⁶⁵ Report from the law department, in the appendix to the *Regents' Annual Report*, 1870-71, pp. 45-46.

⁶⁶ *La Follette's Autobiography* (Madison, 1913), 4.

⁶⁷ Jones, "Reminiscences," in the *Wisconsin Magazine of History*, 20:433 (June, 1937).

purpose. But this action could not be construed as the result of insistent demands on the part of farmers and craftsmen. The five-year period during which Wisconsin must establish at least one college of agricultural and mechanic arts, if she were to hold the land grant, was drawing to a close. In attaching the new college and the grant to the University the legislature followed the line of least resistance.

The claims of agricultural education were, however, emphasized in the law of 1866. The act specified that the object of the University should be to provide training in the scientific, industrial, and professional pursuits through the organization of the Colleges of Arts and Letters and such professional schools as might be added from time to time. The course of instruction in the College of Arts, the legislature directed, should consist of mathematics and physical and natural science, with their "applications to the industrial arts, such as agriculture, mechanics and engineering, mining and metallurgy, manufactures, architecture and commerce."⁶⁸ Moreover, the legislature exacted a tribute of forty thousand dollars from Dane County as the price for attaching the new college to the University and locating it in Madison. The money contributed by Dane County was to be used for the purchase and improvement of an experimental farm of not less than two hundred acres.

Although acknowledging a public prejudice against "industrial education"⁶⁹ the Board proceeded promptly to arrange for the purchase of a farm, to organize a department of agriculture within the College of Arts, to create a professorship of agriculture and chemistry, and to begin searching for a man for the post. After considering various sites the Board purchased approximately one hundred and ninety-five acres of land contiguous

⁶⁸ *General Laws, 1866*, pp. 153-154.

⁶⁹ A committee of the regents, Hinckley, Cover, and Smith, submitted a report in July, 1866, pleading for a thorough and "practical" agricultural and mechanical arts college. The committee recognized a "divided public confidence in the usefulness of agricultural and other colleges for industrial education" and that many people entertained "antiquated" and "hurtful" notions of a "wide imaginary line between education and labor." Despite this, the committee believed that "such notions are wearing away and that their disappearance may be greatly speeded by a judicious management of an agricultural college with the contemplated experimental farm." Reports to the Regents, Vol. B, pp. 16-17, July 18, 1866.

to the original campus and lying directly west of it.⁷⁰ This land, the Board said, was "peculiarly well adapted" for an experimental farm because of "the great many varieties and differences in its soil and location." The purpose of the farm was to provide the place where "agriculture is to be practically taught by experimenting on different soils and location of the land, and *not a model farm* where the best kind and largest quantity of particular products are sought to be obtained from a particular piece of land."⁷¹ The tract, which included the steep hogback on which the observatory was built, lakeshore, and swamp, did in truth contain some arable land.

The task of finding a professor proved more difficult than getting an experimental farm. The Board invited Dr. John W. Hoyt, editor of the *Wisconsin Farmer* to accept the position, but he refused. It was not until 1868 that the Board was able to announce an appointment. William W. Daniells, formerly an instructor at the Michigan Agricultural College, took the post.⁷²

In 1867 the University announced its intention of providing agricultural education, but no courses were offered. It was promised that every effort would be made "with the means now at the command of the University, to meet the wants of all students who present themselves, as well as the reasonable demands of the people." A year later the establishment of a school of agriculture was announced along with a three-year course of study drawn mostly from the general science course. Botany, practical agriculture, physical geography and climatology, practical botany, and "horticulture including landscape gardening" were offered the first year; chemistry, zoology, and organic and analytical chemistry the second; forestry, geology, agricultural chemistry, animal husbandry, and history of agricultural education the third. Students already "well acquainted" with the

⁷⁰ *Regents' Annual Report*, 1865-66, p. 8.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. C, p. 54, October 3, 1866; *Regents' Annual Report*, 1866-67, p. 6; 1867-68, pp. 5, 9, 25. Wisconsin's difficulty in finding a professor of agriculture was not unique. In 1866 James B. Angell, then president of the University of Vermont, wrote to Regent Van Slyke saying that he knew of no available professor of agriculture and that Vermont, although it had an agricultural department, had none. Angell to Van Slyke, November 5, 1866, in Papers of the Board of Regents.

physical sciences might complete the three-year course in a single year. Agricultural students would be permitted to take optional studies in the department of philosophy—i.e. theoretical science—and thus secure “a three year’s course . . . that will combine thorough mental discipline with theoretical and practical knowledge of the relation of science to Agriculture.”⁷³

This course of study not only reflected the current lack of experience in vocational training and the shortage of material for teaching, but also suggests the extent to which the program was shaped by professional teachers who cherished “mental discipline” and “theoretical knowledge” rather more highly than “practical applications.” Yet the course of instruction offered was fairly typical of the offerings of many of the colleges established under the Morrill Act.⁷⁴ While professing to believe that the course of study was one that would meet “the requirements of the agriculturalists of the state,” University officials announced that it must be regarded as an experiment. It would be studied and modified until it met the needs of the people.⁷⁵

Even the relatively small portion of time allotted to strictly agricultural subjects was viewed with alarm by some of the faculty. The professor of agriculture himself feared excessive specialization and urged for the student “that thorough culture that will enable him to use all his mental powers in the application of such knowledge.” Professor Stephen H. Carpenter, speaking before the State Agricultural Society several years later, declared that the new technical colleges should build on a college training more complete than that of the existing classical courses. He suggested three terms of agricultural studies in the sophomore and junior years, based upon solid work in trigonometry, physiology, mechanics, astronomy, economic geology, political economy, logic, aesthetics, and conic sections.⁷⁶ In 1874, perhaps to forestall the danger of excessive specialization, the course was revised so that the agricultural studies were placed

⁷³ *University Catalogue*, 1866–67, p. 22; 1867–68, pp. 33–36, 37.

⁷⁴ See Earle D. Ross, *Democracy’s College: The Land-Grant Movement in the Formative Stage* (Ames, Iowa, 1942), 86–135.

⁷⁵ *University Catalogue*, 1867–68, p. 40.

⁷⁶ Wisconsin State Agricultural Society, *Transactions*, 1872–73, pp. 58–59; 1873–74, pp. 261–271.

in the last two years of a four-year course. The first two years were made identical with the general science course. The agricultural studies included husbandry, breeding, insects, horticulture, veterinary science, history of agriculture, plants, chemistry of soils and foods, road-building, drainage, and farm architecture, although mental philosophy, logic, and international law were included in the last two years' work.⁷⁷

The grand announcements of the offerings of the department of agriculture fell into a void. However much the professors might argue about what should constitute proper agricultural education, such discussion was essentially without point. The department had no students. Indeed, not until 1878 was the first student graduated, and many years passed before another followed him. The simple fact was that neither farmers nor farmers' sons were attracted to the department. President Chadbourne, in 1869, lamented: "I do not know of a single Agricultural College that is not encountering violent opposition in its own state; some have gone to pieces and those most promising . . . are publicly pronounced failures by prominent men in those states."⁷⁸ Chadbourne attributed the opposition to the division of opinion among educators, rather than failure on the part of the colleges.

While it is true that the farmer was sometimes vociferously opposed to the new agricultural colleges, and often indifferent to the efforts which were being made in his behalf by social reformers and professional educators, he was not as hostile to change, as contemptuous of learning, as backward, ignorant, and stubborn as some of the sponsors of the new colleges insisted. His willingness to change his methods was reflected in the zeal with which he had adopted farm machinery; his willingness to learn was registered in his support of such institutions as the annual fairs, where he might show the fruits of his husbandry and examine the products of others, his agitation for state departments of agriculture, and his support of the agricultural press. The slow rise in the popularity of agricultural education is only partly explained by the farmer's reluctance to learn the

⁷⁷ *Regents' Annual Report*, 1873-74, pp. 25-26.

⁷⁸ Reports to the Regents, Vol. B, p. 66, February 10, 1869.

lessons of science to his profit. Through the centuries, in the long, slow sweep of the seasons, the farmer had learned his lessons from observation. The accumulated learning of his craft, unlike that of the professions of law, medicine, and theology, was less in books than in what a father taught his son. To win the farmer the college must find other than the bookish devices used for the instruction of lawyers, ministers, and doctors, but largely during the early and ineffective years of agricultural instruction, the farmer was wooed with promises of "mental discipline" and "theoretical knowledge."

Not only did the farmers suspect the value of "book learning," but they often gave voice to the suspicion that the college of agriculture would actually unfit a boy for work on a farm or lure him into another profession, besides subjecting him to all of the temptations of city life.⁷⁹ Nor were the farmers the only ones to express doubts about the value of college training for farmers. In 1881 the *Wisconsin Journal of Education* remarked that there was only one student enrolled in the agricultural department of the University, while sixty were studying law. This did not surprise the editor, who felt that the University was concerned with intellectual pursuits and that the study of agriculture could not be so classified.⁸⁰ The Board of Regents accepted the fact that farm boys would be attracted into other professions, but offered consolation: "The sons of farmers best fill the places vacated by classes enervated by the successes of commerce and the luxuries of city life; and today neither New York nor Boston could maintain its ascendancy in commercial or professional strength but for the continual accession of hard muscles and untainted brain from rural life."⁸¹

Although Daniells was appointed primarily to give instruction in agriculture and to direct the work of the Experimental Farm, most of his time seems to have been devoted to teaching chemistry in the College of Arts. But the Experimental Farm was fenced, and much of the work of clearing it was done under

⁷⁹ Wisconsin State Agricultural Society, *Transactions*, 1872-73, pp. 443-447; 1883, pp. 15-71; 1888, p. 323; *Wisconsin State Horticultural Society Transactions*, 1887 (Madison, 1888), 31-32.

⁸⁰ *Wisconsin Journal of Education*, series 2, vol. 11, pp. 135-136 (1881).

⁸¹ *Regents' Biennial Report*, 1883-84, p. 11.

Daniells' direction. A farmhouse and barn were built, trees planted, an orchard and vineyard begun, and driveways laid out along Lake Mendota. During the twelve years that he served as professor of agriculture and chemistry, Daniells conducted numerous experiments in growing varieties of wheat, corn, potatoes, oats, and barley. The results were recorded and the conclusions published but never widely circulated. The experiments were empirical and the results upon Wisconsin agriculture were negligible at best, although according to the statement of Dean Henry, a particularly fine strain of barley was tested at the farm. It spread to all parts of the country.⁸²

In addition to the experiments, weather observations were taken by the department of agriculture, and in 1870 Daniells reported to the Board that he had begun the collection of insects in the vicinity, "paying particular attention to those that from their injurious or beneficial habits are of economic interest."⁸³ Moreover, the professor of agriculture and chemistry appeared frequently before farmers' conventions and other meetings, but not always with happy results.⁸⁴

In spite of the failure of the department of agriculture to win farmer support, the student press defended this part of the University against hostile attacks, while successive Boards of Visitors sought to explain the lack of popularity of the department, its failure to attract students, and the general indifference of the farmer to the published reports of the experiments of the farm. Ignoring the lone graduate of the department in 1878 the Visitors reported in 1880: "Finding no students in, and learning of no graduates from the agricultural department, we have sought for an answer to the oft-repeated question, What, if any, benefit the State is deriving from that department?" In answer-

⁸² For a report on the various experiments conducted see the reports of the professor of agriculture to the Board of Regents which appeared in the *Regents' Annual Reports*, 1868-81.

⁸³ *Regents' Annual Report*, 1869-70, p. 61.

⁸⁴ Although Daniells did not always please the farmers, the University students were his champions. *University Press*, April 5, 1872. A year earlier the *University Press* had called the chemistry department "the pride of the university" and labeled Daniells as "one of the most popular professors the University ever had," evidence enough to the students who were not taking the course that the department was prospering. *Ibid.*, January 1, 1871.

ing their question the Visitors declared that much valuable work was being done—experiments with fertilizers and different varieties of grain—but there was no systematic means of distributing the published reports. The Visitors recommended that the reports be brought prominently before agricultural societies at their annual fairs.⁸⁵

Neither the defense of the department by the student press nor the tolerant glosses by the Boards of Visitors could wholly obscure the failure of the department and the farm. On the academic side, the extensive and largely irrelevant course of study won no students, while the empirical experiments on the farm, perhaps fortunately, went unpublicized. The farm itself was regarded by University authorities as a source of firewood for University buildings, by needy students as a place where employment could almost always be had at twelve and one-half cents an hour, and by many citizens of Madison as a kind of public park.⁸⁶

For a dozen years after 1875 hardly a convention of the Agricultural Society passed without debate and discussion of the “agricultural college.” While the farmer-spokesmen were seldom explicit as to what they wanted the agricultural department of

⁸⁵ *Regents' Annual Report*, 1876-77, p. 47; 1879-80, pp. 24-25.

⁸⁶ In 1881, a year after he had taken up his duties, W. A. Henry described to the members of the Wisconsin Agricultural Society some of the things he had found when he arrived: “I found upon coming to the state university that we had no agricultural department. . . . We had no building, we had no room even in the building, we had no museum, we had no appropriations, excepting for the farm . . . when I came to my department I found no correspondence, nothing that connected the farmers with the agricultural department. Now letters come, from three to ten a day. . . . It seemed to me that there was a feeling that I was running the experimental farm a good deal as a merchant here in the city would run his store. If I had any seed to sell which farmers could make something out of, they were perfectly willing to . . . take it from the farm . . . and as for the education of the farmer, since there was not a young man in the institution studying agriculture, I felt that I was wholly alone in my work.” He also complained about the attitude of the citizens toward the farm. “If the citizens of Madison will keep their fingers off the farm, I can make a pretty good experimental farm out of it, but when I am . . . told that I must reserve a certain piece of woods on the best part of the farm because people want it to shade a certain drive, and when I have large trees growing within two feet of where I must plant my experimental wheat, and am told that I cannot remove those trees . . . that I must have only thirty-two acres of plow land on the farm, then I feel sometimes like kicking. . . . It can be made a good experimental farm, but it is a pretty poor experimental farm the way it is now.” Wisconsin State Agricultural Society, *Transactions*, 1881-82, pp. 104, 286-287, 303-304.

the University to be, it was plain that it did not satisfy them as it was. In 1878 the society asked the governor to appoint a farmer to the Board of Regents. He complied by appointing Hiram Smith, a successful dairy farmer of Sheboygan Falls. Two years later another farmer was appointed to the Board, but this did not satisfy the farm groups, whose political sense had been sharpened by the Granger victories of the 1870's and whose resentment against the control of government by lawyers and businessmen was as durable as it was ineffective. In 1882 the convention of the Agricultural Society called for a "just number" of farmers on the Board.⁸⁷

The influence of Hiram Smith, who remained on the Board until his death in 1890, was quickly felt in the establishment of a professorship devoted solely to agriculture and the election in June, 1880, of William A. Henry to the chair.⁸⁸ In Henry, who was later to be director of the experiment station and first dean of the College of Agriculture, the Board found a man far different from Daniells, who, though a competent enough chemist, was not active in pushing the development of the agricultural studies. Henry never left any doubt that his interests lay primarily in the development of the department. A man of great energy, a vigorous correspondent, an active and effective publicist, Henry worked closely with the farm leaders of Wisconsin and the farmers' associations, seeking to find out what the farmers wanted from the department and trying to devise the means of giving it to them.

The changed position of the stepchild department was signaled in 1881 when the legislature appropriated \$4,000 for the use of the professor of agriculture to carry on experiments "in the cultivation of amber and other varieties of sugar cane, and the manufacture of syrup and sugar therefrom." Up to \$1,200 of the appropriation could be used to employ a "practical chemist" to assist on the sugar experiments and also to experiment with ensilage.⁸⁹ Henry saw to it that Governor Rusk had a copy of

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 1877-78, pp. 169-172; 1881-82, pp. 335-337.

⁸⁸ Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. C, pp. 341-343, 345-346, January 20-21, June 22, 1880.

⁸⁹ *Laws of Wisconsin*, 1881, pp. 256-257. The legislative history of the bill reveals Henry's capacity, for which he was noted, for dealing with politicians. The bill

his report at hand when he prepared his message to the legislature the next year. As a result the governor devoted more space to Henry's experiments than to any other phase of the University. In the governor's opinion the "raising of cane" was "one of the important agricultural products of the state." He recommended that appropriations be made to publish the report and to continue the experiments.⁹⁰ The legislature obligingly ordered five thousand copies of Henry's report printed and appropriated two thousand dollars to continue the work,⁹¹ while the report itself was discussed at great length and complimented by resolution at the convention of the Agricultural Society the same year.⁹² In 1883 the legislature contributed another six hundred dollars for the experiment and provided that six thousand copies of Professor Henry's report be printed, two thousand to be distributed by Henry, the rest by the legislature.⁹³

These contributions of the state to experimentation on the farm led to another step: the establishment of an experiment station. In this Wisconsin had lagged behind many of the other states, more perhaps because of lack of leadership than unwillingness to make the move. In urging the establishment of an experiment station, Henry had the approval of the regents and the support of the Wisconsin Dairy Association and the Grange.⁹⁴ Governor Rusk was friendly. In his message to the legislature he devoted only one general paragraph to the rest of the University but discussed in some detail the agricultural experiments and urged that six thousand dollars be appropriated annually for the establishment and maintenance of an experiment station on the University farm and the publication of re-

was introduced in the Assembly early in the session, referred to the Committee on Claims, rescued from that committee by its sponsor, sent to the Committee on Agriculture, reported out, amended, referred again to the Committee on Agriculture, again reported out, and, on March 14, passed by a vote of 52 to 13. *Assembly Journal*, 1881, p. 528. In the Senate the bill was approved promptly and without change by a vote of 21 to 2. *Senate Journal*, 1881, p. 471.

⁹⁰ *Senate Journal*, 1882, pp. 23-24.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 35, 67, 95, 98; *Assembly Journal*, 1882, pp. 98, 173, 179; *Laws of Wisconsin*, 1883, p. 800.

⁹² Wisconsin State Agricultural Society, *Transactions*, 1881-82, p. 179.

⁹³ *Laws of Wisconsin*, 1883, pp. 18, 72.

⁹⁴ The *University Press* for January 13, 1883, boasted that the state Grange had voted unanimously to assist Henry in his plans for the department.

ports.⁹⁵ The measure to accomplish this end, carrying also a provision for the establishment of a chair of pharmacy, was adopted in the Assembly by a vote of 58 to 9, in the Senate by a vote of 20 to 6.⁹⁶

The appropriation for the experiment station permitted an enlargement of the staff and an increase of facilities. Henry P. Armsby was brought in as chemist; William Trelease, who had come to the University two years before, was able to concentrate on his chosen field of botany. In September of 1883 the farm committee of the Board of Regents—Hiram Smith, H. D. Hitt, and C. H. Williams—met with Professors Henry, Armsby, and Trelease to lay down the specific lines of the work of the station. It was agreed that attention would be focused on feeds, drainage, and breeding of grade rather than pure-blood animals and that there should be no relaxing of efforts in agricultural education.⁹⁷ A year later the farm committee reported to the regents that “practical experiments and investigations are being carried on on the farms, in the stable, in the dairy and in the orchard and garden, and the results of the experiments accurately determined in the laboratory.”⁹⁸ Some benefit came merely from renaming the farm an experiment station. This term described more accurately what was being done, and thus helped to protect the department from farmer criticisms that the farm failed to make money or offer a working model for visiting farmers.⁹⁹

But the initial successes of Henry in getting state funds for

⁹⁵ *Senate Journal*, 1883, p. 16.

⁹⁶ *Assembly Journal*, 1883, p. 680; *Senate Journal*, 16, 482. The measure provided the funds by increasing the state property tax from one-tenth of a mill to one-eighth of a mill per dollar.

⁹⁷ Reports to the Regents, Vol. B, pp. 429-430, January 15, 1884.

⁹⁸ *Regents' Biennial Report*, 1883-84, p. 39. Yet all did not go smoothly. In his first report on the Experiment Station, Henry complained about the “lawlessness prevailing hereabouts” and that the farm was regarded by many as public property “and a mere pleasure ground.” Grain was trampled, labels misplaced or destroyed, the fruit taken from the orchard before it was ripe, and the grapes stolen. “We have spent some time in watching for marauders and have made some arrests but with conditions as they are it would require two watchmen day and night a part of the season to secure immunity from these depredations.” Consequently Henry reported the determination to experiment in dairying and stock-feeding. *Ibid.*, 43.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 1885-86, p. 41.

research and securing the establishment of an experiment station did not serve to attract students to the department, nor, for that matter, did various attempts by Henry to arrange a two-year "short course." In 1884 Professor Henry reported that only nine students were enrolled in the department, five in the special course, four in the regular course.¹⁰⁰ In 1885-86 the number dropped to two, and during the next two sessions a lone graduate constituted the entire student body in the regular courses.¹⁰¹ But the lack of students was not without benefit. It permitted the men employed in the agricultural department to devote virtually their full time to research and experiment which was reflected in the steady flow of research reports from the department.

Meanwhile the farmers' dissatisfaction with agricultural education as offered at the University increased. In 1883 attempts were made in the legislature to secure passage of a bill founding a separate agricultural college.¹⁰² The bills were lost, but agitation continued, notably among the Grangers and the members of the Wisconsin Agricultural Society. The students engaged in a counteragitation. When Professor Freeman spoke before a farmers' convention in February, 1884, boasting that the College of Letters had turned out more farmers than any college of agriculture in the country, the students were on hand both to give Freeman their support and to show their disapproval of the farmers' demand that the agricultural college be separated from the University. The regents themselves were sufficiently alarmed in 1884 to devote a large part of their formal biennial report to the problem, pointing out the contribution the University was making to the advance of agriculture, and opposing on practical and legal grounds the separation of the agricultural department from the University.¹⁰³ Their alarm was not without foun-

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 1883-84, p. 42.

¹⁰¹ Based upon the manuscript for W. H. Glover's forthcoming book, *The History of the College of Agriculture, University of Wisconsin*.

¹⁰² *Senate Journal*, 1883, pp. 119, 291, 303, 472; *Assembly Journal*, 178, 485, 505, 506.

¹⁰³ *University Press*, February 16, 23, 1884; *Regents' Biennial Report*, 1883-84, pp. 6-11. A student in the College of Letters, William E. Aitchison, wrote his father on February 10, 1884, saying that every year the farmers had a convention in Madison and "the air is redolent with howls about nobody earning an honest

dition. Late in November, 1884, a convention of farm leaders was held at Madison to consider the propriety of establishing a separate agricultural college. Hiram Smith, a member of the Board of Regents and chairman of the farm committee, supported the move, and Henry agreed with him.¹⁰⁴ In December the state convention of the Grange endorsed the proposal and its legislative committee waited upon the Board of Regents for discussion. Even the governor was favorably disposed. In his message to the legislature he recounted the action of the farm groups and indicated his own approval of the separate school: "Such a school, devoted purely to training men to be better farmers would operate to check the dangerous rush of farmer boys to the cities and into the professions; would in the end add dignity and power to the agricultural class, and would be beneficial to the people generally. The agricultural department of the University has, through no apparent fault of the institution, not fully met the wants of the agricultural classes in this particular; but the experiment station is doing good work and merits encouragement."¹⁰⁵

The Board of Regents not only stood firm in its opposition to a separate school, but bestirred itself to find the means of appeasing the farmers. The convention of November had based its demands for a separate school upon the failure of the University to attract any considerable number of students. If the college as organized by the faculty did not attract students, the regents would change it. On motion of Elisha W. Keyes, the regents appointed a committee of three: William F. Vilas, who had been denounced a few years before by a Grange orator as a "lawyer of high degree"; H. D. Hitt, a farmer from Oakfield; and John G. McMynn. McMynn was unable to serve, but Vilas and Hitt had a report ready to submit to the regents on January 20, 1885, five days after the governor delivered his message and a week before the bill for a separate agricultural college was introduced

living but the farmer, and phillipics against the University, and give us an Agricultural School instead of the College of Letters, and horrible puns, and excruciatingly bad grammar. . . . I notice that the Granger with all his howling is just as eager to get suck at the public teat as any other man, if not more so."

¹⁰⁴ *Wisconsin State Journal*, November 26, 1884.

¹⁰⁵ *Senate Journal*, 1885, p. 15.

in the Assembly. The report was promptly adopted by unanimous vote of the regents and published the same day.¹⁰⁶

The Vilas-Hitt report, justly famous as the basis of the widely publicized Short Course in agriculture, was largely the work of William F. Vilas. It was the regents' answer to the complaints that the college had failed to attract students. The report was formulated and adopted by the Board, not only without the support of Professor Henry and his associates, but in the face of definite opposition.¹⁰⁷

The report proposed a new course of two twelve-week terms in successive winters. The course was to be made up of agricultural studies only and was to be open to any boy with a common school education. The liberal arts and general science courses, which had for years constituted the principal elements in the agricultural course, were excluded. If the professional training for law and pharmacy could omit such courses, it was argued, so could agriculture. In justification of the proposed specialization, Vilas and Hitt stated a principle of education often denied by professional teachers who, accepting the notion that they are the custodians and even fountainheads of knowledge, assume that what is not learned from them or provided for in a course of study is not learned at all. "It should be borne in mind," the committee declared, "that no system of education in the schools can be of itself a complete education to the student. He must himself pursue independently his peculiar line of study, for which he will obtain his inspiration and knowledge necessary to the pursuit in the school."

¹⁰⁶ Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. C, pp. 427-428, 431-432, 433, December 30, 1884; *Wisconsin State Journal*, January 20, 1885.

¹⁰⁷ Dean H. L. Russell recalled that Henry and Armsby were called into conference by Vilas and Keyes on the new course. When Henry continued too long in his objections, Keyes banged the table with his fist and roared: "Damn you, Henry, if you don't do it we will get somebody who can." Interview, W. H. Glover with H. L. Russell, April 9, 1945. Henry's own doubts were expressed in his report of 1886. *Regents' Biennial Report*, 1885-86, pp. 45-47. Years later, after the Short Course had become a conspicuous success at Wisconsin and had been widely imitated elsewhere, Vilas wrote: "Perhaps one has a warmer attachment to an object which has given him much care and thought. . . . Still I cannot but feel gratified to read the evidence of the growth and usefulness of the short course; and more especially as the good Dean Henry doubted its utility when it was caused to be established." William F. Vilas to H. L. Russell, September 21, 1907, taken from Glover's manuscript History of the College of Agriculture.

The Vilas-Hitt report, instituting a practical short course in agricultural subjects, no doubt weakened the case for a separate school. Yet the forces behind this movement showed great strength in the legislative session of 1885. Following the governor's recommendations, a bill to establish a separate agricultural college and appropriating one hundred and fifty thousand dollars for that purpose was introduced by H. C. Adams in the Assembly. The organized support of the measure by the farmers was immediately demonstrated by the flood of petitions in support of the bill which descended upon the Assembly.¹⁰⁸ Whether the published plans of the regents to launch the Short Course would have been enough to defeat the separation movement remains problematical. More persuasive in checking the movement was the adoption by the legislature of a bill establishing a system of farmers institutes. The bill was introduced by C. E. Estabrook, supported by the executive committee of the Dairy-men's Association and other farming interests.¹⁰⁹ Outside of Wisconsin a number of states had already contributed to the establishment and support of such institutes, which in some cases were attached to the agricultural college, in others administered under another agency.¹¹⁰ The readiness with which the legislature accepted Estabrook's bill attests the general acceptance of the idea. In the Senate only two votes were cast against the measure which appropriated five thousand dollars for the farmers institutes, the funds to be administered by the regents.¹¹¹

Thus before the bill to establish a separate college of agriculture had come to a vote, the regents had devised the Short Course, and the legislature had adopted an act providing for farmers institutes, a measure for which H. C. Adams himself voted. Moreover, a large appropriation had to be voted to replace Science Hall, which had burned in December, 1884. Nevertheless, the agricultural college bill was reported out for

¹⁰⁸ *Assembly Journal*, 1885, pp. 82, 96-740 *passim*.

¹⁰⁹ *Wisconsin Farmers' Institute, Bulletin No. 5*, 1891, p. 18.

¹¹⁰ See Alfred C. True, *A History of Agricultural Extension Work in the United States, 1785-1923* (U. S. Department of Agriculture, Miscellaneous Publication No. 15, 1928), 5-14.

¹¹¹ *Assembly Journal*, 1885, pp. 59, 142; *Senate Journal*, 188; *Laws of Wisconsin*, 1885, p. 8.

passage by a majority of the Assembly Committee on Education. In the minority report opposing passage of the bill, J. E. Darbellay objected that Wisconsin already had a well-endowed agricultural college and that the contemplated school would narrow the educational opportunities of the students who attended it. Moreover, he insisted that the farmers institutes, already provided for, would undoubtedly prove to be valuable to "practical farmers" and should be given at least two years' trial before being pronounced a failure.¹¹² These arguments and the reluctance of the legislature to give one hundred and fifty thousand dollars for the school had their effect. Yet when the measure finally came to a vote, it was lost by the narrow margin of 43 to 52,¹¹³ and cries of double-dealing were heard.¹¹⁴

The Short Course did not attain immediate popularity. Only nineteen students enrolled when it opened in January, 1886. The farmers institutes, on the other hand, organized under the direction of the farm committee by William H. Morrison, president of the Dairymen's Association, were an immediate and almost overwhelming success. During the first year fifty thousand farmers attended the sessions. Morrison, who bore the title of superintendent of the institutes, chose a relatively large number of farmers as institute workers, although the Experiment Station staff was subject to call. Even the president of the Board of Regents, George H. Paul, was enlisted in the work.¹¹⁵ In October, 1886, Hiram Smith wrote to Paul that the institutes had been judiciously managed under Morrison and had awakened "an interest among Agriculturists" and had "created a desire for improved methods of Cultivation, Breeding, and Feeding, that the Experiment Station can do much to foster and encourage."¹¹⁶

¹¹² *Assembly Journal*, 1885, p. 315.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 556.

¹¹⁴ It was charged that William F. Vilas, soon to take up his duties in Cleveland's cabinet, had agreed to throw Democratic support to the Adams bill in exchange for farmer support of the bill appropriating money for the construction of the new science hall for the University. The farmers supported the latter bill, but the Democrats failed to fulfill their pledge, if there was one. *Milwaukee Sentinel*, March 13, 1885.

¹¹⁵ Morrison to Paul, September 28, 1885, in the Paul Papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

¹¹⁶ Smith to Paul, October 12, 1886, in the Paul Papers.

The success of the institutes was shown in the wide attendance of farmers and in the readiness with which the legislature in 1887 increased the appropriation for their support from \$5,000 to \$12,000. The success of the institutes also spelled the death of the separation movement. Although a bill was introduced in the Assembly in 1887 to establish a separate college, it failed to receive serious consideration.¹¹⁷ The passage by Congress of the Hatch Act the same year gave additional strength to the Experiment Station. Under the terms of this act the federal government contributed \$15,000 annually for the support of the work.

Thus, by the time Thomas C. Chamberlin assumed the presidency of the University, the foundations for the extensive work in research and agricultural education had been laid, albeit somewhat haltingly. No one could claim the whole credit. Farm organizations and farm leaders such as William D. Hoard and Hiram Smith had made themselves felt; the Board of Regents, in seeking the defeat of the separation movement, had charted a new path in vocational education; the legislature had contributed both in supporting research and in providing for the institutes. Henry's insistence upon research had created an experiment station, and the small student enrollment had permitted early concentration upon research rather than instruction. Research was to remain the primary activity of the college, but through the publications, through the Short Course, and more particularly, through the agency of the farmers institutes, avenues were created which could bring the results of the experimental work of the station to the farmers of the state.

¹¹⁷ *Assembly Journal*, 1887, pp. 93, 804, 904.

17.

University and Public Schools

IN MOST states of the nation today the state university stands in theory and actuality at the head of the public school system. The system is so organized that each unit—the elementary school and the high school—connects with the one above, and if all roads in the system do not lead to the university, at least one is clearly marked out. Moreover, a proximate uniformity of the high schools of the nation and a flexibility of the entrance requirements of the universities tend to make each high school in the nation a preparatory department for any state university and for many colleges besides. Schools, like factories, have moved toward standardization, and educational credits, like automobile parts, have become interchangeable. And as automobile manufacturers have developed their society of automotive engineers for the purpose of preparing specifications and imposing standards in the interest of uniformity of materials and designs, so the educational authorities have created their state, regional, and national accrediting agencies for the purpose of devising specifications by means of which educational credits shall be described and their value ascertained.

This vast and intricate system, entailing among other things universal, tax-supported, compulsory education, is the product of years of slow growth. It has rested and rests upon ideas of appropriate educational organization and administration, and upon the more or less general acceptance of assumptions about the meaning and function of education. The emergence of the system in its full twentieth-century complexity had to wait not

only for the acceptance of the educational ideas and philosophy on which the system rested but for the economic prosperity necessary to bring it into being.

To examine the origins and trace the early developments of the various elements which have gone into the creation of this system is outside the scope of this book. It is sufficient to observe that the idea of supporting schools by means of public taxation was put into practice in colonial times, though it was not widely accepted. In 1785 the Congress reserved for the support of common schools section sixteen in each newly surveyed township of the public domain. Two years later the first seminary grant was made. Thomas Jefferson, in his *Notes on Virginia*, had proposed an educational system possessing many of the elements of a unified system. It embraced common schools, grammar schools, and college, and was "adapted to the years, to the capacity, and the condition of every one, and directed to their freedom and happiness." To Jefferson and to many another of his thoughtful countrymen, education offered not only the best but virtually the only means of perpetuating liberty. In 1786 he had admonished a friend: "Preach, my dear Sir, a crusade against ignorance; establish and improve the law for educating the common people. Let our countrymen know, that the people alone can protect us against these evils [tyranny and despotism], and that the tax which will be paid for this purpose, is not more than the thousandth part of what will be paid to kings, priests and nobles, who will rise up among us if we leave the people in ignorance."¹

About the same time that Jefferson was urging his countrymen to establish a system of general education, Condorcet was formulating his reports on education. By means of a system of common schools Condorcet and his followers sought to perpetuate the new order which the French Revolution was creating. But the hopes of the idealists of the Revolution faded before they found embodiment. It was in Prussia and in the interests of strengthening the monarchy that the first extensive system of uniform, centrally controlled schools was brought into being.

¹ *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, edited by H. A. Washington (9 vols., New York, 1861), 2:8; 8:388-389.

Although sporadic agitation for uniform schools continued in America during the first decades of the nineteenth century, it was not until the Jacksonian period with its multitude of humanitarian reforms, its vigorous avowal of democracy, and its intense nationalism, that there was any widespread interest in devising appropriate educational systems. The leaders of those movements which aimed at the extension and increase of educational opportunities for all people generally accepted the idea of some centralized control over education, and generally felt that this control, because of the nature of our historical development, should be in the state rather than the federal government. In the agitation for such central control, the example of the Prussian system was not lost on the educational reformers. At the time when the state systems were taking form under boards of education, state superintendents or commissioners, or combinations thereof, such men as Henry Barnard and Horace Mann were publishing descriptions and advocating imitation of the Prussian system. The English translation of Victor Cousin's famous report on the Prussian system appeared early enough (1835) to have considerable effect.²

Although the Prussian system was welcomed as a good example of efficient centrally controlled education, the undemocratic philosophy on which it rested had little appeal for this country. In the United States the movement toward universal education was part of a humanitarian as well as part of a nationalist movement. The schools were not only accepted as the instrument for the perpetuation of the system of government, but were also regarded as agencies for performing many other functions. They offered the means by which an individual could improve his status in society. At the same time education was advocated by many as the universal solvent of all social ills.³ Implicit in

² Edward H. Reisner, *Nationalism and Education* (New York, 1923), 351-380.

³ The following excerpt from the *Wisconsin Journal of Education* (1:12, March, 1856) is typical of the extensive claims that were often made for the general social efficacy of education. All progress during the preceding twenty years, the writer insisted, could be traced to the improvement of the schools. Good schools increased the value of property and human life. "The idea of universal education is the grand central idea of the age. Upon this broad and comprehensive basis all the experience of the past, all the crowding phenomena of the present and all our hopes and aspirations for the future, must rest. *Education* prevents and diminishes crime, gives security to property, lessens the expenses of the poor-rates,

much that was said and done was the assumption that intelligence was the natural possession of all men and that education or its chief product, literacy, would release that intelligence. Hence the constant and repeated use of literacy and intelligence as if they were synonymous terms.

Because of the many purposes education was to serve, because many educational leaders saw in the school system the hope not only of perpetuating representative government but also of assuring constant progress and offering equal opportunity to all, educational reformers in the 1840's began to talk of a system of education which did not begin and end with the common schools. What they envisioned was a system which began in the common schools and reached to the state universities. Although it was to take years to create such a system in any state, talk about it was strong in the 1840's and 1850's. The idea was by no means new when Wisconsin became a state in 1848. But even after the idea had been expressed, even, in fact, after it had been adopted in many places, there still remained the great task of writing it into law and, more important, of translating it into a system of education. This entailed the creation of schools bridging the gap between the university and the common schools, and so shaping the curricula of the high schools and modifying the entrance requirements of the university as to bring these two agencies into harmony.

The full story of the evolution of the Wisconsin educational system remains to be told in its larger setting. Only those aspects of the general movement that relate to the growth of the University will be considered here. During the period from 1848 to 1880, in which a unified school system was emerging in Wisconsin, the migration of settlers into the state was going on at a tremendous rate. In 1850 there were about three hundred thousand people in the state; thirty years later the population had quadrupled. It was during this period of population expansion, the period when the great work of transforming the almost virgin land into settled communities was taking place, that the system of education was being shaped.

prisons, penitentiaries, and police establishments; it evokes the innate energies of genius; it quickens and refines human enjoyments, and it finds out the mighty physical energies of nature, and applies them to the service and comfort of man."

Although the Constitution of 1848 did not specifically provide for a unified system of education in Wisconsin, the proposal that such a system be created was made to the constitutional convention by Eleazer Root and Experience Estabrook, members of the committee which wrote the article on education. As the first superintendent of public instruction, Root argued that the Constitution contemplated the establishment of a general system of graded schools, and to this end he proposed to devote the energies of his office. The system included "the district schools extending primary instruction, under greatly improved conditions to every neighborhood,—the secondary or academic school offering the advantages of a chartered academy to every town in the commonwealth,—the university acting in harmony with the entire system, and crowning the whole."⁴

Root's successor, Azel P. Ladd, urged the creation of county high schools whose purpose it should be to fit youths for the state university or prepare them "for a trade, for commerce, or agriculture." If such schools were established, Ladd stated, "the public schools of the State would then comprise the primary and secondary departments of the District School; the county High School and the State University." This would make the system complete. "It provides means by which every child in the state, for all time to come, may acquire a free education in each branch of knowledge, from the simplest to the highest." Succeeding state superintendents returned to this theme again and again. "It is greatly to be desired," John H. Lathrop wrote A. Constantine Barry in 1855, "that the educational organism for the State should present a skillfully arranged and well compacted system, from the district school to the University." Lyman C. Draper argued three years later that if towns were unable to organize high schools to prepare young people for the University, the counties should do it. "Then we should have a complete public educational system, graded from the primary school to the State University." There was a touch of defiance in the declaration of Josiah L. Pickard in 1860. "The General Government has donated lands to the State for the establish-

⁴ *Journal of the Convention to Form a Constitution*, 1847-48, p. 333; *Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction*, 1851, p. 918.

ment of a University. The state has accepted the trust. A faithful compliance with the spirit of the grant would demand that the University be made available in the establishment of the best interests of the State. It must be the head of our free school system. Shall the State establish a real University, and then confine the Public Schools to the mere rudiments and thus make a wide gulf to be bridged by private enterprise?"⁵

The recommendations of the state superintendents, along with similar declarations by the Board of Regents and the sometimes ambiguous support of the successive governors, had little immediate effect upon the establishment of high schools and virtually none in shaping the curricula of the high schools that did come into existence. This was to be explained partly by the opposition of the private academies, which opposed the extension of public school education into their domain; partly by the opposition of taxpayers; partly by the lack of a clear-cut program with a wide appeal for the high schools. The first public high school, which was created by special law, was opened in 1849 at Kenosha, then called Southport, largely through the zeal of Michael Frank. A second high school was opened in Racine in 1853. By the end of the Civil War high schools had also been established in Janesville, Sheboygan, Oshkosh, Green Bay, La Crosse, Fond du Lac, Madison, Watertown, and Prairie du Chien.⁶ Not until 1868 did Milwaukee, already the leading metropolis of the state, open a high school.⁷

All these schools had been organized under special legislation. A general law adopted in 1856, permitting the organization of high school districts, had remained a dead letter.⁸ The courses of study in these high schools were largely determined by the local school boards. Although they imitated one another and the academies which they supplanted or with which they competed, there was no authority in the superintendent of public instruction nor any other machinery to bring the high schools into harmony with one another or with the University. The first

⁵ *Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction*, 1852, p. 23; 1855, p. 56; 1858, p. 158; 1860, p. 71.

⁶ Conrad E. Patzer, *Public Education in Wisconsin* (Madison, 1924), pp. 81, 82.

⁷ *Annual Report, Board of School Commissioners of Milwaukee*, 1868, p. 49.

⁸ Patzer, *Public Education in Wisconsin*, 82-83.

legal step in this direction was taken in 1872 when the legislature adopted a law offering free tuition in the University to "all graduates of any graded school of the state who shall have passed an examination at such graded school satisfactory to the faculty of the University for admission into the subfreshman class and the college classes of the University."⁹ There was nothing in this act which deprived the local board of its power to determine what was to be studied in the high schools, but it did give University authorities the power to state what subjects must be studied if the high school graduates were to enjoy the benefits of free tuition at the University.

Three years later, in 1875, the legislature passed a general law under which high schools could be organized and, provided they met certain conditions, receive the benefit of some state support. But in this law no attempt was made to impose a definite curriculum upon the schools, nor was the state superintendent or any other authority empowered to impose a standard curriculum. The law merely provided that the course of study should be adopted with the advice and consent of the superintendent of public instruction.¹⁰ Not until the middle of the 1880's was the superintendent of public instruction given the authority and the means to inspect the high schools. Thus to a very large extent the task of shaping the high school course of study to serve as preparation for the University had to be worked out between the high schools and the University, authorized but not imposed by law.

In view of the relatively slow growth of the high schools and the even slower accommodation of these institutions to the needs of the University, it is not to be wondered at that among the first official acts of the Board of Regents was one authorizing a University preparatory department. The function of that department was to bridge the gap between the common schools or academies and the University. It was opened in 1849 and persisted, sometimes disguised under another name, for thirty-one years. Unwanted by the Board or the faculty, often the object of attack both inside and outside the University, a fre-

⁹ *General Laws*, 1872, p. 66.

¹⁰ *Laws of Wisconsin*, 1875, p. 627.

quent source of embarrassment to University officials, this appendage of the University, by its very existence, attested the slowness with which the high schools were brought into harmony with the University. The dropping of the preparatory department in 1880 spelled the reluctant acceptance by the University of the high schools of the state as the primary agency for the preparation of students for the University.

When the preparatory department was first opened, its course of study was essentially that of any academy of the day. It included reading, writing, bookkeeping, arithmetic, English grammar, geography, algebra, geometry, Latin, and Greek. The admission requirements were modest: applicants were required to be ten years old; to have a knowledge of the elements of geography and English grammar and of arithmetic as far as the vulgar fractions; and to present testimonials of good moral character.¹¹

The Board of Regents justified the establishment of the department in its first report. Two years later the chancellor wrote: "This provision for preparatory instruction in the University must be continued, until the academic or union schools, one in each township, embraced in the plan of public instruction for the State, shall be put into successful operation, and relieve the University from an office, which does not properly belong to it, and which will be better performed by the township schools."¹² No sooner had the legislature passed a law permitting organization of a high school in Madison than the Board directed its executive committee to inquire into the "practicability and expediency of connecting the preparatory department of the University with the academic or Union school about to be established." But no such arrangements could be made immediately.¹³

The clear need for maintaining the preparatory department

¹¹ *Wisconsin Argus*, September 4, 1849; *Regents' Annual Report*, January 30, 1849, pp. 5-6.

¹² *Regents' Annual Report*, January 30, 1849, pp. 5-6; December 31, 1851, p. 9.

¹³ Records of the Board of Regents (MS.), Vol. B, p. 79, February 3, 1855. The law authorized the issuance of bonds for the purchase of land and buildings for the proposed school, but the village trustees whose responsibility it was to issue the bonds refused to do so. Hence no school was organized immediately. *First Annual Report of the Board of Education and the Superintendent of the Public Schools of Madison for the Year 1855* (Madison, 1856), 3-4.

was often lost upon critics of the University. During the legislative sessions of 1855 and 1856 the department was objected to. In 1858, when the legislature attempted the reorganization of the University, its abolition was carefully considered. The bill failed, but the Board of Regents attempted its own reorganization.¹⁴ It announced that the preparatory department would be restricted to instruction in Latin, Greek, and algebra and that it would be abolished after five years.¹⁵ In 1859 Henry Barnard assumed the chancellorship and in his first message to the Board advised turning all preparatory work over to the Madison High School.¹⁶ The Board promptly agreed and authorized Barnard to make the arrangements, "provided the instruction be equal in quality to that hitherto given, and that the expense to the University be no greater than the usual salary of the tutor."¹⁷

Thus during the academic year 1859-60 the Madison High School was the preparatory department of the University. This arrangement, though it suited the Board and the chancellor, satisfied neither the faculty nor the students. In June, 1860, the faculty petitioned the Board to bring the preparatory department back to the University. They pointed out that the terms of the high school and the University did not coincide; that the high school did not have room enough to accommodate all University preparatory students; and that students who came to the University objected to taking any part of their work in the high school. The faculty also felt that more advanced preparatory work should be given. The Board of Regents acceded to the request of the faculty; the preparatory department was re-established as part of the University;¹⁸ and the Madison High School closed shortly thereafter.¹⁹ In 1863, the year fixed

¹⁴ Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. B, pp. 188, 226, July 27, 1858, June 22, 1859.

¹⁵ *Regents' Annual Report*, 1858-59, p. 10.

¹⁶ Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. B, p. 226, June 22, 1859.

¹⁷ Minutes of the Executive Committee of the Board of Regents (MS.), Vol. A, p. 92, September 20, 1859.

¹⁸ Minutes of the Meetings of the Faculty (MS.), vol. 1, pp. 87-88, 93, June 23, July 13, 1860.

¹⁹ *Annual Report of the Board of Education*, Madison, 1861-62, p. 5. The close relation between the high school and preparatory department is suggested by the fact that when the high school was closed, the Board entered into an

by the Board for the abolition of the preparatory department, the faculty recommended that the department be continued.²⁰ Four years later the abolition of the department was again considered, and the faculty voted unanimously that it be retained.²¹ The course of study as then arranged took three years. The next year it was provided that those preparing to enter the College of Arts could omit the ancient language studies and thus complete the preparatory work in one year. Shortly afterward the preparatory department was reduced to one year and its work was made prerequisite for admission to the College of Arts, the Female College, and the subfreshman class in the College of Letters. But a subfreshman class was established to provide a two-year course in Latin and Greek for all who planned to enter the College of Letters.²² In 1874 the name, preparatory department, was dropped in the hope that its absence would allay criticism. Subfreshman work was restricted to one year for admission to the College of Arts, and to two years, including the language study, for the College of Letters.²³ In 1880, when the University finally agreed to abolish the preparatory work altogether, subfreshman work in the languages was retained.

The shifts and changes in the preparatory department, the transparent attempts to reduce outside criticism and embarrassment to the University by dropping the name preparatory department and speaking of its work as subfreshman, and the annual apology for its continuation in the report of the regents suggest something of the difficulty that was faced in bringing the high schools into a satisfactory relationship with the University while at the same time maintaining and, when possible, raising University entrance requirements. Some representatives of the high schools objected that the University was competing

arrangement with Miss L. L. Coues to open a school for "females only," assuming that the boys would attend the University preparatory department. While not completely satisfied with this arrangement, the Board of Education contended that it was the best that could be made.

²⁰ Minutes of the Executive Committee of the Board of Regents, Vol. A, p. 135, August 26, 1863.

²¹ Minutes of the Faculty, vol. 1, p. 142, October 28, 1867.

²² *University Catalogue*, 1867-68, pp. 26, 51; 1871-72, p. 49.

²³ *Ibid.*, 1874-75, p. 40; Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. C, p. 211, June 17, 1874.

with the high schools, and others protested that to make the high schools serve as preparatory departments of the University was to divert them from their primary purpose. And when representatives of the University insisted too vigorously that the University was the head of the public school system and as such should receive all high school graduates, representatives of the sectarian colleges protested.

The high schools were slow to accept the obligation of ordering their courses of study so as to prepare students for the University. The Madison High School reopened in 1863, but its course of study included no foreign language. In 1865 Stephen H. Carpenter, then clerk of the Madison School Board, reported that the work could not be as strictly graded as that in the elementary schools "because there is a large class of pupils who wish to pursue certain branches of study instead of strictly following the course adopted by the Board." Yet two years later the Board publicly asserted that the University preparatory department was a powerful though undesirable competitor. "It is extremely difficult," wrote Carpenter, "for us to maintain a legitimate High School in this city, owing to the fact, that pupils from abroad who, under ordinary circumstances, would complete their education at our High School, are attracted to the Normal and Preparatory departments of the State University, by the higher title of that institution. It is also found impracticable to enforce a strict course of study, as pupils, if their wishes are not consulted, will leave the High School for the University, where they imagine, whether correctly or not, that they can pursue a select course, making choice for themselves of their own studies. Pupils also who fail to maintain their standing in the High School classes, prefer to take a lower position in another school, than submit to what they consider the degradation of being placed in a lower class."²⁴

While high school authorities in Madison complained about the preparatory department, President Chadbourne deplored the inadequate preparation of the students who entered the University. Only the increase and improvement of the high schools of the state, he argued, would remedy the situation.

²⁴ *Annual Report of the Board of Education, Madison, 1864-65, p. 10; 1867, p. 9.*

"The success of university education in this State," he said in 1868, "must depend much upon the character of the men who have charge of the high schools." The state superintendent echoed Chadbourne in calling for a program which would "connect our high schools and academies with the university in such a way as to make them feeders to it." A year later the Wisconsin Teachers Association formally acknowledged that the University was regarded as the head of the public school system, "intended to give tone and dignity" to it.²⁵

Agitation for the establishment of a working relationship between the high schools and the University intensified during the next few years. In 1870 the forces favoring unification of the school system found a focus in the newly elected superintendent of public instruction, Samuel Fallows. Fallows, who graduated from the University in 1859, had already attained a reputation in public service. Later he acknowledged that his sole purpose in seeking the office of state superintendent was to unify the public school system. His policies differed from those of his predecessor in that he not only advocated creation of "more intimate and practical relations" between the high schools and the University, but he also proposed a method of attaining this end. He urged the University to furnish the high schools with a list of the requirements for admission to the several collegiate departments, and to admit graduates of high schools offering such courses on the basis of a certificate from the high school principal without further examination.²⁶ In 1872, with the support of the Board of Regents and the president of the University and the approval of the teachers' associations, he was able to secure passage of the law under which "all graduates of any graded school of the state who shall have passed an examination at such graded school satisfactory to the faculty of the University for admission into the subfreshman and the college classes" were entitled to free tuition at the University.²⁷

This provision in the law, a milestone though it was in the development of the Wisconsin school system, followed rather

²⁵ *Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction*, 1868, pp. 43, 130, 246.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 1871, pp. 23-24.

²⁷ *General Laws*, 1872, p. 66.

than led similar movements in other Midwestern states. Two years earlier the neighboring state of Iowa had passed a law which sought to fix the relationship between the state university and the high schools by providing that "the University, so far as practicable, shall begin the courses of study, in its collegiate and scientific departments, at the points where the same are completed in high schools; and no students shall be admitted who have not previously completed the elementary studies, in such branches as are taught in the common schools throughout the State."²⁸ The Iowa law, in turn, although a product of several years' agitation by university and other educational leaders in the state, followed a plan already launched in Illinois under the leadership of Newton Bateman.²⁹ Michigan had adopted in 1871 a system of accrediting high schools, the graduates of which would be accepted into the university without examination.

In conformity with the law of 1872 the faculty formulated and published in the University catalogue directions for the examinations to be given to graduates of graded schools. The subjects listed clearly indicate that the faculty expected only students seeking admission into the subfreshman classes to apply. The free tuition students were expected to pass examinations in arithmetic, grammar, geography, United States history, English history, algebra, and geometry. Four years later examinations in natural philosophy, physiology, botany, and German were added to the list and English history was dropped.³⁰

Although the law of 1872 did not immediately provide for "intimate and practical relations" between the high schools and the University, it did serve to encourage further activity in that direction. In his report of 1872 Fallows exulted that already ten students had taken advantage of the new law, "the first fruits of the great incoming harvest."³¹ Moreover, he and President Twombly, who had succeeded Chadbourne, found numerous occasions to speak before educational gatherings about the

²⁸ *Laws of Iowa*, 1870, pp. 88-93.

²⁹ *Iowa: Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (Legislative Documents, Thirteenth General Assembly, 1870)*, 1:15 ff.

³⁰ *University Catalogue*, 1871-72, pp. 64-65; *Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction*, 1872, pp. 15-17; 1876-77, p. 38.

³¹ *Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction*, 1872, p. 16.

workings and advantages of the new law.³² Indeed, at the annual convention of the school superintendents and principals held in Madison in December, 1872, Twombly spoke so enthusiastically about making the high schools into preparatory departments for the University that he was sharply criticized by two groups: by high school officers, who pointed out that the University continued to maintain its own preparatory department, and by representatives of sectarian colleges, who accused him of claiming all high school graduates for the University.³³

At the annual convention of the Wisconsin Teachers Association in July, 1873, a committee headed by President Twombly submitted a report on a system of education for the state. The committee recommended that a uniform course of study for the schools be fixed by law and that "all high schools be required by law to arrange their courses of study so that they shall correspond with the standard for admission to the University." The committee also advocated bringing the normal schools into the scheme so as to permit their graduates to enter the junior year of the University.³⁴

Despite acceptance by the Wisconsin Teachers Association of the principle that the high schools should connect with the University, the ready acknowledgement by spokesmen for some of the high schools that one of the principal tasks of these schools was to prepare students to enter the University, and the wide acceptance of the idea of a unified system of education with the University at the head of it, unification of the educational

³² *Wisconsin Journal of Education*, series 2, vol. 2, pp. 243-244 (1872).

³³ *Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction*, 1873, p. 153; *Wisconsin State Journal*, December 30, 1872; Albert Salisbury, *History of the Wisconsin Teachers Association from 1853 to 1878* (n.p., 1878), p. 16

³⁴ *Wisconsin Journal of Education*, series 2, vol. 3, pp. 322-323 (1873). Although the committee recommended and the convention adopted a proposal for a standardized course of study authorized by law, Wisconsin, which had not yet adopted a compulsory attendance law, was far from accepting the notion that the state could determine what a child should study. A year after this proposal was made a case came before the supreme court involving the right of a parent to determine what his child should study. The facts in the case were simple enough. A teacher received a twelve-year-old boy into a district school. The child's father had told the boy to study orthography, reading, writing, and arithmetic. The teacher added geography. The parent told the boy not to study the added subject, a part of the school curriculum. The child obeyed his parent, and the teacher whipped the boy. The parent brought suit against the teacher for assault.

system was far from an accomplished fact. The movement toward unification involved more than overcoming the inertia of the high schools and finding satisfactory means of articulating the later institutions with the University. During the period in which the specific steps toward unification of the system were being taken, opposition to this program was expressed even among high school teachers and principals. Shortly after the free tuition law was passed in 1872 the high school committee of the Milwaukee school board protested that the Milwaukee high school had been organized primarily as an intermediate school between the common schools and the University or colleges in the state. The local high school would "better answer the purpose for which it was instituted, if the curriculum had more immediate reference to conferring a higher education upon the students, with a view to fitting them for the active business of life."³⁵ The *Wisconsin Journal of Education*, official organ of the Teachers Association, denied that the University was the apex of the public school system. It must rest on its own base, declared the editor. Any attempt to make it rest upon the common schools was injurious to both. "The public schools, including the graded schools, mistake their function and stand in their own light, if they shape their principal work with reference to the University or any other college." The "proper work" of the high schools was to prepare young people "for the duties of citizenship, not to fit for college." Two years later a speaker before the principals' convention objected that the high school had two faces, one turned toward the "occupations of life," the other toward the University. Although the speaker did not object to this dualism he did insist that when only one function could be performed, it should be the first. The following year C. W. Roby, addressing the State Teachers Association, insisted that the high schools should be popular schools, that although the idea of a working connection between high school and University was good in theory, any attempt to put the idea into practice worked a great injustice upon the high schools. These schools

The teacher brought countersuit. The lower courts held for the teacher, but the supreme court held that a parent had the right to determine what his child should study. *Ibid.*, vol. 5, pp. 27-32 (1875).

³⁵ *Annual Report, Board of School Commissioners of Milwaukee*, 1873, p. 19.

had more important work than to serve as preparatory departments of the University. They were intended to "prepare young people for good citizenship, to make them capable and efficient in the ordinary business affairs of life." He delighted many of his listeners by proclaiming that it was as fair for the high schools to ask the University to drop its Greek requirement as it was for the University to ask the high schools to teach that subject. The next year another speaker, addressing the same group, declared that the high schools had no inherent responsibility to serve as preparatory departments of the University. In 1881 G. W. Peckham, having examined records of the Milwaukee high school, denounced the wastefulness involved in permitting the high school to concentrate on preparing young people for college or university. Of the 2,186 students who had entered the Milwaukee high school during the preceding eleven years, only 110 had graduated, and of these only 16 had entered college. These figures, he contended, proved the point.³⁶

Many arguments were advanced against shaping the high school to serve primarily as a preparatory department for the University; few were specifically advanced against having the high school perform this function along with such others as might be assigned to it. Moreover, although some educational leaders argued that the high school had no responsibility for adopting a course of study in keeping with the demands of the University, they had no specific alternative program for the high schools. This came out clearly in 1875 after the legislature passed the free high school bill. This law, already referred to, was the first general statute adopted in Wisconsin under which any district or districts might organize for the purpose of establishing a high school. It provided state aid to each district where the high school was maintained for at least thirteen weeks each year and was free to all residents in the district. The local board of education was authorized to determine "with the advice and consent of the state superintendent of public instruction" the textbooks to be used and the course of study to be followed.³⁷

³⁶ *Wisconsin Journal of Education*, series 2, vol. 5, pp. 298-300 (1875); vol. 8, p. 45 (1878); vol. 9, p. 508 (1879); vol. 10, pp. 183-190 (1880); vol. 11, pp. 301-302 (1881).

³⁷ *Laws of Wisconsin*, 1875, pp. 623-629.

In accordance with this law the state superintendent devised three courses of study for the free high schools: one, for districts of less than 6,000 population, was designed for a three-year high school; the other two, for districts of over 6,000 population, were designed for four-year high schools. Like the academy courses of study, all three were primarily designed for college or university preparatory work in spite of the fact that the superintendent of public instruction, Edward Searing, was himself opposed to using the high schools primarily as college and university preparatory schools. Moreover, although the local school boards were under no compulsion to accept the course of study recommended by the superintendent of public instruction, most of them seem to have accepted it without objection.³⁸

In 1876 the legislature passed an act establishing a mill tax for support of the University. In the same act the legislature granted free tuition in the University to all residents of the state.³⁹ This act did not repeal the law of 1872 providing free tuition to graduates of graded schools. It merely expanded the offer of free tuition to all students of the University and candidates for admission whether they had graduated from graded schools approved by the University or not. The Board, on advice of the attorney general, construed the law to grant free tuition not only in the collegiate department, but in the preparatory department as well.⁴⁰

In September, 1876 the University faculty, following the lead of Michigan and Iowa, adopted a plan of accrediting high schools. Any high school that prepared students for the University could invite a member of the University faculty to inspect it.⁴¹ If the faculty representative found the course of study, the equipment, and the teaching staff to be adequate, the high school would be accredited: its graduates would be admitted

³⁸ Patzer, *Public Education in Wisconsin*, 85, 86-87.

³⁹ *Laws of Wisconsin*, 1876, pp. 267-269.

⁴⁰ On December 10, 1877, Elisha W. Keyes wrote to A. Scott Sloan asking for an opinion on the matter. The attorney general responded with the statement that no student who had resided in the state one year was required to pay tuition. Keyes to Sloan, December 10, Sloan to Keyes, December 13, 1877, both in the Keyes Papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

⁴¹ Michigan began accrediting high schools in 1871. *Wisconsin Journal of Education*, series 2, 4:241-244 (1874). Iowa began a year later.

to the University without examination.⁴² Under the law of 1872 the University faculty had assumed a passive role in the standardization of graded school curricula, merely indicating the subjects in which a student would have to pass an examination for admittance to the University. In 1876 it assumed an active role in deciding to send representatives to visit, inspect, and advise the high schools. The high school in Madison was the first to be accredited.⁴³

Although the free tuition laws and the establishment of a system of accrediting high schools provided the occasion and the machinery for bringing the high schools and the University into harmony, the years immediately after 1876 witnessed an intensification of opposition to the preparatory department. President Bascom in 1876 acknowledged opposition from the high school principals and even from some members of his own faculty, but he was unwilling to dispense with the department until the high schools were able to furnish a larger proportion of the students in the two classical courses offered by the University. "We do not quite trust the assertion that the work will be done at once by the high schools if it is thrown upon them. We fear that there would be a fatal break in it, and one from which it might take years to recover."⁴⁴

Bascom's view that the high schools could not do the work of preparing students for the University was not shared by the high school principals and superintendents. Samuel Shaw, superintendent of the Madison schools, lamented that the free tuition law of 1876 had the effect of reducing the number of students in the Madison High School. This was because the Board of Regents chose to assume that the act applied to the preparatory department as well as the collegiate department of the University. "I trust," he wrote in his annual report, "that the Regents will not adopt for the future a policy of timidity, calculated to embar-

⁴² Minutes of the Faculty, vol. 1, p. 320, September 25, 1876; *University Catalogue*, 1877-78, p. 46. President Twombly had urged such a step on the Board of Regents four years before, but recognized that there was still too wide a gap between the University and most of the graded schools. Reports to the Regents, Vol. B, p. 197, June 21, 1873.

⁴³ Minutes of the Faculty, vol. 1, p. 351, March 19, 1877.

⁴⁴ *Regents' Annual Report*, 1875-76, p. 31.

pass the High Schools in this neighborhood that are fitting students for college. The advantages which would accrue to the university from the elimination of its preparatory work are so numerous, that only the force of precedent, or a lack of faith in our High Schools can retain it much longer.”⁴⁵

A year later, in 1877, Shaw again attacked the preparatory department and the regents' policy of permitting students to enter the preparatory department without paying tuition. He protested that this action put the University in opposition to the high schools and advocated that the regents adopt the plan followed in Minnesota under which the university offered only such preparatory work as was not available in the high schools.⁴⁶ Receiving little satisfaction from the regents or President Bascom, Shaw carried his complaints to the Principals Association. He was made chairman of a committee appointed to report on the general subject of the relation of the University to the graded schools and the high schools, which reported at the convention in December, 1877. While fully in sympathy with the demands of the University for public support, the committee proclaimed: “We feel that the graded schools of the state are justly entitled to protection at the hands of the Regents of the University, from being forced to compete with its preparatory work.” The Association promptly adopted the committee report and directed the chairman to present the matter to the Board of Regents. This Shaw did, but the regents professed to have no power over the situation. When this was reported to the Principals Association at its next meeting, Shaw was instructed to carry the matter to the legislature and “secure relief in that way.”⁴⁷ In short, the Principals Association proposed to force the abolition of the preparatory department by legislative enactment if necessary. This was precisely what had been done in Iowa in 1878. The Iowa legislature had specifically prohibited the expenditure of any university funds for the maintenance of the preparatory department in its university.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ *Annual Report of the Board of Education*, Madison, 1876, p. 17.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 1877, pp. 17-22.

⁴⁷ *Wisconsin Journal of Education*, series 2, vol. 8, pp. 45-46 (1878); vol. 9, p. 82 (1879).

⁴⁸ *Laws of Iowa*, 1878, p. 101.

Meanwhile, Bascom acknowledged the attacks on the preparatory work in his report to the regents in 1878. He freely admitted that the existing situation was undesirable. It often resulted in bringing subfreshmen together in classes with students of college grade; it interfered with the work of the high schools, particularly that of the Madison High School; and it reflected unfavorably upon the University. On the other hand Bascom contended that suspension of the preparatory work would cripple the classical courses of the University simply because so very few high schools in the state offered training in Latin and Greek. Moreover, there were many communities in the state which did not yet have high schools. Hence students from those regions would have no way of reaching the University if the preparatory department were suspended. Of the students then enrolled in the University, 32 of the 62 in the ancient classical course, 41 of the 67 in the modern classical course, and 27 of the 72 in the scientific course had been fitted for the University by the preparatory department. So long as this condition continued, Bascom insisted, "we can hardly cut off the source of so large a portion of our supply." Moreover, of the 122 subfreshmen students, only 8 from abroad and 21 from Madison could have secured their preparatory work in their home communities. Thus, although acknowledging the arguments against the preparatory department, Bascom felt its work was still important. He proposed that, in order not to interfere with the work of the Madison High School, the University exclude from the preparatory department all students properly belonging to Madison.⁴⁹

This proposal did not appeal to Shaw and his cohorts. In December, 1878, they determined to carry the matter of abolishing the preparatory work to the legislature. Whereupon the University faculty acted. A committee recommended that the subfreshman course in Greek and Latin be reduced to one year as soon as possible and all other preparatory work be dropped. The committee advanced a number of reasons for taking this action: the preparatory work was ineffective, it detracted from "the dignity and character of a university," and the University

⁴⁹ *Regents' Annual Report, 1877-78*, pp. 28-29.

of Wisconsin had "lost in standing and reputation in consequence of the undue prominence hitherto given to preparatory instruction."⁵⁰

In view of the attitude of the faculty and the published intention of the Principals Association, the Board of Regents in January, 1879 discovered that it did have power to act. The Board agreed that all preparatory work should be abolished in 1880 except for one year's instruction in ancient languages. The decision was applauded by the *Wisconsin Journal of Education*. The virtual abolition of preparatory work, the *Journal* declared, would strengthen the University and the high schools and it would help improve the relations between the high schools and the University.⁵¹

Neither the Board of Regents in 1879 nor President Bascom in his report to the Board mentioned the decision to abolish the preparatory studies, but the Board of Visitors that year called attention to it. Although the University was the head of the public school system of the state, the Visitors found that "the relations of the different parts of the system are not accurately defined and but imperfectly adjusted, but for that reason there is an imperative demand for the most earnest effort to bring the whole educational scheme into harmonious working and intercommunication." The Visitors admitted that a full exploration of this problem did not come within the scope of their responsibility but they characterized it as "one of the most important problems demanding the attention of those who have the direction of the University and of the educational interests of the state."⁵²

In his report to the regents in 1880 President Bascom pronounced the closing of the preparatory department "the most marked fact in the internal history of the University during the past year." Acknowledging the pressure brought by the high schools, Bascom announced that the "multiplication and improvement of High Schools must be our great resource." He warned that there was not yet complete harmony between the high schools and the University. A disposition to make each

⁵⁰ Minutes of the Faculty, vol. 2, pp. 30-31, January 13, 1879.

⁵¹ *Wisconsin Journal of Education*, series 2, vol. 9, p. 86 (1879).

⁵² *Regents' Annual Report*, 1878-79, p. 34.

town and district responsible for its own educational program mitigated against uniformity of the high schools, and there was still evidence of a widespread feeling that the high schools were being diverted from their more important work by training students for the University. But the high schools must continue to fit students for the University. "Among the things the University of Wisconsin is striving to do and helping to do, there will be none of more permanent value than its share in the effort to bring into existence and into line a strong body of High Schools scattered throughout the state." In the future the terms of admission to the University would be kept within the reach of the high schools but always high enough to offer an incentive for further improvement. Bascom chose to explain the decision to suspend preparatory work in terms of the University's desire to encourage the high schools rather than in terms of the pressure brought to bear by the Principals Association.⁵³ When ethical or moral principles were not involved, Bascom could give way gracefully before a show of force. His capitulation was made easier by the fact that the University was permitted to retain subfreshman classes in Greek and Latin, disciplines he cherished as the *sine qua non* among the entrance requirements to either of the classical courses. A year later he admitted that the subfreshman class in Greek had proved to be unpopular. Only six students were enrolled in it and unless the number increased, Bascom felt that it could not be retained. But any fears that the abolition of general preparatory work would bring about a decrease in college enrollment had been set at rest. More students had enrolled than ever before, although the total enrollment, which had always included preparatory students, was smaller during the next few years.⁵⁴

After 1880 the faculty was busy inspecting and accrediting high schools for University work. In 1884 Bascom boasted that, of the 130 students who came to the University each year, most came directly from accredited high schools. "We have now a strong list of accredited high schools; and most of the high schools of the state order their course of study more or less in reference to the University." Reporting to the Board for the

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 1879-80, pp. 28, 29-34.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 1880-81, p. 27.

last time, Bascom saw in retrospect only constantly improving relations between the University and the high schools. Not without pride he declared: "There are now very few institutions of higher education which equal it in the hold which it has on the state to which it belongs, in the number of collegiate students it receives from its own state, in the influence it exerts on intermediate instruction, and in its relation to the colleges of the state." He reflected that the University had extended its hold on the state high schools through the accrediting program. By means of this program the schools had been encouraged to mold their curricula to conform with the requirements and demands of the University. The high schools were now being held to a program which gave a thorough training to students preparing for the University.⁵⁵

By the end of Bascom's administration the main outlines of the unified system of education with the University at the apex had been fixed in the public mind and established, albeit less clearly, in law. The system about which Lathrop had written so eloquently thirty-five years before was coming into being. The school system was by no means so complete that its full advantages were available to every child in the state, but the years to come would see the pattern extended and the structure filled out. Nor would the succeeding years find the University's dominant position in shaping the high schools unchallenged. In fact, in the 1880's the superintendent of public instruction began to agitate for authority to inspect the high schools too, and before the decade had run out his assistants joined the University inspectors in visiting the high schools and advising on educational matters. But by the 1880's the University had become in fact as well as in theory the head of the public school system. Thirty-five years before, Chancellor Lathrop had said of the University, not yet born, that it would be the "center and heart" of the whole educational system; that "its pulsations [would] send the tide of intellectual life to the remotest extremities of the social body."⁵⁶ That day had not yet come but it was fast approaching.

⁵⁵ *Regents' Biennial Report*, 1883-84, p. 38; 1885-86, p. 35.

⁵⁶ *Regents' Annual Report*, January 16, 1850, p. 12.

FROM COLLEGE TO UNIVERSITY, 1887-1903

Part Four



18.

The Making of a University

ONLY sixteen years elapsed from John Bascom's resignation to the election of Charles Van Hise as president of the University. But during this period the institution was transformed, in intellectual as well as in material terms, in direction as well as in organization. The most obvious change was in the rapid increase in the size of the student body, the faculty, and the budget. If the size of a university is "really a measure of one dimension of its influence,"¹ as E. E. Slosson once declared, University officials had little reason to complain. In Bascom's last year enrollment barely exceeded five hundred. In the year preceding Van Hise's election enrollment had reached almost three thousand. This number included those registered in the summer school and the agricultural Short Courses, innovations which themselves marked a change. In 1903 the College of Engineering had a larger number of students than had the whole University in Bascom's last year. The faculty had increased during the same period from about forty members to almost five times that number, the budget from one hundred and fifty thousand dollars to half a million.

In 1886 the internal management of the University was still conducted largely by the entire faculty. By 1903 there were four college faculties: a faculty of letters and science, of agriculture, of engineering, and of law. Each one was an autonomous body presided over by a dean. Quasi-autonomous committees con-

¹ E. E. Slosson, *Great American Universities* (New York, 1910), 475.

trolled the graduate school and extension service. Above the four college faculties, and composed of them, was the general faculty. This body dealt principally with matters affecting the internal affairs of the University as a whole. At the same time the office of the president experienced something vaguely resembling mitotic division. Chancellor Lathrop had served as keeper of the student records and other presidents had retained this responsibility. In the 1890's, however, the president's secretary-assistant emerged as registrar and secretary of the faculty. And in the same period much of the president's responsibility as disciplinarian came to be shared with the deans of the colleges and with the newly created officer, the dean of women.

The physical prosperity of the University was reflected not only in the size of the student body but in the rapid increase in building on the campus. An armory and a gymnasium were constructed and Camp Randall was acquired as a playing field. The library was moved into the massive new State Historical Society building. Separate buildings were constructed to house the law college and the engineering college, and a cluster of new buildings on the agricultural college campus bespoke the lobbying skill of Dean Henry and the popularity of that arm of the University.

There were other more important evidences of change. In 1890 one of the professors of the College of Agriculture, S. M. Babcock, announced the invention of a simple, quick, and accurate device to determine the butterfat content of milk. The immeasurable value of the Babcock milk test to the dairying industry and Babcock's refusal to patent the process won for him and the University wide acclaim. Two years later, in 1892, the University enticed Richard T. Ely into leaving Johns Hopkins, then one of the leading graduate schools in the United States. He came to Wisconsin to organize a school of economics, history, and political science. A year later Frederick Jackson Turner, a graduate of the University and professor of American history, read his famous paper at the Chicago meeting of the American Historical Association. This paper pointed the way to vast areas of historical investigation and exercised a profound influence upon the study of American history. A year later, in the initia-

tion of a University bulletin series, there was provided a publication outlet for research in the College of Letters and Science and the College of Engineering. These academic developments, more than the new buildings and the increased enrollment, were lending distinction to the University.

During these years the social fraternities began to acquire chapter houses. In the 1890's athletics began to attract enthusiastic student support, and the annual football game with Chicago or Minnesota came to vie with the joint debate as the high point of the college year. But if some saw learning blighted in the rise of intercollegiate athletics or imagined that the social fraternities were undermining the literary societies and robbing the institution of its democratic spirit, they might have found solace in the fact that in 1904 George Peabody, a New York philanthropist, financed and made arrangements for a visit to the University by a group of political and educational leaders from Georgia. Interested in the educational improvement of the South, Peabody wanted this party to visit and examine a leading state university.

Many of these changes in the University reflected no more than normal growth, others were the result of conscious effort and direction by the governing board and the president, while some could be explained as purely accidental. The increase in the size of the student body and the faculty and the acquisition of additional buildings were not peculiar to the University of Wisconsin. Almost all the Midwestern state universities were enjoying a similar growth during the last two decades of the nineteenth century—a growth that reflected the general prosperity and the widening acceptance of the university.

By 1890 the state of Wisconsin was well through its pioneering stage. The population had reached the million mark by 1870. Thirty years later the population passed two million. It was predominantly a Wisconsin-born population. More than 1,300,000 of the 2,000,000 residents in the state in 1900 had been born in Wisconsin. Most of the farms had been laid out and the land brought under cultivation. Dairying had become a leading industry. By 1890 industry in Wisconsin had assumed predominance over agriculture in terms of value of the goods

produced if not in terms of the number employed. The relative value of agricultural and industrial products is difficult to establish clearly, but in 1890, according to the census report, the value of all manufactured products in Wisconsin amounted to \$248,546,164. The products used \$145,437,016 worth of materials. The value added by manufacturing was thus over \$100,000,000. The same census report estimated the total value of all farm products to be only slightly in excess of \$70,000,000—only a million dollars more than ten years before.²

As the shift to dairying stimulated certain lines of research in the agricultural college and Experiment Station and as the dairy industry was in turn stimulated by the fruits of research, so the quickening industrial activity stimulated the growth of the Colleges of Law and of Engineering, especially the latter. Engineers, whose profession was yet so new as hardly to qualify as a profession, were the technicians of the emerging industrial society. They were called upon to translate chemical formulas into industrial processes, mathematical equations into machines, and they did.³ The growth of the College of Engineering reflected the rapid growth of the demand for these technicians.

If the times were propitious, it must also be noted that the men in whom the government of the University resided were alert and energetic. The University was fortunate in the character of the men selected for its Board of Regents, and the regents were singularly fortunate in the selection of Thomas Chrowder Chamberlin and Charles Kendall Adams as successive presidents. Complete tranquillity did not always characterize the relations between these men and the Board of Regents, but the president and Board worked together with a harmony and intimacy unknown during Bascom's time. In Chamberlin the Board secured not only a distinguished geologist but a man of originality and daring, anxious to push the University into new fields of research and service. And when Chamberlin left with

² *Abstract of the Eleventh Census: 1890* (2nd ed., Washington, 1896), 101, 142. Lumbering, milling, and brewing, in that order, constituted the leading industries of the state. *Report on Manufacturing Industries in the United States* (Eleventh Census, *Reports*, Washington, 1895), Part I, pp. 628-635.

³ Slosson, *Great American Universities*, 512 ff.

his program barely started, the Board selected Adams to take his place. Less original than Chamberlin, Adams brought a wealth of university and administrative experience to adapt and enlarge the program launched by his predecessor. Urbane, sophisticated, and convincing, Adams worked generally in harmony with Board, faculty, and students.

During the period under study some forty-four men were appointed to the Board of Regents. In 1887 the Board consisted of eleven members appointed by the governor—one from each congressional district and two from the state at large—and one ex officio member, the state superintendent of public instruction. In 1889 the president of the University was again made an ex officio member. The redistricting of the state, later, added two more members to the Board. Thus by 1901 the Board of Regents was made up of fifteen members. The same year the legislature directed that at least one woman be appointed to the Board.⁴ The term of appointment, fixed in 1866, stood at three years. Although a large number of this group served only one term or less, many served for two terms or more. Breese J. Stevens, first appointed in 1891, served until his death in 1903; William P. Bartlett, from 1886 until 1899; Judge George H. Noyes, from 1890 to 1902; John Johnston, from 1892 until 1900; and Orlando E. Clark from 1892 to 1901.⁵

About one quarter of the men who served on the Board had been born in New York State, but an equally large number were born in Wisconsin. Three were of foreign birth. Of the twenty-seven who had attended either college or university almost half had been students at the University of Wisconsin. At least fifteen were lawyers, while an equally large number were bankers and businessmen. Five were doctors. Farmers continued to be virtually unrepresented on the Board after the death of Hiram Smith in 1890. But whether lawyers, bankers, or doctors, these men were politicians, active in local, state, and national politics. Although the Board was made up of men of wide political interests, it was nonpartisan in that Governor Peck, a Democratic governor, appointed Republicans to the Board and the Re-

⁴ *Laws of Wisconsin*, 1901, pp. 347-348.

⁵ *University Catalogue*, 1902, pp. 9-10.

publican governors reciprocated. President Bascom once charged that the political interests of the regents caused their deliberations to be "sicklied o'er with the pale cast of expediency." Nevertheless the political experience these men possessed had great value. Many a member of the Board was a skilled practitioner in the art of politics. This skill was needed as the University came to rely more and more heavily upon the legislature to finance its operations and expansion, and it required no mean political skill to steer a deft course in the roiled waters of Wisconsin politics during the 1890's.

The University became increasingly dependent upon legislative support during a period when Wisconsin politics was notably agitated. In 1890 the Democrats had swept into power and they retained control until 1894. Thereafter the Democratic Party virtually disappeared as a force in Wisconsin politics, but this did not spell the end of political conflict. In 1891 Attorney General James L. O'Connor, a Democrat, had brought suit against former Republican state treasurers and their bondsmen to recover interest collected by these officers from the deposit of state money. Not only did this precipitate a sharp conflict between the two parties, but it opened a wide rift in the Republican Party when the wealthy lumberman, Senator Philetus Sawyer, offered La Follette what Sawyer claimed was a retainer to defend his interest in the suit. La Follette charged that Sawyer attempted to bribe him to influence his brother-in-law, Judge R. G. Siebecker, before whom the case was to be argued.⁶ In 1894, the year that witnessed the triumphant return of the Republicans to power, La Follette and a small group of supporters launched their reform movement in the Republican Party. Although unsuccessful that year, the Progressives, as they came later to be called, carried on a vigorous campaign against the Stalwarts. In 1900, after twice having failed, La Follette won the nomination for the governorship.⁷

It is indicative of the skill of the regents that they were able to so manage the affairs of the University as to win support from

⁶ Milo M. Quaife, *Wisconsin: Its History and Its People, 1634-1924* (4 vols., Chicago, 1924), 2:7-9.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 9-15; A. M. Thomson, *A Political History of Wisconsin* (Milwaukee, 1900), 263 ff.

both parties. After visiting Madison in 1892 at the invitation of the Board, Adams wrote to Moses Coit Tyler that he had been assured "the university is the pet of the state, and . . . liberal appropriations may be expected."⁸

In the conduct of its regular business the Board changed its procedures but little, although the growth of the University and the multiplication of its functions called into existence a larger number of committees. In 1886, the Board had only four standing committees: the executive, farm, library and text-book, and law department committees. Two additional committees had been created in 1892, while three building committees supervised the construction of the law building, the armory, and the dairy building. The committees relied upon the Board for approval rather than direction. Indeed, in 1895 the Board specifically declared that the committees on grounds and buildings, the College of Letters and Science, the School of Economics, and University Extension were to have the "immediate supervision and direction" of all matters falling within their respective spheres.⁹

Yet even with an increased number of standing committees the regular meetings of the Board of Regents came to be more and more tedious. The Board was slow to adopt devices which would free it from the necessity of having to take action upon a multitude of insignificant administrative details. At the June meeting of 1892, for example, the regents considered more than forty proposals, motions, resolutions, or other actions, most of which were of little significance and served only to devour time and clutter the records. Perhaps because of this and because of the more cordial relationship which existed between Chamberlin and the Board of Regents, educational policy came to be shaped more completely by the faculty and the president than hitherto.

When Chamberlin arrived to take up his duties two important aspects of the relation of the University to the state had been substantially marked out. The University had been accepted as head of the public school system, and the state had

⁸ Charles F. Smith, *Charles Kendall Adams: A Life Sketch* (Madison, 1924), 35.

⁹ Records of the Board of Regents (MS.), Vol. D, pp. 350-351, June 19, 1895.

accepted responsibility for contributing to the financial support of the institution. The emerging relationship between the University and the public schools, the handling of which was left largely to the faculty, will be discussed in detail below, as will the general problem of the campaign for more adequate financial support. The increasing dependence of the University upon the state for funds for additional buildings, land, and operating expenses required the regents and president to devote additional amounts of time and effort to the business of presenting the needs and wants of the University before each legislature. Although most of the business of the Board of Regents was concerned with problems pressing at the moment, during this period the Board was twice forced to act upon a matter of far-reaching import. The first involved the question of academic freedom, the second the power of the Board to control the funds of the University.



ONE of the gravest issues faced by the Board of Regents grew out of charges made against Richard T. Ely by Oliver E. Wells in 1894. Ely had joined the University faculty in 1892 as director of the School of Economics, Politics, and History. Wells, formerly a high school teacher, had been elected superintendent of public instruction in the unexpected Democratic victory of 1890 and had been re-elected two years later. As superintendent of public instruction Wells was ex officio member of the Board of Regents. Even before he launched his attack on Ely he had had difficulty with the regents. He quarrelled with George Raymer, president of the Board in 1890 and 1891, and in his first report accused the Board of conducting public business secretly and charged that the executive committee controlled it.¹⁰ Wells was known locally as something of a crank and a troublemaker, but his position as superintendent of public instruction and as a member of the Board assured him a wide hearing.

In the summer of 1894 Wells had made a trip to New York and while he was there prepared the letter which appeared in

¹⁰ *Wisconsin State Journal*, April 12, 1892; *Biennial Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction*, 1892, pp. 102-103.

The Nation on July 12, 1894.¹¹ The letter was a violent attack upon the University and upon Ely. "Your statement in the last *Nation*," Wells wrote, "to the effect that there is a sort of moral justification for attacks upon life and property based upon a theory which comes from the colleges, libraries, and lecture rooms, and latterly from the churches, is supported by the teaching and the practice of the University of Wisconsin. Prof. Ely, director of the School of Economics, believes in strikes and boycotts, justifying and encouraging the one while practicing the other." From these general accusations Wells went on to charge that during a printers' strike in Madison Ely had entertained and advised the union delegate who managed the strike and had demanded that the shop in which his printing was done be unionized. "In conversation with one of the proprietors he asserted that where a skilled workman was needed, a dirty, dissipated, unmarried, unreliable, and unskilled tramp, if a union man, should be employed in preference to an industrious, skillful, trustworthy non-union man who is the head of a family." Wells next turned to Ely's teachings and writings, insisting that here one would "discover essentially the same principles." His books abound in "sanctimonious and pious cant . . . and ostentatiously sympathize with all who are in distress." Here the careful student would "discover their utopian, impractical, or pernicious doctrines."¹²

On July 14 the letter was reprinted in the columns of the *New York Evening Post*, then the owner of *The Nation*.¹³ A week later *The Nation* followed with an editorial attack upon Ely, declaring that Ely's days were numbered at Wisconsin. This was clear from Wells's public criticism of Ely and also from the rebuke implied in President Charles Kendall Adams' bacca-

¹¹ In his autobiography Ely recalled the story that Wells had visited the offices of *The Nation* and while there had expressed his opinion of Ely. He was promptly invited to sit down and write it out for publication. Richard T. Ely, *Ground Under Our Feet* (New York, 1938), 223.

¹² *The Nation*, 59:27 (July 12, 1894).

¹³ In 1881 E. L. Godkin had sold *The Nation* to the *Evening Post* when he accepted editorship of the *Post*. *The Nation* became the weekly edition of the *Post*. Carl Schurz was editor in chief from 1881 to 1883, and upon his withdrawal Godkin assumed the post and remained in active control, under the Villard interests, until 1899. Rollo Ogden, ed., *Life and Letters of Edwin Lawrence Godkin* (2 vols., New York, 1907), 2:119-123, 219.

laureate address. "The President seemed to consider it his duty to remove from the minds of the graduating class . . . the rubbishy ideas which the director had planted therein."¹⁴

The charges against the University and against Professor Ely received national notice. The financial and industrial panic of 1893 had been followed by a wave of unrest and sporadic strikes. Only twelve days before Wells's letter appeared a federal injunction had been issued against the railroad strikers in Chicago, and shortly afterward President Cleveland had sent federal troops to maintain order there. The general apprehension about the overt acts of violence against property was only slightly less than that acknowledged in the press and pulpit about "alien" and "revolutionary" ideas seeping into the country from abroad or emanating from the colleges and universities. It was against the academic influence that *The Nation* warned. President Adams' baccalaureate address, *The Limitations of Reforms*, which *The Nation* construed as a rebuke to Ely, was intended to quiet such apprehensions.

Even Johns Hopkins University, the institution which had done so much to sponsor candid examination of evidence in the field of social relationships and the formulation of conclusions based on such evidence, bent before the storm. In June, 1894, the trustees of Johns Hopkins agreed to "regard the discussion of current political, economic, financial and social questions before the students of this University as of such importance that the lessons should be given only by the ablest and wisest persons whose services the University can command." It was the opinion of the trustees, transmitted confidentially by President Gilman to Professor Herbert Baxter Adams, that no instruction should be given on such subjects "unless it can be given by persons of experience, who are well acquainted with the history and principles of political and social progress."¹⁵

Although the charges made against Ely were grave charges, trumpeted to the country in publications of national circulation,

¹⁴ *The Nation*, 59:41 (July 19, 1894).

¹⁵ W. Stull Holt, ed., *Historical Scholarship in the United States, 1876-1901: As Revealed in the Correspondence of Herbert B. Adams (Johns Hopkins University Studies in Historical and Political Science, Series LVI, No. 4, Baltimore, 1938)*, 227.

the first response of the Wisconsin press was mild. In Madison only the *Wisconsin State Journal* acknowledged the attack. The *Journal* reprinted Wells's letter from the *Evening Post*, but made light of the whole affair, remarking that the charges were too sweeping and that Wells was incapable of speaking with authority on these matters.¹⁶ But if the local newspapers made light of the attack, neither Ely, who was in Virginia at the time, nor his friends and colleagues in Madison could view it without misgivings. W. A. Scott, whom Ely had brought with him from Johns Hopkins two years before, wrote to Ely telling of the general indignation felt on the campus toward Wells.¹⁷ Amos P. Wilder, editor of the *Wisconsin State Journal*, expressed his sympathy, but warned that because of the attitude of the owner of the paper he could not give Ely editorial support. But he could and would reprint materials favorable to Ely from other newspapers. Ten days later he felt that interest in the affair in Madison was dying out and all Ely needed to do was to issue a short statement denying the charges.¹⁸ Albert Shaw, then editor of the *Review of Reviews*, who had been one of Ely's students at Johns Hopkins, urged Ely to find the means to compel Wells to retract his charges. If that failed, Shaw proposed that Ely sue Wells and the *Evening Post* for libel. This proposal was repeated by Albion W. Small, then head of the department of social science at the University of Chicago.¹⁹ President Adams, who was also away from Madison at the time, wrote to Ely saying that the letter seemed to him to be "outrageously libellous." If Ely felt perfectly sure of his case he should enter suit. "I believe you can well afford to have all your writings put to the test of searching scrutiny, as, of course, they would be in case of a trial. I don't see how you can afford anything less, in the face of such

¹⁶ *Wisconsin State Journal*, July 17, 1894. Two other references to the affair constituted the *Journal's* early interest in the affair. On July 19 the *Journal* carried another news story and two days later triumphantly quoted the *Chippewa Herald's* denunciation of Wells. *Ibid.*, July 19, 21, 1894. The other Madison paper, the *Democrat*, neglected to mention the attack until after the Board of Regents had taken formal action on July 31.

¹⁷ Scott to Ely, July 16, 1894, in the Ely Papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

¹⁸ Wilder to Ely, July 19, 30, 1894, in the Ely Papers.

¹⁹ Shaw to Ely, July 19, 26, and Small to Ely, July 28, 1894, in the Ely Papers.

a charge by a Regent." Adams suggested that Ely first consult ex-Senator Spooner, and, if he would not take the case, act upon his advice. Adams confided: "I have never believed your fundamental ethical concepts in regard to the relations of property and persons to be essentially different from my own. . . . I have no doubt [that] these fundamental concepts lead us to different conclusions. But in regard to that I am quite indifferent."²⁰

Not all Ely's friends favored a libel suit. His younger colleague, W. A. Scott, was more cautious. He opposed a libel suit, which "would lead to an entire overhauling of all your writings, and to their misinterpretations by hostile lawyers and the newspapers of the state which are already hostile." Scott was also opposed to Ely's demanding an investigation by the Board of Regents. He feared that several regents were hostile and doubted whether "it would be good policy to support by our actions the notion that the Board of Regents has any right to determine what a Professor should or should not teach in the University or through his writings."²¹ C. N. Gregory, who would presently become associate dean of the law college, advised Ely that he had talked the matter over with Regent Breese J. Stevens. Stevens felt that Ely should remain silent. A reply would only excite a further attack, and the public was much too excited about labor difficulties to treat the matter fairly. Gregory also informed Ely that Stevens strongly urged against inviting an investigation by the Board of Regents.²²

Ely had not yet decided on a course of action when the Board of Regents took the matter out of his hands. At a meeting on July 31 the president of the Board, William P. Bartlett of Eau Claire, submitted a prepared statement calling attention to the charges published by a member of the Board against Ely and proposing, with the consent of the Board, to appoint a committee "to carefully investigate the charges made, the effect of Dr. Ely's teachings upon the students, and the whole matter connected therewith and report at our next regular meeting." The proposal was opposed by Breese J. Stevens on the grounds that

²⁰ Adams to Ely, July 23, 1894, in the Ely Papers.

²¹ Scott to Ely, July 21, 1894, in the Ely Papers.

²² Gregory to Ely, July 19, 1894, in the Ely Papers.

“the times were too much disturbed to permit of a careful investigation into the facts charged and a careful judgment upon the facts found.” After full discussion a majority of the regents approved Bartlett’s plan and he appointed an investigating committee composed of H. W. Chynoweth of Madison, John Johnston of Milwaukee, and Dr. H. B. Dale of Oshkosh.²³

All three members of the committee had been appointed to the Board by Governor Peck in 1892. Chynoweth had graduated from the University of Wisconsin in 1868, had received a master’s degree three years later, and was admitted to the bar the same year. He was for several years a law partner of Boss Keyes, and was described by the *Chicago Herald* as “a conservative man who one might naturally expect to be inimical to all social doctrines such as Dr. Ely holds.” However, he was also for many years a follower and close adviser of Robert M. La Follette, Sr.²⁴ Dale was a graduate of the Cleveland Homeopathic Medical College. At Oshkosh he practiced medicine and dabbled in Democratic politics.²⁵ John Johnston, also a Democrat, was a prominent Milwaukee banker who had lost heavily in the financial collapse of 1893. A native of Scotland, he had attended the University of Aberdeen and received his master of arts degree at the age of nineteen. Shortly thereafter he came to Milwaukee and went to work in the Wisconsin Marine and Fire Insurance Bank. A literary man in a modest way, he prepared the article on Milwaukee for the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* and the article on curling for Johnson’s *Universal Cyclopaedia*, of which Charles Kendall Adams was general editor.²⁶ He had shown his interest in the University several years before he was made a regent by providing annually for a scholarship and a fellowship.

Although the committee was perhaps better balanced and more representative than could reasonably have been expected, not all people were satisfied that the Board had acted wisely

²³ Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. D, p. 293, July 31, 1894.

²⁴ *Chicago Herald*, August 20, 1894; *Madison Democrat*, October 16, 1906.

²⁵ Reuben Gold Thwaites, *The University of Wisconsin* (Madison, 1900), 292.

²⁶ A. J. Aikens and L. A. Proctor, eds., *Men of Progress: Wisconsin* (Milwaukee, 1897), 430-432.

or even properly. John M. Olin, who had himself felt the displeasure of the Board while a teacher at the University under John Bascom, wrote to George H. Noyes, a member of the Board of Regents, to protest the decision. If such an investigation were to be made at all it should be made not by the Board but by the president of the University.²⁷ Others feared that the committee might be planning to uphold Wells. Frederick Jackson Turner wrote Ely his doubts. "I fear that it means that an aggressive attack is to be made, and I have reason for thinking that some of the committee are not your friends." Turner advised Ely to make a statement so that the Board would be compelled to make a complete investigation. Scott, who continued to view developments with alarm, warned Ely that neither Dale nor Chynoweth was favorably disposed. David Kinley, one of Ely's former students, then a member of the faculty of the University of Illinois, was spending the summer in Madison. Kinley wrote to Ely urging that he make a public statement denying the charges. He reported that Burr Jones, who was to serve as Ely's attorney at the committee hearing, and Lucius Fairchild, ex-governor of the state, agreed that this course should be pursued. Such an action, Kinley insisted, was necessary to permit Ely's friends to defend him. Kinley, who had already done much to win sympathy for Ely in the press and who helped collect evidence which would lead to his exoneration, was gloomy about the committee. He, too, had heard that a majority was unfriendly. Only President Adams remained unperturbed. On learning of the action of the Board he advised Ely to write the chairman of the committee offering his full cooperation. President Harper of Chicago encouraged Ely by saying that he would regard "an injury to you as a public calamity," and that he had written to Regent Chynoweth asking his support.²⁸

In the face of this conflicting advice, Ely was deeply troubled. He decided to issue a public statement from the platform of the

²⁷ Olin to Noyes, August 4, 1894, in the Olin Papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

²⁸ Turner to Ely, August 4, 1894; Scott to Ely, August 6, 1894; Kinley to Ely, August 7, 1894; Adams to Ely, August 6, 1894; and Harper to Ely, August 7, 1894, all in the Ely Papers.

summer Chautauqua, but he was far from optimistic. To Albert Shaw he confessed his fears: "The situation is a grave one. If I am slaughtered, others in different Universities will perish, and what will become of freedom of speech, I do not know."²⁹

The announcement of the appointment of the committee quickened newspaper interest. The *Madison Democrat*, which had ignored the accusations up to this point, began to print stories. The various newspapers expressed their support or opposition to Ely as much on the basis of the position taken by their competitors as on the basis of conviction. But both the *Democrat* and the *State Journal* of Madison remained friendly. On August 3 the *Journal* printed an interview with David Kinley in which Ely was presented in the best possible light and the question of academic freedom was raised. "Wisconsin should not be the first, at least, of these great states of which it may be said that she feared freedom of speech, and so muzzled men who dared to think independently."³⁰ On August 7, the day before the committee met to discuss procedures for the investigation, the *Journal* reported that the faculty was solidly behind Ely. It was felt that if Ely were convicted, other professors would be investigated, because, it was noted ominously, "It is easier to find heresy outside of economics than in it."³¹

On August 8 the investigating committee held its first meeting at Milwaukee. It agreed to hold a public hearing in Madison on August 20, 1894. The subject of the investigation, according to the reports, was to be limited to Ely's teaching. It would not deal with his writings or teachings of ten years ago. Nor would the committee consider evidence on "anything that Prof. Ely may have stated in recent lectures before the public here or elsewhere or may have given utterance to in conversation outside of his school work."³²

²⁹ Ely to Shaw, August 8, 1894, in the Ely Papers.

³⁰ *Madison Democrat*, August 1, 7, 1894; *Wisconsin State Journal*, August 3, 1894.

³¹ *Wisconsin State Journal*, August 7, 1894. The Chicago and Milwaukee papers followed the affair closely. The *Journal* reprinted many articles which appeared in out-of-town papers.

³² *Evening Wisconsin* (Milwaukee), August 9, 1894, p. 2. The *Madison Democrat* reported that the committee had decided to call upon Wells to prove his charges and Ely to defend himself. *Madison Democrat*, August 10, 1894. The *Milwaukee*

The reported decision of the committee to limit the scope of the investigation was greeted by Ely's friends with jubilation. David Kinley wrote to Ely "I think the Comm. feels the favorable drift [of public opinion] and any hostility one or two of them may feel toward you will not dare show itself." The *Wisconsin State Journal* protested that the investigation would not be satisfactory. "The people want to know, and have a right to know, whether his views are sound upon the great economic questions of the day. If they are not . . . he is not a safe man to be at the head of the school of economics in any educational institution."³³

Ely's supporters were further cheered by his unequivocal denial of Wells's charges, read to a large audience at the summer Chautauqua by Bishop John H. Vincent.³⁴ Ely had declared privately that academic freedom was a vital issue, but he failed to mention this in his reply. Wells had charged him with believing in strikes and practicing boycotts and with disseminating pernicious doctrines in his books. These charges, Ely declared, "if true . . . unquestionably unfit me to occupy a responsible position as an instructor of youth in a great university." He attacked Wells as a "shameless slanderer" and "a politician of the meaner sort," possessed of an "insensate love of notoriety," submitted a categorical denial of all Wells's charges, claimed to have been the first "to examine exhaustively, to expose and to attack unsparingly, anarchy in the United States," and even declared that his views on some matters had changed with the years and he had become "on the whole, more conservative." To the charge that he influenced his students in the direction of socialism and anarchism, he responded: "Who are these dangerous men? Shall I name a few? They are men like Profs. Turner, Haskins, Scott, Blackmar, Ross, Warner, Charles Lee Smith, Bemis, Small, Commons, Powers, Kinley, Gould, Wilson, Dewey, Presi-

Daily News likened the committee's work to an inquisition: "The gentlemen of the committee wear the dress of the nineteenth century, but the object of their convenement is a reminder of the sixteenth," and it reported, "from the looks of the members of the committee, they seemed rather ashamed of the whole business."

Milwaukee Daily News, August 8, 1894, p. 1.

³³ Kinley to Ely, August 10, 1894, in the Ely Papers; *Wisconsin State Journal*, August 11, 1894.

³⁴ Ely, *Ground Under Our Feet*, 224.

dent John Finley; journalists like Edward Ingle, George P. Morris, W. B. Shaw, Robert Finley and Albert Shaw; workers in associated charities and municipal reform, like McDougall, Hubbard, Ayres, and Tolman." It was indeed a roll of brilliant and influential students and it included men whose names already adorned American scholarship. In concluding, Ely declared that when the time came, others would speak, including the president of the University, "who is falsely and maliciously accused of having rebuked me for my doctrines."³⁵

Meanwhile David Kinley and Frederick Jackson Turner had been busy collecting evidence and helping to prepare Ely's defense at the hearings of the committee scheduled to begin on August 20. On August 16 the *State Journal* printed a story, quoting an unidentified member of the Tracy and Gibbs printing firm, which denied that Ely had threatened to withdraw the printing of the Christian Social Union unless the company were unionized. Ely had only warned that the Christian Social Union, of which he was secretary and a member of the executive committee, might compel him to withdraw it. This never happened. The same day the *Journal* reported that it was now established that one of Ely's students, H. H. Powers, onetime teacher in the Northwest Business College in Madison, had consulted with the strike leader, a man by the name of J. F. Klunk. Local union leaders had declared that Klunk never had anything to do with Ely while the strike was in progress, but that he did confer several times with Powers. The *Journal* explained hopefully: "Both Prof. Powers and Dr. Ely wear short, full beards, and this may have aided in Supt. Wells's evident misconceptions."³⁶

Meanwhile Wells wrote to each member of the committee asking for verification of the newspaper reports of the committee's decision to confine the investigation to Ely's teaching. Perhaps he was anxious for a full investigation, or perhaps he was already hoping to find a reason for insisting, as he would later do, that his charges had not been carefully investigated. From Chynoweth he received the confirmation that the decision of

³⁵ *Madison Democrat*, August 15, 1894. Ely's denial was printed in the Madison papers and Ely took pains to have copies circulated as widely as possible.

³⁶ *Wisconsin State Journal*, August 16, 1894.

the committee was substantially that reported in the *Milwaukee Sentinel*. From Regent Johnston he received a similar although fuller reply. Johnston pointed out that the faculty of the University in the past two years had published some two hundred books and magazine articles. The regents could not be expected to supervise the teachings in these writings—"all which could be expected of us would be to see that no immoral or revolutionary teaching took place in the University."³⁷ Dale was equivocal. He did not recall hearing exactly what the Milwaukee papers stated, but he thought it was generally understood that particular attention should be given to Ely's teaching after he became a member of the University faculty.³⁸ On the basis of these replies Wells concluded that the investigation would be unfairly limited. Accordingly he decided not to attend the hearing. He had another excuse. He had to attend a meeting of the Board of Normal School Regents in Milwaukee which, perhaps fortuitously, had been called for the evening of August 20. Thus, when the committee met in the law school auditorium, with an audience of two hundred, Ely's accuser was not present. Instead, he sent a letter.³⁹ The committee adjourned the hearing to the next evening and Wells was again invited to be present.

Wells's letter was given to the press the next day. It was a long document, both argumentative and defiant. Wells contended that he had frequently called the attention of the Board to Ely's dangerous teachings, but without effect. When other devices failed he resorted to a public attack. Disclaiming any intention of harming Ely, Wells insisted, "I believed his occupancy of his present position was working and would continue to work irreparable injury." Wells saw an undermining of the courts, destruction of respect for properly constituted authority, class hatred and violence and bloodshed all issuing from Ely's writings. He refused to attend the hearing unless these dangerous writings as well as the teachings would be examined.⁴⁰

³⁷ Transcript of the Ely Trial, August 21, 1894, in Papers of the Board of Regents. This will be cited hereafter simply as Transcript of the Ely Trial.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ *Madison Democrat*, August 21, 1894; Transcript of the Ely Trial, August 20, 1894.

⁴⁰ *Madison Democrat*, August 21, 1894.

The committee responded by writing Wells and publishing the letter, expressing disappointment in his failure to appear, and reasserting the belief that it was authorized only to investigate Ely's teachings. The committee also pointed out that Wells had made other charges which had to be proved or disproved. The committee was surprised that Wells considered the proposed procedure unfair. However, if Wells attended the hearing and if "the mode of investigation determined upon is such as ought not be adhered to, we will cheerfully change it. We will gladly hear any suggestions you have to make with reference to the mode of procedure."⁴¹

The same day the *Democrat* carried a statement written by Ely to the Board complaining that he had traveled six hundred miles to face his accuser who, although he lived in Madison, had not appeared at the hearing. As for the strictures on his books, although he invited investigation by the committee, Ely was content to rest the matter with "an unprejudiced public to approve or condemn." Wells's other charges Ely regarded as more serious because "they assail not the soundness of my opinions . . . but because they attack my private character, and, if true, show me unworthy [of] the honor of being a professor in a great university. . . . I feel that I have the right to demand that your board at once investigate these charges."⁴²

The seemingly candid offer of the committee to consider Wells's suggestions as to procedures, added to the fact that there was no convenient way of escape, brought Wells to the trial on the evening of August 21. He was accompanied by George W. Bird, a prominent Madison attorney, whom he had employed that morning to represent him. But if he felt that the committee would adopt his proposals as to the scope and procedures of the investigation, he was quickly to learn his mistake. On the second evening of the hearing, the auditorium was again crowded. The reporter of the *Madison Democrat* observed the wives of a number of faculty members present. Chynoweth, Dale, and Johnston occupied the judges' rostrum; on one side of the rostrum were Ely and his attorney, Burr Jones; on the other, Wells and his

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² *Ibid.*

attorney.⁴³ The first part of the hearing was occupied with skirmishes between the lawyers, largely over the scope and procedure of the investigation. Bird submitted that Wells had made two charges. He charged that Ely believed in strikes and boycotts, "justifying and encouraging the one while practicing the other." Secondly, Wells charged that Ely's books contained "utopian, impractical or pernicious doctrines," the acceptance of which would "furnish a seeming moral justification of attacks upon life and property such as this country has already become too familiar with."⁴⁴ Bird insisted that investigation of the second charge must include the examination of Ely's writings as well as his teachings. It was only on the assumption that the investigation would be extended to include Ely's writings that Wells was willing to appear at all. Before a decision was made on the scope of the trial attention shifted to procedures. It was agreed that Wells's charges, as printed in *The Nation*, would be accepted as the starting point of the investigation. It was also agreed that the hearing should be conducted according to the rules of evidence. The committee would thereby confine itself to what would constitute evidence in court.⁴⁵ Following acceptance of Wells's letter to *The Nation* as the formal charge against Ely, Burr Jones, Ely's attorney, presented a specific and categorical denial of each charge. The denial was greeted with such applause that the investigating committee rebuked the audience and Wells's attorney protested that such behavior made the trial "the proceedings of a mob."⁴⁶

After the charges against Ely had been formally presented and specifically denied, the committee and the lawyers again became involved in a discussion of whether Ely's writings would be considered legitimate evidence. Wells and Bird insisted that the only way the most serious accusations could be sustained was through an examination of Ely's writings. "The mere fact of what he has talked in the lecture room is very ephemeral in comparison with what he has written and taught in his books."⁴⁷

⁴³ *Ibid.*, August 22, 1894.

⁴⁴ Transcript of the Ely Trial, August 21, 1894.

⁴⁵ Ely, *Ground Under Our Feet*, 228.

⁴⁶ Transcript of the Ely Trial, August 21, 1894.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

The committee, however, sought to avoid examination of Ely's writings. It was contended that the Board resolution did not authorize such an investigation. Chynoweth even sought to escape examining Ely's written works by asking whether Bird intended to "inflict upon this committee a reading of these entire works."⁴⁸ But where Chynoweth sought to divert attention from the books by witticisms,⁴⁹ Johnston met the issue squarely and seriously. He felt that the regents had no obligation to read all books published by the faculty to "see that there is nothing improper in them." A professor might write what he did not teach. Unless the teachings were closely connected to his writings, he saw no occasion for considering the books. Again he declared, "It seems to me it would be asking a great deal of this committee to purge the University library of every book which might be subject to criticism. Vaillant, the anarchist, in a court of justice in France, said that he got his views as an anarchist from Darwin and Spencer. Now, we cannot exclude their books from the library here because some fellow says he got his anarchistic ideas from them. It would put this committee in a very unenviable position to sit as censors upon all such books."⁵⁰ Ely's attorney also objected to examining his client's writings because statements would be "tortured" out of context. No clear-cut decision was made by the committee, although the transcript suggests that Ely's books would be considered if pertinent to the specific charges.⁵¹

The investigation then turned to the first charge against Ely, that is, that he encouraged strikes and practiced boycott. Three witnesses were called. W. A. Tracy, of the Tracy and Gibbs printing firm, testified that Ely did discuss the strike with him, that he had expressed the hope that Tracy's company would recognize the union since the Christian Social Union, of which

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ At one point in this debate Wells declared: "A man is liable to teach most effectually what his mind is most filled with. Now while the Professor is writing a book on socialism, his mind is filled with the subject, and he is liable to teach it with a great deal of power." To this Chynoweth responded: "Well, I used to think that some people tried to teach those things that their minds were particularly empty on." *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

Ely was secretary and whose publication Tracy and Gibbs printed, usually dealt with union firms, and that he had intimated that his association might require him to withdraw its printing from the company if it was learned that the company was opposed to unions. No evidence was produced to show that Ely threatened a boycott, that he assailed nonunion men, or that he consorted with the strikers. Ely substantiated the main points of this testimony in his declarations from the witness stand. The last witness to be called was Mr. Thomas Reynolds, who had been active in the strike. His testimony showed that there was a rumor that Ely had consorted with Klunk, but as the *Democrat* had reported earlier, this was a consequence of someone's confusing Ely with his student, H. H. Powers.⁵² At this point, with the testimony from the three witnesses clearly showing that Wells's first charge was false, the committee adjourned the hearing to August 23.

When the hearing opened again, Wells failed to appear. Instead, he wrote another letter to Chynoweth complaining that he had been deceived. The committee had not modified procedures or extended the scope of the investigation as he had been led to expect. He again objected to the "limitation the committee was disposed to place upon the scope of the inquiry," and he objected to the "admitted lack of power on the part of the committee to prosecute a thorough investigation." Although he now admitted that he could not prove his charges about Ely's connection with the strike, he insisted his other accusation was true. He concluded his letter by again denouncing Ely's works and quoting passages from Ely's book, *Socialism and Reform*. But he acknowledged, "The book is so innocent of clear cut thought, and so uniformly barren of explicit statements that it is difficult to quote passages that determine Prof. Ely's opinions or show that he has succeeded in forming any."⁵³

Thus, when the committee met again on the evening of August 23, neither Wells nor his attorney appeared. No sooner had the hearing begun than Regent Breese Stevens asked the committee for permission to present certain letters discussing Ely's books. The letters had been sent to President Adams by

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ *Madison Democrat*, August 24, 1894.

prominent teachers and scholars. The chairman granted permission on the grounds that the committee had already accepted a letter from Wells on Ely's writings, so it would welcome any other opinions which might be submitted. Thus, with Wells and his attorney absent, the committee graciously permitted testimony on Ely's writings to be inserted into the record.

The testimony—including statements from Charles Kendall Adams, E. B. Andrews, president of Brown University, Carroll D. Wright, commissioner of labor statistics of the United States, Albert Shaw of the *Review of Reviews*, Albion Small of Chicago, and others—disputed the charge of Ely's socialist teachings. Ely was again called to the witness stand and examined on his ideas; David Kinley and Frederick Jackson Turner also testified. Burr Jones concluded the hearing by presenting evidence from Ely's books to show Ely's evident conservatism on strikes, boycotts, communism, unions, anarchism, religion, temperance, private property, and the rest. Jones declared that Ely's books indicated a "growing tendency towards conservatism" of the author.⁵⁴ Thus the second session of the hearing, with all discordant and hostile elements removed, was devoted to showing what an essentially conservative fellow Ely really was, and it succeeded admirably.

As the trial progressed, the press reported it fully and with widespread editorial comment. Newspapers from Minneapolis and Des Moines, east to Atlanta, Baltimore, Philadelphia, and Boston, offered opinions on the case. Many gave Ely their full support, but some published caustic attacks. At the end of the month *The Nation* reluctantly withdrew its charges: "If he has been unjustly attacked, as now appears, no one will be better pleased than ourselves to see him vindicated."⁵⁵ Professor Albert Bushnell Hart had written from Paris an unsolicited response to the original *Nation* articles, complimenting Wells for his "courageous and public-spirited letter" and stigmatizing Ely as a "very mischievous man." The letter arrived too late to make much of an impression, but after Hart returned to the United

⁵⁴ Transcript of the Ely Trial, August 23, 1894.

⁵⁵ *The Nation*, 59: 151 (August 30, 1894).

States he wrote to Ely, acknowledging that his first impression of the case had been incorrect. He admitted that Wells had failed "to make out even a plausible basis for his attack," and requested Ely to use the letter as he chose, to counteract Hart's earlier letter to Wells.⁵⁶

That Ely would be exonerated few people now doubted, but some felt that this would not be enough. Two days after the committee hearing had been concluded, John M. Olin wrote to Regent George H. Noyes triumphantly announcing that Wells had "flunked." Olin was sure that the committee would exonerate Ely, but he felt that the committee should go further: "it seems to me there is an opportunity here for this committee to do the University a great service. This matter has attracted very general attention, and whatever this committee reports will receive attention and publication all over the country." The attack, he felt, had hurt the University, "and if the committee should bring in a report to the effect that the policy of this University was to give to the instructors or professors, great liberty in teaching what they believe to be the truth on the living questions of the day, such a report, would, I believe, be an excellent advertisement for the institution." Olin was sure that Johnston, Noyes's fellow townsman, would favor such a declaration; so would the chairman, Chynoweth of Madison. Olin proposed that Judge Noyes talk to Johnston about it.⁵⁷

Olin's suggestion, as the report of the committee shows, was willingly accepted. The report was read to the Board on September 18, 1894, by the chairman, Chynoweth. The first part dealt with the charges against Ely, the second with freedom of research and teaching at the University. It probably surprised no one, not even Wells, who did not attend the meeting, that the committee reported that the charges against Ely were completely without foundation. In view of the direction and aims of the investigation, however, and the general climate of opinion, the remarks of the committee on freedom of research and teaching were unexpected. The committee pointed out that during the preceding eighteen months nearly two hundred books,

⁵⁶ *Madison Democrat*, August 26, September 14, 1894.

⁵⁷ Olin to Noyes, August 25, 1894, in the Olin Papers.

pamphlets, and magazine articles had been written by members of the University faculty. These publications covered a very wide range of subjects and included, the committee surmised, ideas with which many good people could not agree. "We cannot, however, be unmindful of the fact that many of the universally accepted principles of today were but a short time ago denounced as visionary, impracticable and pernicious." The committee continued: "As Regents of a University with over one hundred instructors supported by nearly two millions of people who hold a vast diversity of views regarding the great questions which at present agitate the human mind, we could not for a moment think of recommending the dismissal or even the criticism of a teacher even if some of his opinions should, in some quarters, be regarded as visionary. Such a course would be equivalent to saying that no professor should teach anything which is not accepted by everybody as true. This would cut our curriculum down to very small proportions. We cannot for a moment believe that knowledge has reached its final goal, or that the present condition of society is perfect. We must therefore welcome from our teachers such discussions as shall suggest the means and prepare the way by which knowledge may be extended, present evils . . . removed and others prevented.

"We feel that we would be unworthy [of] the position we hold if we did not believe in progress in all departments of knowledge. In all lines of academic investigation it is of the utmost importance that the investigator should be absolutely free to follow the indications of truth wherever they may lead.

"Whatever may be the limitations which trammel inquiry elsewhere we believe the great state University of Wisconsin should ever encourage that continual and fearless sifting and winnowing by which alone the truth can be found."⁵⁸

The report of the committee, containing this bold and eloquent affirmation of academic freedom, was promptly adopted by the regents, and, so that there might be no misunderstanding, the Board then passed a resolution censuring Wells.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ Report of the investigating committee, in Papers of the Board of Regents, September 18, 1894.

⁵⁹ Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. D, p. 295, September 18, 1894.

It does not detract from the importance of this declaration to observe that in a sense it was irrelevant to the aims and methods of the committee's investigation. The committee had, in the beginning, simply sought to determine the truth of the charges against Ely. The investigation had revealed that Ely was guiltless of having aided strikes and practiced boycotts, and it demonstrated the "conservative" quality of Ely's writings and teachings. There was no occasion during the hearing to consider what Ely's privileges would have been had the evidence not shown the essential "safeness" of his views. Despite the hubbub raised by the newspapers and the dark fears of some of his colleagues, Ely was probably never in any real danger of dismissal. He was respected and popular, President Adams' "star" professor. Wells, on the other hand, was *persona non grata* to the members of the Board, a contentious, fractious man. Even if he had had a good case he would have encountered difficulty in convincing his colleagues on the Board of Regents. Without the suggestion of Olin, the committee might simply have found for Ely and the case would have been forgotten as soon as Wells retired to the anonymity from which he had come. But the committee had welcomed Olin's suggestion and prepared an explicit affirmation of academic freedom which lifted its report into the realm of academic statesmanship. And in the words of Pyre, "This noble statement of principles no subsequent government has had the hardihood to retract."⁶⁰

The report was printed in full by the local papers and broadcast widely. The *State Journal* pronounced the vindication of Ely "complete and unqualified" and observed, "Incidentally if not inadvertently the report contains a résumé of the good work done at the university ever since the civil war. . . . This handsome advertisement has been telegraphed all over the country. Brother Chynoweth has a fetching way about him that disregards seasons and is no respecter of anything except oppor-

⁶⁰ James F. A. Pyre, *Wisconsin* (New York, 1920), 292. Pyre declares that the words dealing with academic freedom were written by Adams. *Ibid.*, 293. Theodore Herfurth later reached the same conclusion. *Capital Times*, December 18, 1946, p. 6. Orlando E. Clark in 1910 wrote to Van Hise, "I am one of the few surviving members of the board of '94. My recollection now is that John Johnston was the author of that part of the report on the Wells-Ely Controversy." Clark to Van Hise, July 7, 1910, in the Presidents' Papers.

tunity." The *Democrat* was not surprised with the verdict. It was highly pleased, however, with the other parts of the report. "It put forth an earnest defense for liberty of thought and freedom of instruction. . . . It is obvious from the report of the committee and the action of the board upon it that the University of Wisconsin is in no immediate danger of having its true university character shriveled by unreasonable limitations."⁶¹

The Board of Regents, still made up largely of those whom President Bascom had denounced as politicians, had deliberately chosen, at the prompting of John Olin, to meet the issue of academic freedom. The Board met the issue directly and they met it gallantly.



AT THE very end of this period between 1887 and 1903, the regents faced a serious problem involving the control of University funds. Although the struggle which ensued was far less dramatic than that involved in the investigation of the charges against Ely and though it received no publicity, in the minds of some of the regents the outcome was fully as important to the independence of the University. It is difficult to know whether the question of the control over University funds raised a genuine threat to the necessary powers and prerogatives of the regents, or whether, in this instance, some of the members were not overly suspicious of any change which might under imaginable circumstances reduce the power of the Board. But whatever the ultimate truth, the regents believed and acted as if their powers were being jeopardized by the establishment of a centralized system of accounting for the state.

In 1899 Governor Schofield complained in his message to the legislature that no provision had yet been made for bringing together the estimated receipts and necessary state expenditures in order to guide the legislature in its work. What he seemed to want was provision for a state budget system, something which was not formally introduced into Wisconsin until 1911. The legislature responded by adopting a law which provided for the

⁶¹ *Wisconsin State Journal*, September 19, 1894; *Madison Democrat*, September 19, 1894.

inauguration of a central and uniform accounting system.⁶² Although this act applied only to the state executive offices, and was intended primarily to institute "uniformity and system" in the accounting methods of these offices, the regents of the University saw in the law a move which would ultimately lodge control of the disbursement of University funds with the executive department of the state government. The Board of Regents in 1900 viewed this prospect with no more favor than had the Board of the 1850's. The early Board had been forced to accept legislative control of University funds, but the regents of 1900 moved to avert a similar danger.

In 1900, speaking for the Board of Regents, President George H. Noyes instructed the governor and legislature on the relation between the University and the state: "The University is a corporation under the laws of the state, managed by a board of regents appointed by the Governor. While it derives its power and at the present time the principal part of its financial support from the state, it is given the exclusive authority . . . of administering its affairs. The moneys which it receives and disburses are corporate funds and not 'moneys of the state.' The duties of its officers are prescribed by the statute and by the regulations adopted by the regents under authority of the statute. Its books of record and of account are kept in accordance with its own approved methods and in a manner best suited for the conduct of its business. Any attempt to take away or curtail its corporate powers or character . . . would prove detrimental to its interests. Only some great defect in its present organization, or in its present systems, would justify any attempt to change them."⁶³ The

⁶² *Laws of Wisconsin*, 1899, pp. 201-203.

⁶³ *Regents' Biennial Report*, 1899-1900, p. 4. The position taken by the Board was not as paradoxical as it might seem at first glance; it had both a legal and historical basis. The University was recognized in the Constitution. When the Board of Regents was first created, among the powers given it was the right to sue and be sued. In 1873 the Wisconsin supreme court, in a case in which a professor sued the Board for the remainder of his salary, held that the professor was not a public officer in the sense that his employment did not constitute a contract between himself and the Board of Regents. The court refused to uphold the argument advanced by William F. Vilas, counsel for the regents, that the University was not a corporate body but a public institution. *Butler vs. Regents of University*, Wisconsin supreme court, *Reports*, 32: 124-133 (1873). In 1887 Regents Keyes and Paul, both able lawyers, affirmed on the witness stand their belief in the independent powers of the Board of Regents. For a general

Board of Visitors in 1899 and again in 1900, perhaps at the suggestion of a member of the Board of Regents, offered support by proclaiming that the University accounting and business methods were "so complete and safe that we can offer no improvements thereon."⁶⁴

Neither the declaration of the regents nor the testimony of the Board of Visitors deterred the legislature of 1901 from extending the law of 1899. The law of 1901 directed the governor to establish a system of central accounting for the state. All state departments, institutions, and agencies were to be included within the system. The law provided further that all money belonging to or received by the departments and institutions was to be deposited in the state treasury or in a depository named by the treasurer. No money was to be paid out by the treasurer except on a warrant issued by the secretary of state.⁶⁵

It was not immediately clear what changes would emerge from this move toward centralized state accounting, but the regents could be sure of several things. Although the state treasurer had been ex officio treasurer of the Board of Regents since 1870, he had hitherto been required to "perform all the duties of such office subject to such regulations as the Board may adopt." Under the law of 1901 it would seem that he would no longer be subject solely to the regulations of the Board in his capacity as treasurer. Moreover, the law had authorized the regents to expend the income of the University Fund "as they may deem expedient." The law of 1901, permitting the regents to draw funds only on a warrant issued by the secretary of state, placed that power in jeopardy if the secretary of state construed his function to embrace discretionary power. In the portent of these changes the regents scented danger.

Governor Robert M. La Follette, who had supplanted Schofield in 1901, moved slowly in carrying out this law. In his second inaugural message he reported that progress had been made in establishing a central accounting system for the state. He

discussion of the corporate status of state universities, see Edward C. Elliott and M. M. Chambers, *The Colleges and the Courts: Judicial Decisions Regarding Institutions of Higher Education in the United States* (The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, New York, 1936), 114 ff.

⁶⁴ *Regents' Biennial Report*, 1899-1900, pp. 37, 64-65.

⁶⁵ *Laws of Wisconsin*, 1901, pp. 618-620.

pointed out, however, that in initiating this system care was being taken "not to interfere with systems already established and in every way commendable" in the normal schools and the University.⁶⁶ So long as La Follette was governor, it was apparent that no vigorous attempt would be made to force conformity to the law. This was further borne out several weeks later when the governor wrote to the Board of Regents outlining the steps which had been taken to make the law of 1901 effective and directing the regents to initiate new procedures to conform to the law. At the same time he invited from the Board of Regents such comment as "to them should seem proper."⁶⁷

The governor's proposal and request were considered sufficiently important to warrant calling a special meeting of the Board. In preparation for the meeting, Breese J. Stevens, chairman of the executive committee, prepared a paper exploring the relations between the regents and the state government. The principal points of the paper were accepted as representing the views of the Board.⁶⁸ The Board of Regents approached the problem specifically from the standpoint of its power. It was agreed that the central accounting system provided for by law would, if extended to the University, relieve the regents of much labor and responsibility.⁶⁹ The regents, however, felt that they had no authority and certainly no inclination to surrender their power over funds even to the extent contemplated in the law. In large part they arrived at this opinion because of the nature of the financial support of the University. Funds for the maintenance of the institution were derived from private sources, from the United States, and from the state. Private gifts had recently become important. President Adams had willed all his property to the University. Two members of the Board were contemplating or had already determined on similar bequests. Moneys received from private sources, the Board contended,

⁶⁶ Message of Robert M. La Follette, January 15, 1903, in *Public Documents of the State of Wisconsin*, 1901-1902, vol. 1, pp. 6-8.

⁶⁷ La Follette to the secretary of the Board of Regents, February 2, and regents to La Follette, February 5, 1903, in *Records of the Board of Regents*, Vol. F, p. 17.

⁶⁸ A copy of this document is among the papers of the Board of Regents. It was subsequently spread upon the *Records of the Board of Regents* (Vol. F, pp. 17-22) as a report of the executive committee expressing the views of the Board.

⁶⁹ *Records of the Board of Regents*, Vol. F, p. 18, February 16, 1903.

“are given to the regents, a corporation of the state, as a trustee, selected . . . by the respective testators and donors. It would seem that the corporation would hold these moneys for the designated beneficiaries, pursuant to the terms of the trust, and not as state moneys in any sense. And the same would seem to be true of the fees received for accommodations furnished and service rendered to students.” The regents took a similar position on money received from the federal government. “These moneys are given by the general government directly to the regents or to the state in aid of the university. They are not given to the state in any sense other than that of a trusteeship, which trust is fully discharged when the conditions under which the gift is made are fully complied with.”⁷⁰ If the regents were responsible to anyone for the proper use of this money, they submitted, they were responsible to the federal government. “It would seem to follow that these are not state moneys to be covered by the system of accounting proposed.”⁷¹

Even the money supplied directly by the state, the Board contended, became the money of a private corporation once it was transferred to the Board. Support for this position was found in the law governing the University. The law established the regents as the governing power of the University and invested them with all the power necessary to accomplish their duties. Although the state treasurer was treasurer of the Board, he was required to “perform all the duties of such office subject to such regulations as the board may adopt.” The Board was “authorized to expend such portion of the income of the university fund as they may deem expedient”; it was only required to report to the governor on its finances biennially. Moreover, the law specifically provided that all state appropriations “shall be placed at the disposal of the board of regents by transfer to the treasurer of such board, thenceforth to be independent and distinct of the accounts of the state.” This was not only provided for by law, but required by principle. Citing the famous Dartmouth College case and the less well known case of Vincennes University versus Indiana, they postulated that “the power of dis-

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 19.

posing of its own funds is one of the necessary and inseparable attributes of corporate life, and the withdrawal of which so emasculates as to destroy the corporation itself." Acknowledging, then, the power of the secretary of state to audit expenditures of state funds, the Board submitted that his power ended with the transfer of state funds to the regents. For the legislature to require the secretary of state to audit disbursements of state funds after transfer to the Board was "in effect to require him to audit the expenditure of private as distinguished from state moneys, a field once entered upon, to which there is no limit."⁷²

After full discussion, and agreement between the regents on these points, a committee was appointed consisting of Breese J. Stevens, Major C. Mead, William F. Vilas, and James C. Kerwin. The committee was instructed to transmit the views of the Board to Governor La Follette and to work out any necessary arrangements with him, "it being the desire and purpose of this board to cooperate with cordiality in the efforts of the Governor to carry out the system of central bookkeeping sought to be put into effect."⁷³ The committee arranged to meet the governor that very evening.⁷⁴ No formal report of the meeting was ever made, but one of its consequences was a law passed by the legislature several months later. The legislative history of this measure indicates that it had effective support and encountered no opposition though there is no record that it was sponsored by the governor and the regents. Introduced in the Senate by the Committee on State Affairs on April 16, the bill moved quickly to passage in the Senate on May 1. On May 9 the Assembly concurred.⁷⁵ No amendments were even proposed in either house.

The law succeeded in bringing University accounting within the purview of the state accounting system while safeguarding the power of the regents over the University Fund and protecting the fund itself. The relation of the state treasurer to the Board was somewhat changed. The treasurer was given charge of "all securities for loans and all moneys belonging to the uni-

⁷² *Ibid.*, 19-20, 21.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 22.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ *Senate Journal*, 1903, pp. 708-709, 909; *Assembly Journal*, 1184.

versity or in any wise appropriated by law to its endowment or support," under such regulations as the regents might make "not inconsistent with law."⁷⁶ It was further provided that money was to be drawn from the treasury only on warrants issued by the secretary of state; but the secretary of state was denied discretionary power and required to issue warrants as directed by the Board or its authorized agents. Moreover, the treasurer was directed to set all University funds apart from state funds in a special account. In the creation and protection of this fund the law was specific. "All gifts, bounties, and moneys paid in and appropriations made by law for the university, its endowment, aid, or support, when received by the state treasurer shall be at once credited to the proper fund, and if received as part of the general funds shall be forthwith transferred by warrant to the proper university account, and shall all thenceforth be held solely for the respective uses to which the same is by law appropriated, and shall never be employed, diverted to, or paid out for any other use or purpose."⁷⁷ This part of the law is still in force.⁷⁸

To Breese J. Stevens more than to any other should go the credit for preserving the integrity of the University Fund and for safeguarding, if only for a time, the power of the regents over that fund. It was his last important service for the University.⁷⁹

⁷⁶ *Laws of Wisconsin*, 1903, pp. 415-418.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 417.

⁷⁸ *Wisconsin Statutes*, 1945, p. 518.

⁷⁹ It is of course impossible to know what difficulties were forestalled by the regents' jealous preoccupation with what must have seemed to some a trifling affair. In the case of the University of Michigan and the University of Minnesota mandamus proceedings, either upheld or directed by the respective supreme courts, were employed to compel presumptuous state officers to audit and allow expenditures approved by the regents. See Elliott and Chambers, *The Colleges and the Courts*, 134 ff.

19.

President Thomas Chamberlin

By 1885, a year before Bascom resigned and two years before his resignation took effect, some members of the Board of Regents had already decided that Bascom's successor would be Thomas Chrowder Chamberlin. Chamberlin was a Midwesterner and a Wisconsin man. He was born near Mattoon, Illinois, in 1843, but when he was three his family moved to Wisconsin and settled in the southern part of the state near Beloit. In 1866, at the age of twenty-three, Chamberlin received the bachelor of arts degree from Beloit College; after serving as principal of the Delavan High School two years he enrolled as a graduate student at the University of Michigan. He returned to Wisconsin to teach at the state normal school at Whitewater and in 1873 was invited to join the faculty of Beloit College as professor of geology. The same year he was appointed to the Wisconsin Geological Survey as assistant geologist. From 1876 until the completion of the work of the survey in 1882 he was chief geologist. Chamberlin's distinguished work with the Wisconsin survey brought him to the attention of Major J. W. Powell, who became director of the United States Geological Survey in 1880.¹ In 1881 Powell placed Chamberlin in charge of the glacial division of the United States Geological Survey. In his early forties, widely and favorably known in Wisconsin, he was one of the leading geologists of the United States. When, early in 1885, Chamberlin was asked whether he would be a

¹ Rollin T. Chamberlin, "Biographical Memoir of Thomas Chrowder Chamberlin, 1843-1928," in *National Academy of Sciences, Biographical Memoirs* (Washington, 1934), 15:312-313, 316.

candidate for the presidency of the University, Bascom had not yet submitted his resignation.

Chamberlin's response to the first tentative offer was cautious. Aware of the tension between Bascom and the Board of Regents, he had no desire to project himself into the conflict. Writing to Professor Holden in May, 1885, he declared that he could not accept the position before 1886 if it were offered. He disliked administrative friction; hence before accepting the position he would have to be assured that there was no friction between the faculty and the regents and that the faculty favored his appointment. "On these points my mind is clear," he had written. "And also that I will do nothing knowingly that will not be agreeable to Dr. Bascom and his friends."² Chamberlin would not permit himself to be used as a lever in the hands of Boss Keyes to pry Bascom out of the presidency. That much he made quite clear. Then, late in 1885, Bascom announced to the Board his intention of submitting his resignation at the June meeting of the Board in 1886, the resignation to take effect in June, 1887.

The regents promptly appointed a committee of five, with George H. Paul as chairman, to canvass the field for a "proper person" for president and "to investigate and determine at what time and in what manner a successor to President Bascom can be chosen with strict regard to the convenience and best interests of the University."³ If possible the Board would register a last minor triumph over Bascom by refusing to let him set the date at which his resignation was to become effective.

Paul's first act as chairman of the committee showed that the regents had already decided upon Chamberlin as Bascom's successor. On January 12 he wrote to Chamberlin announcing Bascom's resignation and inviting Chamberlin to accept the presidency of the University. Pointing out that the committee could not make a final offer, Paul assured Chamberlin that if he indicated a willingness to accept, the Board would elect him to office. In conclusion Paul asked Chamberlin to fix the earliest

² Chamberlin to Professor E. S. Holden, May 16, 1885, in the Keyes Papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

³ Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. C, p. 461, January 19, 1886.

date at which he could take over the duties of the office.⁴ At the same time Paul asked Senator Spooner to interview Chamberlin in Washington and urge him to accept the position.⁵ Elisha W. Keyes, although not a member of the committee, lent a willing hand in the negotiations with Chamberlin. Six months before, Keyes had written to Vilas that sentiment was unanimous for Chamberlin as Bascom's successor.⁶ During the committee's negotiations with Chamberlin, Keyes advised the members of the committee, he had written to Senator Spooner to counsel him in his conversations with Chamberlin, and he had asked Professor Irving, who was in Washington at the time, to convey what he considered pertinent information to Chamberlin.

Chamberlin was slow to respond. After deliberating for more than a month he wrote a long letter to Paul in which he neither accepted nor rejected the offer. He was reluctant to leave his scientific work "on the very threshold of its higher fruition." On the other hand, he was favorably disposed because of the "great possibilities" of the University and because the position promised a "less nomadic life." But even if he did accept he could not come before midsummer of 1887 because of work he must finish. Thus any hopes that Keyes might have entertained for pushing Bascom out went glimmering.

But Chamberlin also was concerned with the powers of the president. He declared that from what he had heard the president was an executive in name rather than fact. "In the shadow of a great controversy here, I am prompted to raise the radical question of 'Presidential prerogatives' with this suggestion of difference, that it were better settled before election than battled afterward."

Chamberlin looked forward to a vigorous and healthy development of the University and the connected educational systems, and to the introduction and firm establishment of "the newer educational ideas that have emanated and will yet more abundantly develop from the profound intellectual movements of our times." An executive seeking these ends would have to

⁴ Paul to Chamberlin, January 12, 1886, in the Papers of the Board of Regents.

⁵ Paul to Keyes, February 11, 1886, in the Keyes Papers.

⁶ Keyes to Vilas, June 4, 1885, in the Keyes Papers.

be sure of his ground. "Without questioning that this is equally the view of the Board, I yet desire to inquire upon what specific guarantees lying in the rules or practices of the Board, could the latitude and the support needful to a progressive administration be predicted."⁷

Paul was not pleased with Chamberlin's letter. To Keyes he wrote: "I do not precisely like the outlook—nor do I wholly like the views intimated by him as to the government of the University. We want no more one-man power, above the regents. This is neither Law nor Sense." But Keyes was unperturbed. He felt that the letter was excellent but that Chamberlin had been misinformed concerning "the exact nature and conditions of our relations with Dr. Bascom." He had no doubt that Chamberlin would "come to time in June." Keyes confided that he was in touch with Irving, who strongly favored Chamberlin. "Through him I am pouring into C's ears some things he should know, and one thing in particular, that while the Board want a President, competent to run the whole business of instruction, and will not interfere if such a man fills the place, but in no event will the Board agree, in advance, to abdicate its powers, etc."⁸

Reassured by Keyes, Paul called a meeting of his committee at Milwaukee on March 23. Chamberlin's letter was carefully considered, and on the basis of the discussion Paul drew up an answer which was signed by the members of the committee who were present. The committee urged Chamberlin to accept the presidency, agreed that he could wait until June, 1887, to assume his duties and that there would be no objection to his devoting part of his time to writing up the results of his research, provided this work did not interfere with the effective administration of the University. In response to Chamberlin's inquiry about the prerogatives of the president, the committee pointed out that under law the president was the executive head of the instructional force of the University. The immediate government of the several colleges was entrusted to the several faculties.

⁷ Chamberlin to Paul, March 4, 1886, in the Papers of the Board of Regents, copy in the Keyes Papers.

⁸ Paul to Keyes, March 8, 1886, in the Keyes Papers; Keyes to Paul, March 11, 1886, in the Paul Papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

All other powers resided in the Board. The committee pointed out that this arrangement differed from that of some of the older colleges where virtually all power was lodged in the president and the faculty. "Under such circumstances," the committee declared, "the extent of the authority delegated to the President of the Faculty, is largely measured by the extent of the confidence entertained by the Board in the ability and discretion of that officer." The committee assured Chamberlin that the Board would not deprive him of "the proper prerogatives of the President or the faculty as to the instructional department, or, under ordinary circumstances . . . withhold from the President any executive duty pertaining to the same, which he can properly, or would willingly, exercise." In the past, the committee explained, the president and the faculty had been given a free hand in matters involving course of study, internal organization, discipline, and the like. The regents had controlled financial affairs, the number on the teaching staff, and the property of the University. "Serious irritations" between the faculty and regents had never occurred. Those between the president and Board "have arisen, apparently, not so much from the action of the Board in the strict pursuance of its legitimate and conceded duty under the law, as from the fact that the law permitted the Board to exist and to perform any duties whatever." The committee denied that Bascom's resignation was the result of either interference by the Board in the internal affairs of the University or an attempt by the regents to usurp the president's power. Most misunderstanding had arisen from the political course which Bascom had chosen to pursue.⁹

After receiving this letter Chamberlin was still undecided. But he was slightly embarrassed at the length to which the committee had gone in discussing the powers of the Board and its relation to the president. "This question of formal relationships, though an important one, has not been a leading consideration in my study of the subject. I raised it because it was the chief one among the legal and specific relations of the position that could be authoritatively answered by the Board." But he was

⁹ Paul, Raymer, and Parkinson to Chamberlin, March 27, 1886, in the Papers of the Board of Regents.

not yet completely satisfied. He had heard many rumors about the internal situation. In order to clear up all questions he proposed to meet the committee in a conference at some point between Washington and Madison.¹⁰ The committee accordingly arranged to meet Chamberlin at Chicago on May 8.¹¹

The conference was eminently satisfactory on both sides, and any doubts that had existed were swept away. In reporting to the regents on June 22 the committee declared that of the many applicants only four or five had been actually considered. This was indubitably for the record only. There is no evidence that any candidate but Chamberlin was ever seriously considered. Prefacing its recommendations with a statement of what it hoped to find in a president, the committee pointed out that it sought someone with natural ability, culture, scholarship, experience, teaching ability, executive talent, and devotion to higher education. But more important than these, the committee declared, no doubt with a picture of Bascom in mind, was the consideration that the "office of president, especially in view of the relations of the University to the state and the people, is peculiarly representative in character, and in the opinion of your committee, more danger to the institution is to be apprehended from the misapprehension or perversion of the functions of that officer than from any conspicuous absence of the positive qualifications enumerated . . . it is not possible for the institution to realize just public expectation and to fill all the grand purposes of its organization, unless its chief officer should prove to be in harmony with the progressive spirit of the age, and the general interests of the institution, and the method of government determined for it by law."

The committee believed that Thomas Chamberlin possessed all the qualifications desired. He had been born and educated in the West, he was in his prime, he had had professional educational experience, he was a scientist with a good classical knowledge, and though conservative in temperament he was sympathetic to "progressivism" in education. "In the opinion of your committee, while his election could in no man-

¹⁰ Chamberlin to Paul, April 15, 1886, in the Papers of the Board of Regents.

¹¹ Chamberlin to Paul, May 3, 1886, in the Papers of the Board of Regents.

ner be construed as any reflection upon the conceded progress of the University in the past decade, his acceptance would afford ground for an unreserved confidence in the wholesome, conservative and efficient administration of its instructional affairs in the future." The committee reported that Chamberlin had agreed to accept the presidency on condition that he be elected unanimously with the virtually unanimous concurrence of the faculty and alumni, that he be allowed to take over his duties after commencement in 1887, that he be granted time to complete the written portion of his present work, and that he be given an annual compensation equal to what he could command in the United States Geological Survey.¹² All conditions were as satisfactory to the Board as to the committee. Chamberlin was accordingly elected to the presidency the next day at a salary of four thousand dollars a year and was promised the use of the president's house.¹³ He accepted promptly.¹⁴ As Elisha W. Keyes had predicted, Chamberlin had "come to time." It now remained to see how well the Board had chosen.

When he entered upon his duties as president of the University of Wisconsin, Chamberlin was just turning forty-four. A big man—six feet, one and a half inches tall—with a large, plain face partly concealed behind a heavy, drooping mustache and luxurious chin whiskers, he was aloof, cold, and distant. Only his closest associates found him gentle and kindly. A product of the classical education of Beloit College of twenty years before, he had already established his reputation in geology, a science in which were combined a search for knowledge for its own sake and a search for knowledge that could be used in the exploitation of those resources of the earth's surface which were now becoming more valuable through the rapid advances in industrial processes and engineering skills. Chamberlin's interest was primarily focused on the advance of knowledge. His work in the Wisconsin Geological Survey had turned his attention to glaciation, which in turn led him to a study of the geological climate. Later, after he left Wisconsin to return to the study of

¹² Report of Special Committee on the Selection of a New President of the University of Wisconsin, June 22, 1886, in Papers of the Board of Regents.

¹³ Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. C, p. 482, June 23, 1886.

¹⁴ Chamberlin to Paul, July 5, 1886, in Papers of the Board of Regents.

geology, he penetrated still further into geological antiquity to formulate and, with the aid of Forest R. Moulton, to demonstrate the planetesimal hypothesis of the genesis of the earth. His great and original contributions in geology led at least one of his admirers to place him on a short list of the great original thinkers of the world: Aristotle, Copernicus, Galileo, Newton, Laplace, Darwin, Chamberlin.¹⁵

This was the man, midway in his career as a scientist, whom the regents had lured to the presidency of the University and whose leadership they willingly accepted. At the first meeting of the Board after he arrived to take up his duties, Chamberlin was invited to sit with the Board and "to participate in the discussion and consideration of all questions at his pleasure."¹⁶ Two years later the legislature, at the request of the Board, revised the law to make the president of the University an ex officio member of the Board of Regents and a member of all standing committees.¹⁷

The Board had little reason to regret the leadership which Chamberlin offered. As chief of the Wisconsin Geological Survey he had learned how to coax funds from the legislature and to deal with state officials. He had improved this skill while a member of the United States Geological Survey. His plans for the extension and improvement of the University were large, almost revolutionary. Chamberlin himself was a man of great originality and boldness with a mind unfettered by commitment to any one type of learning or any one discipline as the single road to educational salvation, and he conceived a broad program to widen and deepen the activities of the University. It mattered little to him whether an educational program had been tried before or whether it conformed to traditional usage. He was concerned solely with whether it promised useful results, either cultural or practical, and how it could be brought about. Yet he was no more predisposed to approve what was new merely because it was an innovation than he was willing to ac-

¹⁵ Bailey Willis, "Memorial of Thomas Chrowder Chamberlin," in *Bulletin of the Geological Society of America*, 40:23, 28-29 (March 30, 1929).

¹⁶ Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. C, p. 506, June 21, 1887.

¹⁷ *Laws of Wisconsin*, 1889, 1:318. The president was given the right to vote only in case of a tie.

cept what was old merely because it was established. During the period of his presidency he traveled widely, he visited other universities, and discussed aims, objectives, and methods with leading university administrators. Chamberlin's correspondence shows he was in frequent communication with such men as Adams of Cornell, Eliot of Harvard, Jordan of Stanford, and Wilson of Princeton.¹⁸ His plans for the University and his ideas of the appropriate functions of the institution were set forth in his reports to the Board, in his correspondence, and occasionally in his speeches.

In the first University catalogue prepared under his direction, Chamberlin enunciated what he considered to be the great aims of the University: "(1) To provide amply for disciplinary training, by presenting a varied group of college courses, each rendered capable of modification through elective studies, and by offering carefully considered adaptations of those suited to afford a broad ground work for subsequent professional training. (2) To provide trustworthy technical training in the leading professions. (3) To contribute to the advancement of knowledge, and to train students in investigation. (4) To contribute directly to the higher education of the people."¹⁹ Chamberlin's conception of a state university was more formally elaborated in a Charter Day address at the University of Nebraska in 1890. He proclaimed that the mature state university must train the individual not for his sake but for the community's good; it must show and teach students "that the truest and most profound patriotism consists in performing their individual part in the great civic organism in the highest and most perfect manner." The University was to promote scholarship for the common good. "Scholarship for the sake of the scholar simply is refined selfishness. Scholarship for the sake of the state and the people is refined patriotism." The state university, he contended, must work for the entire people; its influence must be radiated out through its students, through work with the common school

¹⁸ Wilson, for example, wrote to him in 1891 that he was "delighted to think that you enjoyed as much as I did our brief conversation in my parlor. I hope that it is indeed true that I may have been of some use to you in formulating your plans for the university." Woodrow Wilson to Chamberlin, June 20, 1891, in the Presidents' Papers.

¹⁹ *University Catalogue*, 1887-88, p. 38.

system, through university extension, through the investigation of old and new truth, and the dissemination of the results of these investigations for the benefit of all.²⁰

Although he was a scientist himself, Chamberlin's sympathy for learning was broad and catholic. In the early 1890's he was engaged in a project to so modify the copyright law as to place a copy of each copyrighted book in selected libraries—an adaptation of the English law. In soliciting aid he wrote to President N. Merrifield of the University of North Dakota about his conception of a university. "I do not see how the great aim of educational institutions, the promotion of the highest civilization, is to be attained without a thoroughgoing scientific knowledge of the forces and agencies of civilization and their mode of operation as expressed in the past and the present. . . . One of the great obligations of today, as I see it, is to begin on a vast scale the collection and preservation of the necessary data for a scientific study of civilization in all its factors. Next to this is the obligation to train up men in all the states to begin, in the strict scientific spirit, the investigation even with the imperfect data which we now possess and to work on as fast as may be to the greater consummation.

"I hold very radical and intense views concerning the functions of state universities—of all real universities in fact—which I believe to embrace the accumulation and production of knowledge at least as truly as the dispensing of the conglomeration of knowledge and guess-work which, in some of the most important departments of thought, is the best that we can do now because our predecessors have not gathered the requisite material nor developed the requisite number and quality of investigators."²¹

But Chamberlin's conception of the multiple functions of the state university did not in itself set him apart from his predecessors. Forty years before, Chancellor Lathrop had talked and written in terms not very different from what Chamberlin now proposed. What did distinguish him from his predecessors and from many of his contemporaries was that he acted, often dar-

²⁰ Thomas C. Chamberlin, *The Coming of Age of State Universities* (n.p., 1890), 9, 10. This was a Charter Day address delivered at the University of Nebraska, February 15, 1890.

²¹ Chamberlin to Merrifield, March 3, 1892, in the Presidents' Papers.

ingly, to translate his program and his plans into reality. In him the word often only explained the deed or was preliminary to it. Of course, he was able to do many of the things he did only because the time was right; the University had been accepted as a responsibility of the state before he arrived, and its relation to the high schools had been established in broad outline; the growth of wealth within the state made it possible for the legislature to contribute larger funds to the University. But Chamberlin was quick to see the situation and use it in furthering his designs. When he carried his proposals to the Board, the faculty, or the legislature, his objectives were clearly defined and were always accompanied by a plan to put them into effect. If some of his associates found him to be almost as cold as the glaciers he had studied so long, they must also have remarked another similarity. It was almost impossible to resist or deflect him.

The various phases of Chamberlin's program will be discussed in detail in other chapters, but the general outline of his work may be noted here.²² Early in his administration Chamberlin sought and secured a modification of the law, to permit a more logical and workable organization of the University. In 1889 the legislature adopted a law which provided that the University should consist of the Colleges of Letters and Science, Mechanics and Engineering, Agriculture, and Law, and "such other colleges, schools or departments as now are or may from time to time be added thereto or connected therewith."²³ In the reorganization which followed, the departments of pure knowledge and investigation were largely grouped together in the College of Letters and Science; professional studies and applied knowledge and research were placed in the respective professional colleges. General E. E. Bryant was made the first full-time dean of the law college in 1889; two years later E. A. Birge and W. A. Henry were named deans, respectively, of the Colleges of Letters and Science, and of Agriculture. The College of Engineering continued to be administered by a committee of the faculty until the end of the decade.

²² For a brief and competent treatment of Chamberlin's work at the University see Harry L. Russell, "Thomas C. Chamberlin," in the *Wisconsin Alumnus*, 42:215-227, 285 (April, 1941).

²³ *Laws of Wisconsin*, 1889, 1:301-302.

In pursuit of the "great aims" of the University, Chamberlin gave his strongest support to the encouragement of research by the faculty and the training of investigators through the development of graduate work. One of his first acts as president had been to persuade the regents to establish eight University fellowships, each carrying an annual stipend of four hundred dollars, to be awarded by the University faculty to promising graduate students. In his last report to the Board, Chamberlin said: "Perhaps no end has been sought more earnestly during the present administration of the University than the development of the graduate department."²⁴ He strove diligently to strengthen the faculty by the appointment of outstanding established scholars or potential ones. Thus Joseph Jastrow was brought from Johns Hopkins University in 1888 to establish a psychological laboratory; Frederick Jackson Turner, a Wisconsin graduate with a Ph.D. from Johns Hopkins, was appointed to take William F. Allen's place upon the latter's death; and a year later C. H. Haskins, also a Johns Hopkins man, joined the history department. In 1892 Richard T. Ely transferred from the faculty of Johns Hopkins to Wisconsin to establish the School of Economics, Political Science, and History. In these, as in other appointments, Chamberlin leaned heavily on Johns Hopkins, a fact which did not escape President Charles Eliot of Harvard when he visited the Wisconsin campus during Chamberlin's administration.²⁵ Moreover Chamberlin sought to redirect emphasis in undergraduate instruction toward more advanced study by encouraging the introduction of the seminar, which was already popularized at Johns Hopkins, and by the establishment of the group system as an alternative for the course system. The group system was devised, in the words of Chamberlin, "for the purpose of permitting greater concentration, continuity, and thoroughness in the leading lines of study and at the same time of affording wider familiarity of the broad field of knowledge."²⁶ Under this system the first two years were to be devoted to the "basal studies" while the "leading

²⁴ *Regents' Biennial Report*, 1891-92, p. 42.

²⁵ James F. A. Pyre, *Wisconsin* (New York, 1920), 281.

²⁶ *Regents' Biennial Report*, 1891-92, pp. 41-42.

study and its accompanying studies occupy the last two years. These courses are to be supplemented by synoptical lectures on the chief studies not otherwise taken, so that the student at graduation will possess some knowledge of their salient features. The general purpose of this system is to introduce university methods, in the modern sense of the term, more largely in the undergraduate college courses, and so prepare the way for the better development of graduate work.”²⁷ Introduced in Chamberlin’s last year, the group system was never fully developed, but in it was the germ of the later orientation courses.²⁸

The professional colleges of engineering and agriculture likewise flourished during his administration. The agricultural college, under the leadership of Professor Henry, had already established itself as a research agency before Chamberlin arrived, and had founded or at least had had thrust upon it the Short Course and the institutes. Chamberlin helped broaden its research base and was himself largely instrumental in establishing the department of soil physics under Professor King. Chamberlin supported the Short Course and the farmers institutes and lent material assistance in the creation of the dairy course, the first of its kind in the country. For the College of Engineering he sought more adequate financial support, instituted departments of electrical and railroad engineering, encouraged research, and strengthened the faculty, only to have three of his most promising new professors promptly lured to Leland Stanford University at higher salaries.²⁹

The success of the farmers institutes and the Short Course

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ Chamberlin, “Biographical Memoir,” in *National Academy of Sciences, Biographical Memoirs*, 15:324.

²⁹ David Starr Jordan, president of Leland Stanford, was supposed to have boasted that he waited to see whom Chamberlin called to his faculty and then hired the same people at higher salaries. *Ibid.*, 325. In 1891 he wrote to Chamberlin congratulating him on the “remarkable growth” of the University under his direction. “I have attributed this growth to the fact that you have held much higher ideals of the work of the college professor, particularly in the direction of investigation, than have been held in most of the state universities lying about you. One result of this is shown in the fact that you have in your faculty more men that I should like than can be found in any other faculty west of Cornell University.” He said there were several men on the faculty he would like, “but I will turn my eyes in other directions just as much as I can.” Jordan to Chamberlin, December 11, 1891, in the Presidents’ Papers.

encouraged Chamberlin to extend this phase of the University work. Early in his administration he sought to develop a system of mechanics institutes which would do for the mechanics of the state what the farmers institutes did for the farmers. This project, however, had to await development by his successor.³⁰ In two other phases of popular education he was more successful: University Extension and summer school. The University Extension was launched in 1891, and a year later Chamberlin proudly reported that requests had been received for one hundred and seven courses, but it had been practicable to offer only fifty courses in thirty-three Wisconsin towns plus three courses which had been given in Chicago.³¹ Summer school was launched early in Chamberlin's administration as a summer school for science teachers. In his last report Chamberlin declared that the summer school had been so successful that he recommended making it definitely and formally a branch of the University.³²

Notwithstanding Chamberlin's conspicuously large abilities, his marked capacity to formulate and carry out new projects, his generally happy relations with the legislature, the Board, and the faculty, he was not at ease as an administrator. Besides the fact that administrative duties took him away from the work in which he was most interested, he felt his own shortcomings as an executive. As he later explained, he had so long trained himself to consider alternatives that it was difficult for him to give quick and positive answers to the host of petty questions which crowded in on him.³³ He was conscientious and scrupulous, and these matters weighed upon him.

Nor was he happy in his relations with the students. A sober, serious, literal, hard-working, somewhat humorless man, he had neither the moral fervor of Bascom nor the genial tolerance of Adams to support him.³⁴ Chamberlin had little patience with

³⁰ Chamberlin to the regents, January 15, 1889, in *Reports to the Regents*, Vol. B, pp. 595-596.

³¹ *Regents' Biennial Report*, 1889-90, p. 44.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ Chamberlin, "Biographical Memoir," in *National Academy of Sciences, Biographical Memoirs*, 15:327.

³⁴ The regents might have sensed a certain lack of proportion in Chamberlin from one letter that he wrote during the correspondence preceding his appoint-

student pranks, which he termed "lawlessness" and which he held should be treated as any other lawlessness.³⁵ This attitude was not one to endear him to the students. Moreover, he followed a very popular president and a man whose popularity had no doubt been enhanced by his long struggle with the Board of Regents. One student who had been a freshman during Bascom's last year at the University recorded in his diary on the occasion of Chamberlin's resignation: "He met with much opposition when he first came to the institution and I, as well as everyone else, that had been under Pres. Bascom, disliked the new president."³⁶ The students were predisposed to dislike him if for no other reason than that he had displaced Bascom, and moreover he did few things to win their fickle devotion.

Among the student practices of which Chamberlin disapproved was that of hazing. This custom, perhaps no worse at Wisconsin than elsewhere at the time, usually went on in the fall when the sophomores undertook to tame the wild spirits of conspicuous freshmen. In trying to deal with hazing and hazers Chamberlin was probably at his worst.

In general the faculty and the president chose not to notice hazing, but in the fall of 1887, almost before Chamberlin had settled into office, a case occurred which could not be ignored. It involved the son of Professor Rosenstengel, hard taskmaster of the German department. Young Rosenstengel, who had already graduated from the University, returned to do postgraduate work. He had made himself obnoxious to some students by

ment. "Inadvertently the letter I sent you yesterday was mailed before it had been stamped. I endeavored to overtake it before it left the P.O. but it had already been sent. The stamp on this will make it even with Uncle Sam. It is a small matter but I endeavor to be scrupulous even in little things." Chamberlin to Paul, April 29, 1886, in Papers of the Board of Regents. On being asked his opinion of *Black Beauty*, he responded that the book was "a wholesome one, especially promotive of sympathy with domestic animals and a spirit of kindness towards our fellow-creatures of the lower orders. The effort to awaken such sympathy and an appreciation of the feelings and the rights of lower animals deserves the highest commendation." Chamberlin to George T. Angell, president of the American Humane Educational Society, March 28, 1891, in the Presidents' Papers.

³⁵ Chamberlin, *The Coming of Age of State Universities*, 14-15.

³⁶ Sidney Dean Townley, *Diary of a Student of the University of Wisconsin, 1886-1892* (mimeographed, Stanford University, 1939), 115.

pretending that he was a freshman. He wore freshman colors and attended freshman meetings. Accordingly, some students decided to accept him as a freshman and to haze him. Unable to apprehend him in the open, a group of students went to his father's house and there sought to capture him. The attempt was not successful, partly because someone telephoned for the police. The police arrived, seized several of the crowd, and bore the culprits off to the police station, followed by the rest of the student crowd and probably some onlookers. Once inside the police station all the students were arrested and their names taken. The police offered not to press the serious charge of resisting arrest against the original culprits if twenty of the students would plead guilty to disorderly conduct. The offer was accepted but later the students grew openly resentful when it was rumored that the police officers received a fixed fee for each arrest and the students had simply contributed to a prosperous evening for the Madison police.³⁷ The relations between students and police, never cordial before that time, ripened during the next years into such a state of undeclared warfare that a student could remark in 1902 that no member of the Madison police force dared show himself in uniform at a large student rally.³⁸ The Rosenstengel affair was too serious to be overlooked. Not only did it involve a member of the faculty whose household had been disturbed, but exaggerated accounts of the incident were given wide circulation in the newspapers. The faculty met and decreed that the students must apologize to Professor Rosenstengel and his family. Chamberlin accordingly called the students together, lectured them, and submitted appropriate forms of an apology to which they were asked to subscribe. The students rebuffed the president by refusing to discuss the matter while he was present. After he left the proposition was debated vigorously and it was decided to call a meeting of the whole student body two days later. Chamberlin did not appear this time. Instead he sent Professor Birge, who discussed the matter with the students and then withdrew. After more argument the students finally

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 29-30.

³⁸ From a letter of Solon Justus Buck to his parents, letters in possession of Solon J. Buck, Archivist of the United States.

agreed to apologize and adopted a resolution to that effect. They also adopted a resolution condemning the police for seizing students indiscriminately.³⁹

But this was only a prelude to an incident two years later. By 1889 Chamberlin was ready to put an end to hazing. Not only was the faculty to deal harshly with hazers, but Chamberlin was willing to use the Madison police in dealing with these disturbances.⁴⁰ Early in the term Chamberlin caught four sophomores in the act of trying to break up a freshman class meeting, a practice sanctioned by usage if not good manners. All four, by act of the faculty, were permitted to remain in school but only as hostages for the good behavior of the rest of their class. Meanwhile the sophomores had encountered a Tartar among the freshmen—Riley by name, a youngster who refused to be hazed. Twice before the end of September, so it was said, he had “dispersed his assailants” with a revolver.⁴¹ On the evening of October 10 a group of masked sophomores captured this freshman unarmed in the room of another student. But he was not hazed. He made such an uproar that several citizens came to his assistance.⁴² Four days later the faculty suspended the four sophomores who had been held as hostages. At least one of them had been implicated in the attempt to haze Riley.⁴³ This act of the faculty, for which Chamberlin was given full credit, offended the students’ ideas of fair play. One student recorded his indig-

³⁹ Townley, *Diary*, 30, 31.

⁴⁰ Writing to Superintendent W. B. Anderson of Milwaukee, November 6, 1889, Chamberlin declared that he had not moved against hazing immediately because the system was chronic when he came, it was approved by current sentiment, and because he had been too busy. He had acted definitely at the beginning of the current year and was able to report, “Within our own bailiwick the effort has been entirely successful. For the first time in years the grounds and property of the University have been respected. For the first time in years we have passed Halloween without violations of good order, peace of citizens and property of the University. It is my belief that the University should be placed squarely on the civic basis, and that good citizenship should be made a prerequisite to participation in its benefits, and it is my purpose to move steadily on until that end shall be accomplished.” Chamberlin to Anderson, in the Presidents’ Papers.

⁴¹ Townley, *Diary*, 68, 69.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 69; *Wisconsin State Journal*, October 11, 1889. The *State Journal* carried a brief, jocular account of the affair, reporting with playful exaggeration that it took one hundred masked sophomores to capture one unarmed Riley.

⁴³ Minutes of the Meetings of the Faculty (MS.), vol. 3, p. 125, October 14, 1889; *Wisconsin State Journal*, October 16, 1889.

nation in his diary: "This appears to be the rankest kind of injustice. I cannot for the life of me understand how the Faculty can hold four men responsible for the actions of the whole class."⁴⁴

But this was only the beginning. Simultaneously the Madison police entered complaints against several students for riotous conduct in attempting to haze Riley. This action was not instigated by Chamberlin, as the students believed, but it did have his full support.⁴⁵ Before issuing warrants for the arrest of the students named, Municipal Judge Elisha W. Keyes decided to investigate the matter himself. Keyes was no longer a member of the Board of Regents, but he had an old score to settle with the students. Accordingly, Keyes began to subpoena students to collect testimony.⁴⁶

Keyes's "hazing inquisition," as it was called, was not wholly successful. Even the testimony of Riley was evasive. He had recognized none of his assailants. Enough testimony was collected, however, to indicate that D. M. Flowers, one of the sophomore hostages already under suspension, had been implicated in the attempt against Riley.⁴⁷ Moreover, the newspapers followed the proceedings with avid interest and reported them with brazen inaccuracy. Even the *New York Tribune* commented that Riley's mistake had been that he had used small arms to protect himself, that he was now carrying a rifle.⁴⁸ One student complained that the newspaper accounts gave the impression that the University students were a "set of hoodlums, ruffians and liars."⁴⁹

⁴⁴ Townley, *Diary*, 69.

⁴⁵ On learning that the son of the president of the Board of Regents, George H. Paul, was implicated in the hazing, Chamberlin wrote to the father declaring that he had had "nothing to do with directing the inquiry in that direction. Of course the action should proceed impartially and I cannot consistently intervene, as I do not know what evidence the authorities may have. I desire that the authorities shall do their duty in such cases and be supported in so doing by all who desire good order." Chamberlin to Paul, October 22, 1889, in Presidents' Papers.

⁴⁶ Townley, *Diary*, 70; *Wisconsin State Journal*, October 14, 1889.

⁴⁷ Townley, *Diary*, 70.

⁴⁸ The *Tribune* story was reprinted in the *Wisconsin State Journal*, October 18, 1889.

⁴⁹ Townley, *Diary*, 70.

Judge Keyes's investigation was brought to an abrupt halt when one of the students who had been subpoenaed refused to be sworn. After several days' delay while the student, on advice of his lawyer, continued to refuse to be sworn, Keyes offered him one more chance to testify or be held in contempt of court. Meanwhile Keyes issued a warrant for the arrest of D. M. Flowers on the charge of "riotous and tumultuous conduct." Flowers secured a change of venue to the circuit court for trial.⁵⁰

Before Keyes got around to resuming his investigation, Colonel William F. Vilas, just back from four years' service in Cleveland's cabinet, was prevailed upon to enter the case on the side of the students. He applied to the supreme court for a writ of prohibition to restrain Keyes from conducting further investigations. A temporary restraining order was issued on November 6⁵¹ and argued before the court six days later. Vilas represented the students; S. U. Pinney represented Keyes.⁵² On December 3 the supreme court handed down a decision sustaining Judge Keyes.⁵³ The judge was free to take up his inquisition again.

Meanwhile the case of Flowers had come up for trial in the circuit court. Among the witnesses produced by the state was President Chamberlin who, although he claimed exemption, was subpoenaed to testify against Flowers. Flowers' lawyer took the occasion to excoriate Chamberlin for this violation of student confidence.⁵⁴ At least one student adduced from the cross-examination that Chamberlin had admitted he had started the legal proceedings against the students.⁵⁵

The jury held Flowers guilty.⁵⁶ On December 2, the day before the supreme court rendered its decision upholding

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 71.

⁵² *Ibid.*; *Wisconsin State Journal*, November 12, 1889.

⁵³ *Wisconsin State Journal*, December 3, 1889; *Wisconsin supreme court, Reports*, 75:288-299.

⁵⁴ *Wisconsin State Journal*, November 27, 1889. To Paul, Chamberlin explained his unwillingness to testify earlier in Judge Keyes's court. He said he had asked to be excused "not because I am not willing to do my part as a good citizen, but because I stand as a judge in so far as the matter relates to University discipline and ought not to be embarrassed by performing a double function in a given case." Chamberlin to Paul, October 22, 1889, in the Presidents' Papers.

⁵⁵ Townley, *Diary*, 72.

⁵⁶ *Wisconsin State Journal*, November 27, 1889.

Keyes's right to continue his investigation, the circuit court pronounced sentence on Flowers. He was fined ten dollars and costs amounting to about eighty dollars. Students helped him to pay the costs by turning their witness fees over to him. After paying the fine, Flowers left the University and the city.⁵⁷ The faculty subsequently suspended several students who had refused to testify as witnesses in the circuit court.⁵⁸ Assuredly, as one student observed, "the boys seem to be coming out of the small end of the horn in this business."⁵⁹

Judge Keyes wisely refrained from taking up his inquisition again, but many of the students were outraged by the whole affair, which had begun merely as an attempt to haze a recalcitrant freshman and had grown to involve the courts and the police and had won for the University a wide but undesirable publicity. They resented the action of the police. They were indignant that their members not only were expected to inform against their classmates but were hauled into court for that purpose. And they were as incapable of sympathizing with Chamberlin's humorless view of that "ancient collegiate malady" of hazing as he was of comprehending their humiliation and indignation at being asked to testify against one another. "This whole affair," wrote a student diarist, "seems to me to be the most unwise and foolish proceeding I have ever heard of. When it comes to this that the president of this University has to seek the aid of the courts in trying to govern this institution then I think it high time that we had a new president. It has advertised the University far and wide in a manner that will be anything but beneficial. President Chamberlin, it seems to me, has completely demonstrated his utter inability to fill the office of president. He is totally ignorant of human nature and no more fit to govern a large body of students than a country schoolmaster. Instead of being looked up to and revered by the students he is criticized and laughed at. As a scientist I admire him, but as president of the University I almost despise him."⁶⁰

⁵⁷ Townley, *Diary*, 72-73.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*; *Wisconsin State Journal*, December 5, 1889.

⁵⁹ Townley, *Diary*, 73.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 72.

Chamberlin was probably never completely aware of how bitterly his action was resented by the students. To his matter-of-fact mind the objections of the students were too trivial to be given serious consideration. He expected good citizenship, as he defined it, to be the prerequisite of attendance at the University, and, as he confided to W. B. Anderson, it was his purpose "to move steadily on until that end shall be accomplished."⁶¹ To James B. Angell, president of the University of Michigan, and to Charles W. Eliot of Harvard he made similar declarations. To these men he revealed a plan to abolish the old system of college classes. By this means he would disrupt the group solidarity which had afforded the basis for most of the hazing and other disturbances.⁶²

But the students were unwilling to submit quietly to what they regarded as outrageous indignities and injustice. Two days after the supreme court had unleashed Judge Keyes to take up again his investigation of hazing, the students called a mass meeting at Assembly Hall to consider the faculty suspensions and the entire situation.⁶³ A large crowd attended. Only males were permitted on the main floor, but the reporter for the *Wisconsin State Journal* reported incredulously that the gallery was "well filled with young lady students who seemed to show great interest in the proceedings."⁶⁴ After a chairman had been elected, a proposal to invite President Chamberlin to address the meeting was briefly and noisily considered and then voted down, because, as one student put it, the majority "thought that it would be simply a waste of time." After further spirited discussion a resolutions committee was appointed. This committee promptly presented a set of eight resolutions which were debated and adopted by a large majority.⁶⁵ In these resolutions, subsequently published in the newspapers, the students deplored the distractions which had occurred, condemned hazing, affirmed that students were law-abiding citi-

⁶¹ Chamberlin to Anderson, November 6, 1889, in the Presidents' Papers.

⁶² Chamberlin to Angell, November 12, 1889, and Chamberlin to Eliot, November 12, 1889, both in the Presidents' Papers.

⁶³ Townley, *Diary*, 73.

⁶⁴ *Wisconsin State Journal*, December 6, 1889.

⁶⁵ Townley, *Diary*, 73.

zens who recognized their obligation to preserve order. But the students also condemned the faculty for calling upon the police to maintain University discipline, objected to the use of legal proceedings to suppress hazing, denounced the notion that students should serve as "informers" to the faculty, and protested against the misleading and inaccurate newspaper accounts of student behavior which had been circulated.⁶⁶

And so the matter rested. Whatever further action might have come out of this contest between the students and the president was stopped a few days later when Professor William F. Allen, the most popular member of the faculty, died suddenly, on December 9. The hot resentment of the students was dissipated in the common sorrow over this great loss. Moreover, neither the faculty nor Judge Keyes chose to push the investigation any further.

The student resolutions and the events which had preceded their adoption, however, did provide the background for another difficulty in student relations which was to dog Chamberlin during the remainder of his stay at Wisconsin. Later the same month John C. McMynn, son of the former state superintendent of public instruction and regent of the University, John G. McMynn, was charged with having turned in an examination paper "largely identical" with that turned in by another student.⁶⁷ Professor Jastrow reported the matter to President Chamberlin, who promptly summoned young McMynn for questioning. McMynn had been a member of the student committee which presented the resolutions condemning the faculty and the president for their method of suppressing hazing and had, his father insisted later, been taken to task by Chamberlin for it. When the president questioned young McMynn on his actions during the examination, McMynn

⁶⁶ *Wisconsin State Journal*, December 6, 1889. Sidney Dean Townley, who attended the meeting, recorded that he had voted for the resolutions, but that they were "not strong enough to express my sentiments, but I did not urge the passage of stronger ones for fear that it might influence the Faculty with regard to reinstating the four men now under suspension." *Diary*, 73.

⁶⁷ *Minutes of the Faculty*, vol. 3, p. 130, December 21, 1889. Julius Olson investigated the matter fully and found other damaging evidence, all of which he assembled and placed on record, March 27, 1894. Copy in the University Archives.

refused to testify. Chamberlin suspended him from his classes until his case could be brought before the faculty the next day.⁶⁸ The faculty formally referred the matter to the president with power to act.⁶⁹

Chamberlin insisted upon a "full confession" from young McMynn and got it, and he then required that the examination be taken over again by both students. On January 13 McMynn was given a letter of dismissal from the University to enter Williams College. The letter of dismissal, Chamberlin wrote, was granted "at his own request for the purpose of entering your college. His class-officer will furnish a copy of his standings which will be found to be very creditable."⁷⁰ Young McMynn was accepted at Williams College and graduated with the class of 1890.

John G. McMynn considered that his son's honor had been maligned, and he felt deeply about it. Moreover he had almost a proprietary interest in the University. He was virtually one of its founders, and he had moved his family from Racine to Madison so that his children might attend the University. In seeking satisfaction for the wrong done his son, McMynn bombarded the president and faculty with letters of protest and then carried his case to the Board of Regents, where he charged that his son had been "illegally and arbitrarily suspended."⁷¹ Not content with longhand copies of his letters, McMynn took to printing both his letters and the responses to them. He then circulated the printed copies among all the people he felt might be interested or who ought to be concerned in the affair. Although the faculty and the Board gave solid support to Chamberlin, no statement of the president, the faculty, or the Board appeased McMynn. McMynn's last publication was a pamphlet of thirty closely packed pages reproducing what he considered to be the important documents in the case and

⁶⁸ Thomas C. Chamberlin to John G. McMynn, January 3, 1890, in the Presidents' Papers.

⁶⁹ Minutes of the Faculty, vol. 3, p. 130, December 21, 1889.

⁷⁰ Chamberlin to the faculty of Williams College, January 13, 1890, in the Presidents' Papers.

⁷¹ McMynn to the regents, September 15, 1890, in Papers of the Board of Regents.

containing a bitter excoriation of President Chamberlin, who was pictured as a man without a sense of honor and without integrity. McMynn even implied that Chamberlin had struck at him through his son.⁷² The affair had not quieted down when Chamberlin resigned in 1892 to accept a position at the University of Chicago. In 1894 the Board of Regents instructed its secretary to return all papers pertaining to the case of John C. McMynn to their original owners or authors.⁷³ The last harsh word on the incident was pronounced the next year by McMynn in a letter to Professor Julius Olson. He had neither forgotten nor forgiven. He directed Olson's attention to the order of the Board, which he declared "will command the approval of honorable men. I can but hope that the course pursued by you and others in this case of collegiate government may stand alone, and remain as isolated in the future as it does in the past."⁷⁴

Chamberlin never recorded his feelings about these attacks. His own righteousness and literal-mindedness probably protected him. But no man, however righteous and insensitive, could wholly ignore them. The distress he felt at being so much misunderstood and his distaste for administrative work made him welcome an opportunity to return to teaching and research. The opportunity came in 1892 when William R. Harper, then assembling the faculty for the University of Chicago, invited Chamberlin to become the head of the department of geology. News of the offer and of Chamberlin's acceptance was published in a Chicago newspaper before either Harper or Chamberlin was ready to announce it. Both denied that Chamberlin had accepted the proffered position, but great alarm was manifest in Madison.⁷⁵ It was a testimonial to Chamberlin that the faculty, the students, and the Madison newspapers did all within their power to get him to remain at Wisconsin.

⁷² A copy of this pamphlet, dated September 21, 1891, is in the University Archives.

⁷³ Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. D, pp. 259-260, April 18, 1894.

⁷⁴ McMynn to Olson, May 4, 1895, in the University Archives.

⁷⁵ *Chicago News Record*, May 19, 1892, and telegrams, Hiestand to President W. H. Harper, Harper to Hiestand, May 20, 1892, all reprinted in the *Daily Cardinal*, May 20, 1892, p. 1; *Madison Democrat*, May 20, 21, 1892.

Three days after Chamberlin's appointment as head of the geology department had been announced and denied, the faculty unanimously adopted a resolution declaring that it had learned "with surprise and regret" that Chamberlin was considering a position at another university. The faculty declared that relations between Chamberlin and the faculty "have been characterized by a degree of harmony which is rarely reached in university government." This has been "an important cause of the progress of the University in the past, and is a condition of its effective future development." Chamberlin's "wise and vigorous policy is in large measure the cause of the great advance of the University of Wisconsin during the five years of his presidency. We believe that the important movements toward the reorganization of the curriculum, the coordination of the educational institutions of the state, the extension of the University influence to the whole people, and the fostering of graduate study and original investigation which the University has undertaken can be best carried forward under his administration." The faculty asked Chamberlin to remain to "direct the growth of the University at this time when its rank among the great universities of the country is dependent upon a continued forward movement."⁷⁶

The students, not to be outdone, circulated a petition asking Chamberlin to stay. Nearly six hundred signatures were collected on the first day, and before it was presented it carried the names of almost all the students. Madison newspapers joined with the students and faculty to urge the retention of Chamberlin. The *Madison Democrat* quoted with approval the declaration of an unnamed member of the faculty that Chamberlin was "the best university president that the West has ever produced."⁷⁷ The student newspaper devoted a whole issue to reprinting what the faculty, the students, and the newspapers said about Chamberlin. Every account stressed the tremendous growth of the University in size and quality during Chamberlin's five years.⁷⁸

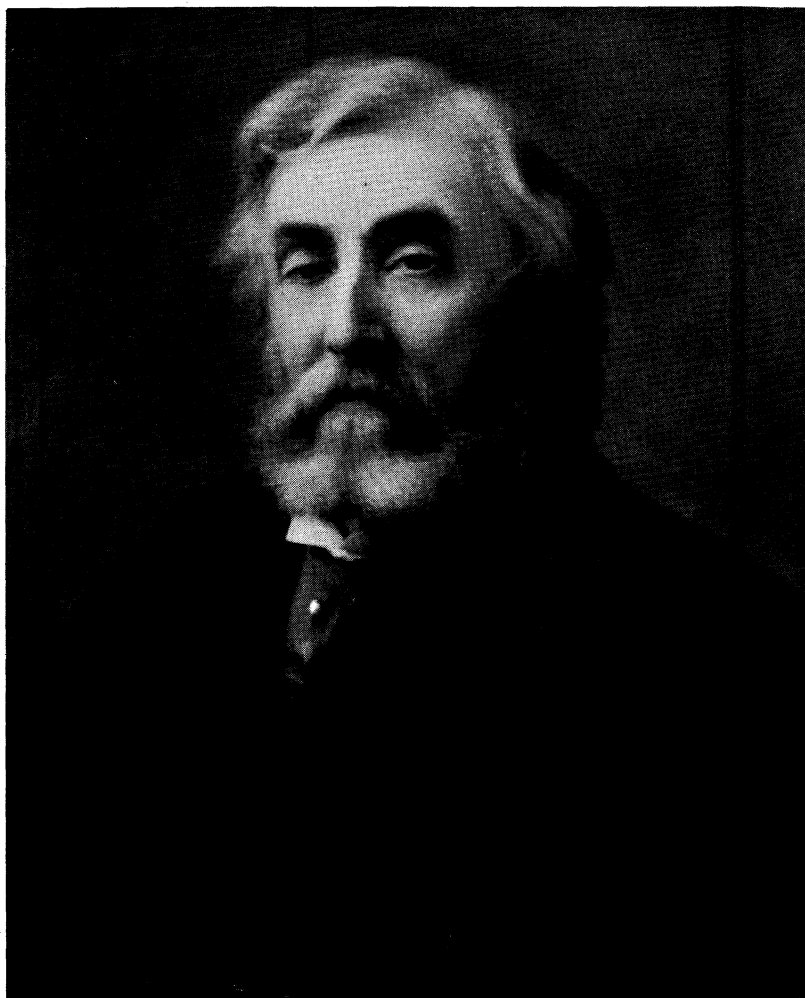
⁷⁶ Minutes of the Faculty, vol. 3, p. 223, May 23, 1892; Reports to the Faculty, File Book, vol. 1, p. 34.

⁷⁷ *Madison Democrat*, May 21, 1892.

⁷⁸ *Daily Cardinal*, May 26, 1892.



Thomas Chrowder Chamberlin



Charles Kendall Adams

Some Republican newspapers grasped the news as an opportunity for attacking the state Democratic administration. The reasoning was simple and direct if not logical. Thus the *Milwaukee Sentinel* announced on May 21 that Chamberlin would accept a \$7000-a-year professorship at the University of Chicago and that a number of University professors were planning to leave because of his resignation. The reason for the president's resignation was not that he had been offered a post more congenial to his interests and more remunerative, but because of conflict with the Board. This conflict, the *Sentinel* implied, was the fruit of Democratic control of the state administration. The *Sentinel* followed the first article with a series of accounts on developments at Madison and several editorials denouncing political, i.e., Democratic, control of the University. The *Sentinel* was little troubled by the fact that John Johnston, a leading Democratic member of the Board, was one of Chamberlin's conspicuous supporters, or by the fact that the alleged division of the Board did not follow political lines.⁷⁹ A similar line was taken by the staunchly Republican *Wisconsin State Journal*.⁸⁰

While Chamberlin must have been pleased with these numerous, and in some cases unexpected, evidences of approval and even affection, he decided to go to Chicago. On June 14 he submitted his resignation to accept a position which offered "a more advantageous field of work and is at the same time less taxing upon my strength and more congenial to my tastes." The Board accepted the resignation with a cordial and complimentary resolution.⁸¹

Chamberlin remained at Chicago to the end of his distinguished career as a geologist. He never returned to an administrative post. Probably he never wanted to. Ely recalled in his autobiography that Chamberlin, before leaving the Madison

⁷⁹ *Milwaukee Sentinel*, May 21, 22, 23, 24, 26, 29, 1892.

⁸⁰ *Wisconsin State Journal*, May 20, June 15, 1892; William Irvine of the Chippewa Valley Publishing Company, Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin, to Chamberlin, June 17, 1892, in the Presidents' Papers. While the widespread enthusiasm for keeping Chamberlin at Wisconsin was no doubt genuine, it did not extend to the point of spelling his name correctly. Even the faculty on one occasion entered it into their record as Chamberlain.

⁸¹ Chamberlin to the Board of Regents, June 14, 1892, in Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. D, pp. 179, 180, June 15, 1892.

campus, had confided in him, "I came to Wisconsin a young man of forty-five, and now I leave Wisconsin at fifty-two, an old man."⁸² But Chamberlin's energy was far from spent. He lived until 1928, each year contributing scholarly articles and monographs in his field.⁸³

To Thomas Chrowder Chamberlin the five years he spent as president of the University of Wisconsin may have seemed only an interlude, an interruption of his investigation and contemplation of the great cosmic forces which shaped the world and the solar system. For the University, however, the administration of this cold, detached, sober, forceful man marked the crossing from a college to a university. Adams and Van Hise, both of whom Chamberlin outlived, could build extensively and confidently on the foundations he had laid.

⁸² Richard T. Ely, *Ground Under Our Feet* (New York, 1938), 196. Ely added two years to Chamberlin's administration.

⁸³ The bibliography of Chamberlin's published works, prepared by his son, contains a list of two hundred and fifty-one titles. The first was a paper printed in the *Transactions of the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts, and Letters* in 1872, the last a book, *The Two Solar Families: The Sun's Children*, published in 1928 by the University of Chicago Press only a few weeks before his death. Chamberlin, "Biographical Memoir," in the *National Academy of Sciences, Biographical Memoirs*, 15:394-407.

20.

President Charles Kendall Adams

IN TWO respects the appointment of Charles Kendall Adams resembled the appointment of Chamberlin: in neither case is there anything to show that the committee ever considered any other candidate, and both candidates when first approached were coy. In the case of Adams, however, there was no extended correspondence. Indeed, there appears to have been very little correspondence at all.

Upon accepting Chamberlin's resignation the Board appointed a committee consisting of William P. Bartlett, president of the Board, and Breese J. Stevens, John Johnston, and Herbert W. Chynoweth to find a new president. In July two members of the committee, Bartlett and Stevens, went east, authorized to speak for the committee and the Board. On July 22, Madison newspapers announced that the presidency of the University had been offered to Charles Kendall Adams, who only two months before had resigned the presidency of Cornell.¹ Adams, the announcement continued, had agreed to visit Madison later in the month and then make his decision. Before the end of July the *Wisconsin State Journal*, in which advertising still vied with news for the first page, proclaimed in a front-page headline, "Adams will take it."² The Board of Regents made the appointment official in September by unanimously electing Adams to the presidency of the University.³ As soon as the election was

¹ *Wisconsin State Journal*, July 22, 1892.

² *Ibid.*, July 30, 1892.

³ Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. D, p. 188, September 20, 1892. The formal record of the vote shows that Adams was unanimously elected, but in an

over, Adams, who was waiting outside the Board room, entered and took his seat.

Only fragments remain to suggest why and how Adams was selected. When Chamberlin's resignation was officially announced, Adams was mentioned as one of a group of possible candidates which included Elisha Andrews of Brown University, the Reverend Washington Gladden, G. Stanley Hall of Clark University, John B. Parkinson, then vice-president of the University of Wisconsin, and Professors Birge and Stearns.⁴ There is no obvious reason why the office should have fallen to Adams. One explanation, perhaps the best, is in Breese Stevens' application to Andrew D. White for a suitable list of men. White had been Adams' predecessor as professor of history at the University of Michigan and had preceded him as president of Cornell. In answer to Stevens' request, White is supposed to have replied, "My first choice would be Charles Kendall Adams, my second choice would be Charles Kendall Adams, my third choice would be Charles Kendall Adams."⁵

When Adams resigned from the presidency of Cornell it was with the intention of devoting himself to editorial work and to writing. His own surprise that he should have accepted the offer from Wisconsin was reflected in a letter written to his old friend, Moses Coit Tyler, shortly after the Wisconsin appointment had been announced. "I was persuaded to visit Madison," he wrote, "but I did not think there was one chance in ten of my taking the place. But the regents, the professors, and the people made love to me with such persuasiveness and energy that all my determinations gradually melted away. . . . I hope it will not prove to have been a matter of infatuation."⁶ Seven years later Adams confided to Reuben Gold Thwaites: "It was the heartiness of the Regents and the Faculty and the assurances that I received from citizens of the state, especially from General Fairchild, that led me to think that it was my duty to accept."⁷ In

informal vote which preceded the formal election, Adams received only eleven of the twelve votes cast. Charles R. Van Hise received one vote. Papers of the Board of Regents, September 20, 1892.

⁴ *Milwaukee Sentinel*, June 15, 1892, p. 5.

⁵ Charles F. Smith, *Charles Kendall Adams: A Life Sketch* (Madison, 1924), 35.

⁶ Adams to Tyler, August 11, 1892, quoted in Smith, *Charles Kendall Adams*, 35.

⁷ Adams to Reuben Gold Thwaites, April 5, 1899, in the Presidents' Papers.

the same letter, Adams said that, though pressed by the regents, he had refused to name a salary at which he would come. He proposed instead that the regents make whatever proposition they saw fit and said that he would consider it and give his answer within two weeks. The salary which the Board offered, sixty-five hundred dollars a year, was fifteen hundred more than Chamberlin's had been. In addition to his salary Adams was to have the use of the president's house, which Chamberlin had had, and a fund of five hundred dollars a year for heating, lighting, and repairing the house. This generousness on the part of the regents reflected both their strong desire to get Adams to accept and their embarrassment at having seen Chamberlin go to a professorship at a salary considerably higher than that which he had received as president of the University of Wisconsin.⁸

Charles Kendall Adams was the oldest man called to the presidency of the University up to this date. He had had also a wider experience in university administration and a greater knowledge of the history of higher education than any of his predecessors. Born in Vermont, January 24, 1835, and educated in the common schools of that state, he had migrated to Iowa with his family in 1856. His father, a hatter turned farmer, purchased a farm near Denmark, Iowa. Adams was already past twenty-one when he entered the Denmark Academy to crowd into one year his belated and modest preparation for college. In 1857 he enrolled in the University of Michigan. Despite his inadequate preparation and the fact that he had to earn his way, Adams managed to graduate with a bachelor of arts degree in 1861, not, his biographer insisted, because of any marked brilliance, but because of persistent, plodding effort.⁹ Greatly influenced by Andrew D. White, only three years his senior, who had come to the University of Michigan as a professor of history the same year Adams entered as a freshman, Adams continued at Michigan as a graduate student. In 1862 he was appointed instructor

⁸ Chamberlin never made a public statement on this matter. The first newspaper reports declared that he was to have an annual salary of seven thousand dollars at Chicago. *Milwaukee Sentinel*, May 21, 1892, p. 2. If this was true the salary offered Adams was roughly equal to what Chamberlin was to receive as a professor. It fell far short of the ten thousand dollars a year which the Board was reported willing to offer. *Ibid.*, June 15, 1892, p. 5.

⁹ Smith, *Charles Kendall Adams*, 9-10.

of history and the next year, when White resigned, was named to his place.¹⁰ After his appointment as full professor in 1867 Adams took a leave of a year and a half to study in Europe.

Although not a brilliant teacher, his popularity and prestige rose gradually during his years at Michigan and he came to occupy a position in the inner circle of the faculty. He was clearly in the vanguard of that small group of European-trained scholars who revolutionized the teaching and study of history and its allied disciplines in the last part of the nineteenth century. In 1871 Adams introduced the seminary method of instruction at the University of Michigan.¹¹ He helped to establish a political science association there, he was active in the organization of the American Historical Association, and he was made the first dean of the School of Political Science when it was created at Michigan in 1881.¹²

Adams' reputation as a scholar rested largely upon two books, *Democracy and Monarchy in France*, published in 1872 and translated into German the next year, and a *Manual of Historical Literature*, first published in 1884 and several times re-issued.¹³ His scholarly interests continued after he became a university president. He served as president of the American Historical Association while he was at Cornell. While at Wisconsin he was general editor of the revision of Johnson's *Universal Cyclopaedia*, and during the last years of his life he was engaged in writing a history of the United States in collaboration with Professor William P. Trent.

In 1885 Adams was made president of Cornell University, succeeding Andrew D. White, whose influence won the election for him. His seven-year administration was marked by extensive progress at Cornell, but it was progress won at the cost of intense opposition and hostility on the part of a minority of the governing body and the faculty. Although he was not a

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 11-12.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 14-16. Professor Albert Bushnell Hart wrote to Adams in 1893: "So far as History is concerned I will freely acknowledge that the seminary method was first put into operation in the West; and to be more specific at the University of Michigan; and to be more specific still, by Professor Charles Kendall Adams." Hart to Adams, April 1, 1893, in the Presidents' Papers.

¹² Smith, *Charles Kendall Adams*, 17-18.

¹³ For a bibliography of the writings of Adams see Smith, *Charles Kendall Adams*, 149-150.

sensitive man, by 1892 Adams had had enough. He resigned because of "grave and seemingly unreconcilable differences of opinion in regard to matters of administrative importance."¹⁴ Whatever the exact nature of his difficulties, Adams remembered Cornell with bitterness. To Andrew D. White he confessed in 1895 that he had no desire to return to the place. "Until it is changed by one or two funeral ceremonies, I imagine I shall not put my happiness to so severe a strain as again to visit the old scenes."¹⁵

Through his stay at Michigan and during his first years at Cornell, Adams never created the impression of worldliness and distinction his presence conveyed to so many in Madison. Benjamin Ide Wheeler, who first met Adams at Cornell, found in him no suggestion of sophistication or urbanity. "A certain heaviness of style," Wheeler later recalled, "coupled with apparent slowness of wit, a considerable uncouthness of manner, classed him as bucolic rather than metropolitan, and earned from irreverent lips the title of 'Farmer Adams'. . . . The drowsiness of his facial expression, centering in a peculiar droop of the upper eyelids, combined with his dragging utterance, his heavy manner, and his slow and homely geniality to mark him as presumably an easy victim to the wiles of the wicked and designing, such as dwell in cities."¹⁶ At Michigan the same peculiar droop of the upper eyelids had won him the unoriginal nickname of "Droopy." While he was at Cornell, however, his appearance changed remarkably, no doubt in part reflecting the cultivated taste of his second wife. He had had a long

¹⁴ Waterman T. Hewett, *Cornell University: A History* (4 vols., New York, 1905), 1:198. Hewett quietly questioned Adams' veracity in this declaration by adding: "The exact cause and nature of the difficulty to which reference is here made, if such a difference really existed, was unknown to the faculty." On the next page, however, he acknowledged that the University Senate at Cornell did not always follow the president's recommendations. *Ibid.*, 1:198-199.

¹⁵ Adams to White, quoted in Smith, *Charles Kendall Adams*, 28. A friend from his Michigan days wrote to Adams shortly after he came to Wisconsin, expressing the hope that Adams would find Madison more congenial than Cornell had been. "The west I imagine has a less exacting and a less suspicious espionage over those to whom it has entrusted high educational position and I think the freedom resulting from this confidence gives greater latitude for carrying out any wise policy you may advocate and you can reasonably hope for some recognition of its value in due time." John M. Wheeler to Adams, January 16, 1893, in the Presidents' Papers.

¹⁶ Quoted in Smith, *Charles Kendall Adams*, 31-32.

straggly beard which, with a clean-shaven upper lip, accentuated the length and angularity of his face and the droopiness of his eyelids. At Cornell he had grown a full beard, while age had filled out and softened the sharp lines of his face. Almost six feet tall and well-proportioned, neatly groomed, with beard carefully trimmed, usually wearing a red necktie in token of his allegiance to the University he came to cherish so deeply, Adams became one of the impressive sights of the Wisconsin campus. What was said about Daniel Webster might also have been said of him: no man could possibly be as wise as he looked. One of his admirers declared: "He looked like a president, he walked like a president, he talked like a president." Indeed, on one occasion a Milwaukee newspaper used his photograph for that of the king of Belgium.¹⁷

Not since Lathrop had a new president been so warmly received. Five months after he took office, Adams was formally inaugurated. The ceremony was planned both to present Adams to the public and to afford him, and possibly others, an opportunity to publicize the needs of the University. The various committees, it was announced, had done everything possible to make it a "most auspicious event."¹⁸ Alumni from all parts of the state were urged to attend. Two prominent graduates, Bishop Samuel Fallows and James L. High, a distinguished jurist, were given a place on the program with Governor Peck, President James B. Angell of Michigan, Professor Freeman, and John Johnston. A special excursion train was run from Milwaukee to bring alumni from that city and from intermediate towns. On the afternoon of January 17 the Assembly Hall was crowded. "Never before in the history of the institution," boasted the *Madison Democrat*, "has there been assembled in Library Hall a gathering more representative of the intellectuality of the state."¹⁹ On the platform "banked with palms and potted plants," enjoying a place of honor with the governor, the justices of the supreme court, the regents and other dignitaries, were three men who had been members of the

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 19, 110.

¹⁸ *Wisconsin State Journal*, January 13, 1893.

¹⁹ *Madison Democrat*, January 19, 1893.

first class organized at the University. There too was the aged Simeon Mills, who had come to Madison in 1837 before the first territorial Capitol was begun and who, as a member of the first state Senate, had nursed the University bill through the legislature, had served as a member of the first Board of Regents, and had sold "university lots" in the 1850's to help keep the institution alive. It was indeed a notable gathering that listened to the prolonged speechmaking interlarded by selections from the University Glee Club and Leuder's Orchestra.

Before Adams rose to deliver his address, five speakers had welcomed him on behalf of the students, the alumni, the state, the neighboring universities, and the regents. Governor George Peck, speaking for the state, denied that richly endowed private institutions must necessarily surpass state-supported institutions. John Johnston, speaking for the Board of Regents, tried to say briefly what the University had come to mean in cultural and material terms. He was, perhaps naturally, more illuminating in talking about the latter. Over forty years before, when the institution was barely launched, John Lathrop and the Board had urged state support because of the material benefits which the University would foster.²⁰ Now Johnston could say: "There is not a county in Wisconsin which is not richer because of the university. The cheese of Sheboygan, the butter of Rock, the tobacco of Dane, the sheep of Walworth, the horses and cattle of Racine and Kenosha, and the potatoes of Wau-paca are all better because of our university, while the existence of those men who dig in the sunless mines of Gogebic has been made comparatively comfortable and safe through the discoveries of science." Lathrop would have approved his conclusion that "industry and science join hands in their triumphs over the forces of nature."²¹

Adams himself used the occasion to present a discourse upon the relations of the University and the state. He observed at the outset the peculiarly close relations which obtained in Wisconsin between the preparatory schools and the University and

²⁰ See above, Chapter 3.

²¹ John Johnston, "Address on Behalf of the Regents," in *The Addresses at the Inauguration of Charles Kendall Adams . . . January 17, 1893* (Madison, 1893), 42-43.

the prominent place occupied by the University in educational affairs. This, he felt, was largely the result of values cherished by the people who had settled in Wisconsin. But a state university, he proclaimed, was not an accident; it was the "creation and the possession of the people."²² Its progress rested squarely upon the support of the people. Having presented these postulates, Adams next considered the propriety of state support of higher education. In examining this question he might have referred to the dissipation of the land grants—and on later occasions he would.²³ At this time he based the case for state support of university education upon higher and more substantial ground than the charge that the state had failed to fulfill its responsibility in safeguarding the land endowment. Among the prominent tendencies of the age Adams discerned movements toward universal suffrage and universal education, movements which could not and would not be stopped. He perceived a close and causal relation between the progress and power of the nations of Europe and their support of higher education. Progress and power rested securely upon education. Moreover, in the history of the United States he observed that state support of universities was sanctioned by colonial usage, by the actions and words of the founding fathers of the republic, and by the acts of the federal government in giving first land and then money for the support of colleges and universities in the states. He concluded that state support of a university was "in accordance with the best thought of the nation as well as the most enlightened spirit of the age."²⁴

Modern universities, he declared, were expensive. A great university could not and should not be made self-sustaining. At Wisconsin, where no tuition fees were charged, every increase in enrollment meant an increase in the cost of maintaining the institution. Adams then proceeded to outline a program for the University, a large part of which found fulfillment during his administration. To carry on its work the University

²² Charles Kendall Adams, "The University and the State," inaugural address, in *Addresses at Inauguration, 1893*, p. 48.

²³ Cf. *The University and the State*, baccalaureate address (Madison, 1896).

²⁴ Adams, "The University and the State," inaugural address, in *Addresses at Inauguration, 1893*, p. 48.

needed many new buildings, particularly a new library. Additional funds were needed to increase the teaching staff. The extension work which had been launched by Chamberlin must be supported and enlarged. "There are thousands, yea, tens of thousands," Adams declared, "who desire to avail themselves of such [university] instruction, but cannot leave their homes to go to the university. Cannot the university be taken to them?"²⁵ The new School of Economics, Political Science, and History deserved widespread and warm support. After outlining the needs and opportunities of the University, Adams again pointed out that the University belonged to the people. It was the function of the president and the Board of Regents to formulate programs, but the people, through their representatives, must approve and furnish the means of carrying the work forward.

The Madison press was deeply impressed. The *Wisconsin State Journal* declared that the day marked an epoch in the history of the University, for it awakened the general realization that the University was "assuming a stable and prominent position among the greatest schools of learning in the land." The citizens of Wisconsin, the editor thought, could "indulge in an honest exultation that a new era of prosperity" was "lowering upon the institution."²⁶ The *Madison Democrat* announced that the inauguration was "most dignified, elevating and appropriate" and remarked that the legislators "observed with pleasure and pride the abounding evidences of respect and veneration for the university. . . . All felt the institution was in the dawn of a new and expansive era, that even the nobility of its history could be little indeed in comparison with that of the illimitable period now before it."²⁷

The *Journal* was of course wrong in declaring that the coming of Adams marked a new epoch in the history of the University. It was Chamberlin who had launched the University in new fields, who had outlined and embarked upon new programs. Adams found adequate scope for his talent in working toward

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 65.

²⁶ *Wisconsin State Journal*, January 17, 1893.

²⁷ *Madison Democrat*, January 19, 1893.

a realization of the University as conceived by Chamberlin. "It became his share," Pyre wrote, "to fill in the outline that had been sketched and carry forward to success the work that had been begun; to enlarge the departments that had been created, to reconcile their conflicting demands, to secure larger and larger means for their continuance and growth, to enrich and control and unite the new, more complex institution that was arising. It was a work for experience, for patience, for sagacity born of a wide knowledge of institutions and varied contacts with men."²⁸ Adams was pre-eminently fitted for this work.

Although few innovations were made in Adams' administration, the institution enjoyed a healthy growth and enlargement in virtually all directions during his presidency. Ely's School of Economics, Political Science, and History was divided to provide for the establishment of a School of Commerce and a School of History, all of which were subsequently reduced to the status of departments by Van Hise. The series of University research bulletins, which had been planned by Chamberlin, was launched to provide a publication outlet for research in the College of Letters and Science and in the College of Engineering to match the publications already established by the Washburn Observatory and the agricultural college. Adams brought about the establishment of a School of Music in 1894, which, although drawing little financial support from the University, enjoyed its sponsorship. Adams also persistently sought to revive interest in classical studies, but without success. During his administration the office of dean of women was established, but Adams had little enthusiasm for this creation and permitted the office to dissolve when the three-year appointment of the first incumbent expired.²⁹

Although the faculty recognized Adams' "unfailing sympathy with scholarly aspirations," his primary interest was in the students. "The University is for the students," was a dictum he never tired of repeating.³⁰ This spirit, Dean Birge asserted,

²⁸ James F. A. Pyre, *Wisconsin* (New York, 1920), 250-251.

²⁹ Smith, *Charles Kendall Adams*, 46-47.

³⁰ Charles Kendall Adams, *The Predominance of Character*, baccalaureate address (Madison, 1895), 17; Smith, *Charles Kendall Adams*, 18.

“governed his administrative policy. Eager as he was for research, and profoundly as he believed in it as an indispensable factor of university life, he would never sacrifice teaching to research.”³¹ The University, Adams insisted, was “chiefly an inspiration and opportunity,”³² and he wanted good teachers to make it that. Few aspects of University administration were more carefully considered than the matter of appointments and promotions. Adams, although he asked for advice on appointments, felt that the final decision was his. He kept a card catalogue of promising young scholars and teachers and, when new appointments were to be made, conducted the correspondence and not infrequently visited the candidate and formed a judgment of his capacity by observing him teach his classes.³³ He never, apparently, had any doubts about his capacity to judge well. He once told Dean Edward A. Birge that in only three cases had he yielded to the advice of others and in each case a mistake had been made. “Hear everybody and then do as you think best,” was his admonition.³⁴ Adams wanted a free hand not only in making appointments, but also in adjusting salaries. He chafed at the necessity of having to follow a salary scale established by the Board of Regents in his negotiations for new men and in his endeavor to retain the services of members of the staff who were invited elsewhere. To President James B. Angell of Michigan he confessed that he favored a system in which each professor would be dealt with individually.³⁵ When unable to meet competition in the matter of salaries Adams sometimes tried other means of attracting or holding professors. He often would offer a special fund for the purchase of books for the department, a device sometimes as attractive as an increase in salary. Adams’ system appears to have worked satisfactorily, perhaps because of the pains he took and the breadth of his understanding.

Adams was tolerant to the point of indulgence of the lighter interests of the students. He supported the literary societies,

³¹ From Birge’s memorial address on Adams, quoted in Smith, *Charles Kendall Adams*, 112.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ Smith, *Charles Kendall Adams*, 48–53, 115–120.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 117.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 53–54.

he encouraged the development of musical interests, the rising social fraternities, and the host of social activities which burgeoned within the University in the nineties—activities culminating in and typified by the Junior Prom. And his support of athletics was unreserved. The growth of the University, the rapidly increasing number of students, and the new diversity of intellectual interests served to break the student body apart and to create a situation in which athletics, particularly football, became the common denominator of student interest. Bascom had deplored this shift, Chamberlin tolerated it, but Charles Kendall Adams welcomed it.³⁶ He encouraged at Wisconsin something of the spirit which his distinguished fellow president, William Rainey Harper, had nurtured at the University of Chicago, where “Rockefeller gifts were celebrated like football victories, and football victories like the Second Coming.”³⁷

Shortly after he arrived in Madison, Adams gave his support to a project to raise funds for a boathouse. He rejoiced over the victories of crews, track teams, and baseball teams, but his greatest enthusiasm he reserved for football. He helped to get Camp Randall for the University as a playing field, and he complained bitterly to the Board of Regents when, after the place had been used all summer for a cow pasture, the playing field was something less than pleasant to use. Adams not only attended the games and cheered the team on, but sometimes took a hand to help the team. On one occasion he changed the date of an extension lecture so as to permit the lecturer, who was a member of the football team, to play with the team in the all-important game with Minnesota.³⁸ Again, when a promising football player refused to go out for the team without his father’s “cheerful consent,” Adams undertook to convince the parent. Adams’ letters, which the regents so often found irresistible, were effective.³⁹ The parent succumbed to Adams’ persuasive charm. On another occasion, perhaps abetted by the

³⁶ Adams, *The Predominance of Character*, 16–17.

³⁷ Milton Mayer, “Portrait of a Dangerous Man,” in *Harper’s Magazine*, 193:60 (July, 1946).

³⁸ Smith, *Charles Kendall Adams*, 67.

³⁹ Adams to Andrew Kull, September 18, 27, 1893, in the Presidents’ Papers.

resident regents, Adams deliberately and awkwardly thwarted a faculty action intended to exclude from the team a young man of mighty football prowess but with little or no academic capacity. In so doing, Adams provoked a storm of protest from the faculty, but apparently had his way.⁴⁰ Perhaps at no time during his long and successful administration did Adams come closer to disrupting the harmonious relations he so assiduously cultivated with the faculty. Indeed, some members of the faculty felt that he never recovered their complete confidence.⁴¹

Adams sought to make the University attractive to sons and daughters of well-to-do citizens of the state. "It was the policy of President Adams to foster the patronage of this class, not in a snobbish spirit, but in the belief that it made for a more cultivated tone in college society. Although wealth and culture were by no means synonymous labels, students of this class had, on the average, a more leisurely attitude toward education than the edifying offspring of poverty and ambition, and their presence was, on the whole, an encouragement to liberal studies."⁴² Adams on occasion defended his policy by insisting that the sons and daughters of the rich should have an equal opportunity with those of the poor.⁴³ This tendency of Adams did not go unnoticed and unchallenged. In 1895 Oscar E. Pederson, superintendent of Winnebago County, made among other charges the one that Adams was propagating "aristocratic tendencies" in the University, a charge which a special committee of the Board of Visitors formally investigated and denied.⁴⁴ A year later similar charges were published during a legislative investigation of the University.⁴⁵

⁴⁰ Smith, *Charles Kendall Adams*, 68-70; Minutes of the Meetings of the Faculty (MS.), vol. 4, p. 116, October 13, 1896.

⁴¹ Smith records that one professor later acknowledged that this incident led to a complete break between him and Adams and was one of the chief reasons for his accepting a position at the University of Chicago. *Charles Kendall Adams*, 69. Perhaps it was this incident that led Pyre to remark that Adams was suspected by the faculty of a "disposition to draw strength from the traditional enemy, the students plus the regents." Pyre, *Wisconsin*, 248.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 254.

⁴³ Smith, *Charles Kendall Adams*, 65.

⁴⁴ Report of a special committee of the Board of Visitors, appointed to investigate charges made against the administration by Superintendent Oscar E. Pederson of Winnebago County, in Papers of the Board of Regents, January 21, 1896.

⁴⁵ *Chicago Record*, February 23, 1897, p. 6.

In his way of living and in his choice of intimates in Madison Adams was also criticized. The second Mrs. Adams was a woman of means. She had fine horses and a fine carriage, and she employed a Negro butler, perhaps the only one in Madison.⁴⁶ President and Mrs. Adams entered graciously into the social life of Madison, and Mrs. Adams made the president's house the center of entertainment for students, faculty, and townspeople. Pyre, who both as a student and as a member of the faculty enjoyed the hospitality of the Adamses, declared: "To many, students and faculty alike, whose lives had been barren of material refinements, the possessions of the house, its books and trophies of European travel, its table, and the subjects and manner of the conversation shed a new light upon social intercourse."⁴⁷

Adams himself found congenial and admiring friends among the influential and wealthy citizens of Madison. General Lucius Fairchild, Senator John C. Spooner, Breese J. Stevens, and Lucien S. Hanks were among his intimates.⁴⁸ From Senator Spooner he received the gift of a fine riding horse.⁴⁹ With Hanks he spent many an hour over billiards. Adams was not a wealthy man himself, but he could discuss business and politics with men of large affairs. He had investments in a publishing house, real estate in Michigan and Maine, and he dabbled, without much success, in Colorado mining stock. His own conservative views in economics and politics sheltered these pleasant associations. His doctrine on wealth, for example, was eminently correct in the 1890's and eminently acceptable. In his baccalaureate address in 1894, *The Limitations of Reform*, he defended Rockefeller, Stanford, Carnegie and others. "Of course," he declared, "I do not mean to assert or imply that men of wealth have not been subjected to peculiar temptations, for they certainly have, and they have, no doubt, often yielded to such temptations, but what I mean to say is, that the simple accumulation of wealth on the part of a man who detects and seizes upon the inherent possibilities of a given situation, does

⁴⁶ Smith, *Charles Kendall Adams*, 65, 133.

⁴⁷ Pyre, *Wisconsin*, 303.

⁴⁸ Smith, *Charles Kendall Adams*, 122-124.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 120-121.

not of itself increase the poverty of the poor. On the contrary, it surely diminishes the poverty of the poor, for it opens countless new avenues and opportunities for labor."⁵⁰ On the eve of the election of 1896, although he refused to speak at a Republican rally on the grounds of bad health, Adams gave Boss Keyes friendly assurances of his support of the ticket. "While I hope that no one, here in Madison at any rate, is in doubt as to how my sympathies are in this campaign, I believe the influence of anything I might say would not be sufficient to justify the personal risk I should undertake in attempting to make a speech on Monday next."⁵¹

Although Adams was once charged with neglecting the University in order to carry on his work as editor, the charge was patently untrue. He had patience and industry in abundance and he gave to the University his fullest energy. Certainly no president before him identified himself more closely with the institution or took a more paternal interest in all its activities. His relations with the regents were on the whole harmonious and productive. Early in his administration he wrote to Andrew D. White that the regents were intelligent and considerate. "It is a pleasure—an increasing pleasure—to work with them, for I believe there are no jealousies or misunderstandings, and they are certainly predisposed to think well of whatever is recommended by the President. This I count for more than all else."⁵² In his relations with the regents he made full use of his wide knowledge of the leading universities of this country. His recommendations were almost always buttressed by references to the history and the programs of Michigan, Cornell, Columbia, or Harvard. By nature something of a politician, Adams was both interested in and adept at working out personal and ideological adjustments within the existing framework of values and rules, a skill which is the essence of the politician's art. This skill he employed on the faculty, the regents, and the legislature with almost uniform success. His genialness, wisdom, and persuasiveness partially concealed another trait—he was

⁵⁰ Charles Kendall Adams, *The Limitations of Reform*, baccalaureate address (Madison, 1894), 6.

⁵¹ Adams to Keyes, October 28, 1896, in the Presidents' Papers.

⁵² Adams to White, May 23, 1894, quoted in Smith, *Charles Kendall Adams*, 130.

something of a benevolent despot. He treasured the power of nominating new members of the faculty, and in the exercise of his prerogative, while listening to counsel, considered himself the final judge. He tied new men to him in various ways and viewed their successes as his own. Although usually affable and gracious, he was occasionally brutal to less favored members of the faculty, as Professors Jastrow and Kremers, among others, discovered when they attempted to cross him. Yet whatever his weaknesses, he carried the institution through a period of remarkable growth and maintained such harmony that Richard T. Ely referred to his administration as the "era of good feeling" in the history of the University.⁵³

It was perhaps in his work of increasing the material resources of the University that he was most successful. Before Chamberlin left, funds had been provided and plans adopted for the construction of the dairy buildings, the law building, and the armory. The last two were completed after Adams arrived. In the years that followed, Adams got legislative funds to support the increased activities of the institution, and funds for additions to the machine shops, Bascom Hall, and Chadbourne Hall, as well as funds for a new engineering building and the great library building to be jointly occupied by the Historical Society and the University. Adams took pride in these achievements. In 1899 he wrote to Reuben Gold Thwaites: "Possibly the most noteworthy fact in connection with my administration thus far has been the success of the University in securing every appropriation for which it has asked."⁵⁴ In June, 1902, only a month before his death, Adams recalled to Birge that on just two occasions the legislature had not followed his requests, "but with these exceptions we got all I ever tried for, with Camp Randall to boot."⁵⁵ Adams also took pride in the fact that he had managed to keep the faculty working together.⁵⁶ Birge, who had been close to Adams during the whole period of his administration, declared: "He heightened the spirit and

⁵³ Richard T. Ely, "Charles Kendall Adams," in the *Wisconsin Alumnus*, 42: 303 (July, 1941).

⁵⁴ Adams to Thwaites, April 5, 1899, in the Presidents' Papers.

⁵⁵ Adams to Birge, quoted in Smith, *Charles Kendall Adams*, 99.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

temper of the teaching given by the University, and elevated the educational ideals which inspired it. Thus his administration not only enlarged the material resources of the University and increased its size, but effected an even more important advance in its inner life. This is the great contribution of his work to the University and to the state of Wisconsin—a contribution whose value will become clearer as the years pass away.”⁵⁷

Adams had hoped to remain at his post until he reached the age of seventy-five, but in 1900 his health broke. He went first to Hot Springs, Virginia, and then to Battle Creek, Michigan, hoping for relief, but he failed to regain his strength. Upon the advice of his doctors, who continued to hold forth the possibility of complete recovery, Adams asked for and was given a year's leave of absence to go to Europe.⁵⁸ Dean Birge was made acting president during Adams' absence. Adams, despite persistent ill health, continued to advise the acting president and the Board. In September, 1901, he returned to Madison. Although not fully recovered, he attempted to assume the full responsibilities of his office, but his strength was unequal to the task. Early in October, 1901, he submitted his resignation to the Board with “a deep sense of gratitude to the Regents for that cordiality and unbroken harmony with which we have been able to work together for the advancement of the University; and with a warm appreciation of the constant unity of purpose, care in deliberation, and vigor of action, that have characterized all our relations during my administration.”⁵⁹

Although Adams explained in his letter that for reasons of health he must resign immediately and leave Madison for a warmer, drier climate, the regents did not then accept the resignation. Instead, the Board adopted a resolution acknowledging that the cause of education was sustaining a severe blow and extending sympathy and expressing the hope that both Adams and his wife would be restored to health.⁶⁰ At the same time a

⁵⁷ Quoted in Smith, *Charles Kendall Adams*, 114, from Birge's memorial address.

⁵⁸ Adams to the regents, in *Reports to the Regents*, Vol. D, pp. 652-657, September 18, 1900; *Records of the Board of Regents*, Vol. E, pp. 377, 384, September 18, December 6, 1900.

⁵⁹ *Records of the Board of Regents*, Vol. E, p. 479, October 11, 1901.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 479-480.

committee was appointed to consider the resignation and, if the committee accepted it, to consider the subject of a successor.⁶¹ The faculty and students, however, regarded Adams' resignation as final. The faculty adopted a resolution of sympathy and sorrow, affirming the large gains of the University under Adams' administration. "The administration of President Adams has aimed to promote the physical and social interests of the students, as well as their intellectual and moral welfare; in its relations toward the Faculty it has shown wisdom in the choice and promotion of instructors, readiness to provide the best facilities for teaching and unfailing sympathy with scholarly aspirations."⁶²

Adams' first letters from California spoke of his improved health, but a return to Madison was out of the question. In January, 1902, Adams wrote to the regents asking that formal acceptance of his resignation be postponed no longer.⁶³ The regents reluctantly accepted it.⁶⁴ Yet this did not sever the relations between Adams and the Board or the faculty. He kept in close touch with the activities of the University and, at the request of the regents, advised on a successor. He was authorized to offer the position to President Benjamin Ide Wheeler of California, but Wheeler refused to accept.⁶⁵ Adams did not live to see his successor named.⁶⁶

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 480.

⁶² Reports to the faculty, File Book, vol. 1, p. 198. See Smith, *Charles Kendall Adams*, 87; *Daily Cardinal*, October 11, 1901.

⁶³ Adams to the regents, January 4, 1902, quoted in Smith, *Charles Kendall Adams*, 91.

⁶⁴ Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. E, p. 496, January 21, 1902.

⁶⁵ Smith, *Charles Kendall Adams*, 95-96.

⁶⁶ Charles Kendall Adams died in July, 1902, and Mrs. Adams a few months later. He left the bulk of his estate, amounting to about \$40,000, to the University for the support of graduate scholarships in history, English, and Greek. Before leaving Madison he had given his library to the University, and Mrs. Adams had given many of her "trophies of European travel" to the Historical Society. An account of the circumstances and problems encountered in getting the Adams property safely into the hands of the University as recounted by one of the executors, L. S. Hanks, is to be found in Smith, *Charles Kendall Adams*, 104-108.

In accordance with the wishes of Charles Kendall Adams and his wife, their remains were returned to Madison to be buried in the community near the University that had given this childless couple so much happiness before the harsh climate forced them to leave.

From early in 1900 until 1903, when Charles R. Van Hise was installed in office, Edward A. Birge served as acting president. In this capacity Birge had to deal with two legislatures, approve a number of faculty appointments and several departmental reorganizations. Nevertheless the period can hardly be called the period of Birge's administration. He himself regarded his function first, as steward for Adams and, after Adams' resignation, as custodian of the office of president until a new man should be appointed to it.⁶⁷

⁶⁷ In March, 1902, Adams wrote to Birge from California, telling him what steps had been taken in the selection of a new president and informing him of what he probably had already sensed, that the regents were not prepared to name anyone then on the staff of the University to the presidency. Smith, *Charles Kendall Adams*, 95.

21.

Getting and Spending

IN 1887 the total receipts of the University from all sources amounted to almost \$227,000. The amount declined to about \$183,000 in 1890. But from then on the receipts showed a sharp increase until by 1903, the last year of the period under study, the income of the University reached \$675,000.

The University obtained most of its funds from five sources: income from University and agricultural college land endowments; direct contributions from the federal government; income from student fees, tuitions, room rents, and sale of products from the Experiment Station; gifts and bequests; and contributions from the state. The contribution from the state made up, of course, the largest portion of University income.

The income from the land endowments decreased during this period both relatively and absolutely. In 1887 the total revenue received from the University land fund and the agricultural college fund was approximately \$28,000.¹ This amount increased during the next few years to a high point of \$32,800 in 1895, but by 1899 it had declined to \$21,600. Although it showed slight increases thereafter it did not again reach \$30,000. The fluctuation indicated declining interest rates and the periodic failure of the state officer to keep the full fund invested.

The first direct contribution of the federal government was made under the terms of the Hatch Act of 1887, which provided \$15,000 annually for agricultural experiment stations.

¹This figure and all others cited below are taken from the reports of the secretary of the Board of Regents in *Regents' Biennial Reports*, 1888-1904, inclusive.

The first funds received under this act were accepted in 1888. In 1890 the second Morrill Act provided further aid to land-grant colleges and universities, a sum of \$15,000 the first year, to be increased \$1,000 a year until the annual contribution should reach \$25,000.² The money received under the Morrill Act was allocated to the Colleges of Letters and Science, Agriculture, and Engineering. The first received one-fifth of the amount and the last two, two-fifths each.

Of the funds raised by the University, the largest amount came from student laboratory fees and other fees, tuitions, and room rents. This source yielded approximately \$11,000 in 1887, \$42,000 by 1897, and \$104,000 in 1903.³ The sale of farm products brought the next largest amount, mostly from milk and milk products from the Experiment Station. Agricultural college sales were reported to be approximately \$2,000 in 1887. Ten years later the income from this source had increased to \$23,000 and in 1903 to approximately \$50,000. During the last two decades of the century the University also reported income from the work of the observatory in furnishing time signals for railroads and several other organizations. The University was paid \$1,461 for this service in 1893, but by 1898 the amount had declined to \$90, and thereafter no income at all was re-

² *United States Statutes at Large*, 24:440-442; 26:417.

³ Under the law the University was not permitted to collect tuition fees from residents of Wisconsin except for students in the law college and those taking extra work. Early in the 1880's the regents levied an incidental fee and were upheld by the supreme court. In 1887 nonresident tuition in the College of Letters and Science was \$6 per term, and all students paid a fee of \$10 per year for general expenses. Tuition in the College of Law was \$50 for the first year; in the School of Pharmacy it was \$25. A \$3 graduation fee was extracted from all seniors. *University Catalogue*, 1886-87, pp. 125-126. In 1895 the fees were raised somewhat. Nonresident tuition in the College of Letters and Science was \$15 per semester, general expenses were \$10. Nonresident tuition in the College of Engineering and the School of Pharmacy was \$15 per semester, general expenses, \$20. Tuition in the law college was \$85 for the first year and \$60 annually for the next two years. *Ibid.*, 1894-95, p. 59. Fees were reduced a little the next year, but by 1903 they were again substantially what they had been in 1895. *Ibid.*, 1902-03, pp. 47, 48. The modest income from fees for general expenses was threatened from time to time by legislative enactment. In 1901, for example, a bill prohibiting the University from collecting any such fee from Wisconsin residents passed the Senate but was lost in the Assembly. *Senate Journal*, 1901, pp. 120, 954; *Assembly Journal*, 1901, pp. 1286-1287. The same legislature, however, amended the law to provide that "attendance at the university shall not of itself be sufficient to effect a residence" in the state. *Laws of Wisconsin*, 1901, pp. 484-485.

ported. Most of the University income from room rents, laboratory fees, sale of farm produce, and the time-signal service barely covered the cost of supporting these activities. Thus while the collections were entered as receipts, this particular income provided little for constructing new buildings or paying professors' salaries.

Gifts and bequests, never amounting to more than \$10,000 a year, nevertheless found a place in the secretary's annual report. Most of these were gifts for scholarships or fellowships or for the library.⁴ Not until the end of the period did the University receive a substantial private gift, the Adams estate, but the income from this also was designated for scholarships. Early in the 1890's the regents accepted a bequest which partly supported the Jackson professorship of law. Thus this source of income, gratefully as it was received, hardly cut the cost of running the University.

Except for the funds received from the sources already enumerated, the money for support of the University came from the state. In 1887 the state's contribution represented over fifty per cent of the total. And in 1896 the Board of Visitors, having surveyed the sources of support of the University, reported that 14 per cent of the revenue came from the federal government, about 9 per cent from student fees and University profits, and the remaining 77 per cent from state contributions.⁵

It is difficult to form a reliable, detailed picture of the expenditures of the University income during these years because of the frequent changes in the accounting system. By 1896, however, the secretary had begun to show expenditures by colleges and separate functions, thus affording a rough basis for the comparison of expenditure by college. In 1896 the College of Letters and Science, with 818 of the 1,598 students enrolled in the University, received \$112,394; the College of Agriculture, with 190 students—180 of whom were in the Short

⁴ Among the contributors was William Jennings Bryan, whose gift of \$250, the interest from which was to be used each year as a prize for the best essay on government, the regents gratefully accepted in 1899. Bryan had delivered a lecture at Madison and gave his fee to the University. Records of the Board of Regents, (MS.), Vol. E, p. 198, February 20, 1899.

⁵ *Regents' Biennial Report*, 1897-98, p. 70.

Course or the dairy course—received \$69,241; and the College of Engineering, with 207 students, received \$35,928.⁶ In 1903 the College of Letters and Science, with 1,232 of the 2,870 students in the University, received \$185,032; the College of Agriculture, with 461 students (4 graduate students, 32 students in the long course, and the rest in the Short Course and the dairy course) received \$122,479; and the College of Engineering, with 585 students, received \$73,226. Never during the whole period did the total allotment to the College of Law exceed \$16,000, a sum smaller than the amount annually devoted to administration of the University. The School of Pharmacy received about half as much as the College of Law. Only three times in the period from 1887 to 1903 did the secretary's report show that more money was expended for the library than for laboratory supplies and apparatus. And at no time during this period did the total amount expended for salaries reach fifty per cent of the budget. The reason for this lay in the extensive building program and the need of the Colleges of Agriculture and Engineering for large sums of money for laboratory supplies, apparatus, and equipment for instruction and experimentation. In the College of Law and the College of Letters and Science often as much as 90 per cent of the total budget was spent on salaries. In the College of Agriculture salaries usually amounted to less than half of the cost of running the college and often accounted for as little as one quarter of the whole.⁷

⁶ *University Catalogue*, 1895-96, pp. 315-317.

⁷ These figures are based on the reports of the secretary published in the *Regents' Biennial Reports*, 1896-1904.

DISBURSEMENTS BY MAJOR UNITS, 1896-1903

	Total	Letters & Science	Agri- culture	Engi- neering	Law	Pharmacy	Total Salaries
1896	403,376	112,394	69,241	35,928	15,015	8,022	192,462
1897	466,623	120,599	65,585	37,761	14,602	8,046	197,898
1898	449,330	122,825	70,370	39,290	14,654	8,281	206,289
1899	507,171	126,613	78,922	42,654	14,179	7,529	224,640
1900	592,797	135,103	83,783	47,682	14,116	7,811	237,770
1901	536,925	152,424	96,261	57,011	15,418	8,831	258,414
1902	549,953	173,012	95,984	60,486	12,936	8,508	258,978
1903	672,408	185,032	122,479	73,226	13,661	8,700	291,295

The process through which the state by 1887 had come to accept substantial financial responsibility for the University has been examined. It remains at this point to describe the push for more abundant support during the administrations of Chamberlin and Adams. Although successful in this campaign for more state support, the regents lost some of their power and independence in the process, for as the legislature voted larger and yet larger sums for the University its members naturally envinced greater interest in the multiplying activities of the institution. This interest was expressed in periodic attacks, in investigations—some of them pertinent—and in a tendency, noticeable after 1899, to appropriate funds to the University for specific purposes.⁸ Moreover, the increasing financial dependence of the University upon the legislature not only gave rise to a continuing University lobby, but also served to bring into existence, in Wisconsin as elsewhere, a new type of public servant—the educator-politician, whose primary function it was to extract funds from, and when necessary to placate, the legislature. Chamberlin was adequate in this capacity, but Charles Kendall Adams was a conspicuous success.

During his five years as president of the University, Chamberlin dealt with two legislatures. The legislature of 1889 was asked to act on ten University measures and acted on most of them. Two of the measures involved no expenditure of funds. One provided for the reorganization of the University and the other made the president an *ex officio* member of the Board of Regents.⁹ Of the remaining bills, three carried direct appropriations. One granted to the University one per cent of the

⁸ In 1859 John Lathrop had warned Barnard that the legislature is "our open side." Nor was he the only one who recognized that the legislature would increasingly concern itself with the University. Shortly after Ely joined the faculty of the University, Frederick Jackson Turner had remarked: "It is really astonishing that the people of Wisconsin let us have such free scope as we do have. We cannot expect this always. At present the budget of the university is relatively small; when it becomes larger, it will attract more attention from the legislature and the citizens, and criticism is sure to follow." Richard T. Ely, *Ground Under Our Feet* (New York, 1938), 196.

⁹ *Laws of Wisconsin*, 1889, 1: 301–302, 318. The University reorganization bill was introduced at the request of the Board on the recommendation of President Chamberlin and was adopted without amendment. Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. D, pp. 1–2, January 15, 1889; *Senate Journal*, 1889, pp. 241, 330, 346, 358, 377; *Assembly Journal*, 533, 535, 804, 848, 855.

railroad license fees for the support of the engineering college, the second appropriated one thousand dollars annually for the support of the summer school for teachers, and the third provided five thousand dollars for steam-heating "Ladies Hall" and authorized employment of a "competent preceptress" to take charge of the building.¹⁰ Two provided for the publication of research reports.¹¹ Two were joint resolutions, the first permitting the regents to accept the funds offered by the federal government under the Hatch Act, the other dealing with the farmers institutes.¹² Bills providing funds for the construction of a law building and a gymnasium and armory were also introduced but not passed at the 1889 session.¹³

Of all the bills passed, the number suggesting the vigor of Chamberlin's first assault upon the legislature, the bill providing additional funds for the engineering department deserves elaboration. George H. Paul, in his report as president of the Board of Regents, had pointed out that the "permanent establishment of the department of mechanic arts on a broader basis" demanded legislative consideration. Good faith to the federal government and the "mechanical and manufacturing interests of the state" required the reorganization of this department "with a view to larger results." Paul was emphatically supported by the Board of Visitors.¹⁴ But it was left largely to Chamberlin to devise a plan for attaining this end. He proposed to have the legislature appropriate to the University for the College of Engineering one per cent of the railroad license fees.¹⁵ Chamberlin solicited support from the railroads operating in Wisconsin and pointed out that the fund would be used to establish "one of the strongest and most complete railroad

¹⁰ *Laws of Wisconsin*, 1889, 1: 309, 648, 590-591.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 180-181, 755.

¹² *Ibid.*, 764; *Senate Journal*, 1889, p. 216; *Assembly Journal*, p. 374.

¹³ The bill for the law building died in the Senate; the other was passed by the Senate but was defeated in the Assembly. *Senate Journal*, 1889, pp. 205, 237, 731; *Assembly Journal*, 330, 1155.

¹⁴ *Regents' Biennial Report*, 1887-88, pp. 5-6, 61.

¹⁵ The Wisconsin railroad-license-fee system had its origin in a gross receipts tax adopted by the legislature in 1854 to encourage the building of railroads in the state. Later this tax policy was extended to other transportation and communication companies. Under the gross receipts tax the companies paid a tax only on their gross receipts; they paid no general property tax. When this law was pronounced unconstitutional in 1860 the legislature re-enacted it in the form of a

and electrical engineering schools of the country."¹⁶ The response of the railroads to Chamberlin's solicitation is not on record, but apparently replies were favorable, for Chamberlin continued to keep the representatives of the railroads informed on the progress of the bill.¹⁷ Clearer evidence that the railroads approved is shown in the progress of the bill itself. Introduced on February 20 by Senator Main, the bill passed through two committees, came to final vote one month later, and was passed unanimously.¹⁸ It was approved seven days after it reached the Assembly by a vote of 71 to 11.¹⁹ The law, which remained in effect until 1899, provided from \$12,000 to \$15,000 a year and yielded funds for the expansion of the engineering college.

The success of the legislative program and the general prosperity of the University caused the executive committee to declare in June of 1889: "The cold indifference—not to say hostility—has given place to an earnest solicitude and deep interest in the welfare of the University in every quarter of the state. The people have come to look upon it as their University and to rejoice to see it taking rank with the first educational institutions of the country."²⁰

In 1891 the legislature considered only two bills dealing with the University, one permitting the regents wide latitude in the acceptance of gifts²¹ and the other appropriating funds for new buildings.²² Preparation for the passage of the latter bill was begun in September, 1890, when the Board approved the creation of a legislative committee of five, composed of President

license fee under which the companies paid one per cent of their gross receipts as a fee to engage in business in the state. Although the percentage was increased later, it was not until 1903 that the legislature finally adopted a law under which the property of transportation and communication companies was taxed on the same basis as other real property. See Raymond V. Phelan, *The Financial History of Wisconsin (Bulletin of the University of Wisconsin, Economic and Political Science Series, Vol. 2, No. 2, Madison, 1908)*, 373-387.

¹⁶ Chamberlin to L. T. Moore, chief engineer of the Illinois Central Railway, December 22, 1888, and to representatives of six other railroad companies, in the Presidents' Papers.

¹⁷ Chamberlin to Moore and others, March 2, May 14, 1889, in the Presidents' Papers.

¹⁸ *Senate Journal*, 1889, pp. 258, 540.

¹⁹ *Assembly Journal*, 1889, pp. 742, 882.

²⁰ Reports to the Regents, Vol. C, p. 9, June 18, 1889.

²¹ *Laws of Wisconsin*, 1891, pp. 228-231.

²² *Ibid.*, 23-24.

Chamberlin, George Raymer—the president of the Board of Regents—, and Regents Noyes, Hanks, and Challoner.²³ The committee early determined to ask for a millage tax for this purpose instead of a fixed sum. Accordingly, early in the session, a bill was introduced by Senator Kingston of Ashland appropriating to the University the proceeds of a tax of one-tenth of a mill on the assessed value of the property in the state.²⁴ The bill encountered few obstacles in either house of the Democratic legislature. In the Senate it was briefly delayed by attempts to recommit it, but then was passed by a vote of 29 to 1.²⁵ The Assembly approved it by a unanimous vote.²⁶ This law provided the first substantial building appropriation received by the University since 1887. It provided that the tax of one-tenth of a mill should be collected annually for a period of six years, the money to be used by the regents “for the construction, equipment, and maintenance of an armory and drill-room for the military department . . . a building for the College of Law, a building for practical instruction in dairying, and such modifications or extensions of existing buildings as the growth of the university may require.” It also provided that any residue accruing from this tax could be used by the regents as other income of the University.²⁷

The University derived approximately \$60,000 a year from this appropriation. A year and a half after it was made the regents were able to report that a dairy building costing \$60,000 had been completed, the law building had been begun, and plans had been adopted for the construction of the armory and gymnasium.²⁸ But this did not mean that the regents would make no more demands upon the state funds. On the contrary.

Charles Kendall Adams had entered upon his duties as president in 1892. In a special report to the regents on January 4,

²³ Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. D, pp. 82–83, September 16, 1890.

²⁴ *Senate Journal*, 1891, p. 76.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 239–240.

²⁶ *Assembly Journal*, 1891, p. 423. Chamberlin later thanked Charles W. Eliot of Harvard for his assistance, but just what Eliot had done is not on record. Chamberlin to Eliot, March 7, 1891, in the Presidents' Papers.

²⁷ *Laws of Wisconsin*, 1891, pp. 23–24.

²⁸ *Regents' Biennial Report*, 1891–92, pp. 2–3. The regents made practical use of Chamberlin's great knowledge of geology by directing that he select the stone for the law building.

1893, just before the legislature met, he served notice that additional funds were needed and would be asked for: "The very fact that the legislature has ordered free tuition to be given to nearly all the students from Wisconsin at the university carries with it an implication and an assurance. The implication is that it is the duty of the regents not only to administer the fiscal affairs of the university judiciously and wisely, but also to inform the legislature as to the condition under which the university may adequately do its work. The assurance is that the legislature will supply all needful equipment and teaching force."²⁹ Thirteen days later, in his inaugural address, Adams dwelt more fully on the needs of the University.

Several appropriation bills were introduced for various purposes in the Senate and Assembly in 1893. Despite signs of the impending financial panic, the legislature, after consolidating all the items in one bill, passed a measure which appropriated \$125,000 to the University, including \$45,000 for the engineering department, \$14,200 annually for general University expenses, and \$25,000 for the purchase of Camp Randall "for the exclusive use of the University."³⁰

The appropriation of 1893, most of which was received during the fiscal year of 1894 (October 1, 1893 to September 30, 1894), was added to income already provided: one-eighth of a mill tax under the law of 1883, one-tenth of a mill under the law of 1891, one per cent of the railroad license fees under the

²⁹ Reports to the Regents, Vol. C, p. 406, January 4, 1893.

³⁰ *Laws of Wisconsin*, 1893, p. 378. The bill in its final form was adopted in the Senate by a vote of 25 to 3. *Senate Journal*, 1893, p. 597. The Assembly approved it by a vote of 66 to 6. *Assembly Journal*, 1893, p. 1003. Camp Randall, so named during the Civil War when it served first as an assembly center for troops and later as a hospital and Confederate prison camp, belonged to the Dane County Agricultural Society. After the war it had been used as a fair ground and for other purposes. When the Society decided to dispose of the property in 1892 numerous plans were proposed. The one which won the support of the legislature was its purchase by the University for use as a playing field. Credit for convincing the legislature of this highly advantageous purchase was generally given to General Lucius Fairchild, former governor, former ambassador, and former Commander of the Grand Army of the Republic. As Mrs. Fairchild recalled the story years later for Charles Forster Smith, General Fairchild's testimony before the legislative committee was brief and to the point: "Gentlemen, there is the property; the University needs it; the price is cheap; if you don't buy it, I will." Charles F. Smith, *Charles Kendall Adams: A Life Sketch* (Madison, 1924), 40-41.

law of 1889, and special contributions for support of the farmers institutes. During the same year the University received unexpectedly the sum of \$52,214.80, the fruits of the famous treasury tax cases.³¹ The total receipts of the University during the fiscal year of 1894 amounted to \$499,859.47. There was indeed some truth in Governor Peck's witticism, the delight of the academic community, to the effect that he had never gone through the University but that the University had gone through him for more than a million dollars.³²

The Democrats were decisively defeated in the election of 1894, yet the change in the political complexion of the legislature did not deter the regents from applying for additional funds. In his report to the regents in 1894 Adams had dwelt upon the rapidly increasing needs of the University. He had placed particular emphasis on the need for a new library. This project was to be a joint enterprise. The University would provide the land and the State Historical Society would provide the building with funds from the legislature. Both the University and the Historical Society would occupy the building.³³ Besides funds for a library, Adams said the University needed funds for the repair and remodeling of Ladies Hall and University Hall, a new building for the College of Engineering, and additional funds for the maintenance of the buildings already acquired.³⁴

Adams and the regents took pains in 1895 to see that the members of the new legislature were fully informed on the needs of the University, partly because so many of them were serving their first term, partly because they may have feared repercussions from the Ely trial of the preceding August. Any fears which they might have had on the latter score soon proved groundless. Early in February, 1895, before the legislature had been long in session, Adams issued an invitation to the legisla-

³¹ *Regents' Biennial Report*, 1893-94, p. 21. See Milo M. Quaife, *Wisconsin, Its History and Its People, 1634-1924* (4 vols., Chicago, 1924), 2: 7-9.

³² Pyre, *Wisconsin* (New York, 1920), 302; Smith, *Charles Kendall Adams*, 43.

³³ This project was first proposed by President Chamberlin and later espoused by Adams. It was formally approved by the Historical Society in 1893 and received the hearty support of the Board of Visitors in 1893 and again in 1894. *Regents' Biennial Report*, 1893-94, pp. 63-64, 71-73.

³⁴ *Regents' Biennial Report*, 1893-94, pp. 52-55.

ture to visit the University on February 20. Hacks would be provided by the regents. The invitation was accepted.³⁵

The event was carefully, even shrewdly, planned. The legislators were escorted over the campus and through the buildings by members of the faculty. Finally all were brought together in the new armory where the students, almost fifteen hundred of them, had already been assembled to provide an alert and noisy gallery. Adams used the occasion to reiterate the requests he had made in his report to the Board of Regents. After Adams, according to one version of the meeting, a Democrat was called upon to speak. He challenged the Republicans to do more for the University than the Democrats had done during their four years in power. His challenge, made publicly before this large gathering, could not be ignored. The first Republican speaker accepted, and when it came time for Governor Upham to speak, he could not resist an appeal to the gallery. To the legislators he proclaimed: "I warn you that you cannot pass any bill in favor of this University so large that I will not dare to sign it." He was rewarded by deafening and prolonged shouts from the undergraduates, who demonstrated that football yells could be used appropriately on state occasions. Ex-Governor Fairchild and ex-Governor Austin of Minnesota also urged the legislature to support the University.³⁶

Meanwhile appropriation bills had been introduced in both houses³⁷ and referred to the respective Committees on Education. The Assembly was the first to take action. On April 12, shortly before the end of the session, the University appropriation bill was brought up for final vote and adopted unanimously.³⁸ Referred immediately to the Senate, it was adopted the next day without amendment. James J. McGillivray, Ca-

³⁵ *Assembly Journal*, 1895, pp. 280, 282.

³⁶ Smith, *Charles Kendall Adams*, 42-43. Neither of the Madison newspapers reported the event quite in the way that Smith presents it in his memoir of Adams, although both reported it fully. The *Wisconsin State Journal* printed Adams' entire address. According to both papers the legislators promised to give the University their support, but there was no mention of a challenge. Governor Upham was reported as saying substantially what Smith quotes. *Madison Democrat*, *Wisconsin State Journal*, February 21, 1895.

³⁷ *Senate Journal*, 1895, p. 91; *Assembly Journal*, 132. ³⁸ *Ibid.*, 947.

nadian-born Republican senator from Black River Falls, registered the lone vote against it.³⁹ The act appropriated to the University for the next two years the proceeds of an annual tax of one-fifth of a mill on each dollar of the assessed value of taxable property. The money was to be used by the regents for administration expenditures and expenditures for the department of engineering, for University Extension, an addition to the horticultural building, enlargement of Ladies Hall with gymnasium apartments, changes and repairs in University Hall, the construction of a farm barn, and purchase of a herd of cattle for the agricultural department. Any residue which remained could be applied to such use as the regents deemed most important to the interests of the University "provided that . . . there shall be set apart for the College of Agriculture, in addition to its present several incomes, \$20,000 for the completion and equipment of the horticultural building, \$5,000 for a dairy barn, \$2,000 for the purchase of a herd of dairy cows, and \$10,000 annually for current expenses."⁴⁰ The law also continued indefinitely the levy of one-tenth of a mill, which had been made in 1891.⁴¹ Thus by 1895 the University was, comparatively, in an excellent financial position. It now received from the state the proceeds of a tax of one-eighth of a mill under the law of 1883, one-tenth of a mill under the law of 1891, one-fifth of a mill under the law of 1895, one per cent of the proceeds of the railroad license fees, and funds to support the farmers institutes. Moreover, in 1895 it had received the first appropriation for a new University library. This was procured in the name of the Historical Society so that it would not show as a direct contribution to the University.

It is indicative of the prosperity of the University in the 1890's that only a few references were made to the University of

³⁹ *Senate Journal*, 1895, p. 680.

⁴⁰ *Laws of Wisconsin*, 1895, pp. 470-471.

⁴¹ *Ibid.* The legislature also adopted two other measures: one sought to establish more adequate records of the expenditures of the University and the other directed the dean of the College of Agriculture and his assistants to prepare a handbook describing the agricultural resources of the state "with reference to giving practical, helpful information to the home seeker." Fifty thousand copies were to be printed at state expense. *Laws of Wisconsin*, 1895, pp. 595, 627-629.

Michigan, the example of which had been cited so often in Wisconsin during the first forty years in attempting to encourage legislative and popular support. During the 1890's most comparisons for this purpose were made with the new and richly endowed University of Chicago and Stanford University. Indeed, by 1895 University officials wisely refrained from comparing the state of Wisconsin's contributions to their institution with the contributions of neighboring states to their universities, for in terms of state support it had surpassed them all. The University of Michigan had obtained a permanent annual grant of \$15,000 from the state in 1867—the same year that the Wisconsin legislature had voted a small appropriation to the University. In 1873 the Michigan legislature had given its university the proceeds of an annual tax of $1/20$ of a mill which was increased to $1/6$ of a mill in 1893.⁴² It was not until 1891 that Ohio University was assured an annual income from the state on the basis of a tax of $1/20$ of a mill. This was increased to $1/10$ of a mill in 1896.⁴³ In 1895 the Indiana legislature, having made small annual grants to the state university earlier, voted a tax of $1/6$ mill to be shared by Indiana University, Purdue University, and the State Normal School. Illinois did not provide a mill tax for its university before the turn of the century, but it contributed funds regularly after 1886. From 1886 to 1904 the contribution averaged \$215,630 per year. Minnesota voted its first mill tax for the university in 1878. The tax of $1/10$ of a mill was increased in 1893 to $15/100$ mill and in 1897 to $23/100$ mill.⁴⁴ In 1895 the University of Wisconsin was receiving a total tax of $17/40$ of a mill, substantially more than any of the other universities named. Furthermore, for the next four years the University enjoyed relatively greater prosperity, in terms of the rate of tax support, than it would at any time during the next twenty years. In 1899 the millage tax was abolished in favor of a lump sum appropriation. Although it

⁴² Richard R. Price, *The Financial Support of the University of Michigan: Its Origin and Development* (Harvard Bulletins in Education, No. 8, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1923), 34-37.

⁴³ Richard R. Price, *The Financial Support of State Universities* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1924), 80.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 91, 104, 143.

was restored in 1905, the rate was reduced to $2/7$ of a mill. In 1911 this was increased to $3/8$ of a mill or $15/40$ as compared to $17/40$ of sixteen years before.⁴⁵

The success of the University in winning relatively generous support from the state was due to many factors. The University was located at the capital, which meant that state officers and legislators were easily accessible to all the representatives of the University. Propinquity in the 1890's did not, apparently, breed contempt. The Board of Regents included men of large affairs, staunchly committed to the University, to its president, or to some phase of its activities, men both dexterous and effective in the art of dealing with legislatures. The University was peculiarly fortunate in the successive presidents, Chamberlin and Adams. These men might disclaim political capacity but they were effective in impressing the legislature with the value and importance of the work of the University, and it was the good fortune as well as the good judgment of the Board of Regents in making their selection that these men proved to be so persuasive. Neither should it be forgotten that in the legislators and the people who elected them was a willingness, resting on practical as well as idealistic considerations, to be won to support of the University. Whatever the reason, Wisconsin could and did boast that hers was one of the leading state universities in the country. And well she might. The University was better financed than most, and, as John Lathrop had so often and so futilely said, "Money is the nerves of learning."⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Comparisons must not, of course, be carried too far. Michigan, although it had a larger student body, had no college of agriculture. Illinois and Minnesota, the latter with a larger number of students than Wisconsin, did have colleges of agriculture. Moreover, the assessed value of the property in the several states differed considerably although the estimated value of property in Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota was substantially the same in 1900. *Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1906* (Washington, 1907), 78. In 1890 the value of taxable property in Michigan was reported as 736 million, in Wisconsin as 464 million, and in Minnesota as 496 million. *Ibid.*, 1895, pp. 346-347.

⁴⁶ The prosperity of the University, while it was reflected most strikingly in the acquisition of new buildings, equipment, and apparatus, was also apparent in the rapid increases in the salaries paid the president and the professors. Bascom had received \$3,500 per annum; Charles Kendall Adams received \$6,500 plus \$500 for expenses. In Bascom's day the maximum salary paid professors was \$2,000 per year. Under Chamberlin salaries were increased to a maximum of \$2,500; the new dean of the College of Agriculture received \$3,500; the dean of the College

But Adams was not yet satisfied. In 1896 he chose the subject of the relationship between the University and the state for his baccalaureate address. His inaugural address of three years before had had the same title, but on that occasion he had dealt with the subject in historical terms. In 1896 he devoted himself specifically to the relation of the state of Wisconsin to its University. In reviewing the history of the land grants, Adams argued that the decision to sell the land cheaply was, in Wisconsin, deliberate. Before it acted, the attention of the Wisconsin legislature had been called to the example of Michigan. The legislature's decision had resulted, Adams said, in a loss of \$59,000 a year in income to the University.⁴⁷ In disposing of the agricultural land grant, the same course had been pursued. Had the legislature followed the example of New York, the agricultural college lands would have yielded \$144,000 a year instead of a little more than \$16,000. The disposition of the lands resulted in "an aggregate loss for all time to the University income of not less than \$187,000 per year." Adams' good friends, ex-Governor Fairchild and United States Senator John C. Spooner, must have been pleased with this argument.

The reason for selling the lands early and cheap, Adams pointed out, was to attract settlers. This policy had been successful. "Wisconsin grew faster than any other State in the Union," but at a cost of \$187,000 to the annual income of the University.

of Letters and Science, \$3,000. Ely was paid \$3,500 as director of the new School of Economics, Political Science, and History when he came in 1892. A new maximum professorial salary of \$3,000 was set in 1894 when Charles Forster Smith was employed as a professor of Greek and classical philology. Before the decade had run out, many professors had reached that maximum and some were pushing beyond it. Although the salary scale did not reach that of Chicago and Stanford, it compared favorably with that of the other state universities in the Middle West. At Michigan the maximum salary in the literary departments was set at \$2,500 in 1872, reduced to \$2,200 in 1878, increased again to \$2,500 in 1888, and to \$3,000 in 1892. B. A. Hinsdale, *History of the University of Michigan* (Ann Arbor, 1906), 70-71. At Minnesota the maximum professorial salary was \$2,400 in the 1880's and had reached \$3,500 by 1910. E. B. Johnson, ed., *Forty Years of the University of Minnesota* (Minneapolis, 1910), 76. At Ohio the maximum salary was fixed by law at \$2,500 in 1878, and this maximum was still in force as late as 1902. Alexis Cope, *History of the Ohio State University*, edited by Thomas C. Mendenhall (5 vols., Columbus, 1920-41), 1:100, 329.

⁴⁷ *The University and the State*, baccalaureate address by President Adams (Madison, 1896), 10. The quotations from Adams in the next four paragraphs were taken from the same address, pp. 11, 15, 17, 18, 19, 22-23, 25.

The loss occasioned by this policy was recognized in the law of 1872, and again four years later in the mill-tax appropriation. Adams called attention to the clause contained in the law of 1876—that the grant was in “full compensation for all deficiencies in the income of the University arising from its [the legislature’s] disposition of lands donated to the State by Congress in trust for the University.” Adams failed to find grounds for such an “act of settlement.” The University was not a child of the state—its relation was more intimate and organic. “The university has no individuality and no rights apart from the will of the State. There can be no denying these facts, and no escape from the conclusions to which they lead. It is impossible for the State to make any bargain with the University that can have any binding force whatever.” George H. Paul had died in 1890, but Elisha Keyes, recalling his testimony before the legislative committee in 1887, must have enjoyed this line of reasoning. Granting that the University could be treated as a ward of the state, Adams asked whether the parent should make such a bargain with its ward after having misused its trust. The child of course had to accept. “But was it a proper bargain for a prosperous and wealthy parent to make, with a puny and almost starving child, especially when the child already gave promise, if it could be nourished into health and vigor, of bringing the greatest possible credit and advantage to the family name?” Even so Adams could not accept this argument except for illustration. The legislature had acted upon a false theory in 1876. The bargain, if there was one, was not fair. The amount contributed by the state in recompense fell short of full compensation by \$129,000 a year.

It was true that the state had made other grants to the University—grants amounting to \$900,000 since 1870. The state had contributed liberally for the College of Agriculture, the observatory, and the College of Engineering, but had given nothing for the “largest of all the Colleges, that of Letters and Science or for the warming, the lighting, and the care of these buildings,” nothing for administration, libraries, museums, and the rest. These funds had to come from money provided by the “Act of Restitution.” “It is no misuse of language, but the plain

statement of a simple fact, to say that during the twenty-seven years from 1866 to 1893, while the State provided with a noble liberality for the buildings of the University, it contributed not a single dollar for its general maintenance and support. Funds for these purposes came entirely out of what should be called the partial Act of Restitution of 1876." Adams was led to the conclusion that "the State is still the moral debtor to the amount of \$129,000 a year. Until a permanent grant of this amount is made, the State will still be the debtor in equity to the Federal University Fund; and until such provision is made, the purposes of the early legislators of the State, in using the University lands as they did, will not have been fulfilled.

"In presenting this cause . . . I have had no time to discuss that phase of the question which grows out of the obligation of the State, not merely to pay its debt to the Federal Fund, but even, in addition, to support the University with a generous hand. To pay one's debt, when one is able, affords no very great reason for praise, even though to refuse to pay it is ignominy." The old land grant still had its uses, but the legislature of 1897 was in no mood to listen to the president.

In 1893, and again in 1895, Adams had urged the legislature to inform itself on every phase of the University, but neither legislature had indicated more than an acquiescent interest in the institution. In 1897, however, the legislature, entirely dominated by Republicans, whose party was already sharply divided between the Stalwarts and Progressives, launched a series of investigations of the finances of the University, the sale of produce from the University farm and dairy school, and the finances of the athletic association; it considered bills which would remove the president from the Board of Regents, would abolish the Normal School regents and the University regents and consolidate control of all higher institutions under one board, and would require the agricultural college to sell its surpluses outside of Madison; and it proposed the establishment of a permanent legislative committee on the University. After 1897 Adams could not complain that the legislature showed too little interest in the University. Indeed, its interest had been too catholic, its search for information too enthusiastic.

A week after the opening of the session, William M. Fogo, editor and publisher of the *Richland Republican Observer*, introduced a bill in the Assembly to remove the president of the University from ex officio membership on the Board.⁴⁸ Almost unnoticed by the press, the bill was sent to the Committee on Education, where it remained for a month. On January 28 Senator Levi Withee, a La Crosse lumberman, introduced a joint resolution asking for a complete report from the regents on the hours of work, salary, and number of students taught by each teacher in the University, together with a complete statement of receipts and expenditures for 1896. This resolution was approved by both houses immediately.⁴⁹ In the Assembly, this resolution called forth another which provided for the appointment of a special joint committee to "examine and sift the figures furnished . . . to examine into the needs of such expenditure and conduct of the university administration, and to require such further statements from the faculty and board of regents as they may deem necessary."⁵⁰

The local newspapers at first viewed the proposal to investigate the University without great alarm. The *Wisconsin State Journal* acknowledged: "Many erroneous and damaging reports are in circulation throughout the state concerning the management of the University, and only by careful reports as to the exact facts can the untruthfulness and the absurdity of these reports be shown."⁵¹ Later the *Journal* hopefully reported that the spirit of hostility was not active in the investigation, but that since the people furnished the money the people had a right to know how it was spent.⁵² The next day the same paper viewed with alarm the talk "throughout the state and among members of the legislature, in regard to refusing necessary appropriations for the state university."⁵³ A day later the *Journal* reported that Regent Noyes approved the *Journal's* stand on the investigation and even favored appointment of a standing

⁴⁸ *Assembly Journal*, 1897, p. 73.

⁴⁹ *Senate Journal*, 1897, pp. 66, 89; *Assembly Journal*, 146.

⁵⁰ *Assembly Journal*, 1897, pp. 170, 184, 236.

⁵¹ *Wisconsin State Journal*, January 29, 1897, p. 2.

⁵² *Ibid.*, February 3, 1897, p. 1.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, February 4, 1897, p. 2.

committee which would keep the legislature informed on the University.⁵⁴

The editor of the *Journal* had reason for some uneasiness. On February 8, 1897, the regents submitted a report to the Senate consisting of a manuscript of nearly one hundred typed pages together with the printed reports of the Board of Regents and the Board of Visitors.⁵⁵ After the clerk had read part of the report he was interrupted, and the Senate voted to refer it to a special committee "to digest and recommend what parts should be spread upon the minutes."⁵⁶ The special committee, of which Senator Withee was chairman, reported two days later, recommending, to the delight of the newspapers, that the report be returned and the regents directed to furnish the information asked for "without any extraneous matter." This recommendation was adopted.⁵⁷ The Assembly the same day passed the resolution establishing the joint committee to extend the investigation, and the Senate accepted it on the day the regents' supplementary report was received.⁵⁸

Five new bills on the University were introduced that same day. In the Senate, Frank Dennett of Sheboygan introduced a bill to abolish the Board of Regents of the University and the Board of Regents of Normal Schools and to replace them with a board of education which would supervise and manage the University, the normal schools, and the high schools. This bill was sent to the Committee on Education.⁵⁹ Although cordially approved by the Madison press, the bill was permitted to die quietly in committee.⁶⁰ The other bill introduced in the

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, February 5, 1897, p. 2.

⁵⁵ *Wisconsin State Journal*, February 9, 1897, p. 4.

⁵⁶ *Madison Democrat*, February 9, 1897, p. 1; *Senate Journal*, 1897, p. 124.

⁵⁷ *Senate Journal*, 1897, p. 154; *Wisconsin State Journal*, February 10, 1897.

⁵⁸ *Assembly Journal*, 1897, p. 236; *Senate Journal*, 295.

⁵⁹ *Senate Journal*, 1897, p. 158.

⁶⁰ It was not reported out until April 21, and then with the recommendation of indefinite postponement. *Ibid.*, 922, 950. The *Wisconsin State Journal* announced that the introduction of the bill would create a wide stir and quoted Senator Dennett to the effect that, "When the directors of different branches of our educational system get to warring between themselves it is time a new order of things was established. The bill is sure to become a law." *Wisconsin State Journal*, February 11, 1897, p. 4. The *Madison Democrat* gave editorial approval to the bill for the same reason. "Normal school jealousies of the university might thus be allayed and the curricula of all the schools shaped in such a manner as to better subserve the highest educational purposes of the commonwealth."

Senate provided for the indefinite continuation of the one-fifth mill appropriation voted first in 1895. This was referred to the joint committee on claims.⁶¹

In the Assembly, Regent W. A. Jones introduced a similar appropriation bill; Assemblyman Tucker of the education committee introduced a bill which increased the annual appropriation to the University summer school from \$1,000 to \$2,000; and Oscar F. Minch of Dane County introduced a bill which would prohibit the sale of University farm and dairy products at retail. All these bills were sent to the Assembly education committee.⁶² Two more resolutions were introduced during the next ten days, one asking for a detailed report of receipts and expenditures of the athletic council for the year 1896 and the other asking for a full report on the costs and disposition of products of the agricultural college and of "machinery hall." By the middle of February, University supporters were looking for some explanation for the unprecedented interest of the legislature in the University and for the seemingly hostile attitude. The *Daily Cardinal* said it was the "false notion of the university that exists in the state," but the editor of the *Milwaukee Daily News* thought Judge Keyes was behind it.⁶³

The bill removing Adams from membership on the Board of Regents was reported out for passage on February 17, with two members dissenting on the grounds that "an official in touch with university affairs should be on the board."⁶⁴ The next day the bill was ordered engrossed and passed to a third reading.⁶⁵ On the same day the regents, having met to prepare the supplemental report for the legislature, adopted a resolution asserting that the "best interests of the University demand" that the president remain on the Board. This resolution was sent to the chairman of the Assembly education committee.⁶⁶

Madison Democrat, February 13, 1897, p. 2. The newspaper enthusiasm cooled quickly, however. *Wisconsin State Journal*, February 20, 1897; February 24, 1897; March 6, 1897; March 23, 1897; *Madison Democrat*, February 28, 1897.

⁶¹ *Senate Journal*, 1897, p. 150.

⁶² *Assembly Journal*, 1897, pp. 226, 232, 242.

⁶³ *Daily Cardinal*, February 15, 1897; M. A. Hoyt of the *Milwaukee Daily News* to Keyes, February 18, 1897, in Keyes Papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

⁶⁴ *Assembly Journal*, 1897, p. 306; *Wisconsin State Journal*, February 18, 1897.

⁶⁵ *Assembly Journal*, 1897, p. 320.

⁶⁶ Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. D, p. 553, February 18, 1897.

So far the plan to eliminate the president from the Board had attracted little newspaper attention. On February 23, however, the *Chicago Record* published a story declaring that a number of prominent citizens were attempting to obtain the removal of President Charles Kendall Adams, that legislative investigation had revealed that the University had overdrawn its account in the treasury by \$145,000, and that the discovery of the overdraft had caused the regents to withdraw support from Adams. Moreover, it was charged that Adams gave the University only two hours a day, that he drew his salary without doing any work, that he fostered fraternities and athletics at the expense of intellectual interests, and that he had antagonized the faculty over athletic matters. There was now little hope of whitewashing him, the *Record* thought.⁶⁷ The *Wisconsin State Journal* immediately denounced the article as "sensational and senseless" and asserted that "the attempt to excite hostility against the university by sensational and malicious charges and gossip, will fail as it ought to fail."⁶⁸ Two days later the regular correspondent of the *Chicago Record*, R. A. Elward, inserted notices in both Madison papers denying authorship of the article in the *Chicago Record*.⁶⁹ Shortly thereafter, Judge Keyes, who was also accused of having sponsored if not of having written the article, denied any connection with it. In a letter to the editor of the *Wisconsin State Journal* Keyes protested that this charge was "too outrageous to be borne."⁷⁰

The newspaper stories placed the bill in a new setting and forced attention on it when it came up for passage on February 25, two days after the release of the *Record* story. On motion of the chairman of the committee, the bill was sent back to the Committee on Education.⁷¹ Tucker explained in making his motion that "the bill had reached its present stage of progress without its purport being fully understood."⁷²

⁶⁷ *Chicago Record*, February 23, 1897, p. 6.

⁶⁸ *Wisconsin State Journal*, February 23, 1897, p. 2.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, February 25, 1897, p. 1; *Madison Democrat*, February 25, 1897, p. 2.

⁷⁰ *Wisconsin State Journal*, February 27, 1897, p. 1.

⁷¹ *Assembly Journal*, 1897, p. 435.

⁷² *Madison Democrat*, February 26, 1897, p. 1. Either because of the opposition of the regents or because of the disclosure that the bill was an attack on Adams,

In spite of many public disclaimers by Keyes of responsibility for this bill, at least two former regents, Nicholas D. Fratt and William E. Carter, assumed Keyes was behind it and assured him that the move was correct. Carter, who had served on the Board while Bascom was president, recalled the difficulties which the Board had had with Bascom.⁷³ Nevertheless, neither Keyes nor anyone else spoke for the bill at the committee hearing on March 2. Breese J. Stevens, ex-Regents George Raymer and Lucien S. Hanks, and Professors Olin, Birge, Van Hise, Turner, Stearns, and Bull all spoke against it.⁷⁴ Notwithstanding these opponents, the committee returned the bill to the Assembly the next day, again recommending passage, but with three members dissenting.⁷⁵ The bill provoked spirited but inconclusive debate on March 4, with the forces favoring and opposing about equally divided. Assemblyman True made a speech opposing the bill and was roundly cheered when he referred to a man in the "background . . . lurking with a knife in his boot"—Boss Keyes.⁷⁶ On March 10 the bill came up again. And again the University and Adams were attacked and defended. The opponents of the bill made it appear to be an attack on Adams by Judge Keyes. Assemblyman D. F. Jones warned that if the bill were passed, the resignation of President Adams would be in the hands of the regents within twenty-four hours. "The passage of this bill," he declared, "would take us back to the infamous time before 1889." Again the reference to Keyes was clear.⁷⁷ On a record vote, the bill was lost, 31 to 64.⁷⁸

The attack on the dairy school fared little better. It had been signaled by an anonymous letter to the *Madison Democrat* on

it had apparently been decided earlier that the bill would be sent back to the committee for reconsideration. On February 24 Frank T. Tucker wrote to Keyes telling him that the bill would be taken up by the committee on March 2. Tucker to Keyes, February 24, 1897, in the Keyes Papers.

⁷³ Carter to Keyes, March 4, 1897; Fratt to Keyes, March 1, 1897, both in the Keyes Papers.

⁷⁴ *Madison Democrat*, March 3, 1897, p. 1.

⁷⁵ *Assembly Journal*, 1897, p. 506.

⁷⁶ *Wisconsin State Journal*, March 4, 1897; *Madison Democrat*, March 5, 1897.

⁷⁷ *Wisconsin State Journal*, March 10, 1897; *Madison Democrat*, March 11, 1897.

⁷⁸ *Assembly Journal*, 1897, p. 606.

February 2, signed "Dealer." The writer declared that the dairy building was the finest of its kind in America but that the management ought to be looked into. Milk and butter sold by the school were good, but the cheese was of poor quality. Moreover, the writer felt that University products should not be sold "in direct competition with private dealers," and wondered why, since the dairy course lasted only three months, the school ran all the year round.⁷⁹ Eight days later a bill prohibiting the retail sale of University dairy products was introduced in the Assembly, and shortly after that the resolution calling for investigation of the sale of University dairy products was introduced.⁸⁰ The resolution was lost, but on March 2 the bill prohibiting the retail sale of University dairy products came before the education committee for hearing. On the same day, a long communication protesting against the sale of butter and cheese by the College of Agriculture was presented to the Assembly from M. H. Atwood on behalf of fifty farmers residing near the city of Madison. Legitimate experiments were all right, but the University had gone into business and was working six thousand pounds of milk every day. The farmers could not compete with "an institution richly endowed by the state."⁸¹

At the committee hearings three dozen farmers from the Madison community testified their approval of the bill. Ex-Senator Main and Judge Keyes, now in the unfamiliar role of farmer, led the supporters of the bill, while Dean Henry opposed it. Henry dwelt emphatically upon the benefits accruing from the experiments and research at the school, calling specific attention to the Babcock test, and he minimized the amount of produce sold in Madison. Main, on the other hand, insisted that the state was depriving the farmers of their home market and the University should be forced to sell its products in Chicago or "other distant markets."⁸² The hearing was highlighted by "several sharp clashes" between Judge Keyes and Dean Henry; both were sharp-tongued old campaigners.⁸³ But

⁷⁹ *Madison Democrat*, February 2, 1897, p. 2.

⁸⁰ *Assembly Journal*, 1897, pp. 242, 314.

⁸¹ *Wisconsin State Journal*, March 2, 1897, p. 4.

⁸² *Madison Democrat*, March 3, 1897.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

nothing came of it. The committee held the bill for three more weeks and then made a recommendation for indefinite postponement which was accepted.⁸⁴ The only appreciable result of this attack was that henceforth the secretary of the Board of Regents, in listing the receipts from the sale of farm produce, always inserted the explanation, "proceeds of material after being used for experimental purposes."

The Assembly lost interest in the investigation of athletic affairs when informed that the regents contributed nothing to support the athletic program.⁸⁵ The investigation of the financial affairs was satisfied when, on February 25, the regents submitted a second statistical report, which the committee could understand. A law requiring the regents to report to the legislature failed,⁸⁶ as did an Assembly measure seeking to create a standing legislative committee on the University.⁸⁷

Meanwhile nothing more was heard of the appropriation bill until the various investigations had spent themselves and the interest of the legislators in the University had been satisfied. The bill introduced in the Senate on February 10 was reported out on April 13, shortly before the end of the session, with amendments providing that \$2,000 be appropriated for the summer school and \$1,000 for purchase of books for the law library.⁸⁸ Two days later the appropriation bill was adopted by unanimous vote. Not even James J. McGillivray cared to stand against it.⁸⁹ Four days later the Assembly unanimously approved the measure without having sent it to committee.⁹⁰ However much the legislators might investigate and denounce, none would risk opposing financial support. Late in March, after the excitement of the numerous investigations had subsided, the *Janesville Gazette* pontificated: "The Republicans in the legislature can afford to vote for any reasonable measure in the interest of the state university. They belong to the party of

⁸⁴ *Assembly Journal*, 1897, pp. 807, 831.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 762.

⁸⁶ *Senate Journal*, 1897, pp. 739, 752, 869; *Assembly Journal*, p. 1213. The bill failed in the Assembly.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 923-924, 1037; *Senate Journal*, 1897, p. 887.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 801.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 835.

⁹⁰ *Assembly Journal*, 1897, pp. 1163-1164.

intelligence and progress, and are expected to do all they can, legally and consistently, to promote the success of all kinds of schools.”⁹¹

In contrast with the noisy legislature of 1897 the legislature of 1899 was quiet, but the action it did take struck sharply at University prosperity. No investigations were launched or reformations attempted, save one. In 1897 the legislature had provided for a new codification of the Wisconsin statutes. The last code had been prepared in 1889. The code-makers, Arthur L. Sanborn and John R. Berryman, had the new code ready for legislative approval in August, 1897. The authors of the code, who had also prepared the one adopted in 1889, made two significant changes in the University laws. The code of 1889 had retained the wording of the law of 1883 under which the state appropriation of a one-eighth mill tax was declared to be in “full compensation for all deficiencies in said income, arising from the disposition of the lands donated to the state by congress, in trust, for the benefit of said income.”⁹² This clause Sanborn and Berryman struck from the code of 1898 and nobody noticed its omission. Secondly, the code-makers simply added the three fractional mill taxes together to provide that the state would levy a tax of 17/40 of a mill each year for the University in addition to the tax of one per cent of the receipts from the railroad license fees.⁹³

By striking out the explanation for the appropriation of a portion of the state funds the code-makers actually removed one support for the regents' contention that it was their right to determine the major allocations of funds within the University. So long as the contribution of the state was a recompense for losses sustained through faulty or careless handling of the University land grant, the regents might claim that the legislature encroached upon their authority in designating the detailed allocation of funds. But this was changing. Increasingly, it will be observed, the legislature chose to throw restraints around the regents' use of funds. Secondly, by lumping all state appro-

⁹¹ Quoted in the *Wisconsin State Journal*, March 22, 1897.

⁹² *Wisconsin Statutes of 1889*, Vol. 1, Sec. 390, pp. 278-279.

⁹³ *Wisconsin Statutes of 1898*, Vol. 1, Sec. 390, p. 335.

priations together the code-makers called special attention to the total amount that the legislature was contributing to the University.

Two important University bills were passed by the legislature in 1899. The first was introduced in the Assembly on February 6, 1899, by Judge Philo A. Orton of Lafayette County, a University regent of the 1870's. His bill provided for the amendment of the revised statutes so as to appropriate a specific amount to the University instead of the proceeds of a millage tax.⁹⁴ Although the regents opposed this change,⁹⁵ their arguments were ineffective. The bill was reported out of committee and debated in the Assembly on March 7. Attempts to send the bill back to the Committee on Education or to the Committee on State Affairs failed. In the debate Judge Orton insisted that the grant to the University should be definite rather than elastic, "that the people may know just what is being spent." Under the present system, Orton claimed, the state appropriation to the University was determined not by the legislature but by the state equalization board. This board could increase or decrease the income of the University by the simple expedient of increasing or decreasing assessment values. Moreover, he contended that although the assessed valuation of the state was only \$600,000,000 it would shortly be increased to \$1,500,000,000, thereby more than doubling the income of the University. Orton's bill was opposed on the ground that it would force the University to return to the legislature each year for an appropriation, thus bringing the institution into politics, and making it impossible for the University to grow with the state. Orton, however, contended that the University was already spending more per student than the University of Michigan, and he anticipated no hardship from this change.⁹⁶ After attempts to send the bill back to committee were defeated, it was carried to a third reading by a record vote. Six days later it passed by a vote of 57 to 8, with 35 assemblymen either absent or not voting. In the Senate it was approved on April 8 by a

⁹⁴ *Assembly Journal*, 1899, p. 128.

⁹⁵ *Records of the Board of Regents*, Vol. E, p. 197, February 20, 1899.

⁹⁶ *Wisconsin State Journal*, March 7, 1899.

vote of 26 to 3.⁹⁷ The bill appropriated \$268,000 annually to the University, reserving specific amounts for the College of Agriculture, the College of Engineering, the summer school, and the law library.⁹⁸ The other bill, introduced at the request of the regents, provided another appropriation to the University from the general fund, consisting of \$35,000 for the enlargement of the dairy building and the increase of the dairy herd, \$100,000 for a building for the College of Engineering, and \$16,000 for a water tower for the supply of water to the Capitol and the University.⁹⁹

Although the University lost the mill tax which had afforded income since 1876, the legislature voted appropriations amounting to almost three hundred and fifty thousand dollars a year for the next biennium. However, the legislature was increasingly restricting the uses to which the regents could put the money by allocating portions to various purposes. The legislature of 1899 was the last one with which Charles Kendall Adams dealt. Robert M. La Follette was elected governor in 1900 and assumed office the next year. He was the first graduate of the University to become governor of the state, and soon his good friend, Charles R. Van Hise, would become the first graduate of the University to be its president. In the meantime, the legislative program was in the charge of acting-President Birge. Nothing particularly noteworthy transpired during the sessions of 1901 and 1903. The annual grant was increased in 1901 by \$21,000 to a total of \$289,000, and the amounts allocated by law to the agricultural and engineering colleges were increased somewhat disproportionately to \$40,000 and \$22,500 respectively. The same appropriation bill approved \$150,000 for the construction of an agricultural building and \$30,000 to furnish and equip the new engineering building. The sums had been trimmed from the \$175,000 and \$35,000 originally asked.¹⁰⁰

Adams boasted in 1902 that with two exceptions he had always gotten everything he asked for from the legislature. That

⁹⁷ *Assembly Journal*, 1899, pp. 358, 421; *Senate Journal*, 625.

⁹⁸ *Laws of Wisconsin*, 1899, pp. 248-250.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 397-398.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 1901, pp. 454-456.

was not true in 1901, nor was it true in 1903, despite the fact that the governor was friendly to the point of partiality. Governor La Follette told the legislature: "It is not an idle boast of immediate beneficiaries from University expenditures, but the conservative estimate of practical business men, which credits to single departments of University work greater returns in material development and added wealth within the state than the aggregate cost to the State of the entire University. Whether viewed as an ethical force or as a business investment the results of University work more than justify the cost."¹⁰¹ The University's fortunes in the legislature that year need not be followed in detail. Suffice it to say that in addition to the annual appropriation already provided for under the law adopted in 1899 and amended in 1901, \$48,500 was added for current expenses, allocated by the legislature in such a way that \$7,500 went to the agricultural college, \$7,500 to engineering, \$4,000 to commerce, \$5,000 to aid premedical work, \$17,000 for the College of Letters and Science, and \$7,500 for the establishment of a department of domestic science. The library was voted \$7,500, and instead of the \$169,000 asked, \$100,000 was voted annually for buildings and equipment.

In 1903 the legislature inserted into the appropriation bill financial provision for various work to be done by the University: \$2,500 was appropriated for investigations of the cranberry industry of the state, \$3,000 for investigation of the growth and curing of tobacco, and \$3,000 annually for the establishment and maintenance of a hygienic laboratory to check water supplies. Other bills provided \$10,000 for the purchase of stock for the Experiment Station farms, and \$16,000 to improve the water system of the Capitol.¹⁰²

When the next legislature met, Van Hise was president, and a drive was launched for the re-enactment of the mill tax.

¹⁰¹ *Assembly Journal*, 1903, pp. 90-91. In this statement La Follette virtually quoted the statement John Johnston had made in 1898. *Regents' Biennial Report*, 1897-98, p. 4.

¹⁰² *Laws of Wisconsin*, 1903, pp. 249, 549-551, 594.

22.

The University Faculty

WE ARE having a great boom on the hill just now," observed President Chamberlin at the opening of the fall term in 1889. "The number of new students in the University proper is 50 per cent greater than last year. . . . We have an unusual number from other institutions and they still keep coming. We are hard pressed to handle them."¹ A great many of the problems relating to the faculty arose directly from the rapid growth of the instructional staff and the student body. The enrollment rose during the years from 1889 to 1903 from seven hundred to over two thousand. Despite the increase in the size of the faculty—the forty of 1887 had become a hundred and thirteen by 1896—the proportion of students to teachers was greater than at any of the other leading universities except Michigan, which was almost equally burdened.² The classes, then, had to be larger than in other institutions, or the teaching load heavier, or both—a situation which the regents' committee on the instructional force deplored in a special report submitted early in 1893.³

The striking expansion of the student body and the less marked but still impressive growth of the instructional staff raised the important question of how to keep faculty management without sacrificing efficiency. The faculty was not only a

¹ T. C. Chamberlin to Regent Frank Challoner, September 18, 1889, in the Presidents' Papers.

² Report of the President, in *Regents' Biennial Report*, 1895-96, pp. 7-8; Reports to the Regents, Vol. D, p. 411, April 19, 1896.

³ Reports to the Regents, Vol. C, p. 419, January 4, 1893.

legislative body but a judicial and, to some degree, an administrative agency as well. The administrative and judicial functions were especially evident in the cumbersome system of class officers. These members of the faculty advised students, kept their records, wrote to their parents, enforced rules regarding class attendance, and looked out generally for the students in their charge. At the same time they were expected to maintain a high level of teaching and to engage in original investigation. The faculty was then in the position of having to unload itself of much of its administrative work or be bogged down in a hopeless morass.

The pivotal nature of the presidency meant that at best the faculty merely helped shape policies. Chamberlin was engaged in creating a university out of a small college; and Adams carried on this work. Both of them initiated proposals for the major changes affecting organization and curriculum. Often the faculty merely ratified these proposals. Certainly both presidents took a vigorous part not only in selecting new men for major appointments but in pushing forward younger men in the lower ranks. On one occasion Adams attempted to override faculty rules on eligibility for intercollegiate football. Several professors severely criticized Adams' position. According to Professor Skinner, "the meeting broke up in what was more nearly a row than any faculty meeting has ever been in my thirty years connection with the faculty." The incident led to a permanent break between the president and Professor Barnes; and it was the principal factor in determining Barnes's decision to go to Chicago.⁴ President Adams felt the faculty was too stringent; but he yielded the point after serious soul-searching. Some felt, even so, that he never afterwards quite regained the full confidence of the teaching staff. Despite the way the incident turned out, it indicated the influence of the presidency when it was in the hands of a strong man.

All these things, then, posed the problem of finding relief for the faculty from routine burdens without too greatly jeopardizing its influence. The problem of relieving the faculty of time-consuming tasks was partly solved by the creation of new

⁴ Charles F. Smith, *Charles Kendall Adams: A Life Sketch* (Madison, 1924), 69.

administrative offices. In the early 1890's deans were appointed in the several faculties and Wisconsin for the first time had a dean of women. At the beginning of the autumn term in 1888 it was decided to transfer as much clerical work as possible to the registrar, including the keeping of permanent records of studies, standings, and absences. In 1896 Registrar Hiestand began to serve as secretary of the faculty, hitherto a duty of one of the professors. Certain simplifications of procedures in filing work reports promoted efficiency and reduced the load of faculty obligations. Changes in arrangements for departmental expenditures were also adopted in the interest of efficiency. The time-consuming method of requesting purchases of books was simplified and made more efficient.⁵ In order to regularize and expedite the whole business of student advising, the faculty in 1903 instituted a new system.⁶

Important as all these innovations were, the rapid growth of the committee system was the principal safeguard of faculty time. In the autumn of 1888 standing committees for each general course assumed special charge of the detailed business of the students concerned. To preserve faculty control over larger issues, each committee was to refer to the faculty "such questions of general import as may arise in connection with its duties." Standing committees were to meet each Monday afternoon prior to the regular faculty meeting.⁷ Some years later the faculty meetings were reduced to bi-weekly affairs, and every other Monday afternoon was reserved for meetings of the committees of class officers. Thus student requests were disposed of and the faculty itself relieved of the burden of the regular weekly meeting.⁸

Committees multiplied like leaves on the trees in the first warm days of spring. A committee, established in 1898, passed on applications for advanced standing and reported on rules regulating admission to advanced standing.⁹ The committee on

⁵ Reports to the faculty, in File Book, vol. 1, p. 66; Minutes of the Meetings of the Faculty (MS.), vol. 4, p. 16, January 15, 1894.

⁶ Reports to the faculty, in File Book, vol. 1, p. 215; Minutes of the Faculty, vol. 5, p. 183, November 9, 1903.

⁷ Minutes of the Faculty, vol. 3, inserted notes facing 94, September 17, 1888.

⁸ Minutes of the Faculty, vol. 4, p. 170, November 16, 22, 1897.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 206, 207, October 31, November 14, 1898.

accredited schools fulfilled another of the faculty functions. In addition to standing committees such as that on business relations with the regents, almost innumerable *ad hoc* committees were created as the occasion arose: committees were appointed to get faculty notices properly before the student body and to consider relations between the College of Letters and Science and the law school; a committee recommended that faculty engaged in advanced study be exempt from the payment of tuition fees; another committee, appointed to investigate the merits of the existing three-term system as against those of the semester system, reported in 1894 in favor of the latter—a report which the faculty adopted. So multiple were the committees, and so heavy their work, that to regularize it the University provided special blanks for committee reports.

The problems arising from genuine faculty participation and control through the committee system revealed the important and pressing need for faculty reorganization. The groundwork for the reorganization was laid by President Adams, who worked on it for four years before presenting a proposal to the regents early in 1898. Declaring that it was no longer possible for a faculty of sixty to manage effectively the 1,157 students, Adams recommended that Wisconsin follow the example of Cornell and Michigan in permitting each of the schools and colleges to be administered by its own faculty. Through such a reorganization, he concluded, "We should lose none of the advantages that come from a large university, and at the same time we should secure very many, if not all, of the advantages that come to students of the smaller college, in which they are more intimately known by the members of the instructional force."¹⁰ Making his proposals more concrete, Adams subsequently recommended the recognition of a general faculty to legislate on students carrying work in more than one college; separate faculties for the Colleges of Letters and Science, Agriculture, Engineering, and Law, to be made up of all members of the instructional force and to be concerned primarily with the progress of individual students; and an academic council, composed of the president, vice-president, deans, and directors of

¹⁰ Reports to the Regents, Vol. D, pp. 367–368, January 18, 1898.

these several schools. Adams also recommended the definition of the powers and duties of the several deans.¹¹

Up to this point the faculty itself had not, apparently, been consulted. But on October 15, 1900, acting-President Birge presented the reorganization scheme to the faculty, with the comment that it had been reported to the regents by the president after consultation with the deans. The whole scheme was laid before the faculty in order that it might appoint a committee, sufficiently large and representative, to take up the matter in detail and to refer it to the faculty for their consideration before its presentation to the executive committee of the Board of Regents. A committee of ten was named which included leading professors from the respective colleges.¹² In three weeks acting-President Birge convened the faculty to take action on the report of the committee. Apparently some members felt that the report should be mimeographed in order that it might be studied at some length, but a motion to this end met with defeat. The report, with certain suggestions incorporated as amendments, was adopted.¹³ The regents thereupon authorized the faculty to organize itself for the year in accordance with the scheme.

This episode suggests that the voice of the faculty was minor and assenting rather than positive and directing. Other evidence also pointed to increasing restrictions on the freedom of faculty members. Thus, quite properly no doubt, the regents prohibited any member of the faculty from soliciting funds in behalf of the University or any of its departments either from private individuals or from the state legislature, without express authorization from the regents or the president of the University.¹⁴ Moreover, the regents determined the salary for each professorship. Nor was there any clear understanding regarding the number of hours a professor was to teach each week.¹⁵ In

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 484-485, January 17, 1899.

¹² Minutes of the University and Letters and Science Faculties, vol. 5, p. 6, October 15, 1900.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 9, November 5, 1900.

¹⁴ Records of the Board of Regents (MS.), Vol. F, p. 29, April 21, 1903. This was probably the result of Ely's efforts to raise funds for the School of Economics.

¹⁵ Adams to D. C. Buell, August 22, 1893, in the Presidents' Papers. President Adams on one occasion suggested to the Board of Regents that it might be

matters of salaries and promotions President Adams took the view that a professor was not entitled to criticize the acts of the regents or of the president in matters affecting his status. When Professor Jastrow expressed his feeling of grievance at having been given merely a hundred dollar increase, President Adams, instead of regarding the letter as a personal statement to the head of the faculty, turned it over to the regents and roundly took Professor Jastrow to task.¹⁶ Indeed, the manner in which Adams handled this affair must have made other professors hesitate before expressing their grievances to the president.

Yet the faculty was not without a certain degree of freedom. On one occasion, when the legislature was considering a bill to remove the president from the Board of Regents, the faculty expressed itself firmly to the effect "it is indispensable to the successful administration of the University that the President be a member of the Board of Regents."¹⁷ As early as 1890 the regents decided it was no longer necessary for every professor to report to the Board at its annual meeting. However, professors were free to communicate with the Board at any meeting.¹⁸ This privilege was, apparently, seldom used.

On matters of internal administration the faculty was in no sense a rubber stamp. Adams had bowed before its determination to enforce rules of eligibility for athletes. And it did not accept as final the report of the committee on faculty reorganization until it had thoroughly discussed the plan.¹⁹ After the reorganization had become an actuality the faculty determined the proper method of appointing committees on matters con-

well to conceal the fact that Professor Charles Forster Smith was brought to Wisconsin at a salary of \$3,000; if this were known he felt that some of the older members of the faculty might be so disturbed "as to interfere with the cheerfulness of their work, and perhaps with their efficiency." Reports to the Regents, Vol. C, p. 597, April 17, 1894.

¹⁶ Papers of the Board of Regents, September 21, 1897.

¹⁷ Minutes of the Faculty, vol. 4, p. 141, March 1, 1897.

¹⁸ Reports to the Regents, Vol. C, p. 131, September 16, 1890.

¹⁹ It will be recalled that when the proposal was brought before the faculty someone felt it should be mimeographed to permit extended canvassing of the plan. This was not done, but the plan was accepted for the current year only. The following year printed copies of the report of the committee were prepared; it was made the order of business at a special faculty meeting and was adopted only after discussion and amendments. Minutes of the University and Letters and Science Faculties, vol. 5, pp. 81, 82, January 20, February 3, 1902.

cerning more than one college of the University. And committees were appointed to consider changes in the curriculum in economics, political science, and Greek.²⁰ Despite the firm hand of President Adams and the multitude of pressures that were brought by the rapid growth of the University, the faculty continued to share in the making of important decisions affecting purely academic affairs.

The Board of Regents, moreover, except in the case of the Ely investigation, was little inclined to interfere in the internal affairs of the faculty. Nothing came of the rumor that one of the regents was out to scalp Parkinson and Kerr. Even when President Adams indicated to the Board that it might be well to give some thought to the lack of harmony between the two professors of Greek, the regents apparently did nothing.²¹ Likewise when Adams called the attention of the Board to certain criticisms of a member of the chemistry department, criticisms having to do with alleged ineffectiveness in the classroom and an inadequate research record, the regents merely referred the matter to the president who, it seems, was either to dismiss the instructor or to assign him to what he could do with suitable compensation.²² Only on one occasion apart from the Ely affair did the regents take the initiative in an issue concerning the competency of a faculty member. In 1893 it requested President Adams to inform William H. Rosenstengel of the complaint "in regard to certain actions of the Professor in his relation to the students." President Adams interviewed Rosenstengel, visited his classes, and conferred with successful graduate students. He reported to the regents that Rosenstengel's management of the German department had been exemplary, and that save for certain peculiarities and weaknesses, his classroom methods were admirably designed for all students who were diligent and bright. The matter rested with this report.²³ In no other instance, perhaps because of the outcome of the

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 23, February 4, 1901.

²¹ Reports to the Regents, Vol. C, p. 526, June 20, 1893.

²² E. A. Birge to Charles Adams, April 25, 1900, in the Presidents' Papers.

²³ Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. D, p. 246, September 19, 1893; Reports to the Regents, Vol. C, p. 578, January 16, 1894.

Ely trial, did the regents raise any questions about any professor or about the purely internal administration of the University.



IN ITS report to the Board of Regents in January, 1891, the executive committee, no doubt at the prompting of President Chamberlin, called attention to the fact that other institutions had been making overtures to several members of the faculty, offering compensation considerably larger than what they were receiving at Wisconsin.²⁴ The Visitors followed up the matter a few months later. If the University was to retain its able men, the Visitors declared, it must meet these inroads with adequate compensation, for, "in this as in all other enterprises, either directly or indirectly, money is the final factor which determines the result. . . . If we are to have the best service we must be ready to pay its market value."²⁵ The *Aegis* likewise deplored the fact that no year had passed in which "some of the most talented members of our faculty have not gone elsewhere where larger compensation was offered," and that men who had remained had done so at less pay than they might have obtained in other institutions.²⁶ Governor Peck was apprehensive that Chicago and other institutions would wean away Wisconsin's strongest men unless the salary level was raised. The situation thus publicized no doubt had something to do with the decision of the regents to include general salary raises in the budget for 1892-1894. In addition, the regents accepted the faculty recommendation to exempt members of the teaching staff from paying tuition fees in courses and seminars in which they enrolled to advance their own scholarship.²⁷ Undoubtedly the desire to retain outstanding men explains the growing tendency to grant leaves for research or for outside professional assignments.²⁸

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 146, January 20, 1891. ²⁵ *Regents' Biennial Report*, 1891-92, p. 48.

²⁶ *Aegis*, September 11, 1891.

²⁷ Reports to the faculty in File Book, vol. 1, p. 164; Minutes of the Faculty, vol. 4, p. 209, December 12, 1898.

²⁸ Thus Charles Homer Haskins was given a year's leave of absence in 1895-96; F. E. Turneure, in 1895-96; J. C. Freeman, in 1899-1900; Storm Bull, in 1900.

In general the University tried to meet the threat of losses of outstanding professors by acting on each situation as it arose. For example, Charles Van Hise, Frederick Jackson Turner, and Edward David Jones were permitted to supplement their salaries and to broaden their experience by teaching at Chicago and Michigan, while at the same time maintaining their connection with Wisconsin. When offers came to men that the University wanted to keep, promotions in rank and salary were used as the best means of adding to the attractiveness of Wisconsin.

In trying to keep Frederick Jackson Turner the University encountered more than the usual difficulties. Chamberlin had made it clear that Turner must take his doctor's degree if he expected a career at Wisconsin. During the year that Turner was completing his work for the doctorate at Johns Hopkins, Chamberlin offered him an assistant professorship in American history and political economy, at the same time encouraging the young historian in his plans for the development of the libraries and other facilities for historical study.²⁹ Turner's epoch-making address on the significance of the frontier in American history, delivered in Chicago in the summer of 1893, brought Turner into the limelight.³⁰ On June 22, 1897, President Adams informed the regents that Professor Turner had been invited to the University of Pennsylvania at a salary of thirty-five hundred dollars and with a more favorable teaching program and more advantageous research opportunities. With difficulty President Adams persuaded Turner to stay on condition that the regents advance his salary to three thousand dollars—five hundred dollars less than Pennsylvania offered—and provide him with a graduate assistant. Princeton, which at the same time extended an invitation to Turner's close friend and colleague, Charles Homer Haskins, made it clear that it meant to lure both Haskins and Turner.³¹ The next offer came, however, not from

²⁹ Chamberlin to Turner, February 27, 1889, in the Presidents Papers.

³⁰ Albert Bushnell Hart wrote to President Adams, January 11, 1893: "Your Professor Turner seems one of the coolest headed and thoughtful young men of his profession." Presidents' Papers.

³¹ Reports to the Regents, Vol. D, pp. 317-320, June 22, 1897. Haskins was invited to Harvard within a few years.

Princeton, but from Chicago. Early in the year 1900 President Harper offered Turner the headship of the large and flourishing department in his institution. The salary was to be five thousand dollars, after the first two years; for the first two years, he was to have a half-year leave of absence with pay, at the rate of \$4,000 a year. President Harper also agreed to provide at once an annual fund of five thousand dollars to purchase books in history. As an additional inducement, Haskins was offered a chair in medieval history.³²

This was a challenge indeed to Wisconsin. "I read with considerable apprehension what you say in regard to Prof. Turner," wrote Regent Noyes to President Adams. "The University cannot afford to lose him. I am in favor of retaining him at almost any cost."³³ President Adams at once proposed the establishment of a School of History in order that full use might be made of the materials in the State Historical Society. Turner made clear what such a School of History implied: enlargement of staff, fellowships, permanent funds for the purchase of books, a leave of absence, and provisions for publication of historical studies. These conditions were met sufficiently to induce Turner to stay on at Wisconsin. Three years later Turner was invited to teach at Harvard for a semester, and though President Eliot assured acting-President Birge that no call was likely to come to Turner, it was not without reluctance that Birge recommended that Turner be granted leave to go to Cambridge as a visiting professor.³⁴ Actually, it was not until 1910 that Turner did finally accept a permanent professorship at Harvard. The University's sustained effort over many years to keep him indicates the high value attached to having him on the faculty.

The recruiting of new members of the faculty was taken seriously. It is true that by a vote of nine to three the regents in 1895 stipulated that, other things being equal, preference be given to graduates of the University.³⁵ Apart from this limitation, which does not seem to have been immutable, great

³² Turner to Birge, April 14, 1900, in the Presidents' Papers.

³³ Papers of the Board of Regents, April 17, 1900.

³⁴ Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. F, pp. 4, 12, January 20, 1903.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, Vol. D, p. 372, August 6, 1895.

effort was made to find outstanding men for new appointments. Again and again the Visitors approved a national search for "the best talent."³⁶ After the death of William F. Allen, President Chamberlin attended the meeting of the American Historical Association in the East and corresponded with leading authorities at Johns Hopkins University, Cornell, Yale, and Harvard. Biographical data regarding many candidates, carefully preserved in the president's correspondence, reveal the care taken to find able scholars and gifted teachers.

The recruitment of Richard T. Ely, the most outstanding of the younger economists, was dramatic and significant. Professor Turner, who had been in Ely's graduate classes at Johns Hopkins, no doubt knew of his dissatisfaction in Baltimore. He had not been given a full professorship; he had neither an assistant nor adequate library facilities; and, in connection with his work for the Maryland Tax Commission, he had experienced difficulties with the "interests."³⁷ Eager to build up the social studies and to promote graduate work, Turner informed Chamberlin that if a sufficient inducement were made, it might be possible to persuade Ely to come to Wisconsin. Chamberlin visited Ely and drew an attractive picture of the situation in Madison. In the four years of his presidency he had doubled the annual expenditures for instruction and done much to organize graduate and research work. Ely was attracted by the possibility of using the state's facilities in the study of economic problems and in training students.

It had long been clear that Parkinson's work in civil polity and economics should be divided. In a communication marked "confidential" Chamberlin, early in 1892, informed the Board that Ely might be persuaded to come if Turner's idea of establishing a School of Economics, Political Science, and History were acted upon and if Ely were made its director. It must be understood, continued the president, that Ely's "work is to be of the higher investigative, scholarly order." Chamberlin made it clear that a salary of thirty-five hundred would be necessary—

³⁶ Report of the Visitors in *Regents' Biennial Report*, 1889-90, p. 55.

³⁷ Richard T. Ely, *Ground under Our Feet* (New York, 1938), 173-176.

a sum considerably larger than that which any Wisconsin professor received. Moreover, Professor Ely would require two assistants. "He is one of the foremost economists in the country," Chamberlin went on, "and is connected with one of the highest institutions. Probably no one among the younger generation of economists is more widely or favorably known. His employment would direct attention to the development of the University in a most pointed and effective way, and would aid greatly in giving it recognition as a leading institution."³⁸ Although it was impossible to give Ely all he wanted, he decided nevertheless to accept the invitation. The announcement of his decision evoked widespread enthusiasm. "I can hardly adequately express to you the delight with which the news is everywhere received," wrote Professor Jastrow to Ely. "The newspaper accounts hardly leave room for doubt in the matter. . . . I can assure [you] that a most cordial welcome awaits you, and that a thrill of enthusiastic gratification will hurry over the state, over our good fortune."³⁹ It was indeed a great stroke, and the coming of Ely opened a new chapter in the study of the social sciences in the Middle West.



THE perennial difficulty in maintaining and even advancing academic standards did not decrease in importance as the student body increased in numbers. In 1888 the faculty adopted a report which specified the procedure in entrance examinations. Examination questions, prepared at the University, were to be certified, returned to the University, and read by the appropriate departments.⁴⁰ The committee on accredited schools continued to exercise supervision over the approved high schools.

In 1892 several steps were taken to improve standards by tightening and regularizing admission requirements. In order

³⁸ Chamberlin to Regents Clark, Fratt, Dale, and Keith, March 5, 1892, in the Presidents' Papers; Chamberlin to the regents, January 19, 1892, in Papers of the Board of Regents.

³⁹ Jastrow to Ely, February 14, 1892, in the Ely Papers, State Historical Society.

⁴⁰ Minutes of the Faculty, vol. 3, pp. 77-78, May 14, 1888.

to equalize the preparation for all courses the requirements for admission into the several courses were increased. Further, the University adopted the four-year high school courses recommended by the state superintendent as standards for the preparatory work required for admission to the corresponding University course. In the case of the program preparatory to the classical courses at the University, the requirements of the University courses dictated what was done in the high school. On the other hand, the interests of students not intending to enter the University governed in increasing measure the high school program taken by those who were to follow the science and English courses at the University.⁴¹

In their report in June, 1891, the Visitors contended that the higher standards of admission just adopted must be more rigidly enforced than previous ones had been. While standards of admission had in theory been raised in the Chamberlin administration, the category of "special students" had been used as a dodge. The Visitors pointed out that in the College of Letters and Science in the past five years the percentage of special students in the total enrollment had increased from 35 per cent to 53 per cent. Experience proved that most special students were incompetent to carry on successful college work. By weeding out the unfit the faculty could do justice to those who were prepared to receive instruction to advantage.⁴²

Confronted by frequent applications from students lacking the necessary requirements, Registrar Hiestand listened to reasonable requests and gave solid information and sound advice in a cordial fashion. "Our sympathies are entirely with this class of ambitious young men who have not had the opportunity for thoroughly preparing themselves for college," he wrote to the mechanical superintendent of the J. I. Case Company in Racine in regard to an inquiry. But in the case of the young man desiring to enter the engineering department it was clear that he was entirely unprepared to do the academic work in the course. "My advice to him would be to first prepare himself

⁴¹ *University Catalogue*, 1891-92, p. 69.

⁴² Report of the Visitors, June 30, 1891, in *Regents' Biennial Report*, 1891-92, p. 49.

as thoroughly as possible in as many of the required studies of the course as he can complete. . . . If he will let me know what studies he has completed in detail, I shall be pleased to outline a course of study for him."⁴³ This was a fair example of the position taken by the registrar when such requests were presented him.

In the interest of higher standards the faculty adopted legislation regarding the entrance of special categories of students. In 1895, for example, the faculty defined specifically the conditions under which normal graduates would be admitted to the sophomore class: graduates of the normal English course were to be admitted to the University English course, to the German course, to the general science course, to the Latin course, and to the civic history course. In 1902 the subfreshman class in English was discontinued. Entering students deficient in English composition, who did not make up the deficiency in one year, were to be dropped.⁴⁴

The University tried in various other ways to improve standards. In 1897 it was decided, after a thorough canvass of the situation, to discontinue the department of correspondence study. To prevent students who had been dropped on account of deficiencies from being readmitted into some other college of the institution, the University stipulated that no such student could be readmitted without the approval of the University faculty. In 1889 the faculty adopted a report of the committee on examinations which specified that a student conditioned in a course must remove the condition by satisfactory examination not later than the beginning of the second term after the condition was imposed. If the student failed a course it was necessary for him to take it over again, and this requirement was to take precedence over all other requirements for course work. Perhaps the most important effort to improve standards was the decision of 1893 to require each candidate for the bachelor's degree to present a thesis on some phase of his principal work in the last two years. This was "to have the

⁴³ W. D. Hiestand to George W. Morris, August 6, 1902, in the Presidents' Papers.

⁴⁴ Minutes of the Faculty, vol. 4, p. 53, March 11, 1895; vol. 5, p. 104, June 2, 1902.

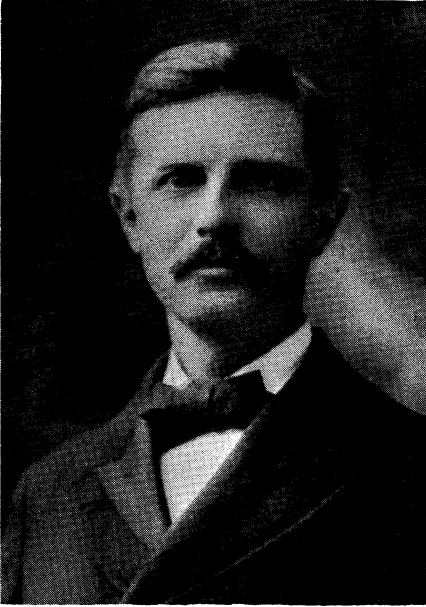
character of a scholarly dissertation on the subject chosen" and was to be judged not only from a technical standpoint, but from the point of view of literary merit.⁴⁵ Many of these senior theses were admirable performances.



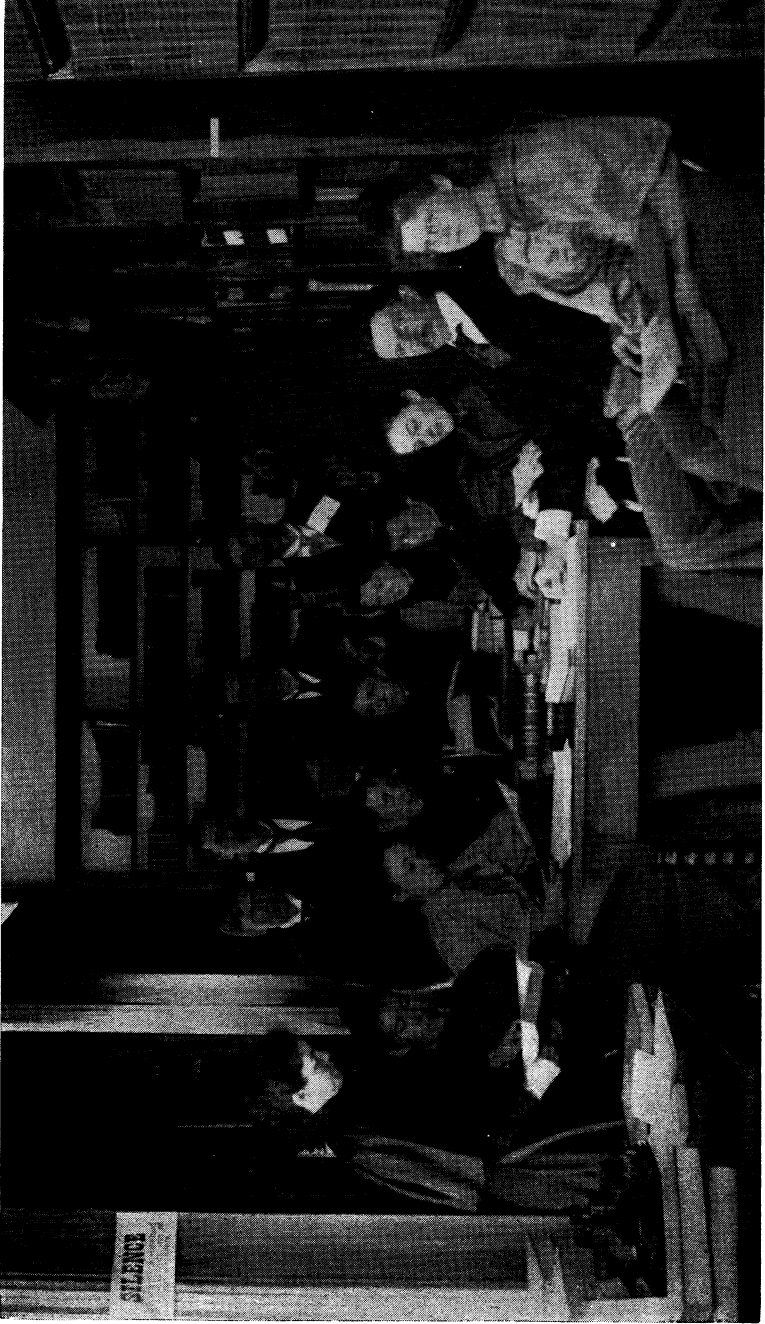
THE University of Wisconsin could not escape the whole problem of further liberalizing the curriculum, a problem every American institution of higher learning was facing. The time had passed when there was any institution, except a Catholic one, in which all the officers accepted the position that every student must pursue certain clearly defined fields of knowledge deemed either indispensable in disciplinary value or essential to a liberal education. Harvard, Columbia, Cornell, Indiana, and Chicago and Stanford, after their establishment in the early 1890's, all took an advanced position in introducing and extending the free elective system. Yale, Princeton, Amherst, Williams, and other institutions attempted to preserve the traditional requirements.

The battle was neither new nor typically American. Before the Civil War, Wayland of Brown and Tappan of Michigan had none too successfully fought for the liberalization of the curriculum; and in England the conflict between Newman and Arnold on the one hand and Spencer and Huxley on the other was at its height in the decades following the mid-century. In America the arguments most frequently heard for the liberalization of the academic program, both in recognizing the validity of newer and more practical studies and in permitting freedom of choice on the part of the student, followed a fairly well-defined pattern. Andrew D. White of Cornell, Charles W. Eliot of Harvard, Frederick Augustus Porter Barnard of Columbia, and David Starr Jordan of Indiana and Stanford, all held that more attention must be given to individual differences than the traditional prescribed course of study permitted; that the classics and mathematics could no longer be assumed to provide the mental discipline everyone had once supposed; and finally,

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, vol. 4, p. 132, January 25, 1897; vol. 3, pp. 123-124, October 7, 1889; pp. 254-255, April 10, 1893.



Frederick Jackson Turner and Richard T. Ely



Frederick Jackson Turner's Senior Seminar in American History, 1893-94
Held in the library of the State Historical Society in the old capitol, Madison

that undergraduates needed more freedom to specialize if they were to pursue graduate studies.

At Harvard the ground had been prepared by Eliot's predecessor; but it was Eliot who justified and publicized the new departure. All the requirements for seniors were abolished at Harvard in 1872 and for juniors in 1879. In 1884 sophomores were no longer required to take particular studies, and a year later requirements were reduced for freshmen. In 1894 only English and a modern language were required. At Columbia President Barnard was being gradually convinced of the merits of the elective principle and in 1871 presented the several arguments in its behalf. Steps were taken one by one, but by 1882 the system was in effect to a modified degree. Cornell worked out a different version of the elective idea. When Cornell opened in 1866 President White devised five parallel academic courses in the arts and sciences. In four of these the studies were prescribed, but the student was free in his freshman year to choose any one of the courses; and he might select the fifth, which was a completely free elective program. Although this system was in time abandoned, Cornell retained the elective parallel course system until 1896, when the bachelor of arts degree was given to all who finished the required number of hours of study. When Charles Kendall Adams succeeded White as president in 1885, he declared that he would extend the parallel group system in preference to moving in Harvard's direction of a completely free elective system. Johns Hopkins likewise developed a group system—each group required French and German and one laboratory science. And finally, Indiana University also experimented along this line. David Starr Jordan, on becoming president in 1885, relegated the elementary studies to the first two years and required upper classmen to choose a "major study."

Wisconsin had from the first recognized the claims of the so-called practical subjects. This recognition was not inspired by any systematic educational philosophy. It rested on two facts: first, the consideration that the preparatory schools could not provide adequate training in Greek and Latin; and second, the utilitarian temper of a pioneer society. But in making conces-

sions to the modern and practical subjects Wisconsin, unlike Harvard, had insisted that the bachelor of arts degree could be granted only to those who studied Greek and Latin in the first two years. In addition, the ancient classical course prescribed mathematics and physics in the first two years. By the opening of the Chamberlin regime students in this course were able to make fairly free elective choices in their last two years; but they were required to choose philosophy and, if they had not already taken political economy, constitutional law, English literature, and the elements of chemistry and biology, to cover these in the junior and senior years. In the ancient classical course the idea survived that a liberal education included, in addition to Greek, Latin, mathematics, and philosophy, the sciences, some social studies, and English literature.

All other programs of study led to the bachelor of letters or to the bachelor of science degrees. The modern classical course required Latin but not Greek, for which either German or French or Anglo-Saxon was substituted. Like the ancient classical course, this program required mathematics through calculus. It also stipulated that in the last two years the student acquaint himself, if he had not yet done so, with a general survey of English literature, physical and biological sciences, political economy and constitutional law, and psychology and philosophy. The English course required no foreign language for entrance, but did require elementary German and French, or Norse, as well as Latin for graduation. It also demanded mathematics, history, and some science, and, as in the case of the other programs, stipulated that in the last two years the student take the same requirements in philosophy, English literature, and so on. This course was subdivided presently into the civic-historical course, which required less language and a good deal of history, political economy, and related subjects. The general science course and the premedical course, a special feature at Wisconsin introduced formally in 1888, led to the degree of bachelor of science. These courses required mathematics, the various sciences, German, and in the last two years, one term of psychology, two terms of civics or philosophical studies, and at least one year in English or French. In addi-

tion to the general science and premedical courses there were technical programs in engineering, agriculture, and pharmacy, for which the bachelor of science degree was also awarded; and, finally, there was the course in law.

Such were the formal catalogue requirements. In actual practice students frequently dodged these requirements through the simple expedient of petitioning the faculty to relieve them of a "required" course in favor of one more suited to their personal preferences. In other words, there was in practice an elective system at Wisconsin, not only between the several organized programs of study but within programs, long before the catalogue formalized an elective system, and long before President Chamberlin inaugurated a more explicit recognition of the elective principle.

Despite the fact that the elective system had thus crept into Wisconsin in considerable degree, many felt that the University ought to move further in the direction of free electives. It was to Indiana and Stanford, each of which had adopted modified elective systems, that President Chamberlin turned for counsel. David Starr Jordan, who had recently left Indiana for Stanford, outlined in detail his evaluations of the experiments in the two universities. The most important aspects of the Indiana plan, according to Jordan, were the abolition of grouped courses of study, and the admission, from the start, of students to all courses. This meant that students were obliged to take the backbone of their courses under one professor; it also meant a system of collateral electives. Stanford went even further in the direction of the elective system. Apart from a required freshman course in the art of writing, a student centered his work in one department and in closely related fields indicated by the major professor; for the rest, the student was free to choose his courses without restriction. Jordan was convinced that the elective system was much superior to the old scientific, philosophical, and classical curricula, and he recommended it for Wisconsin.⁴⁶

In communicating his proposal for a modification of the curriculum, Chamberlin developed a program which was no

⁴⁶ Jordan to Chamberlin, December 11, 1891, in the Presidents' Papers.

mere imitation of the Indiana and Stanford plans. In many respects it anticipated the so-called general education scheme of our own time. Chamberlin advocated giving over the first two years to what he called "basal studies." These included a year of mathematics, a year of physical or natural science with laboratory work, a year of English, one or more courses in language, ancient or modern, and sufficient additional courses in one of these fields, or in some other, to provide the foundation for concentration in the last two years. Upperclassmen were to devote their time to a major study and to a minor study intended to supplement the major field, the latter to be approved by the chairman of the major department. A second minor, elective in character but subject to approval by the major department chairman, completed the program.⁴⁷

On subsequent occasions President Chamberlin pointed out the advantages of the new system. It was designed to provide greater continuity, concentration, and thoroughness in the leading lines of study, in order that university methods might more largely be introduced into undergraduate courses thus better to prepare the way for graduate work. Each department was to organize "a solid, continuous, progressive course of three or four years...built up with reference to the maximum of thoroughness and efficiency." Thus within the student's field of specialization the number of elective courses was increased, thanks to the amplification of courses, while the electives outside his field of specialization were reduced.⁴⁸ Unfortunately the faculty minutes do not record any discussion following Chamberlin's first presentation of the new plan.

A supplementary feature of the new system, intended to achieve breadth as well as depth of knowledge, provided for a series of synoptical lectures, designed to "present the outlines of the leading branches taught in the University in such a way as to convey the maximum of important information in the minimum of time, so that the students may become familiar with the salient features of subjects they are unable to take

⁴⁷ Reports to the faculty, in File Book, vol. 1, pp. 28-30; Minutes of the Faculty, vol. 3, p. 215, April 11, 1892.

⁴⁸ Reports to the Regents, Vol. C, pp. 257-258, January 19, 1892.

up as regular studies. The aim is to broaden the students' information and interest and correct the effects of too great specialization."⁴⁹ It was also assumed that such lectures would help students select their leading lines of study by familiarizing them with the broad outlines of the fields of knowledge before final selections for concentration were made. These "capsule" courses included, besides the lectures proper, the class exercises, readings, and examinations. In a sense, no doubt, these synoptical courses were the prototypes of the modern orientation courses. Again, the reaction of the faculty to this part of the scheme is, apparently, unrecorded.

The response of the *Cardinal* probably reflected a considerable body of student opinion. From one rather pointed editorial it seems likely that some of the lecturers crowded a mass of details into their presentations. In the opinion of the *Cardinal* the professor who gave this type of course should emphasize the general concepts in the field rather than incorporate a large mass of specific materials. At best, the editorial continued, a very inadequate smattering could be obtained from the synoptical courses. The *Cardinal* also believed that the quiz should be made shorter, or dropped, and that final examinations should be eliminated. Perhaps the justification for the whole scheme was, the *Cardinal* concluded, that it might prepare the student to profit more greatly from public lectures in later life and even whet his appetite to hear more of them.⁵⁰ These comments suggest some of the obvious shortcomings of the synoptical series. The project was given up after 1898.

Wisconsin, then, sought a compromise between the complete elective system of Harvard and the traditional course with its many requirements in different fields and with inadequate concentration in any one. But the conflict between elective and required studies was not the only nation-wide educational question which troubled Wisconsin. Everywhere the classics were slipping and the sciences pushing forward. The Visitors at Wisconsin bemoaned the lack of interest in the classics and declared that the study of Greek and Latin cultivated the

⁴⁹ *University Catalogue*, 1891-92, pp. 87-88.

⁵⁰ *Daily Cardinal*, February 9, 1894.

memory, educated the reason, developed the judgment, exercised the taste and imagination, and gave precision in the use of language. No other field of studies could better prepare a student to become an intelligent and influential member of the community.⁵¹ The Visitors declared that the situation was worse at Wisconsin than in other comparable institutions: at Minnesota 21 per cent of students were enrolled in the department of Greek; at Michigan, 25 percent; at Northwestern, 36 per cent; in Wisconsin's denominational schools, 23 per cent to 60 per cent; while at the University only 10 per cent were so enrolled.⁵²

It was obvious that linguistic and literary studies were receiving far less emphasis than the scientific and practical studies. "For some reason, which we cannot define, the atmosphere of the University does not seem to offer such inspiration and encouragement" to the humanities as it did to the other fields. In a later report the Visitors urged the University to reconsider its policy of accrediting schools offering no instruction in the ancient languages. In view of the fact that eighty-eight per cent of the schools discriminated against the ancient classical course in the University, the Greek and Latin faculty was helpless.⁵³ Despite the effort to prove that there was no foundation for the belief that the sciences were oversupported and overgrown,⁵⁴ exponents of the classical scheme of education remained unconvinced.

The decline of interest in the classics was so marked that in 1903 a fairly thoroughgoing revision of the curriculum frankly faced the fact. To take the place of the ancient classical, civic-historical, English, and general science courses, a new course was established—a course leading to the bachelor of arts degree. It required one hundred and twenty hours of work in the College of Letters and Science, specifying sixteen hours of any language for those entering the University with four or more years of language study, and twenty-four hours for other students. Heretofore the bachelor of arts degree had been obtained

⁵¹ Report of the Visitors in *Regents' Biennial Report*, 1893-94, p. 77.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 1891-92, p. 50.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 1893-94, pp. 61-62.

⁵⁴ Report of the President in *Regents' Biennial Report*, 1887-88, p. 43.

only by students who followed the ancient classical course. The new program also required ten hours of natural science, six hours of mathematics, and six hours of history. Each student was to select a major at the beginning of his junior year, the departments specifying the manner in which the work of the major was to be completed.⁵⁵

The chief curricular discussions and developments do not seem to have evoked any considerable amount of student comment. Nevertheless the undergraduate press frequently expressed opinions on certain aspects of the curriculum. From time to time suggestions were made for additions to the offerings. A writer in the *Aegis* in 1891 noted: "This is the era of innovation and an opportunity offers itself for the University of Wisconsin to lead a new departure." He advocated the establishment of a chair for the study of contemporary events. This would not only elucidate the social and political problems of the outer world but prepare the ground for translating knowledge into practical activity. Although the *Daily Cardinal* was not always consistent in its attitudes toward the establishment of a school of journalism, support for such a training center increased. In 1895 the decision to introduce a course in journalistic writing was received with applause.⁵⁶

For the most part student opinion in curricular matters was confined to instruction itself. From time to time criticisms were expressed regarding classroom procedure: some held that discussion was not sufficiently free; others maintained that instructors were too prone to ask leading questions; still others deplored the fact that students found it increasingly difficult to take courses with heads of departments, who were preoccupied with advanced students and with administrative tasks. On the other hand, there was considerable enthusiasm for the substitution of senior theses for the old rhetoricals. "The requirement of a thorough and skillful treatise," the *Cardinal* declared, was bound to force "each student to make a careful and logical analysis of some particular theme. . . . Furthermore, the ad-

⁵⁵ Reports to the faculty, in File Book, vol. 1, p. 208; Minutes of the University and Letters and Science Faculties, vol. 5, p. 149, April 29, 1903.

⁵⁶ *Aegis*, February 6, 1891; *Daily Cardinal*, April 9, 1892; February 17, 1893; April 18, 1895.

vancement of original investigation will necessarily ensue, and render the writer of the thesis more independent of the textbook, which is so apt to become the bane of a student's intellectual development." Another innovation in the curriculum which found some favor was the decision to allow credit to freshmen and sophomores for attending the student assemblies which President Adams revived in 1899.⁵⁷

The concern of Bascom at the large role the natural sciences had come to play was not shared by his successors. The solid beginnings made by Daniells, Davies, Birge, Irving, and Power in the 1870's and 1880's had been strengthened and extended by new men. The brilliant lecturer in physics, Benjamin Snow, began his Wisconsin career in 1892; Hillyer, Kremers, and Kahlenberg developed a research program in chemistry; Barnes and Harper did distinguished work in botany; Miller carried forward Birge's pioneer work in the premedical fields of zoology; Marshall, an entomologist, represented the new emphasis on specialization. Comstock came in 1888 to direct the work of the observatory. Charles Slichter invigorated mathematics and before the end of the century began to publish measurements of the motion of underground waters, as well as texts of merit. Van Hise was achieving an international reputation in geology. The contributions of all these and of other scientists whose Wisconsin careers belong in part to this period will be discussed in detail later. So too will the highly important work of the scientists at the Experiment Station.⁵⁸ Meanwhile we may well turn to the remarkable developments in the social sciences in the Chamberlin-Adams period.



THE establishment in 1892 of the new School of Economics, Political Science, and History was due in the first place to the obvious necessity of dividing the chair in political science and economics held by the aging Vice-President Parkinson. In

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, February 16, 1893; *Aegis*, November 4, 1887; *Daily Cardinal*, December 12, 1893; May 26, 1893; Reports to the faculty, in File Book, vol. 1, pp. 169-70; Minutes of the Faculty, vol. 4, pp. 225, 229, April 10, May 29, 1899.

⁵⁸ See the chapter on the College of Agriculture in volume two.

the second place, the executive committee of the Board of Regents felt that, inasmuch as the majority of the graduates chose business careers, the University should foster the growing interest of the public in the institution by introducing "commercial science." A committee of the American Bankers Association had recently advocated instruction on the university level in "the correct philosophy of business management," and the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania, established in 1881, had demonstrated the feasibility of such an objective. On June 16, 1891, the executive committee recommended the establishment of a chair similar to one at the Wharton School.⁵⁹ Inasmuch as neither Harvard, Yale, Columbia, Michigan nor the new University of Chicago had yet imitated the example of Pennsylvania, this was a radical step.

The aim of the regents was not immediately realized because of the eagerness of Professor Frederick Jackson Turner to build up advanced work in the social sciences, and the determination of President Chamberlin to promote research and scholarship in the humanities and social sciences as well as in the natural sciences. Turner and Chamberlin decided to bring to Wisconsin a really outstanding economist and turned to Richard T. Ely of Johns Hopkins. In the course of the negotiations with Ely the original intention of the regents to set up a chair of economics was expanded into the far more ambitious scheme of establishing a School of Economics, Political Science, and History. Such a school was necessary to justify the salary required to bring a man of Ely's position and to give the desired importance to research and training in the social science field.⁶⁰ The regents outdid themselves by agreeing to establish the school, to make Ely its director at the unprecedented salary of thirty-five hundred dollars, to appoint an assistant professor of political economy, to provide fellowships, and to find the unheard of sum of five thousand dollars for books.⁶¹

The importance of this decision, for which Turner, Ely, and Chamberlin were so largely responsible, cannot be overempha-

⁵⁹ Reports to the Regents, Vol. C, pp. 174-175, June 16, 1891.

⁶⁰ Chamberlin to the regents, January 19, 1892, in Papers of the Board of Regents.

⁶¹ Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. D, p. 145, January 19, 1892.

sized. It meant that Wisconsin was to be a pioneer in the Middle West in promoting social science on an advanced level; that the appointment of so well-known a scholar as Ely from a leading Eastern university focused the attention of the whole academic world on Wisconsin; and that at last implementation was to be given to a hitherto neglected aspect of the time-worn idea that the state university should serve the public not only in the training of lawyers, engineers, and teachers, and in the development of natural resources and agricultural improvement, but in the schooling for administration and citizenship. For in Ely's mind the new school was to do for civil life what West Point did for military life. It was to be a school of citizenship which not only advanced knowledge in the social sciences but also offered training for public careers.⁶² Turner was not merely the coadjutor of Ely in all this. In persuading his Johns Hopkins teacher to come to Madison, Turner emphasized the idea that the West was ripe for new economic investigations, that students trained in the debating societies were vigorously and deeply interested in the practical bearings of the social sciences,⁶³ and that among leading, well-to-do citizens "the practical aspects of the school are our strong cards. The idea that a School is to be established where such practical questions as the roads, poor care, tram statistics, etc., etc., can be investigated appeals to many. I wish," Turner continued in making this report to Ely, that "you would briefly indicate to me the practical ways in which such a school, in your opinion can be made serviceable to the people of Wisconsin. . . . The very novelty of these practical aspects of the School is what will win us support from these hard headed Wisconsin capitalists—if anything will."⁶⁴

The new school was not unprecedented. At Johns Hopkins, Herbert Baxter Adams and his associates had developed a program of research in the social sciences based on the utilization of local materials. The Johns Hopkins group also had taken action in the public interest on many local problems and were not indifferent to the need of training experts in public service.

⁶² Report of the President in *Regents' Biennial Report*, 1895-96, p. 20.

⁶³ Turner to Ely, January 29, 1892, in the Ely Papers. ⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, March 20.

At Columbia in 1880 John W. Burgess took the leading part in establishing the Faculty of Political Science, a research staff and a training center inspired by the German universities and the *Ecole Libre des Sciences Politiques* at Paris. At Michigan a School of Political Science, modeled after those at Columbia and Cornell, was launched in 1881; and for eight years it offered advanced work in the whole social science field under the guidance of such distinguished figures as Charles Kendall Adams, Henry Carter Adams, T. M. Cooley, and others. Chicago, as it opened its doors in 1891, made it clear that the social sciences would fare well in the new institution.

The larger objectives of the school were appreciated not only by President Chamberlin, who presently left Wisconsin, but by his successor, Charles Kendall Adams. Aware that American civilization was rapidly becoming "exceedingly complicated" and that "the most thorough knowledge practicable is properly demanded of those who are called to direct in public affairs," Adams threw his full support to the school.⁶⁵ Indeed, the subsequent association of Wisconsin social scientists with the Progressive movement owed much to the broad conception of the School of Economics, Political Science, and History.

The enthusiasm of Ely and Turner, the cordiality of President Chamberlin and the generosity of the regents, did not ensure the auspicious launching of the new venture. Ely did not realize the difficulties involved in establishing such a school at Wisconsin. His ideas, moreover, were somewhat grandiose and he expected quick and even flashy results. It was not surprising that during the spring of 1892 he frequently felt let down and bitterly disappointed. He had assumed, since the emphasis was to be put on research, that the school would be entirely devoted to the training of graduate students. But Turner pointed out that this was not feasible—the people of the state might resent having undergraduates turned over entirely to assistants. Ely would find, moreover, that the best seniors, accustomed as they were to research in preparing for debates, were quite competent to carry on original investigations.⁶⁶

⁶⁵ Adams to O. F. Preshey, September 8, 1893, in the Presidents' Papers.

⁶⁶ Turner to Ely, February 19, 23, 1892, in the Ely Papers.

Nor was this all. Ely, with large ideas, had not only publicized the establishment of the school in the Eastern press but with some success had sought private gifts from well-to-do men on the seaboard to supplement the University appropriations. He assumed that wealthy Wisconsin citizens would contribute liberally to the new venture. Turner, as a matter of fact, exerted himself to enlist subscriptions, but neither he nor President Chamberlin hoped for very much from such overtures. When Ely expressed disappointment Turner pointed out that the alumni were not wealthy, that it was hard for the *nouveaux riches* to part with their money, that many expected the state itself to shoulder the burden of support, and that, in brief, conditions differed from those prevailing in the East.⁶⁷ "I must say," complained Ely, "that I thus far am inclined to feel somewhat disappointed in the people of Wisconsin. It looks as if they had less public spirit than I believed possible. I supposed they would be ashamed to have people in other States make contributions to the University and not make any themselves."⁶⁸ Since training for public service was a central purpose of the new school, Ely was naturally disappointed that it was impossible to name a professor of public administration at the very start.

An unfortunate misunderstanding arose which led Ely somewhat peremptorily to demand a clarification of his powers as director. Vice-President Parkinson had acquiesced in the splitting of his chair and the calling of Ely. But he did not want to be completely overshadowed and, on learning that Ely was to have an assistant professor of economics, insisted that he too must have an associate in political science. Moreover, he requested that his son be named to the post. President Chamberlin did not have confidence in the ability of young Parkinson, but to ease matters he was willing for the son to act for a year as an instructor. The regents on the other hand, were eager to propitiate Vice-President Parkinson and acceded to his request that his son be named assistant professor.⁶⁹ Thereupon

⁶⁷ Turner to Ely, January 29, 1892, in the Ely Papers.

⁶⁸ Ely to Chamberlin, June 11, 1892, in the Presidents' Papers.

⁶⁹ Turner to Ely, March 16, 1892; Chamberlin to Ely, March 17, 1892, both in the Ely Papers.

Ely, quite properly, but without much sensitivity to the situation, asked whether or not he was really to manage the school and just how new appointments of junior staff members were made at Wisconsin.⁷⁰ In a long letter Chamberlin made it clear that the situation was an unusual one and that Ely would have the same powers as the director of the observatory. But the president felt Ely was putting the worst possible interpretation on the matter and inwardly resented the new appointee's lack of confidence in him.⁷¹

For Ely the final blow came when, in June, he learned that President Chamberlin had accepted the call to Chicago. Declaring that he had made the worst mistake in his life in agreeing to come to Wisconsin, Ely roundly blamed Chamberlin for leaving the University. "As nearly as I can gather, you leave me in the hands of Parkinson . . . and you have had no provision made for books or facilities for advanced work. What a mortification for me! What am I to say to students who come to Madison with enthusiasm and high expectations? They will feel that they have been deceived."⁷² Chamberlin reminded Ely that he could hardly be expected to turn down an attractive and hitherto unforeseen offer simply because he had been the instrument for negotiating Ely's transfer to Madison.⁷³ Turner on his side begged Ely to remember that he was coming not to the man Chamberlin, but to the institution Wisconsin, and that he should come, not in a despondent mood, but with the determination to carry out the original plan. "We must not indicate any doubt about the future of our work."⁷⁴ It is a tribute to Turner's generosity and tolerance that he encouraged Ely and did everything possible to make the new venture successful. His generosity is the more remarkable in the face of Ely's feeling that Turner as well as Chamberlin ought to share with him the burden of any deficit in the salaries of the new junior men. Turner merely remarked that his own salary was but two thousand dollars, on which he could do no more

⁷⁰ Ely to Chamberlin, February 23, 1892, in the Presidents' Papers.

⁷¹ Chamberlin to Ely, March 1, 17, 29, 1892, in the Ely papers.

⁷² Ely to Chamberlin, June 24, 1892, in the Presidents' Papers.

⁷³ Chamberlin to Ely, June 27, 1892, in the Ely Papers.

⁷⁴ Turner to Ely, June 24, 1892, in the Ely Papers.

than live, and that he had spent much time and energy in advancing the aims of the new school.⁷⁵

Despite all these troubles and misunderstandings, the school actually got under way in the autumn of 1892. Its staff even at the start was outstanding; and as the decade passed, it became possible to enrich offerings by designating promising young men as instructors in specialized fields. Ely himself was one of the leading American economists. Trained in the newer German school he had also come under the influence of Christian Socialism. In helping to found the American Economic Association in 1885 Ely had given it an ethical and reform orientation. Here was no closet economist but a man devoted to the study of actual economic institutions and conditions and to the concept that the specialist has a social obligation to right wrong. His associates in economics were young men of great ability and promise. Dr. William A. Scott, who offered courses in the theories of value, interest, rent, wages, and profits, and in public finance, was on the threshold of a distinguished career. Dr. Edward David Jones brought competence in the statistical method. Among many other contributions, Dr. Jones prepared for the Paris Exposition of 1900 the exhibit of statistical maps and charts illustrating the industrial achievements of the United States, an exhibit which was honored by one of the grand prizes. A group of unusually able young economists, holding fellowships and giving instruction in specialized fields, included David Kinley, presently to become at Illinois an outstanding liberal in his field and finally president of the University; Charles Bullock, who was to go to Harvard as an authority on economic theory; Balthazar H. Meyer, who concentrated in the economics of transportation and presently won his spurs as the outstanding authority in this field; and Benjamin H. Hibbard, who took land economics for his field. Allyn A. Young demonstrated unusual gifts in economic theory.

Somewhat hampered in developing the school as a training center for public administrators by the fact that Professor Parkinson represented an outmoded approach to political science, Ely made the best of the situation by appointing Dr.

⁷⁵ Turner to Ely, April 11, 1892, in the Ely Papers.

Albert Shaw as special lecturer on public administration and, within a few years, by adding two able young men to the staff. One of these, Paul Reinsch, was to publish in 1900 his *World Politics at the End of the Nineteenth Century*, a telling analysis of the dangers of excessive nationalism and imperialism. Two years afterward Reinsch brought out his *Colonial Government*, marked by sympathy with "backward peoples" and by a realistic sense of the economic, social, and political problems of colonial dependencies. Dr. Samuel Sparling began in 1896-1897 to offer instruction in administration. Of especial significance was the naming of Bernard Edward Fernow, chief of the Division of Forestry in the United States Department of Agriculture, as special lecturer in 1896-1897. Fernow was the outstanding champion of the conservation of natural resources; he no doubt influenced Charles Van Hise, at this time professor of geology and subsequently the author of the best book on conservation.

When the school was opened in 1892 sociology was taught in only a very few American institutions and by no means in all of the leading ones. Ely broke new ground in offering work in elementary sociology and in charities and crime, and in arranging for two fellowships to enable Wisconsin graduate students to do field work in Cincinnati under the direction of Dr. Philip Wheelock Ayres, a practical authority on charitable and correctional institutions. Ayres came to Madison as a special lecturer as did Dr. Amos Warner, the principal authority on pauperism, and Frederick H. Wines, the leading American criminologist. The lectures Warner gave at Wisconsin formed the basis of his *American Charities*. Wines's lectures were used in *Punishment and Reformation*. Both books were destined to become classics in the field. In 1894-1895 Ely established a separate sociology department and the next year brought Jerome H. Raymond from the University of Chicago to head it. Raymond offered instruction in both the theoretical and practical aspects. In the spirit of Lester Frank Ward he held to the advisability of applying to the study and control of social problems the methods of the natural scientist. Professor Raymond did not stay long at Wisconsin, and the department in no way approached those at Columbia and Chicago where Giddings and

Small were doing their important work. But it did offer practical training and it continued to supplement its resources by inviting special lecturers, including Small himself.

History, well launched as a field of research and instruction by William F. Allen and his original and gifted pupil, Frederick Jackson Turner, played an important role in the new school. As early as 1889 Turner announced a course in the history of society which included the evolution of classical civilization from primitive society and the development of modern civilization. This was an unheard-of thing for a historian in the United States to be doing in 1889. Professor Turner was also already giving his seminar designed to train students in the original investigation of primary sources. In the catalogue for 1891-1892 he described a new course on the economic and social history of the United States, the first course of its kind to be given anywhere. It emphasized the relation of physiography to the march of civilization across the American continent and the origin and development of the social and economic characteristics of the country. The following year, in writing the description of this course, Turner added a new note: the relation of the westward movement to the social and economic aspects of sectionalism and nationalism. The summer after the new school opened its doors Turner read at the meeting of the American Historical Association in Chicago his epoch-making paper on "The Significance of the Frontier in American History." This reflected the influence of Allen, who had concerned himself with the spread of Mediterranean civilization into the forests of Germany and who had called attention to the importance of the American West as a field of study. Turner's paper also built on many earlier but random references to the significance of free lands in American historical development. No less important, it took account of the announcement in the census for 1890 that it was no longer possible to divide occupied from unoccupied lands by drawing a line from Canada to Mexico. Turner had learned the secret of using statistical as well as geographical data in historical study. He was already thinking in terms of the social sciences, of the application of the evolutionary concept to the study of Ameri-

can development, and of the bearings of historical processes on contemporary problems.⁷⁶ Ely could not have found a more suitable historian for his purposes in the whole world.

In 1891 Charles Homer Haskins, a youthful and buoyant Pennsylvanian with a Johns Hopkins doctorate, came to Madison to join Turner in the history department. Haskins had already interested himself in the history of institutions and joined Turner in giving seminary training in the use of primary sources. In 1896 his first notable article appeared in the newly founded *American Historical Review*. Haskins' work in the European archives on the rise and influence of Norman institutions made him an international figure in the historical world. As a member of the American Historical Association's committee of seven Haskins took a leading part in shaping the report on the teaching of history in the secondary schools and, with Turner, introduced at Wisconsin a course for teachers on the methods of historical instruction in the schools. Wisconsin kept Haskins when Princeton and Chicago called; but in 1902 it lost him to Harvard. The history department during this period included Victor Coffin, who worked in both the American and the European field, and such able lieutenants as Orin Grant Libby, Theodore Clarke Smith, Lawrence Marcellus Larson, Robert C. Clark, Joseph Schafer, Louise Kellogg, and, after 1900, Carl Russell Fish and Ulrich B. Phillips. In the Historical Society, closely allied to the department, Reuben Gold Thwaites presided, stimulated investigations, and gave occasional instruction.

The achievements of the School of Economics, Political Science, and History were, as might be expected from such a faculty, truly impressive. By the end of the period fifty-three courses were listed in its offerings. The Historical and Political Association, composed of members of the faculty, students and townspeople, made the new undertaking widely influential.⁷⁷

⁷⁶ In many personal conversations and in correspondence with Merle Curti, Professor Turner emphasized his great indebtedness to Professor William F. Allen. That he likewise held Herbert Baxter Adams in esteem was shown in his letter to Ely, January 28, 1902, in the Ely Papers. For the best account of the development of Turner's ideas see Fulmer Mood, "Turner's Formative Period," in *The Early Writings of Frederick Jackson Turner* (Madison, 1938), 3-39.

⁷⁷ *Daily Cardinal*, November 16, 1892.

Professor Sparling rendered valuable service in the organization of the Wisconsin League of Municipalities, whose journal he edited. The school also sponsored the Wisconsin University Settlement in Milwaukee. The Industrial Commission enlisted the services of Professor Meyer, for it had been an important feature of the plan to bring together theorist and practical man for their mutual benefit. Substantial and, in some cases, important research issued from both faculty and fellows. The University bulletins in economics, political science, and history did great credit to the school: the *Review of Reviews*, for instance, held in 1896 that "the literary and scholastic standards to which the University bulletins are made to conform are certainly as high as those set by any institution in the country."⁷⁸ Among the fruits of the new school were Scott's *Repudiation of State Debts*, Kinley's *History, Organization, and Influence of the Independent Treasury of the United States*, Ely's *Outlines of Economics and Monopolies and Trusts*, and E. D. Jones's *Economic Crises*. Libby's study of the geographical distribution of votes in the ratification of the federal constitution demonstrated the possibilities of Turner's mapping technique in correlating economic and political relationships.

The school, true to its basic philosophy, took an active part in the extension movement. Ely himself offered extension courses at various centers on socialism and social reform and on contemporary problems. Scott and Meyer lectured on current economic problems, Raymond on social aspects of the labor movement, Jones on charity and crime, and Reinsch on contemporary world politics. The field of urban problems and city administration was expounded by Sparling, Wilder, and others. All in all, the program offered by the school to the people of Wisconsin was remarkably comprehensive and well designed to promote intelligent citizenship and an understanding of the contemporary world.

Testimonials to the success of the school were proudly cited. At the end of the first year the *Daily Cardinal* pronounced it a decided success, commending especially the tie-up with the

⁷⁸ See the review of Victor Coffin's *The Province of Quebec and the Early American Revolution* (Madison, 1896), in *Review of Reviews*, 14:500 (October, 1896).

law school—an association which unfortunately did not materialize in the way Ely had hoped. But a large number of graduate students sought the instruction offered and, according to President Adams, succeeded in finding prominent and responsible positions on completing their studies. Fellowships for the study of social work through activity programs in Milwaukee and Chicago contributed to the success of graduates throughout the country. The practical character of the program commended itself to the Board of Visitors, which also praised the school for providing instruction “broad and liberal in its character and entirely free from any local, partisan, or class bias or prejudice.”⁷⁹ Professor Simon Patten, the collectivistically-minded economist at the Wharton School, testified after his lectures at Madison that in the very first year the Wisconsin school had placed itself on a level with any similar institution in the country.⁸⁰ In 1895 President Adams hardly overstated the case when he wrote that “we are entitled to feel that in no institution in the country, unless it be in the School of Political Science in Columbia College, is there more thorough and comprehensive work done than that we are now giving in this important department of the University.”⁸¹

Students flocked to the school from all over the country and, indeed, from overseas. Japan sent a contingent, partly because Ely’s writings had become known there. During the academic year 1900–1901 there were sixty-two graduate students in the school. The number increased to ninety in the following year. The Visitors were no doubt correct when they reported that the greatness of the University largely rested on the achievements and reputation of the School of Economics, Political Science, and History. The work done under its auspices represented the first real graduate program at the University. In the first decade the school trained twenty-one men for the degree of doctor of philosophy, and more than half the doctorates granted between 1890 and 1900 were given to its graduates.⁸²

Despite abundant evidence of success the school did not con-

⁷⁹ Report of the Visitors in *Regents' Biennial Report*, 1893–94, p. 59.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ Reports to the Regents, Vol. D, p. 170, January 21, 1896.

⁸² Report of the President in *Regents' Biennial Report*, 1899–1900, p. 14.

tinue as the inclusive focus of instruction and research in the social sciences. In 1900 the regents set up a new School of History under the direction of Frederick Jackson Turner. Turner desired to use the bargaining power given him by the fabulous call to Chicago to promote historical studies more effectively. Turner, in fact, wrote his own check, for President Adams, the regents, and Ely himself were all eager to have him stay at Wisconsin. The departure of Haskins for Harvard and the need of recruiting a larger staff to take care of the impressive registration in history caused Turner to make an extensive and very thoughtful search for able men. Dana C. Munro of the University of Pennsylvania, an able medievalist, came to take the place of Haskins, and Dr. George C. Sellery, trained at the University of Chicago, supplemented Munro in the European field. Turner considered and then rejected the possibility of keeping on some of the younger men that he had trained in history—a group that included Orin G. Libby, Carl L. Becker, and Theodore C. Smith, all to become historians of the first rank. It seemed preferable to Turner to bring in fresh blood. Hence it was that, on strong recommendations from Harvard, Carl Russell Fish was invited to Madison to develop work in New England history. Ulrich B. Phillips came to teach the history of the South. Turner himself, continuing to exploit the history of the West, now had the satisfaction of having a group of regional specialists in American history.⁸³ It was an outstanding center for historical study that Turner was creating. He was active in enlarging the scope of the summer school and in training competent history teachers in the schools. He advised many teachers, helped prepare booklists, addressed teachers' conventions on the study of history, and worked closely with the state superintendent of public instruction. Turner was also in touch with many of his colleagues at other universities—with Woodrow Wilson at Princeton; with Max Farrand at Stanford, who credited Turner with having suggested his best ideas; with Hart, McMaster, McLaughlin, Jameson, Van Tyne, Hulbert, and others. By 1905 Turner's students were widely

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 14-15; 1901-1902, pp. 9-11; Turner to Adams, May 8, 1900, in the Presidents' Papers.

scattered. Schafer and Meany were at Oregon and Washington, Clark at Texas, Hibbard at Ames, Libby at North Dakota, Becker at Kansas. Turner, in advising and encouraging them, was following the earlier example Herbert Baxter Adams had set in his own relationships with his students. In many instances the men Turner sent out were the first adequately trained professors of American history in the institutions in which they found themselves. It was hardly surprising that Turner's conception of the role of the frontier found such rapid and uncritical acceptance especially in western institutions.⁸⁴ Professor Morse Stephens of the University of California was on firm ground in remarking that among American universities Wisconsin was "at the head in History."⁸⁵

At the same time that history was separated from Ely's school another separation was taking place. Scott and Ely apparently did not work too harmoniously together. Besides, the original intention of the regents to set up a school for training business leaders had never actually been realized under Ely. The new dean of the College of Engineering, John B. Johnson, made a strong plea in his inaugural address for the establishment of a college of commerce. It was the Spanish-American War era and the country was in the process of acquiring an empire. Vast opportunities in commercial expansion loomed up on the horizon. Johnson pointed out that our consular reports were full of calls for American goods, along with bitter complaints of the ignorance and stupidity of American efforts to meet these demands. "As a rule our business men, our manufacturers, and their clerical assistants know no foreign language," Dean Johnson declared, "and are quite ignorant of the products, the manners, the laws, the customs regulations and the shipping facilities and practices of the countries to which they are sent or with which they are trying to do business."⁸⁶ The feeling was again and again expressed that, since America now had an empire, the new economic opportunities and responsibilities

⁸⁴ This account is based on Turner material in the files of the history department at the University of Wisconsin.

⁸⁵ President Benjamin Ide Wheeler to President Adams, September 4, 1900, in the Presidents' Papers.

⁸⁶ *Wisconsin Journal of Education*, 29:265 (December, 1899).

required both trained administrators and trained businessmen. Schools of commerce were the answer.

Ely would have preferred to see the new and more specialized offerings in business studies develop within his own school. But neither Adams nor the regents saw eye to eye with him on this point. Adams, indeed, did have an uneasy feeling about the new venture. He once called Charles Forster Smith, professor of classics, to his sickbed and assured him that there was no reason for those "who stood for ideal things to think the University was to be wholly given over to the material and the practical."⁸⁷ Ely on his part stipulated that his powers as director of the truncated School of Economics and Politics should be equal to those of any other director in the University. He also carried his point that the new School of Commerce was not to absorb the faculty of his own school, but was merely to send its students to those courses in economics and political science which they needed.⁸⁸ Ely seems to have made the best of the situation, continuing to work closely with Turner, taking comfort in his election to the presidency of the American Economic Association, and trying to pull wires that might result in a call to Harvard. Ely also had his eye on a public career and was already corresponding with Senator Spooner and with William Vilas to that end.⁸⁹ In any case Ely had the satisfaction of realizing that he had been the principal figure, with Turner as a close second in theory, if not an equal in fact, in building up the social sciences at Wisconsin.

Meantime, the new School of Commerce got off to a good start. Director Scott went abroad to study the curricula in similar institutions and attempted to emphasize the social and cultural as well as the purely vocational aspects of the program. New courses were established in the law school, the College of Engineering, and the College of Letters and Science to facilitate the objectives of the School of Commerce. These included courses in the practical use of the languages, in the commercial aspects of mathematics, in economic implications of the genera-

⁸⁷ Smith, *Charles Kendall Adams*, 48.

⁸⁸ Ely to Adams, March 27, 1900, in the Presidents' Papers.

⁸⁹ Ely to Vilas, March 14, 1900; Ely to Spooner, February 21, 1900; Ely to Henry B. Favill, March 1, 1900, all in the Ely Papers.

tion and use of mechanical and electrical power, and in the law of real and personal property, contracts, sales, torts, bankruptcy, and insurance. The University proudly publicized the results of an inquiry among the students of the School of Commerce which demonstrated that a large proportion would not have come to Madison had it not been for the opportunities provided by the school.



IN HIS first report, and on subsequent occasions, President Chamberlin went to great pains to prove that the humanistic studies, in which he included the social disciplines, were in no sense being blighted, as Bascom had maintained, by the natural sciences. Analyzing the instructional force, the unit exercises taken each week by the students, and the course listings, the president concluded that the humanities were in somewhat the stronger position and that the whole picture was one of "natural, wholesome, and reasonably symmetrical growth."⁹⁰ Insofar as Chamberlin's analysis was sound, it was to be explained chiefly in terms of the growth in vigor and interest of the social studies. Yet Wisconsin was not to stand still in the coming years in the older branches of the humanistic field. The humanities proper were infused with new scientific scholarship, characteristic of the German universities and of such American university centers as Johns Hopkins, Harvard, Cornell, and Chicago. New appointments took account of these emphases and made it possible to offer specialized and graduate courses.

The general trend in this direction may be illustrated by a few figures. In the catalogue for 1889-1890 seven courses were listed in philosophy; in 1902-1903, seventeen. The earlier catalogue announced eight courses in Greek and ten in Latin; the later, thirty-three in Greek and twenty-two in Latin. The five courses in ancient oriental languages had expanded to fifteen, including, besides Hebrew and Sanskrit, Arabic and Assyrian.

⁹⁰ *Regents' Biennial Report*, 1887-88, pp. 37-43. In terms of instructional force, the figures were 23 to 15; of the sub-courses, 55 were in the humanities, 45 in the natural sciences; 58 per cent of the unit exercises per week were in the humanistic-social study field, 42 per cent in natural sciences.

The French department had increased its course offerings from five to thirty-eight, Spanish and Italian from one each to six and two, respectively. The catalogue for 1889-1890 listed twelve courses in German, the catalogue for 1902-1903, forty-nine! The entire offering in the English field in the earlier year was eleven in literature and language, and six in rhetoric and oratory; in 1902-1903, forty-four courses were offered. These figures illustrate the growth of specialization in the humanistic departments and the impact of the new, scientific scholarship.

In the early years of President Adams' administration the Visitors, who had long pointed with regret to the declining interest in Greek and Latin, found in the new president a tower of supporting strength. Adams, true to his own enthusiasm for the classics and his conviction that the University should offer a well-rounded program, was largely responsible for the new appointments which did something, at least, to invigorate scholarship in this field and to bring it into line with the emphasis elsewhere on philology, textual criticism, and archaeology. In fact, Adams was convinced that stimulating leadership on the part of the University might check the decline of Greek in the high schools. He refused, to the very end, to give up his conviction that thorough classical training was the best possible preparation for both professional and business careers.

The new appointments were notable ones. Professor Kerr, on reaching his sixty-fifth year, asked to be relieved of his duties as head of the Greek department. In 1892 Frank Louis Van Cleef succeeded him, though Kerr continued to give some instruction. Van Cleef had taken his bachelor of arts degree *magna cum laude* at Harvard, where he continued to study as a graduate student. Bonn subsequently conferred on him the doctorate *cum laude*. His thesis, "De usu attractionis pronomini relativi Platonico," was in the new vein of German philological scholarship. Van Cleef did not stay at Wisconsin long enough to exert much influence. But the precedent established by his appointment was continued. In 1894 Charles Forster Smith was called from Vanderbilt to head the department. Smith had taken his doctorate at Leipzig in 1881, offering as his

dissertation *A Study of Plutarch's Life of Artaxerxes*. At Wisconsin he worked on his accurate and readable translation of Thucydides for the Loeb Classical Library, prepared editions of college texts, and contributed learned articles to the classical journals. His scholarly achievements were recognized by his election in 1902 to the presidency of the American Philological Association. But Smith was an inspirational teacher and a humanist as well as a scholar. Much later President Birge testified: "We recognize in him one who lives among us the life of letters, who has made literature—not only Greek but all great literature—a vital influence for us as well as for his students."⁹¹ In 1894 Arthur Gordon Laird, also a scholar of the new type, became assistant professor of ancient languages, offering courses in comparative philology as well as in Greek literature.

The Latin department profited from the brief sojourn of Charles Edwin Bennett (1889–1891), who had begun to make his contributions to the knowledge of early Latin syntax and metrics, contributions that were to win for him an international reputation. Wisconsin's loss was Cornell's gain. Nor, unfortunately, was the University able to hold another great scholar, Herbert Cushing Tolman, who was instructor in Latin and assistant professor of Sanskrit from 1891 to 1893. He had taken his doctorate at Yale under the great Orientalist, William Dwight Whitney, and for a time had acted as his assistant. When he came to Wisconsin he was preparing, with President Harper of Chicago, the first of a series of Latin texts, one of which, *Caesar's Gallic Wars*, appeared while he was at Madison. Tolman was also working on an original text of inscriptions and grammatical elements of the old Persian cuneiform. During his brief sojourn at Wisconsin his *Grammar of the Old Persian Language* and his *Guide to Old Persian Inscriptions* appeared; and he found time to bring out, in collaboration with his older colleague, Professor Kerr, *The Gospel of Matthew in Greek*. At the same time he was studying theology and, shortly after leaving for Vanderbilt, he was ordained an Episcopal minister

⁹¹ *Classical Studies in Honor of Charles Forster Smith* (Madison, 1919), introduction; Smith, *Reminiscences and Sketches* (Nashville, Tenn., 1909), *passim*.

at Milwaukee.⁹² Tolman was followed by George Hendrickson, professor at Colorado College and a scholar likewise trained in the new scholarship at Johns Hopkins and at Bonn and Berlin. Hendrickson's stay at Wisconsin was also brief; he left for Chicago.

With the coming in 1896 of Moses S. Slaughter the Latin department achieved a certain stability. Slaughter had taken his doctorate at Johns Hopkins in 1891, writing a philological dissertation on the substantives of Terence. At Madison he developed an interest in Vergil and Lucretius. A thorough but not a prolific scholar, Slaughter maintained high standards in the Latin department. Among his junior colleagues was Grant Showerman, who received his bachelor of arts degree at Wisconsin in 1896. After two years of postgraduate study in Madison Showerman spent another two years at the American School of Classical Studies in Rome and then returned to Wisconsin to take his doctorate. His thesis, *The Great Mother of the Gods*, remained a standard monograph. Although Showerman prepared various texts of the Latin classics he was less specialist than humanist. His graceful style, his concern, especially during his later years, with moral values, and his gift for teaching and lecturing made him an influential figure in classical studies.

The ancient language field included Hebrew and Sanskrit, and, for a few years, Arabic and Iranian. Professor William H. Williams, a Wisconsin alumnus, shifted his interest to Hellenistic Greek, Hebrew, and related tongues when a new department was organized in 1889. Williams, who approached the field with a theological bias and with little concern for either the humanistic or the newer philological emphases, nevertheless persuaded interested groups to endow fellowships and attracted a few able young men, including Kelley, Wolfensen, and Knight, who taught Arabic and Assyrian as well as Hebrew. Although Williams succeeded temporarily in winning special legislative support for his department, it was allowed to starve during the Van Hise regime. The ancient Oriental languages were considered too specialized to maintain at Wisconsin in

⁹² A biographical sketch of Tolman is filed in the Presidents' Papers. See also the *Dictionary of American Biography*.

view of the fact that the University neither gave instruction in theology nor attracted theological training schools to Madison. Besides, Chicago dominated this field in the Middle West.

Modern language studies enjoyed a steady growth in the years between 1887 and 1903. Except for Scandinavian, where the emphasis under Professor Julius Olsen continued to be literary, all the departments enriched their offerings not only by specialized period courses in the literature but also by added offerings in philology. Professor Edward Owen, who had been at Wisconsin since 1878, first offered Italian and Spanish in 1887. Although primarily a teacher, Owen edited a few texts and published several studies on the logical implications of thought connections and on the interrogative as a means of expression. These studies, for which Yale gave him the doctorate, were out of line with the new emphasis on philology and literary criticism. At the end of the period the department included six members. One of these, William Frederick Giese, a minor poet, a promising critic, and a student of Dante, became best known as an editor of French texts.

The sudden death of Professor Rosenstengel during a faculty meeting left the German department without a head. Rosenstengel, a thoroughly competent drillmaster, did not represent the newer scholarship. But he had given German studies force and dignity and had pioneered in emphasizing the importance of training teachers for the secondary schools. Professor Hohlfeld, Leipzig-trained, came from Vanderbilt to head the department. A fertile mind, a cultured scholar, thoroughly alive to the importance of both linguistic science and literary criticism and history, Hohlfeld soon demonstrated his ability to promote and organize scholarship and to build a great department. In Ernst Voss and Edwin Roedder he had able lieutenants. Milwaukee Germans enriched the library in the Germanic field and in other ways provided an important backlog. The German department quickly became one of the strongest and best, not only in the University, but in the whole country.⁹³

The study of English was divided, until 1898, into a department of language and literature and a department of rhetoric

⁹³ For the development of the department see pp. 339-340.

and oratory. The latter continued to be in the hands of Professor Frankenburger, who inspired great affection and spent himself on his students, not only in the classroom, but in the directing of oratory, dramatics, and debate. In 1898 the two departments were combined and an introductory course made compulsory for all freshmen, a course in which the Harvard theme system was the cornerstone. Professor Freeman, who had come to Wisconsin in 1878, continued, until 1900 when he went to Denmark on a diplomatic mission, to inspire his pupils and to fascinate them with stories of his personal acquaintances, including Tennyson and Browning. Learned, and gifted paradoxically with a dreamy, poetical, Jovian personality, this Civil War veteran, whom William Ellery Leonard has immortalized in *Two Lives*, taught throughout the state as well as on the campus. By 1891, he had lectured with great success in eighty-seven towns and villages.

Perhaps Freeman's most important contribution in the teaching field was his recognition of American literature as a subject for university study. Apparently the honor of having first taught this field belongs to John S. Hart, who inaugurated it at Princeton in 1872-1873. Moses Coit Tyler was giving some lectures at Michigan on American literature in 1875. In 1878 Charles Francis Richardson published his *Primer of American Literature* and four years later became professor of English at Dartmouth. The Dartmouth catalogue for 1882-1883 listed for the first time a course in American literature. In the same academic year, 1882-1883, at the University of Wisconsin, Freeman introduced courses on American prose writers and American poets. These were given regularly thereafter. Freeman himself wrote a little manual on the subject and, more important, suggested and guided a doctoral dissertation in the field: the result was the publication in 1898 of William Cairns's *On the Development of American Literature from 1815-1833*. This was one of the very first if not the first doctoral dissertation to be presented at an American university in the field of the national literature. In view of the militant enthusiasm for a distinctively American literature which characterized the intellectual history of the country in the first half of the nineteenth century, it is some-

what curious that the academic study of our literary past was so slow in gaining a foothold in our universities. Harvard did not offer American literature until 1898 when Barrett Wendell began his course. Wisconsin was thus a pioneer in the recognition of the national literature as a subject worthy of serious study.⁹⁴

The scholarship of the English department was strengthened in line with President Chamberlin's policy when Frank Hubbard joined the department in 1892. He had taken his doctorate at Johns Hopkins, publishing a dissertation on *Relation of the Blooms of King Alfred to the Anglo-Saxon Translations of Boethius*; and he took over instruction in Anglo-Saxon, Chaucer, and English philology. The seminary which he introduced began to train competent scholars, and the group of younger men—Cairns, Beatty, Pyre, Lathrop, and others—added variety and distinguished teaching to the department.

In comparison with many universities, philosophical studies at Wisconsin lagged. Michigan's distinguished George Sylvester Morris, whose careful and original scholarship in the field of German idealism won him standing among his contemporaries, died in 1887; but John Dewey carried on, developing the germs of what was later to be instrumentalism. When he left for Chicago in 1896 Michigan called Robert Wenley, a Hegelian with an international reputation. At California, George Holmes Howison was training such men as Mezes, McGilvary, Bakewell, and Lovejoy and, in his opposition to absolutism and his exposition of a personal idealism, was anticipating William James. At Harvard, James himself was formulating his original approach to philosophy in a department which included George Herbert Palmer and Josiah Royce and which gave nurture to George Santayana.

Wisconsin made no effort to fill the void left by Bascom's departure, heeding little his final counsel that philosophy must remain the core of liberal culture. Professor John William Stearns, whose background was that of the normal school and whose interest was primarily in education, gave instruction in the history of philosophy, ethics, and aesthetics. Stearns was the

⁹⁴ *University Catalogue*, 1882-83, p. 57.

older type of professor, skillful in the use of the Socratic method, which he employed, to quote one of his admirers, "with precision and rapidity." Under Stearns the class acquired facility in logical understanding and in seeing the implications of a text. Yet for all these gifts Stearns did not present the technical problems in the field or point out its frontiers. At length, in 1894, Frank Chapman Sharp came to Wisconsin with his recently-acquired Berlin doctorate and his dissertation on "The Esthetic Element in Morality and its Place in a Utilitarian Theory of Morals." A technically competent philosopher, Sharp aided Ely by offering courses in social philosophy, thus developing his own practical interests. This marked him as a promising figure in that characteristically American school of philosophy which was concerned with bringing speculation from the clouds to the earth. From 1900 to 1909 Sharp's work was supplemented by the fresh and vigorous mind of Boyd Bode, versed in science and skillful in applying the doctrine of evolution to logic and to social action. Bascom, in his semi-retirement at Williamstown, must have been pleased at the turn philosophy was again taking at Wisconsin. The tradition he had begun was being carried on and the ground being laid for an interesting development.



IMPORTANT as was the development of instruction and research in the humanities and the social studies, overwhelming evidence indicated that these fields were greatly handicapped by altogether inadequate library facilities. "It makes no difference how fine the grounds may be, how large, commodious and conveniently arranged the buildings are, nor how learned and able the president and professors may all be," declared the Visitors in 1893, "it does not alter the fact that, without a good library, you cannot possibly have a first class university."⁹⁵ In 1889 the University Library reported slightly over eighteen thousand volumes. Fewer than two thousand books were being added annually. In Chamberlin's last year a trifle more than three thousand dollars was spent on the library. Adams almost

⁹⁵ Report of the Visitors in *Regents' Biennial Report*, 1893-94, p. 64.

tripled this amount in his first year. By 1895 the effect of the more generous outlay was evident in the fact that the holdings had almost doubled in six years. But even with thirty-three thousand books the poverty of the Library was still deplorable. It was little or no larger than the libraries of the Universities of Minnesota, Kansas, Iowa, Northwestern, and Indiana—institutions often regarded as inferior to the University of Wisconsin.⁹⁶

The University had always taken great pride in the rich supplementary collections of the State Historical Society housed in the Capitol a mile away. But even when the eighty thousand volumes of the society were taken into account, comparative figures in 1895 indicated that the combined resources of the two libraries compared unfavorably with those at Chicago, Cornell, Pennsylvania, Yale, and Columbia. Harvard, with its four hundred and twenty thousand volumes, was in a class quite by itself.

In a report to the regents in 1897 President Adams pointedly underscored these shortcomings. The University was spending \$11,000 annually for the administration of the Library and for the purchase of books. "I think I have never known Michigan to appropriate less than \$7,000 a year for books, exclusive of service, periodicals, and bindings," declared Adams. He went on to say that Cornell was spending \$18,000 for books alone. On the other hand, Wisconsin provided each department with less than twenty-five dollars for the purchase of books. "Our library in all the departments not cared for by the Historical Library," concluded President Adams, "is simply disreputably weak." If necessary, he threatened, he would recommend that laboratory appropriations be scaled to increase the resources of the library.⁹⁷

Both the librarian and the faculty reinforced the president's argument. Pointing out that little or nothing remained to many departments beyond the cost of the periodical lists, the faculty in 1899 declared that one of the most important functions of the University was being "almost ignored." The library committee was instructed to petition the president and the

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 1895-96, pp. 44-47.

⁹⁷ Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. E, August 24, 1897, pp. 39-40.

regents "that the expenditures for the University library be placed on a footing equal to that represented by neighboring universities of the same grade as Wisconsin."⁹⁸ The librarian, Walter Smith, submitted a significant report to the president early in 1899. The allotments of the previous year had been reduced from \$12,000 to \$9,000. Specifically, this meant that in funds available for the purchase of books the department of geology was reduced from \$81 to \$22.50, the allotment in zoology from \$45.50 to \$8, and the department of economics from ninety dollars to nine cents! Comparative statistics from nine other universities indicated that the amount available for the purchase of books was in all cases larger, and in most cases much larger, than at Wisconsin. The figures showed that the cost of library administration at Wisconsin was not excessive, in fact, that it was much less than at Michigan, Illinois, California, Chicago, and Cornell.⁹⁹

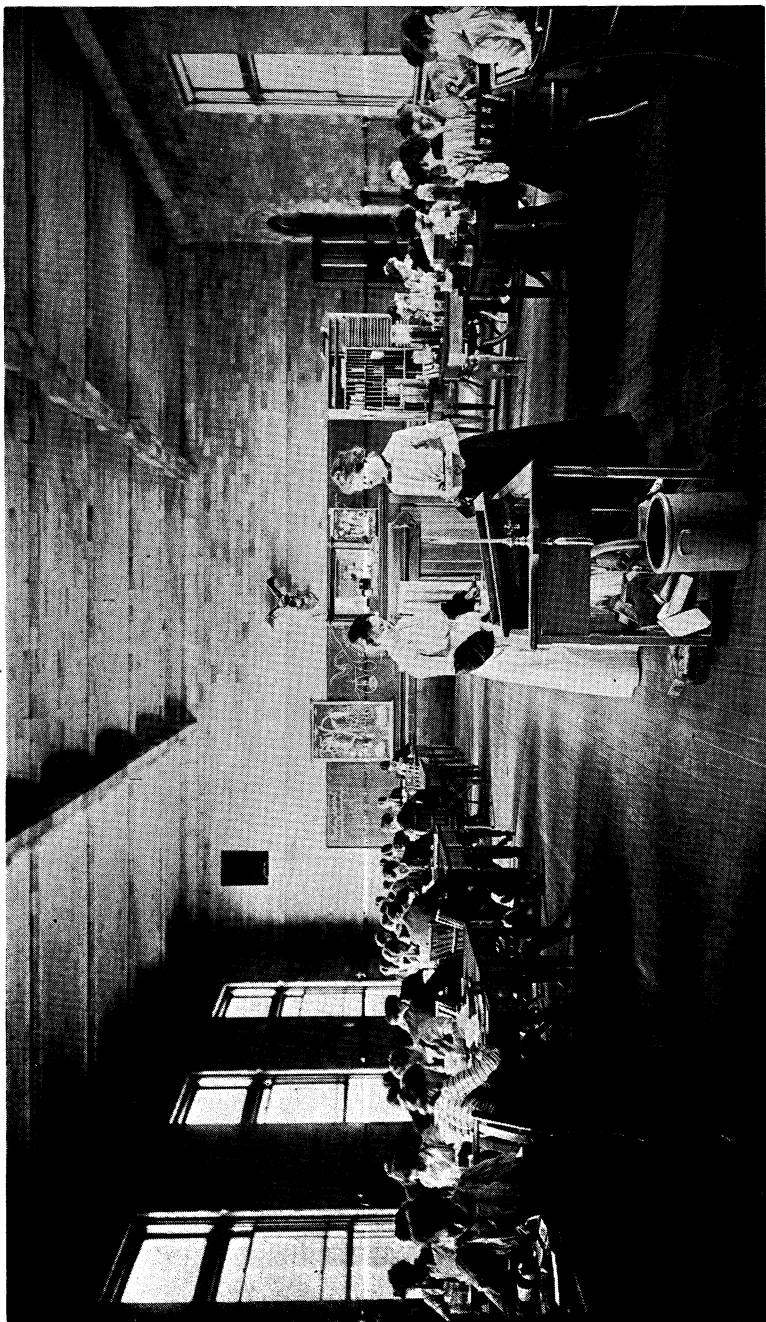
That the University Library was being starved by pitifully inadequate support was bad enough, but the situation was made the worse by the overcrowded conditions in Library Hall. The *Daily Cardinal* testified that on the morning of September 20, 1892, between nine and ten, every available seat in the reading room was taken and a good many students were standing up to read.¹⁰⁰ Patrons of the Library grumbled about the disturbing noises from the adjoining hall, used for military drill. The executive committee of the Board of Regents, having "carefully investigated" the complaint, declared that they could not believe readers were seriously inconvenienced by the noise and that, in any case, military instruction was too important an affair to be "crippled in order to maintain a gilded Hall for dancing purposes."¹⁰¹ The best that could be done under the circumstances was to urge the women students to prepare as many of their lessons as possible in their bedrooms at Ladies Hall, to rearrange the books so that those less frequently

⁹⁸ Minutes of the Faculty, vol. 4, p. 225, April 10, 1899.

⁹⁹ Walter Smith to Charles Kendall Adams, April 17, 1899, in Papers of the Board of Regents, April 18, 1899. The universities were Michigan, California, Illinois, Chicago, Cornell, Stanford, Indiana, Nebraska, and Minnesota.

¹⁰⁰ *Daily Cardinal*, September 20, 1892.

¹⁰¹ Reports to the Regents, Vol. C, pp. 13-14, June 18, 1889.



The Biology Laboratory, 1899



The University Library, 1893

used were stored in the gallery, and to hope that as soon as feasible the library might be kept open for a couple of hours in the evening.

The physical conditions at the Historical Society were little if any better. The ventilation and lighting were poor and the limited space caused the storage of many books in a basement inaccessible to readers. Moreover, the danger of fire was not inconsiderable: any day, it was frequently warned, a calamity might overtake the Library which would dwarf the collapse of the south wing of the Capitol in 1883, a collapse which had killed several workmen and damaged countless state records.¹⁰² It was very pleasant to have Albert Bushnell Hart of Harvard sing the praises of the incomparable treasures of the society and to proclaim their superiority to any in the West.¹⁰³ But the treasures, though not consumed by flames, were greatly limited in usefulness by the conditions that prevailed.

From the very start of his administration President Adams wanted revolutionary changes, but it was clear that nothing really revolutionary could be accomplished until larger and far more suitable quarters were provided. According to Reuben Gold Thwaites, superintendent of the State Historical Society, it was President Chamberlin who first suggested that a new, joint building for the State Historical Society and the University Library be constructed on the campus. The proposal seemed sound to his successor and he set to work to realize it.

President Adams worked skillfully and indefatigably. The way was prepared when in 1892 the curators of the Historical Society voted to join with the University to provide a new fireproof building to house both the libraries; the regents agreed to give a portion of the lower campus for it. Urging the Board to make every effort to persuade the legislature to act, Adams turned to Senator Vilas for help and won a promise "to

¹⁰² *Daily Cardinal*, April 11, December 13, 1892.

¹⁰³ Albert Bushnell Hart to Charles Kendall Adams, January 21, 1893, in the Presidents' Papers. Professor Hart wrote: "The reputation of the Library is very high in the East, but it was not till I visited it that I understood the value of the special collections of books on the Northwest and of newspapers. The history of the United States is still only partially written, because the part of the West has not yet been made clear; for this purpose your Library is priceless. No expenditure could ever replace that material if it were destroyed."

contribute in any way . . . to the promotion of the interests of the University.”¹⁰⁴ Although the bill appropriating \$420,000 for the new building failed to carry the legislature in 1893, the victory was won two years later. The construction took five years, during which time President Adams was a member of every committee concerned with the enterprise. The contract had been let at too low a price to cover rising building costs; the contractor failed; it was necessary to fight another battle for additional appropriations; and at the very end it was discovered that the original estimates had not included bookstacks and furnishings; more begging was needed. All in all it was no wonder that Adams felt the strain accounted in large part for his nervous exhaustion.¹⁰⁵ But the job was finished at a cost of \$750,000 and the building was occupied in the summer of 1900.

The president reported to a friend that, in the eyes of a very competent authority, the new building “would attract the admiration of critics in any part of the world.”¹⁰⁶ He would not swap it, he told Benjamin Ide Wheeler, for the combined libraries of Princeton and Columbia.¹⁰⁷ The regents expressed prevailing opinion in declaring it to be the finest university library building in the country. It was the third library Adams had built, and he took justifiable pride in its stateliness, its classical grandeur, and its ample reading rooms, seminar rooms, and well-lighted stacks.

The joint arrangement brought problems, but the advantages far outweighed them. Superintendent Thwaites complained that the campus in front of the new library was used for football practice, which was bound to ruin the sod, stir up dust and create noise, and inconvenience the patrons of the library. The superintendent pointed out that when the decision was made to move the Historical Society to the campus, it was tacitly understood that the campus was not to be used for athletics.¹⁰⁸ The

¹⁰⁴ Senator William F. Vilas to President Charles Kendall Adams, March 11, 1893, in the Presidents' Papers.

¹⁰⁵ Adams to James B. Angell, May 27, 1899, in the Presidents' Papers.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ Adams to President Benjamin Ide Wheeler, March 19, 1900, in the Presidents' Papers.

¹⁰⁸ Reuben Gold Thwaites to President Adams, September 6, 1900, in the Presidents' Papers.

regents decided to have the space in front of the library seeded and to permit only such gymnastic drill and athletics as would not interfere with the seeding.¹⁰⁹ Thwaites was nominally in charge of the building, the title to which was held by the Historical Society. Yet beyond expressing a preference for the new school of history and the related social disciplines he wisely decided not to assign seminary rooms to the various departments.

Renewed efforts were made in the University to strengthen the holdings. Birge reported in 1900 that whereas the amount expended for books ranged between \$3,000 and \$5,000, actually at least \$15,000 was necessary.¹¹⁰ In discussing the needs of the University in his report for 1901-1902, acting-President Birge declared the most pressing to be provision for "a considerable enlargement of the University library. . . . Nothing less than a large addition to the library and a great increase of the annual appropriation for books can permit the teaching at the University to advance in its quality, or to maintain it at the high level which it has already reached."¹¹¹ The University Library at this time held 78,000 volumes and some 25,000 unbound pamphlets; but even with the 118,000 volumes in the Historical Society, chiefly American and English history, the library resources were, as President Birge indicated, far from adequate.

From time to time special gifts augmented the Library's holdings. In 1899 liberal German-American citizens in Milwaukee contributed \$3,150 for the purchase of a Germanic philology library. The following year three Milwaukee citizens donated \$2,000 for the purchase of books for the School of Commerce; while friends of the University in Milwaukee, New York, and elsewhere, largely as a result of Ely's activity, contributed \$2,645 for purchases in the field of economics and political science. In 1901 President Adams presented the University with two thousand volumes in the field of European history, and Professor Owen deposited his useful collection of books on French language and literature.

¹⁰⁹ Birge to Adams, April 25, 1900, in the Presidents' Papers.

¹¹⁰ Report of the President in *Regents' Biennial Report*, 1899-1900, pp. 30-31.

¹¹¹ Report of acting-President Birge in *Regents' Biennial Report*, 1901-1902, pp.

Unfortunately the prospect of establishing a library school was not realized. In 1897 Adams recommended it to the regents, indicating that the need was the greater by reason of the decision to close down the admirable library training school at the Armour Institute in Chicago.¹¹² The difficulties in the way proved too great, however. For the time the only opportunities in Wisconsin for such training were those provided by short courses given under the auspices of the State Library Commission, which took over an experiment financed by Senator James H. Stout of Menomonie.¹¹³ The course in library science within the College of Letters and Science was not to be established until the Van Hise era.

¹¹² Reports to the Regents, Vol. D, pp. 300-301, April 20, 1897.

¹¹³ *Daily Cardinal*, February 28, 1898.

23.

Students: The End of the Century

THE years between the retirement of John Bascom and the inauguration of Van Hise were years of rapid change. During these years the old unity of the institution was shattered beyond repair. With the erection of the colleges, the rapid increase in the number of students, and the extension of the elective system, there emerged a new and heterogeneous institution, already suggesting the educational hierarchy of today. The interests and activities of the undergraduates changed and became more diversified. The literary societies, though continuing in strength, ceased to occupy the center of the University stage; the fraternities, with their budding chapter houses, began to offer as much in terms of status as the literary societies, and for less mental exertion; the annual football game against Minnesota inspired more enthusiasm than the most hotly contested joint debate, and the Junior Prom came quickly to win prominence over the annual literary society exhibitions. Perhaps this change in the taste of the undergraduate only reflected a change in the taste of the adult population; perhaps it was a result of the larger numbers of students, who, with their increasingly diversified interests, found a common denominator in such relatively simple things as dancing and football.

During the academic year 1886-87 a total of 539 students were regularly enrolled in the University. In 1892 the enrollment passed the one thousand mark.¹ In 1899-1900 it had

¹ Report of the President in the *Regents' Biennial Report*, 1895-96, p. 7.

reached 2,422, and by 1903-04, the first year Van Hise was in office, the number passed three thousand.² During the academic year 1889-90, 497 students were enrolled in the regular courses and 15 as graduate students in the College of Letters and Science, 113 in engineering, 32 in agriculture, 112 in law, and 35 in pharmacy. The summer school was not yet counted as part of the regular community. Five years later 785 students were registered in the College of Letters and Science, of whom 73 were graduates; 225 in the College of Engineering; 213 in the College of Agriculture including the Short Course students; 266 in the Law School; and 41 in the School of Pharmacy. During the academic year 1899-1900 a total of 97 graduate students were listed, 90 of them in the College of Letters and Science, which claimed a total of 1,096 students in the six regular courses; the College of Engineering listed 327; the College of Agriculture, 381; the Law School, 231; the School of Pharmacy, 51; and the School of Music, now a part of the University, 199. In the summer session 221 had enrolled. During the year 1903-04 the College of Letters and Science had 1,312 students, including 36 in pharmacy; the College of Engineering, 744; the College of Agriculture, 525; the College of Law, 201; the School of Music, 172; and the various summer offerings attracted over 300.³ The most rapid growth during this period was in the engineering college, although the Colleges of Letters and Science and Agriculture had also expanded vigorously. Short Course students, however, accounted for the major increase in numbers in agriculture. Pharmacy and law had actually lost numbers during the period.

The proportion of women to the total enrollment remained about the same from 1886 to 1896 although almost no women enrolled in the professional colleges. Thus within the College of Letters and Science the number of women increased more rapidly than that of the men.⁴ Occasionally the question of co-education was still discussed. In 1892 the editor of the *Cardinal* had confidently assured his readers that, "Coeducation has

² *Regents' Biennial Report*, 1899-1900, p. 33; 1903-04, p. 125.

³ *University Catalogue*, 1889-90, pp. 38-39; 1894-95, pp. 280-282; 1899-1900, pp. 358-360; 1903-04, pp. 415-417.

⁴ Report of the President in the *Regents' Biennial Report*, 1895-96, pp. 24-25.

passed the experimental stage and women have demonstrated their right to share in the benefits of higher education as well as other pursuits."⁵ Four years later President Adams declared that the old question of the advisability of coeducation had been "swept away by the energetic hand of experience."⁶ Except for occasional questions as to adequate housing, exercise, or protection of the morals of the young ladies, the increased number of women at the University evoked little interest.

By far the largest proportion of the students continued to be drawn from the sons and daughters of middle-class families. The rich still looked to the eastern institutions as the proper place for the education of their children, although Adams made a notable effort to attract them to the University. The panic of 1893 apparently helped in this campaign, for though it kept many students of limited means from attending college at all, many others who might have gone to an eastern college had to be content with the state university.⁷ Although Adams sought the patronage of the rich, he was as anxious as Lathrop had been fifty years before to discredit any charges that the University was aristocratic. In 1898 he presented a detailed analysis of the vocational status of the parents of the students in the Colleges of Letters and Science and Engineering. Almost twenty-two per cent were the children of farmers, almost twenty per cent the children of merchants, and the rest were the children of manufacturers, mechanics, white-collar workers, and professional people. Adams estimated that one-third of all students enrolled in all colleges of the University were the children of farmers, and contended that this showed "the perfectly democratic nature of our institution." A recasting of Adams' data shows, however, that fully fifty-six per cent of the students were the children of business and professional men.⁸

Educational opportunity, as reflected in the availability of the University, was still largely a matter of geography. In 1897, as in 1856, more young people from Madison attended the University than from any other locality, and more from Dane

⁵ *Daily Cardinal*, April 7, 1892.

⁶ Report of the President in the *Regents' Biennial Report*, 1895-96, p. 25.

⁷ See James F. A. Pyre, *Wisconsin* (New York, 1920), 254.

⁸ Report of the President in the *Regents' Biennial Report*, 1897-98, pp. 6-7.

County than from any other county.⁹ Yet the process of creating a state system of public education was going on, continually increasing educational opportunities. More and more high schools were accredited to the University each year. In 1890 some eighty high schools in the state were qualified to prepare students for some or all of the University courses; ten years later that number had nearly doubled.¹⁰ In 1903 President Van Hise said that more than ninety per cent of the students of the University came from public schools.¹¹

The opportunity to prepare for entrance to the University was becoming more widespread with the increase in the number of high schools. Furthermore high school graduates were encouraged by the University to believe they could earn all or part of their way at the University.¹² As at most other institutions, whatever the hardships which attended this course, the student who worked his way was not isolated from the rest. President Chamberlin, in writing to a student about the opportunity of earning enough to cover his expenses while he was at the University, assured the boy that many did this, and that the "social status of such students is practically the same as that of others."¹³ To another he wrote that students who worked for their expenses "usually rank among the best in the end."¹⁴ To still another he wrote that the secretary of the Board of Regents helped students to find work.¹⁵ President Adams never tired of reminding students that he himself had worked his way through Michigan, and however much he cultivated the sons and daughters of the rich, he never failed to extol the virtues of the student who worked his way through the University.

Beyond formal encouragement, the University attempted to take steps to help students. Some were always employed on the

⁹ *The Badger*, 1898, (1897), 113.

¹⁰ See chapter on University and Public Schools.

¹¹ C. R. Van Hise to Lyman Abbott, editor of *Outlook*, October 20, 1903, in the Presidents' Papers.

¹² See *University Catalogue*, 1889-90, p. 127; 1892-93, p. 57; 1900-01, pp. 47-48.

¹³ Chamberlin to prospective student E. W. Raymond of Boston, Massachusetts, November 30, 1888, in the Presidents' Papers.

¹⁴ Chamberlin to George Stickney, Jr., August 10, 1889, in the Presidents' Papers.

¹⁵ Chamberlin to J. L. Naylor, January 15, 1891, in the Presidents' Papers.

University farm. At the beginning of each college year those citizens of Madison who wanted to employ students were asked to report to the secretary of the Board of Regents. Notices were also placed on the University bulletin boards.¹⁶ In 1895 a student employment agency was incorporated and articles filed with the secretary of state.¹⁷ It apparently never functioned effectively, but shortly thereafter the Y.M.C.A. also established a student employment service. In 1901 the secretary of the Y.M.C.A. claimed that the number of students seeking jobs was unusually high but that the organization had in one month alone found fifty jobs. Students were paid twenty cents an hour for odd jobs—a vast increase from the ten to twelve and a half cents an hour paid by the University farm some fifteen years before.¹⁸ Students took care of yards, cleaned stables, tended furnaces, waited on table, washed dishes, swept out offices and stores, and tended children. Others, more fortunate or more skilled, got jobs as part-time bookkeepers, clerks, newspaper reporters, and barbers. Some students, it was darkly insinuated, now and then took jobs as strikebreakers.

The cost of board and room increased little during the last decade of the century. In 1889 President Chamberlin assured a prospective student that board and room could be had for from \$5 to \$7 per week. Fourteen years later Registrar Hiestand wrote a student that prices ranged from \$4 to \$7 for room and board.¹⁹ At many of the cooperative clubs board could be obtained for much less. Yearly expenditures of course differed greatly according to the resources of the student, some managing to sustain themselves on less than \$250 per year, others spending three or four times that amount. Sidney Dean Townley, who kept a careful record of his expenditures as an undergraduate from 1886 to 1890, recorded his total expenditures for these four years as \$232.26, \$242.73, \$222.78, and \$326.11. During the last two

¹⁶ Hiestand to B. B. Lockney, Waukesha, August 24, 1893, in the Presidents' Papers.

¹⁷ *Daily Cardinal*, November 6, 1895.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, October 23, 1901.

¹⁹ Hiestand to Eugene M. Prentice, South Bend, Indiana, September 2, 1903, in the Presidents' Papers.

years, however, he paid no room rent. Of his total expenditure of \$1,023.88 he recorded that he had earned \$476.38.²⁰ Although there were many who spent more, and some who spent less, Townley's record is perhaps typical.

Except for Ladies Hall the University after 1885 possessed no dormitories for use of the students. The destruction of Science Hall in 1884 had forced the last male students from their dormitory rooms in North Hall into the town. In 1896 Ladies Hall was enlarged enough to accommodate eighty women, who paid from \$35 to \$90 per year for their rooms. Not only was there little dormitory space, but Chamberlin was vigorously opposed to University dormitories. To have large groups of young men housed together he thought encouraged those "peculiar rowdy practices which characterize—and perhaps it is not too strong to say—disgrace college life." Anything which tended to lower the moral conditions of colleges he would dispose of. "I go so far as to believe that . . . it would be well if all that is distinctive in a college community, as such, could be wiped out, and then when we had freed ourselves from our unfortunate inheritance, we could develop a community of sentiment and action harmonious with our times and also consonant with our claims to leadership in education in its broadest sense."²¹ Although there was by no means complete agreement on this score, the construction of college dormitories, during either Chamberlin's or Adams' administration, was out of the question, for the institution was growing so rapidly that there was difficulty enough in getting money for buildings, classrooms, and laboratories. The Board of Visitors in 1898 did propose that dormitories be constructed in order to counteract the undesirable tendencies of the fraternities.²² Nothing came of the recommendation.

Thus the students, with the exception of the small contingent in Ladies Hall, lived off the campus in the wilderness of rooming houses, or fraternity and sorority houses, which sprang up

²⁰ Sidney Dean Townley, *Diary of a Student of the University of Wisconsin, 1886-1892* (mimeographed, Stanford University, 1939), 120.

²¹ Chamberlin to President Lewis McLouth of the Dakota Agricultural College, November 16, 1888, in the Presidents' Papers.

²² *Regents' Biennial Report, 1897-98*, p. 68.

mostly to the east of the campus, filling the vacant spaces between the University and the city, and between Lake Mendota and University Avenue. This was the Latin Quarter of Madison by the end of the 1890's. Perhaps the term was merited. The faculty evinced scant protective or even prying interest in how and where the students lived. Indeed, until 1908 it was entirely the landlord's concern as to whether he would run his rooming house exclusively for students, and if for students, whether it would be for men, or women, or both.

The lack of University dormitories and the larger enrollment with its increased number of well-to-do students encouraged the growth of fraternities and sororities. The first local fraternity claimed to have been established before the Civil War, but the real movement toward Greek-letter societies did not begin until the 1870's. In spite of Bascom's opposition, they prospered, and six fraternities and sororities were in existence before his retirement.²³ The first chapter house was obtained in 1888, and by 1894 ten of the thirteen associations boasted chapter houses.²⁴ Bascom had disapproved of fraternities, but he was powerless to prohibit them. Chamberlin seemed largely unconcerned, but Adams was content to have them multiply as rapidly as possible. During the seventies and the eighties and into the nineties the fraternities had competed with the literary societies for control of University politics and social affairs. The yearly advance of the Junior Prom in splendor and cost showed the gains of the fraternities. In 1894 a new order of University values was signaled by the fact that the fraternities appeared in the *Badger* ahead of the literary societies.²⁵

The mere existence of the Greek-letter societies provoked criticism. As early as 1888 the Board of Visitors had urged that steps be taken to discourage them, insisting that it was against the best interest of the University students to be members of secret societies. The Visitors claimed that their influence upon their members was on the whole "pernicious and against the

²³ *Trochos*, 1885, (1884), 125, 137.

²⁴ Pyre, *Wisconsin*, 308; *The Badger*, 1895 (1894), 104, 133.

²⁵ *The Badger*, 1895 (1894), 132.

highest and best development of the student as an American youth.”²⁶ From time to time thereafter the fraternities were attacked by the Visitors, the press, and politicians.²⁷ On the other hand the Visitors occasionally gave them awkward support. In 1901 they argued that the fraternities represented something quite natural, the outgrowth of superior social and economic status. “We may deplore it as much as we please, but it is the condition confronting us and no amount of theory of equality can change it.”²⁸

Adams himself favored fraternities. In a letter to the Reverend James McGaw he argued that much good was derived from them. “I have been inclined to think that insofar as they are an evil they are a necessary evil, and that the evil can be neutralized very largely through the influence of the best members of the society and the members of the faculty belonging to the society. . . . It is unquestionably true that with proper management a college fraternity is a great help to University discipline.” He was opposed to any attempt to prohibit fraternities, both because the attempt would be sure to fail and because a valuable agency would thereby be removed.²⁹

Nevertheless fraternities, with reputations for lavish expenditures and high living, continued to provoke assaults. In 1901 one bitter but anonymous enemy circulated a pamphlet in the legislature entitled “A Poisoned Spring.” The pamphlet charged that the social life of the University, dominated by the Greek-letter societies, was antagonistic to “the upbuilding of that cultured and virile democracy which has made this nation unique among the nations of the earth.” The author proposed that the annual appropriation be made contingent upon the abolition of the societies. “That spring is the fount of knowledge known as the state university. The poison is that of aristocratic exclusiveness, mainly introduced through certain associations known as Greek letter fraternities, which are composed of a comparatively small number of individuals, selected

²⁶ *Regents' Biennial Report*, 1887-88, pp. 60-61. One of the Visitors dissented from this declaration.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 1897-98, p. 68; 1899-1900, p. 48.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 1901-02, pp. 47-48.

²⁹ Adams to Rev. James A. P. McGaw, May 18, 1893, in the Presidents' Papers.

by reason of wealth or influence, who have combined and arrogate to themselves the control of social life in university circles."³⁰ Such attacks, numerous and ill-natured, accomplished little if the purpose was to destroy or hamper the Greek-letter societies. Providing convivial meeting places, functioning as boarding and rooming clubs, answering social and egotistical needs, the organizations continued to thrive.



THE faculty was relatively slow in attempting to regulate the social activities of the students. Shortly after President Bascom left, a faculty committee, appointed to consider the use of Library Hall for social entertainments, raised the question of the extent of faculty responsibility in these matters. The committee postulated that "formal social intercourse on the part of students involving a conformity to the usages of good society is a valuable adjunct of intellectual culture and an important element in a full preparation for the duties of life and deserves not only our recognition but our fostering care." On the other hand they recognized "certain harmful tendencies that need restriction," but felt that these restrictions should be imposed by the students. The faculty should only "endeavor to aid in the development of such intellectual discernment, such social taste and such moral strength as shall be to each individual, and to all collectively, a sufficient guide and guard." Too frequent entertainment, too late hours, too much expense, and "exclusiveness" were to be avoided; and the faculty were encouraged to enlist the support of the students in an "effort to secure the good and reject the evil presented by the social opportunities" of the University. Upon these considerations the committee proposed and the faculty approved a plan to permit Library Hall to be used for social entertainments.³¹

The faculty was not alone in deploring the cost, the formality, and exclusiveness of some student social functions. Early the next year a student writing in the *Aegis* complained that social

³⁰ *Daily Cardinal*, April 26, 1901.

³¹ Minutes of the Meetings of the Faculty (MS.), 3:47, September 26, 1887.

entertainment was limited entirely to dancing, that Prince Alberts had taken the place of sack and frock coats worn earlier, and protested that "the sweet co-ed who intrepidly winds her way up the campus to recitations through all the vicissitudes of Madison weather, must needs be borne to her scene of conquest in Library Hall by a two dollar hack. Of course, in plain English, this costs money . . . and we are not all millionaires."³² Another student thought that formal dress parties might be condoned for fraternities and private social events, but not for class parties. Moreover, he warned, the legislature was then in session, and some of the legislators might come to the University parties. If they saw students in formal dress, their suspicions that the University was aristocratic would be confirmed. "Keep the dress suit out of sight," he admonished.³³

Although ostensibly in favor of having the students impose upon themselves such restrictions as decorum demanded, the faculty felt it necessary to intervene more and more in social affairs and in other student activities, especially athletics. In 1893 a faculty committee was created to arrange with the fraternities to limit the number of their social affairs.³⁴ A few years later the faculty moved to require all student houses, social organizations, fraternities, sororities, and residents of Ladies Hall to adopt "social regulations" for the government of their houses, unless they had already done so. The rules then adopted were to be approved by a committee made up of the president, the dean of the College of Letters and Science, and several members of the faculty. The faculty also demanded that each organization have a house committee to require adherence to the rules thus adopted.³⁵

The efforts of the faculty to control the social phases of student life were not oppressive.³⁶ If the Junior Prom suffered

³² *Aegis*, January 27, 1888.

³³ *Ibid.*, January 23, 1891.

³⁴ Minutes of the Faculty, vol. 4, p. 9, October 30, 1893.

³⁵ Reports to the faculty, File Book, vol. 1, p. 128.

³⁶ In 1901 acting-President Birge, answering an inquiry about faculty control of fraternities, said that "no direct and official control is exercised by the University over these organizations. However, the faculty committee on social affairs keeps close touch with the fraternities and exerts very considerable influence, although not of a disciplinary character. The University has never thought it wise to attempt the regulation of these organizations. . . . We think it better . . .

from their attempts to make it more generally attended, there is little objective evidence to that effect. Boys and girls who had money spent it freely and were sometimes censured for so doing. In 1900, however, the Board of Visitors, in answering the critics who charged that the Junior Prom was an aristocratic event, pontificated: "They forget that the University is a cosmopolitan institution and must satisfy all classes. This function draws to the University rich people who might otherwise send their children to the eastern schools. We need all classes in an institution that is for the whole state."³⁷

The regulations of the faculty requiring the student organizations to assume some control of social affairs, taken with the work of the first dean of women, Annie Crosby Emery, led to the establishment of the Women's Self Government Association. Perhaps this movement was a natural outgrowth of the faculty's dealing with the students but it was not imitated by the men. President Adams, in his first public pronouncement on student government in 1898, declared that the object of the association was to "define the social conventionalities which shall be observed, and, by the fostering of a wholesome public opinion, to contribute to the earnestness of University life."³⁸ Although generally approved, the association did not escape criticism. In 1900 a subcommittee of the Board of Visitors complained that it could not enforce its own rules and that its membership was not voluntary but was imposed on young women by the simple fact of their being students. It was not surprising, then, that many refused to recognize the authority of the association. This subcommittee, made up entirely of women, felt that the University authorities should make and enforce the rules.³⁹

Outwardly, at least, the policy of the faculty and regents on University government remained unchanged from Bascom's day. The statement in the catalogue was changed little during

to regulate fraternity matters by the influence of the faculty rather than by direct legislation. We feel that we are securing in this way quite as much control as we should in any other manner, and with far less friction and difficulty." Birge to vice-Chancellor W. C. Spangler, University of Kansas, May 6, 1901, in the Presidents' Papers.

³⁷ *Regents' Biennial Report*, 1899-1900, p. 60.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 1897-98, p. 12.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 1899-1900, pp. 62-63.

the years of first rapid growth. "Students," ran the wording of the last catalogue prepared by John Bascom, "are held responsible for good order and the diligent use of their time. Those who fail to conform with this simple requirement will be dismissed."⁴⁰ The central point was not wholly obscured in the more delicate statements which appeared during the Chamberlin and Adams administrations. "As members of the community," the catalogue of 1903 read, "students are amenable to the law; and, if guilty of its infraction, are liable to a termination of their relations with the University."⁴¹ In Bascom's day the University specifically declined responsibility for the students off campus although those found guilty of misdemeanors or crimes were automatically expelled and could only be readmitted by faculty action.⁴² This rule continued in effect.

In the establishment of the rules which served to control or guide the students, the Board played as before only a minor and inconsistent part, and only rarely legislated on student conduct. In 1893, however, the Board unanimously adopted a resolution that "Ball playing, Horse racing, gaming and kindred sports upon the grounds of the University on Sunday be prohibited"⁴³—a resolution aimed more at the protection of the grounds than at the control of student activities. On the question of religious observance the Board was attacked from both sides. On the one hand there were objections to any recognition of religion on the campus. In 1898 Adams reported that he had received a protest against religious services on baccalaureate Sunday or at commencement and against the use of University buildings by the various Christian associations. The protest was based upon the constitutional ban of sectarianism at the University. Adams recommended that the Board do nothing, since "one of the most serious obstacles in the way of increasing the numbers coming to the institution is the impression created, or encouraged, by the agents of denominational colleges that the University necessarily tends to stifle all re-

⁴⁰ *University Catalogue*, 1886-87, pp. 121-122.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 1902-03, p. 31.

⁴² *By-Laws of the Regents of the University of Wisconsin*, [1894], p. 10.

⁴³ *Records of the Board of Regents*, Vol. D, p. 216, May 10, 1893.

ligious activity and growth. These considerations force upon me the belief that aside from all intrinsic merits of the question, any considerable modification of the present custom would put an additional weapon into the hands of those who are already hostile."⁴⁴ The regents agreed.

On the other hand, the Board of Visitors, perhaps at the suggestion of Adams, in 1899 proposed to the regents that provision be made for supplementing "scholastic instruction with general exercises of an ethical nature, tending to influence the character of students, and to inculcate those social virtues the lack of which render mere intellectual acquirements of comparatively little worth and which may become a menace to society."⁴⁵ Adams and the regents responded by establishing a weekly all-University assembly.⁴⁶

After Bascom's departure the fierce official antagonism against saloons diminished somewhat,⁴⁷ but the Board continued to receive protests requesting that action be taken to prohibit saloons in the vicinity of the University.⁴⁸ Wisconsin, unlike some of the neighboring states, had as yet no general law providing a *cordon sanitaire* around its educational institutions. The location of saloons was largely a matter of local option. In Madison it rested in the hands of the Madison Common Council. From time to time the regents were asked to bring influence to bear on the council to keep saloons from being established near the campus, and they obligingly adopted resolutions to this effect. In 1896 in response to such a request the regents

⁴⁴ Adams to the regents in Reports to the Regents, Vol. D, p. 374, January 18, 1898.

⁴⁵ Report of the Visitors in the *Regents' Biennial Report*, 1899-1900, p. 52.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 52, 60.

⁴⁷ Horace A. Tenney, who shared Keyes's antipathy for Bascom, wrote to the latter on New Year's Day, 1887, congratulating him and the regents that "the dark theological [presence?] is about to pass off at the University. . . . No more dogmatic sermons to sectaries in out of the way places,—no more temperance harangues,—no more woman's-suffrage speeches,—no more kindly efforts to take charge of the city government and relieve the police force of its duties,—no more dread that students need a prison for fear they can't pass a saloon without a fall from grace." Tenney to Keyes, January 1, 1887, in the Keyes Papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

⁴⁸ The bylaws provided that any student who "habitually" drank, went to saloons, gambled, etc. was "liable" to expulsion. *By-Laws of the Regents* [1894], pp. 9-10.

unanimously declared: "Whereas, It is the opinion of the Regents of the University that the temptation to idleness and dissipation on the part of students will be increased by the establishment of drinking saloons in the near neighborhood of the University and before which the students must pass on their way to and from class, now therefore be it Resolved, That the Common Council be and they are hereby petitioned to consider applications for the establishment of such saloons with respect to the possible effect upon the students, and to refuse them."⁴⁹ When the operator of a tavern at Park and University discontinued his business, the regents asked the Common Council not to issue a new license for the sale of intoxicants on the premises.⁵⁰ The president as well as the regents maintained a sporadic but not always effective interest in the acts of the Common Council. Thus Birge as acting president engaged in a protracted but inconclusive correspondence with the city attorney over the suppression of slot machines in the city of Madison.⁵¹

For the most part it was the faculty which made the rules of student conduct and imposed penalties for infractions. Although the dean, or the dean and a committee, conducted the investigations, disciplinary actions were usually voted by the faculty and then reports were submitted to the regents as required by the bylaws, sometimes with requests that the penalties be lighter than those sanctioned by the Board. One source of difficulty and embarrassment came from the athletic teams. Accompanied only by student managers, and frequently at large for a day or two in what Dean Birge delicately referred to as a "distant city," the boys sometimes comported themselves with less than decorum.⁵²

⁴⁹ Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. D, pp. 516, 527-528, December 3, 1896.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, Vol. E, pp. 250-251, June 20, 1899.

⁵¹ Birge to Rufus B. Smith, March, April 11, 13, 14, 1903, in Presidents' Papers.

⁵² In 1892 the baseball nine journeyed to Minneapolis for a game. Rain postponed the Saturday game and the team remained in the city over Sunday. On that day, according to information reaching Dean Birge, some of the boys "engaged in gambling," and that night others visited "houses of ill fame." The manager of the team, having participated in the gambling, was compelled to resign, and the men engaged in the "disorder" on Sunday night were directed to withdraw from the University. They were then permitted to apply to the faculty for readmission. Memorandum filed by Dean Birge, File Book, vol. 1, p. 33. This act brought two agonized letters from a parent of one of the boys. After describing the sacrifice which had been made to send the boy to the

The faculty records during the 1890's show that students singly and in groups were called before the faculty on charges of "riotous and drunken" behavior, "gambling and immorality," overzealous hazing, and many other charges of misconduct. The cases were considered carefully and the record suggests that the faculty sought to make the punishment fit the crime.⁵³ In 1903 a student, found guilty in municipal court of "maliciously breaking a window" in a barroom, was suspended from the University, whereupon another student, not even under suspicion, volunteered the information that he had been a member of the disorderly party and had himself broken the window. The letters and science faculty considered the case and decided that both boys should be treated alike, so the second was suspended. The case then went to the University faculty for review and that body decided the cases should be treated separately. In view of the "manly attitude" of the student who confessed it was decided that he should not be punished. This decision was followed by a vote to readmit the other miscreant.⁵⁴

The exuberance of the students probably reached a high point in 1899. Not since the Rosenstengel and Riley hazing escapades in the late 1880's did student conduct get so much newspaper publicity. It began in January, 1899, when University students mobbed the Opera House where the Deshon-DuVries opera company was playing *Fra Diavolo*. The students had announced beforehand that they intended to stop the show. This they managed to do in what the *Wisconsin State Journal* pronounced "one of the most disgraceful exhibitions of rowdyism" ever witnessed in Madison. The *Madison Democrat* denounced the students as "young bloods from the latin quarter." During the course of the performance the actors were disturbed;

University the parent pleaded for reinstatement of his son. He was, after all, a good boy. "Oh, if he had let Base Ball alone this might not of hapened." W. C. H. to Birge, May 3, June 2, 1892, in the Presidents' Papers. In this particular case, justice was tempered. The boy was reinstated, permitted to graduate with his class in 1892, and shortly thereafter he received his medical degree. Birge to Chamberlin, in Reports to the Regents, Vol. C, p. 346, June 14, 1892.

⁵³ Minutes of the Faculty, vol. 4, pp. 157, 245, 269, June 1, 1897, November 27, 1899, May 17, 1900; vol. 5, pp. 138, 140-142, 152, February 20, March 16, 30, May 11, 1903.

⁵⁴ Minutes of the University and Letters and Science Faculties, vol. 5, p. 138, February 20, 1903.

miscellaneous objects were thrown on the stage. Some of the boys had brought bottles, and beer was seen being passed around. Some of the students used language of such nature that "ladies" were seen leaving "with flushed cheeks." The police, forewarned, were there but could not hold the students in check. After stopping the show, the mob assembled outside the theater; the police attempted to disperse it, but failed. Five boys were arrested.⁵⁵

The students were bound over for trial the next month. The trial was conducted on February 13 and 14. The attorney for the students, at one point in the trial, made a speech "claiming that the show was presented in an improper manner, and this justified the conduct of the students."⁵⁶ This line of reasoning, which sought to justify student behavior by showing that the presentation of the play was so bad that it was beyond the endurance of the cultivated artistic taste of the students, was unacceptable to the court. In the end two of the five students were fined; the rest, having been only innocent bystanders, were dismissed.⁵⁷ The faculty, which had already suspended the culprits and had readmitted one, on President Adams' recommendation readmitted all. Adams reasoned that the students had been found guilty only of violating a city ordinance and "the offense was not of the nature of a misdemeanor or crime, and that they are not therefore by the fact of their conviction dismissed from the University under the statutes."⁵⁸

This incident, which attracted wide and largely unfavorable notice in the press, was not the last embarrassment of the year. In 1898 students had organized a nightshirt parade for Halloween. In 1899 they repeated it. Some four hundred students, garbed in pajamas, nightshirts, and other nocturnal dress, began about nine o'clock to parade the streets of Madison. Later the *Daily Cardinal* piously declared that all that was originally intended was to parade a while, and then serenade Ladies Hall and the sororities, but the students had been joined by "a rough set of city hoodlums." At Ladies Hall the parade got out of

⁵⁵ *Wisconsin State Journal, Madison Democrat*, January 14, 1899.

⁵⁶ *Wisconsin State Journal*, February 13, 1899.

⁵⁷ *Madison Democrat*, February 15, 1899.

⁵⁸ Minutes of the Faculty, vol. 4, pp. 214, 218, February 11, 17, 1899.

hand. Some of the paraders broke into the laundry room, looted its washday contents (it was Monday night), and even got into student rooms and took articles of clothing. A Chicago newspaper estimated that \$500 worth of clothing had been taken.⁵⁹

The residents of Ladies Hall promptly met for action, showing in the resolution they adopted that knowledge of Aristophanes had not wholly disappeared with the Greek requirement. Solemnly they resolved to have "no social relations with the men of the University until the faculty or men of the University have satisfactorily dealt with the offenders . . . and until all losses sustained at that time have been made good."⁶⁰

President Adams meanwhile called a convocation and announced that two hundred and four articles of clothing had been taken from Ladies Hall "as trophies of the escapade." He demanded that the men denounce the act and that the clothing be returned. "No man," Adams declared, "has any right to be called a gentleman who will still keep an article of ladies' wearing apparel as a trophy." All stolen clothing should be sent to the laundry at the expense of the president and then returned to its proper owners. But the mere return of what had been taken would not, Adams warned, absolve offenders. The faculty, although it had hired no detectives, had begun investigation and proposed to deal with the "outrage" by "vigorous action."⁶¹ The men obediently met and adopted resolutions denouncing the act. They pledged to do what they could to return the clothing and to work diligently to redeem the reputation of the University.

For a whole week the women's boycott held, although it was a strain. It was retained by a vote of 80 to 55. The most insidious argument used against the non-association resolution was that many innocent people were being made to suffer. But shortly thereafter the faculty acted against thirteen of the paraders, meting out punishments ranging from suspension from University activities until Christmas to indefinite suspension. Five were suspended indefinitely.⁶² With this the non-

⁵⁹ *Daily Cardinal*, October 31, 1899.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, November 2, 1899.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, November 3, 1899.

⁶² *Ibid.*, November 10, 17, 1899.

association resolution came to an end. The incident won a surprising amount of publicity. Notice of it even found its way into the German-language papers of the state and no doubt confirmed deep suspicions already entertained by their readers.⁶³ At the end of the year the Board of Visitors characterized the incident as the "disgraceful raid on Ladies Hall" and, though deploring the unfavorable publicity caused by "exaggerated and sensational" newspaper reporters, approved the action of the faculty in suspending the ringleaders.⁶⁴

Such escapades won the attention of the newspapers and gave the University a reputation for something less than calm and quiet scholarship. The periodic bonfires, pep rallies, marches through the town, torn-up boardwalks, upset privies, blocked streetcar tracks, and the annual round of hazing offered numerous opportunities for these "exaggerated and sensational" newspaper reports.

Among the largely unpublicized but almost chronic problems which the faculty had to deal with were troubles with the military department and cheating during examinations. The student opposition to military drill had found fullest expression in the 1880's when Boss Keyes, as a member of the Board, had hired a detective in a vain attempt to ferret out the ringleaders of the opposition. But the 1890's, too, witnessed periodic appeals from the commandant of the military department to the faculty to impose punishments upon students who refused to treat the commandant with respect, students charged with insubordination, or students who had tried to break up the drill in one way or another. The faculty usually suspended the offenders, sometimes under harsh sentences, only to relent a week or so later, betraying thereby something less than complete sympathy with the commandant.⁶⁵

Of greater concern was the seeming rise of cheating. Actually the amount may not have increased at all; it may only have become more noticeable. But the greater use of textbooks, the larger classes and the resulting breakdown of the personal re-

⁶³ *Ibid.*, December 18, 1899.

⁶⁴ *Regents' Biennial Report*, 1899-1900, p. 60.

⁶⁵ *Minutes of the Faculty*, vol. 3, pp. 138, 145, 209, March 13, April 21, 1890, February 9, 1892; vol. 4, pp. 79-80, October 21, 28, 1895; *Reports to the faculty*, File Book, vol. 1, pp. 23, 26.

lations between student and professor, the appearance in the University of tramp athletes, or any one of a number of other factors may have actually changed the situation. At any rate, the faculty assumed that this practice was increasing and in the middle 1890's moved to check it. The first step was the adoption of a resolution requiring that students furnish bluebooks for all scheduled examinations. Bookstores were ordered to stock them.⁶⁶

But the mere use of bluebooks had little effect. Two years later, while considering one of the numerous cases of cheating, the faculty decided to study the entire examination system to ascertain the degree of cribbing and to recommend changes that would correct the situation.⁶⁷ Early in 1898 the faculty committee on cheating submitted a candid and pessimistic report. The committee felt an honor system would solve the problem but that its introduction at this time could not be sustained. "Very careful investigation," the committee declared, "has led to the conclusion that 'cribbing' in examinations is deplorably common in the University, perhaps more especially in large divisions where the work is required." The committee proposed several measures to correct this. Examination questions, insofar as possible, should test a student's knowledge of principles rather than his ability to reproduce statements of fact. Since the most prevalent and effective way of cheating consisted of bringing to the examination a bluebook filled with "unlawful aids," the committee proposed that the University supply bluebooks. Bluebooks would be passed out immediately before the examination, each one with the instructor's endorsement to guard against any student's substituting one of his own. The students were to sit in seats assigned and if possible not in contiguous seats. Only large rooms were to be used for examination of large divisions. Lastly, a general announce-

⁶⁶ Reports to the faculty, File Book, vol. 1, p. 108.

⁶⁷ Minutes of the Faculty, vol. 4, p. 158, June 7, 1897. A week later the dean of the College of Letters and Science reported that a student cribbed in the examination in ethics, and, according to rule, was suspended for a semester. Birge to Adams, June 15, 1897, in Papers of the Board of Regents, June 22, 1897. On June 21, the faculty adopted a rule that students caught cheating in examinations would be given a failure in the course for the semester, instead of the usual one semester suspension. Minutes of the Faculty, vol. 4, p. 161, June 21, 1897.

ment was to be made of the several penalties for cheating.⁶⁸ The faculty adopted the report and promptly petitioned the regents to supply bluebooks.⁶⁹

Several days after the new rules were adopted, the *Daily Cardinal* broached the subject of the honor system. Noting that such a system had been in operation at Williams College for several years, and that there was agitation for it at the University of Illinois, the *Cardinal* was not wholly convinced that it would be inappropriate to Wisconsin. "Whether it would meet with success is of course problematical. Yet it is hardly likely that the moral atmosphere of Wisconsin is so bad that a system which is based upon the honesty of the students would prove a failure."⁷⁰ Four days later the *Cardinal* announced that the honor system might be tried in some of the examinations during the current term and urged the students to make it a success. This system, the *Cardinal* felt, would create better feeling between students and faculty and make for a heightened moral sensitivity among the students.⁷¹ Yet no systematic attempt to institute the honor system was tried, and under the new regulations, although cribbing cases continued to come before the faculty, the amount of cheating seemed to decline. Vestiges of the rules adopted in 1898 are still evident: the bluebook is still ubiquitous at examinations; although not always followed, the rule still stands that instructors must examine the books before the student writes his examination therein; and students often seem unhappy at examinations unless flanked on either side by vacant seats.



IF OCCASIONALLY rowdyism was too obstreperous to conceal, if some newspapers, feeling free under the leadership of Pulitzer and Hearst to exploit the sensational, printed long and exaggerated stories about the high times of the University students

⁶⁸ Reports to the faculty, File Book, vol. 1, p. 153; Minutes of the Faculty, vol. 4, pp. 173-175, January 10, 17, 1898.

⁶⁹ W. D. Hiestand to Charles Kendall Adams, January 18, 1898, in Papers of the Board of Regents.

⁷⁰ *Daily Cardinal*, January 25, 1898.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, January 29, 1898.

and sometimes broadly intimated that the students were mostly social butterflies, tramp athletes, irresponsible rich young men and women of loose morals and low intelligence, the other side of the picture was also drawn. The students were presented as a hardworking, sober, and conscientious group. The Board of Visitors, while often critical of the students' behavior, nevertheless often defended them. In 1902 the Board discovered with pleasure: "The University is three times larger than ten years ago. And during that time no additional saloons or places of temptation have been established within a radius of a mile of the University."⁷² The inference might have been either that there was less patronage of saloons by students or merely that the students were much more protected than ten years before—or both.

The students themselves often denounced the misrepresentations which appeared in the press. At the commencement exercises in 1895, E. R. Buckley, in his oration on "Democracy in Higher Education," deplored the fact that some people believed that "nearly all college students spend their evenings at the card tables in elegant society club houses, or waste their hours in riots and drunken brawls." He admitted that some students did, but the proportion was no greater than in the Spartan age. "A hundred students with wealth, with a love for society, for dress, fill the eye of the newspaper correspondent, and he notes not the other steady, plodding thirteen hundred. . . . But when you come within the institution itself, in classroom and laboratory, the distinctions of wealth, the conventions of society drop away, and there arises before you the vision of a great democracy, where rules imperial intellect."⁷³ A year earlier a writer in the *Daily Cardinal* had hotly denounced an article in the *Arena* entitled "Low Ethical Ideals in our Higher Educational Centers."⁷⁴ That the University was a "hot bed of corruption," a later student writer in the *Cardinal* denied. "There is as large or larger proportion of church-going, law-abiding students in the University of Wisconsin than in any college in the land." The sentiment if not the syntax was un-

⁷² *Regents' Biennial Report*, 1901-02, p. 69.

⁷³ University of Wisconsin, *Commencement Annual*, June, 1895, pp. 43-44.

⁷⁴ *Daily Cardinal*, February 3, 1893.

exceptionable.⁷⁵ Members of the faculty, too, upheld the students. In 1901, acting-President Birge complained to the *Milwaukee Sentinel* that its reporter had given a highly colored account of a student nightshirt parade. He stated that the University was always ready to accept fair criticism, but insisted that the statements of fact ought to be correct. His exasperation was written large in his concluding sentence: "I do not suppose that this is a practicable business suggestion, but if it were possible to pay your correspondents at a rate inversely proportional to the amount of matter they send in, they might come nearer the truth and certainly would not be tempted to write up a 'scare' article in order to swell their receipts."⁷⁶

Already noticeable among the undergraduates by the 1890's was a change of attitude toward civic responsibility. In the 1850's and 1860's the young men at the University, almost humorless in the assumption that they would be called upon some day to occupy political positions of trust and responsibility, trained in their literary societies and elsewhere for that day. Their utterances often reflected something of that tough fiber of John Quincy Adams who had said that no gift of public office in the command of the people would be too lowly for him to accept. This later generation of students, however, had something of the fastidious aloofness, coupled with a not quite suppressed yearning for public office, that was reflected in the autobiography of John Q's grandson. In 1893, a student editorial writer discussed the scholar in politics. Theodore Roosevelt was an example of a man of college training and literary attainments who turned to politics. University-trained men, he argued, had an obligation to participate in municipal, state, and national affairs.⁷⁷ A half century before no student would have been so naïve as to argue a point then so conspicuously clear.

The vague feeling of the students that politics was beneath a college man was understandable in terms of the well-publi-

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, October 12, 1900.

⁷⁶ Birge to the editor of the *Milwaukee Sentinel*, June 5, 1901, in the Presidents' Papers.

⁷⁷ *Aegis*, February 3, 1893.

cized corruption in national and state politics from the 1870's to the 1890's—corruption evidenced in the Grant administration, the Whisky ring, the Tweed ring, the Wisconsin treasury and gerrymandering cases, and many other political scandals. Moreover, the student of the 1890's had new interests, more immediate and more in keeping with the lengthening period of adolescence which the industrial revolution, the end of the frontier, and the more extensive educational system were imposing upon young people growing up.

Student interest in politics was rekindled from time to time. After La Follette finally won the Republican nomination for the governorship in 1900, the student press followed his campaign with undisguised partisan interest. Some eight hundred students marched in the parade in mid-October at a big rally in the gymnasium which featured Mark Hanna along with La Follette.⁷⁸ But, despite the enthusiasm, there was a striking lack of comment on the issues of the election.

Although the election of 1900 was hardly typical, since La Follette was a Madison resident, a prominent graduate, and long a favorite with the University students, a poll of student votes for president showed how far from the truth the state editors were when they charged or implied that students at the University were radicals. Incidentally, the poll also suggested the unreliability of President Adams' effort to prove that the student body was representative of the Wisconsin population. In the poll taken a short time before the November election, the McKinley—Roosevelt ticket received 674 votes out of 846, and Bryan and Stevenson only 148, in spite of the fact that Bryan had several times spoken before the students. Eugene Debs, the Socialist candidate that year, obtained only 2 votes from the students, but the Prohibition candidate received 22 votes, thereby attesting the vigor of the student temperance association. In a separate poll at Ladies Hall, McKinley and Roosevelt received 72 votes, and Bryan and Stevenson 12. Only three women had no preference.⁷⁹ That year the University had boasted a

⁷⁸ *Daily Cardinal*, October 16, 1900.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, October 26, 1900.

Democratic Club with Joseph E. Davies as president, but it seems to have had little effect in molding student opinion.⁸⁰

The general student opinion reflected in the campus papers probably was little different from that of contemporary Wisconsin. One must look long for evidence to support the often made but irresponsible charges that the University bred radicalism. Then as now the majority of undergraduates, mercifully protected from disturbing ideas by the superior insulation afforded by the teachings of home and church, were little interested in new ideas. The gospel of progress and the idea of manifest destiny which had marked earlier generations of students were still uncritically accepted. Nor had the events of the last part of the century seriously dampened that optimism which has been both the virtue and the burden of America. A student writing in the *Aegis* in 1889 about the future of the United States concluded in a burst of rhetoric: "He is indeed bold who dares to set a limit to the glorious career of these United States. This nation, designed by divine purpose for a noble destiny, blessed with vast domains, measureless wealth, bountiful inheritance, 'illustrious lineage,' magnificent laws, pure morality, rare intelligence, lofty ideals, and mighty genius, may well lay claim to the chief place in the final triumphs of civilization."⁸¹

But the students were not blind to some of the defects of the America they worshiped. One student, in a discussion of socialism, was able to find some justification for the socialist indictment of society in the United States, although naturally the socialist remedy was too extreme—it would destroy the foundations of our society.⁸² Another student, in the same publication, explored the meaning of communism and, although pointing out that the concept was old, concluded that such evils as communism sought to abolish from our society must be corrected within the present system.⁸³ Two years later another student political commentator turned his attention to the subject of political radicalism. "The one thing," he generalized, "which tends toward disaster in the political world is radicalism.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, November 3, 5, 1900.

⁸¹ *Aegis*, January 4, 1889.

⁸² *Ibid.*, October 5, 1888.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, May 10, 1889.

This statement is proved by the history of mankind and of nations. Individual man is naturally obstinate, and nations, the reflections of individual character, are seldom yielding." He urged reform along the reasonable lines favored by the intellectuals. He abhorred radicalism as "the mother of both faction and anarchy."⁸⁴ There is little evidence that the Grangers, or later the Populists, found among the students a sympathetic audience. Henry Demarest Lloyd was not a hero to the students at the University in the 1890's, nor William Jennings Bryan a St. George.

Numerous study and improvement associations were formed during these years. The students and instructors of the biology department formed a Darwin Reading Club in 1892 for the purpose of meeting weekly to read and discuss the writings and work of Charles Darwin.⁸⁵ Shortly after Ely came to Wisconsin the students proposed to organize a college Civil Service Reform Club in line with similar organizations then being established at other colleges. The justification was that the educated classes had a moral responsibility to be active in such movements.⁸⁶ After the establishment of the first School of Commerce, a group of students organized a Commercial Club, aimed "to benefit its members socially as well as intellectually and to maintain a more intimate relationship between the businessmen of Madison and the northwest and the members of the club."⁸⁷ This step reflected something of the same attitude which a few years earlier had led the editor of the *Cardinal* to summarize an article from the *Cosmopolitan* in which it was argued that although college education offered many benefits it could be a handicap to the young man interested in business because it delayed the acquisition of business experience.⁸⁸

The dismissal of Professor E. W. Bemis from the extension division of the University of Chicago elicited a flickering interest in the *Daily Cardinal* but one suspects that interest may have been motivated as much by the Wisconsin-Chicago foot-

⁸⁴ *Aegis*, March 13, 1891.

⁸⁵ *Daily Cardinal*, November 11, 1892.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, February 14, 1896.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, December 11, 1902.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, November 16, 1892.

ball rivalry, already reaching a fever pitch, as by student interest in academic freedom. The charge was made and reiterated that Bemis' advocacy of municipal ownership of utilities had incurred the opposition of the wealthy supporters of the University of Chicago who had forced his dismissal. In the student discussion of the case, Chicago was condemned, but apparently no one thought of the Ely case as parallel.⁸⁹ On the whole there was little interest in other universities, although the *Aegis* once went so far as to present a series of short articles on universities in the United States and Europe, a series written mostly by alumni of the University.⁹⁰

Student response to lectures on social problems was not conspicuous, although there were full reports of the lectures of such men as Jacob Riis,⁹¹ Wines on criminology,⁹² Ely on religion⁹³ and Ayers on charities.⁹⁴ When Senator Tillman came to the University to speak, there was a stirring of student opposition, somewhat mollified by a later announcement that Booker T. Washington would also appear before the University students to speak about problems of the South.⁹⁵

In 1893 the students began agitation for a student cooperative association to sell textbooks and other student supplies. From vague generalizations in favor of cooperatives the students progressed the next year to the consideration of definite proposals in which faculty control loomed large. In January, 1893, the *Cardinal* reminded its readers that the University of Indiana had a thriving cooperative and that the Harvard Cooperative had done almost \$90,000 worth of business the preceding year.⁹⁶ Another year passed before the formation of the Wisconsin Cooperative Association was announced. The association was based upon membership fees. Control resided in a board of directors made up of three members from the faculty, one law student, one graduate student, and one from each of the three upper

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, October 9, 30, 31, November 12, 1895.

⁹⁰ *Aegis*, March 20, October 9, 1891.

⁹¹ *Daily Cardinal*, March 20, 1893.

⁹² *Ibid.*, March 7, 1893.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, September 25, 1893.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, March 26, 1896.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, January 29, March 17, 20, 1903.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, January 31, 1893.

classes. The board of directors in turn employed a manager to take charge of the "mercantile" business.⁹⁷ The association was quickly accepted. A month after it was launched the *Cardinal* pronounced it a success and predicted that other forms of student cooperative enterprise would follow.⁹⁸ Shortly thereafter the *Cardinal* advertised its approval of an interest in cooperation expressed by the students at Lawrence College.⁹⁹

The cooperative claimed to have done almost \$7,000 worth of business during the first year. By June, 1895, it had a membership of 374, including 49 life members. The venture had to be founded, the directors reported, upon "the general belief among college students that they were being charged exorbitant prices for their school supplies."¹⁰⁰

The cooperative grew in the following years. In 1897 it did \$8,000 worth of business, the year after that \$13,000 worth, and in 1899, \$16,200 worth. The expectation in December, 1899, was that in the next year sales would amount to over \$25,000.¹⁰¹ Four years later the sales had increased to about \$40,000 per year.¹⁰²

The early interest in starting a cooperative bookstore was matched by a movement to provide medical care for students. It was proposed that the students assess themselves twenty-five cents a year to raise a fund which would be administered by a joint committee of the Christian associations. This same committee would call on sick students, summon doctors, and provide nurses as required. The plan was proposed in the *Cardinal* and quickly won editorial support.¹⁰³ Although an attempt was made to form an association for medical care at the same time that the cooperative was formed, nothing came of it.¹⁰⁴ Six years later, however, President Adams proposed a similar plan for

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, January 19, 1894.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, February 28, 1894.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, May 2, 1894.

¹⁰⁰ Board of directors of the University Cooperative Association to the regents, in Papers of the Board of Regents, June 18, 1895.

¹⁰¹ *Daily Cardinal*, December 20, 1899.

¹⁰² W. D. Hiestand to W. E. D. Rummel, October 17, 1903, in the Presidents' Papers.

¹⁰³ *Daily Cardinal*, October 6, 7, 1893.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, February 12, 1894.

Ladies Hall, the only rooming establishment for which the University felt a direct responsibility.¹⁰⁵ For the rest of the students there was no health service except what they could provide, and no nursing save what could be obtained from other residents of the house or from the landlady. It required a typhoid scare near the end of the first decade of the twentieth century to make the University authorities see that an adequate health service should be established at the University.¹⁰⁶



IN 1886, it will be recalled, the *Aegis*, a paper owned and operated by the students, came into existence to challenge the *University Press*. Only the year before the *Press* had swallowed its only competitor, the *Badger*. And before the end of 1886 the *Aegis* in turn had bought out its rival. From the autumn of 1886 until 1892 the *Aegis*, partly a literary magazine and partly a newspaper, was the only student paper published.¹⁰⁷

In the spring of 1892 the *Daily Cardinal* appeared. The *Cardinal* was welcomed by the *Aegis* which hoped that the new daily would report the news of the University, leaving the *Aegis* free to devote itself to the "literary aspects" of the college journalism. The *Aegis* even urged that a third University publication be established to report the scientific news of the institution.¹⁰⁸

The *Daily Cardinal*, which claimed to be the sixth university daily to be established in the United States, justified its existence with the assertion that the University must have the means of giving young men and women an opportunity to fit themselves for journalism. Reciprocating the good will of the *Aegis*, the *Cardinal* promised that it would not compete with the *Aegis*. And in fact, several students were editors on both papers. For a while both papers enjoyed the support of the regents who contributed through the purchase of advertising. It was not long

¹⁰⁵ Adams to the regents, in Reports to the Regents, Vol. D, p. 590, April 17, 1900.

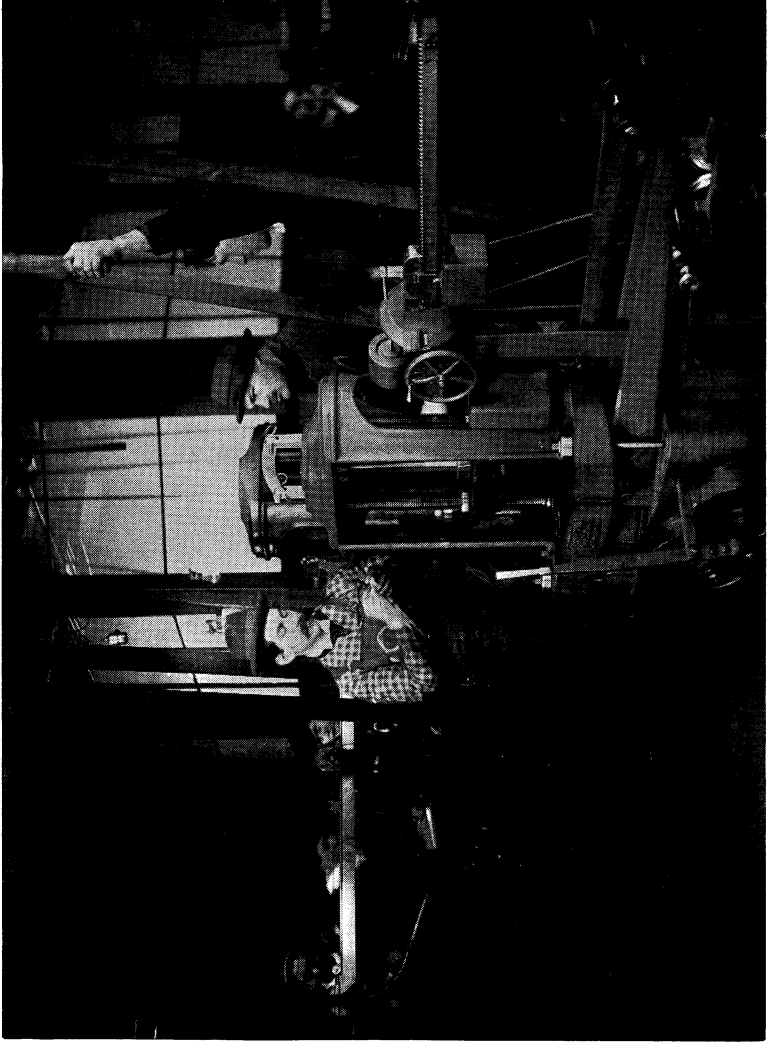
¹⁰⁶ The letters of Solon J. Buck to his parents report the case of a student who had to be tended by his roommates; no one at the University was interested, concerned, or responsible.

¹⁰⁷ See *Aegis*, September 16, 1887, *passim*.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, May 6, 1892.



Coed's Room, 1900



The Engineering Laboratory, 1898

before the regents and the faculty gave full support to the *Daily Cardinal*. In 1894 the *Cardinal* could boast that it was now the official paper of the University by act of the faculty.¹⁰⁹ The regents themselves, probably on the advice of President Adams, attempted to force the *Aegis* and *Cardinal* to combine. The Board instructed its executive committee to make arrangements with the papers for the next year but in so doing asserted that the Board was of the opinion that the best interests of the University demanded the publication of "at least one good paper which will be the organ of the various societies of the University and the medium for the publication of all University news."¹¹⁰

The editors of the *Aegis* opposed combining with the *Cardinal*, and thereafter the *Aegis* began to fail. In the school year 1895-96, it was made into a monthly literary magazine. Its editors promised that in the future it would be conducted "on quite different lines and devoted to a somewhat more dignified character of usefulness" than the preceding weekly or biweekly *Aegis*. Even so the *Aegis* could not abstain from interest in intercollegiate athletics.¹¹¹ The decline of the *Aegis* was further signalized early the next year when the regents, on the recommendation of the finance committee, withdrew all University advertising, stipulating, however, that in case of a union between the *Cardinal* and the *Aegis*—one satisfactory to the president and the professor of rhetoric—the regents would give one hundred dollars a year to the consolidated paper.¹¹² No such combination was arranged. In 1897 the *Aegis* became the official organ of the Alumni Association and combined this function with its literary activities.¹¹³ But this support was slight and ephemeral. The Alumni Association established its own magazine two years later, again forcing the *Aegis* to subsist upon its own literary offering. The *Aegis* was not equal to the strain and within another year it died.

During most of its history the *Aegis* was more literary magazine than newspaper. Although President Adams was much in-

¹⁰⁹ *Daily Cardinal*, October 9, 1894.

¹¹⁰ Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. D, p. 356, June 19, 1895.

¹¹¹ *Aegis*, October 28, 30, 1895.

¹¹² Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. D, p. 421, January 21, 1896.

¹¹³ *Aegis*, September, 1897.

terested in developing a distinguished literary magazine, nothing that he was able to do raised the *Aegis* to that point. After 1895, when it became a monthly, it turned more seriously to literary pursuits. Among its many contributors, perhaps none was more assiduous than Zona Gale, '95, who had won second place in the poetry prize contest in 1892, and who continued to contribute verse and short stories for at least three years after her graduation.¹¹⁴ Charles Floyd McClure and Grant Showerman belonged to the same period; the former was for two years a valiant and valued contributor. Little of the material printed in the *Aegis* rose above the usual effusions of undergraduates, but perhaps its significance as a literary journal and as a forerunner of the *Wisconsin Literary Magazine* is not in the articles which it printed, or in the training ground for authorship that it offered, but in the fact that it existed at all.

The *Daily Cardinal*, on the other hand, had continued to prosper. By 1902 the regents were contributing two hundred and fifty dollars a year to the *Cardinal* in return for its printing University notices and distributing copies to the accredited schools and the state press.¹¹⁵

One of the principal objects of establishing the *Daily Cardinal*, according to the editors, was to give students an opportunity to get training in journalism.¹¹⁶ The students interested in journalism also formed a Press Club which aimed to provide students an opportunity for regular meetings. At an early meeting of the Press Club, W. G. Bleyer read a paper on the general duties of the reporter; and F. E. Bump, then editor of the *Cardinal*, spoke on the preparation of copy. As in the case of the literary societies, the Press Club, formed by the students, sought something which was not yet available in the University course of study.¹¹⁷ For several years in the early 1890's an arrangement obtained under which students serving as reporters for the *Cardinal* were given academic credit in the department of rhetoric for work done on the paper. But when the *Cardinal* was able to pay its reporters the University abandoned the experi-

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, March 18, 1892.

¹¹⁵ Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. E, p. 591, September 16, 1902.

¹¹⁶ *Daily Cardinal*, April 4, 1892.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, April 19, 1894.

ment which, according to Dean Birge, had been "decidedly unsatisfactory."¹¹⁸

The *Cardinal* had little to distinguish it from other university dailies of that or later times. It is true that under the editorship of W. G. Bleyer it was characterized by fairly wide coverage, competent writing, and no more inaccuracy than was to be found in most newspapers. However, it did survive, in part through the patronage of the regents, in part because it served a purpose. In the mid-nineties, it seemed at times little more than a publicity sheet for the athletic teams, but in this it merely reflected the most general interest of the student body. Yet the *Cardinal* did not devote itself entirely to athletics and social activities. It reported the successive publications of the University research bulletins, often with more enthusiasm than judgment, and it recognized the existence of other intellectual activities. If it revealed less independence of action and less interest in ideas and learning than its predecessors, perhaps this was as much a result of a change in student taste and the necessity of getting out daily copy, as it was a result of the corroding effect of regent support and the dissipation of serious student interests.

The publication of a University yearbook was begun by the junior class in 1884. This book, called the *Trochos*, 1885, was brought out after numerous difficulties. The greatest delay, the editors candidly explained, had occurred because the fraternities had quarreled about how their associations should be presented. Some wanted the listing to be alphabetical; others wanted the fraternities to be listed in the order in which they were founded at Wisconsin.¹¹⁹ But the quarrel was not settled. Indeed, it flamed so vigorously as to block publication of yearbooks in 1885 and 1886. The next year, however, the quarrel was resolved and the second and last *Trochos* appeared.¹²⁰ In 1888 the annual appeared under the title of the now defunct newspaper, the *Badger*, and it has borne that name ever since.

¹¹⁸ E. A. Birge to Frank T. West, April 24, 1901, in the Presidents' Papers.

¹¹⁹ *Trochos*, 1885 (1884), introduction. For a full discussion of difficulties, see Frederick A. Pike, *A Student at Wisconsin Fifty Years Ago* (Madison, 1935), 110-118.

¹²⁰ *Trochos*, 1888 (1887), introduction.

Perhaps the best mirror available of the formalized student interests and values, the *Badger* reflected the annual achievements, the changes in taste, and the principal activities of the students. In its pages can be traced the quick rise in popularity of the fraternities and intercollegiate athletics, the decline of the literary societies, and the multiplication of other student interests. Thus by 1895 the University boasted six musical organizations sufficiently prosperous to purchase space in the yearbook: the Glee Club, the Choral Union, the Mandolin Club, the University Band, the Banjo Club, and the University Orchestra.¹²¹ Two years afterward the Junior Prom committee obtained a page in the yearbook.¹²² Even the dedication of the yearly volume suggested something of the capriciousness of student or at least of editorial taste. The annual was twice dedicated to John Bascom, and once to Patrick Walsh, John Johnston, Charles Kendall Adams, Christopher Columbus, the Wisconsin athletes, the legislature, and the joint debaters.

Financed by the sale of advertising, by the sale of the book itself, and by charging all organizations for inserting pictures and other material, the *Badger* was nevertheless often a risky financial venture.¹²³ Like the University newspapers, the annual relied upon the regents for modest financial assistance, which was given, but not without restriction. Thus in 1896 the regents voted to purchase a fifty dollar advertisement in the *Badger*. "This, however, is with the understanding that no matter is to go into the *Badger* that has not the approval of the Professor of Rhetoric."¹²⁴

The Spanish-American War stirred echoes, but only echoes, of the greater struggle almost forty years before. The *Daily Cardinal* followed the crisis sporadically. Military drill, though despised, was already established, so neither faculty nor students needed to call upon the Board for permission to ready the University students for combat as they had had to do before the Civil War. On the day after the Senate adopted the resolution acknowledging a state of war, the *Cardinal* remarked that Wis-

¹²¹ *The Badger*, 1896 (1895), pp. 171-180.

¹²² *The Badger*, 1898 (1897), p. 197.

¹²³ Pyre, *Wisconsin*, 319.

¹²⁴ Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. D, p. 421, January 21, 1896.

consin students had not made spectacular expressions of patriotism, but that several students had already left to join the militia companies of which they were members. Others proposed to enlist, and, should the president call for volunteers, "the students of Wisconsin will respond to the President's call, with the same spirit and readiness that their predecessors did in '61." The *Cardinal* also announced that the first of the special trains bearing United States regulars would reach Madison that evening, April 21, and urged all students to go to the depot to give the soldiers a rousing welcome.¹²⁵ By the next day there had still been no call for volunteers but the *Cardinal* reported a scarcity of players in the First Regimental Band. "Any student musicians who wish to enlist can do so by applying to the leader of that organization."¹²⁶

During the next few days military preparations on the campus began in earnest. President Adams spoke to a large student mass meeting in the gymnasium. He announced that drill would be conducted daily thereafter and that a reserve regiment of University students would be formed. Adams pointed out to the students that the University was in part supported by federal funds or endowments and that the teaching of military science was obligatory in the University. Although he thought the cause was a just one, Adams had hoped the war could be avoided. Since this was impossible, "every consideration of humanity and national honor now requires that we fight it out to the end." Adams did not advise students to enlist. If a large hostile army were to invade the country, or if the war lasted a long time, he felt that students would have to join up. But in the meantime he urged that they join the University volunteer regiment and continue with their college work.¹²⁷

Five companies were formed under this impetus, but the *Cardinal* was not optimistic about the prospects. The hour for daily drills was set at a time when upperclassmen were required to attend synoptic lectures, and this, taken with the unlikelihood that the companies would see service, mitigated against consci-

¹²⁵ *Daily Cardinal*, April 21, 1898.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, April 22, 1898.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, April 25, 1898.

entious drilling.¹²⁸ But if the students did not drill with enthusiasm, they showed their support when the Governor's Guard entrained. After giving the guard a noisy good-bye, they paraded through the streets and called en masse upon various faculty members who gave them words of cheer and patriotism.¹²⁹

Meanwhile, the faculty considered what to do about the credits of students who had joined the army without finishing the semester's work. On April 25, the question was discussed but no decision was reached. Two weeks later the faculty decided that the class officers were to report to the registrar the standings of the student volunteers. On June 6, 1898, the class officers voted that students below the rank of senior who left to join the army would receive full credit for the semester if their work was satisfactory when they left. The case of seniors was left to the general faculty, who voted that all seniors whose work was passing when they left should be given their degrees at the coming commencement.¹³⁰ Before the summer was over, Spain had agreed to peace, and the war had ended.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, April 26, 1898.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, April 28, 1898.

¹³⁰ Minutes of the Faculty, vol. 4, pp. 188, 190, 196, 197, April 25, May 9, June 6, 13, 1898.

24.

The Rise of Collegiate Athletics

THE most striking change in student life in the late 1880's and the 1890's was the rise of intercollegiate athletics. The students had always had their games—baseball, croquet, quoits, rowing, hiking, and the rest in season—but after the Civil War the contests had extended from interclass baseball to baseball contests between a University team and other teams from Madison or surrounding towns. In the early seventies the students had begun to compete with Beloit, propinquity more than anything else determining the collegiate foe. President Bascom had deplored college athletics. He feared not only the distraction to academic life which competitive sports would bring but the attendant evils of drunkenness and gambling. Chamberlin had lent a reluctant hand to improving conditions, but in Charles Kendall Adams intercollegiate athletics had a supporter almost as uncritically enthusiastic as President William Rainey Harper of Chicago. Like Harper, Adams went to the games and was always willing to give the players a pep talk between halves. At Wisconsin, notably under Chamberlin and Adams, interest in organized athletics quickly widened from the sporadic spring baseball games to tennis, track and field sports, rowing, football, and basketball. This fast-growing interest in sports on the Wisconsin campus began in the late 1880's. It was part of a larger development heralded by the appearance of the sports page in the newspapers, and the revival, before the end of the century, of the Olympic Games.

During these years America was moving from a predominantly agricultural to an industrial life, from the farm to the city. "Americans," wrote Ralph Gabriel, "went indoors to serve machines, stand behind counters, or sit at desks. Except for the farmers and fishermen who persisted into the new era, contact with nature largely ceased and men adjusted their lives to an artificial environment. The reaction of an out-of-doors people herded in a single generation into overgrown cities was the rise of sport and the appearance of the out-of-door movement. Athletic development was as swift as that of industry."¹ And though industry, he continued, distorted the older American democracy, "on the playground and the athletic field the individualism of frontier America lives again."² Perhaps organized sports emerged from the physical and spiritual need of a people sucked into the cities to serve an industrial civilization; perhaps they were helped along by the dissipation of the Puritan abhorrence of idleness and of games; perhaps organized sports were only a consequence of the shortened hours of work which the industrial revolution brought to many; or perhaps they were only the evidence of youthful physical exuberance. Certainly there must have been more than a coincidental relation between the quick rise of college and university enrollments and the rise of college athletics. Given a large number of healthy young men, the talent for organization always present in such a group, relatively easy transportation of players, and newspapers eager to dramatize events, the stage was set for the rise of intercollegiate athletics.

During the 1890's most of the competitive sports now established as part of the athletic program of the University of Wisconsin came to be accepted. Baseball competition, it is true, had developed earlier, but other sports received their first wide acclaim during these years. The University accepted competitive athletics and went on rapidly to devise a general physical education program. It acquired Camp Randall for a playing field in 1893, and in 1894 completed the gymnasium and armory and employed Dr. James C. Elsom as professor of physical culture

¹ Ralph A. Gabriel, introduction to John A. Krout, *Annals of American Sport* (*Pageant of America*, vol. 15, New York, 1929), 4.

² *Ibid.*, 6.

and director of the gymnasium. Parke H. Davis became football coach in 1893, and in 1895 Andrew O'Dea was employed as rowing coach. But football more than any other sport won the center of the stage.

Although historians of football like to trace its beginnings in this country back to colonial days, most single out the Princeton-Rutgers game of 1869 as the first intercollegiate contest in America. Thereafter football prospered in the eastern colleges. As early as 1881 Michigan sent a team east to play Harvard and other colleges. Rules associations, working during the 1870's and 1880's, reduced the number of players to eleven on a side and introduced many now familiar features of the game. Before the middle of the 1890's Ivy League football games boasted crowds of thirty to forty thousand.³ The honorary All-American teams were first selected in 1889, giving additional publicity to the game.⁴

Thus by the time football was launched at Wisconsin, it was already established in eastern colleges. It had its own heroes and its own publicity. It also had its major evils, then consisting of irresponsible student control, lack of eligibility requirements, and professionalism. These evils were not, of course, restricted to football. As early as 1885 one observer pronounced: "Professionalism has done much within the last five years to bring discredit upon college sports; and by professionalism we mean the purpose to win a game by any means, fair or foul."⁵ Moreover, the roughness and brutality of the game, with the mass momentum plays such as the flying wedge and the turtle, had already provoked much hostile comment. No less an authority on mayhem than John L. Sullivan, after seeing the Harvard-Yale game, declared, "There's murder in that game."⁶

Intercollegiate rivalry had become so intense by 1894 that George Wharton Pepper of the law faculty of the University of Pennsylvania in an address before the National Education

³ F. R. Dulles, *America Learns to Play* (New York, 1940), 243-244; A. A. Stagg, *Touchdown!* (New York, 1927), 148-149.

⁴ L. H. Baker, *Football: Facts and Figures* (New York, 1945), 141 ff.

⁵ Edward M. Hartwell, *Physical Training in American Colleges and Universities* (*Circulars of Information of the Bureau of Education*, No. 5, Washington, 1886), 124.

⁶ Stagg, *Touchdown!*, 91.

Association deplored the decline of sportsmanship in college athletics. Except for the boat racing, he charged, "There is . . . but little which bears the semblance of sport for sport's sake. In baseball and football the evils are most conspicuous." He complained about the bargaining that accompanied the arrangement of playing schedules, and deplored the "strengthening of the athletic army by the addition of mercenaries who stand ready to give their time and skill to the college which retains them."⁷

Public outcry against football reached a climax in 1893. The *New York Evening Post* and the *Nation* led the attack. As a result, several colleges abandoned football. The Army-Navy game, which had been played annually since 1890, was canceled.⁸ But the game also had its loyal supporters. Most vociferous of all was Walter Camp, who compiled a volume of statements made by football enthusiasts, coaches, and players claiming great value for the game.⁹

This crisis only indirectly affected football in the West. As at an earlier time, when the sons of Yale had gone to Illinois, Iowa, and Kansas to found churches and colleges modeled after their alma mater, so in the early 1890's her sons were organizing football teams. The objective of Yale's missionary zeal had changed between the time Asa Turner led his little band into Illinois in the 1830's and the time Walter Camp went to Stanford to coach, but the zeal itself had not abated. Parke Davis, himself a Princeton man, stated that "at one time in this period there might have been counted no less than 45 former players of Yale, 35 of Princeton, and 24 of Harvard actively engaged in teaching the science of the game."¹⁰ But it was under the aegis of a Princeton man that representatives of Kansas, Missouri, Iowa, and Ne-

⁷ George Wharton Pepper, *Faculty and Alumni Control of College Athletics* (Philadelphia, 1894), 6.

⁸ Parke H. Davis, *Football: The American Intercollegiate Game* (New York, 1911), 97-98. Parke Davis, one of the historians of football, acknowledged that the 1893 season was "fraught with many mishaps." Perhaps this was a matter of chance—perhaps it was due to the fact "that the generals of the game had devised plays too powerful for their sturdy soldiers to execute and withstand" or perhaps the accidents were exaggerated.

⁹ See Walter Camp, *Football Facts and Figures: A Symposium of Expert Opinions of the Game's Place in American Athletics* (New York, 1894).

¹⁰ Davis, *Football*, 93.

braska met in 1890 to form the Western Intercollegiate Football Association.¹¹

Athletic development at Wisconsin followed a pattern similar to that in other western universities. At Wisconsin, in the 1880's, baseball was virtually the only intercollegiate sport. It was under the control of student managers and supported by student funds. Early in that decade Wisconsin had become a member of a college baseball association and participated in games with neighboring schools, traveling to such distant points as Beloit and Chicago and later even to Minneapolis. Baseball was played both spring and fall. The league, in 1887, included Beloit College, Northwestern University, Lake Forest Academy, and Racine College.¹²

In the autumn of 1887 a student remarked that football received little attention at Wisconsin in comparison with other colleges, although interest had been increasing during the last two years and exciting interclass games had been played. Already there was talk of attempting to organize a football league along the lines of the baseball association,¹³ but the University did not play a regular schedule until 1890.¹⁴ Beginning with a game played against Whitewater, which the University eleven won by a score of 106 to 0, that season included games with Minnesota, Lake Forest, and Northwestern. These were all lost though one student recorded in his diary that the Lake Forest team won only because they had possession of the ball when darkness came.¹⁵ The game with Minnesota was lost at Minneapolis by a score of 63 to 0.¹⁶

From this modest beginning interest in football grew rapidly. Opposing teams included the Madison High School and, from time to time, the teams of other high schools. In the season of 1896 the team played nine games—with Madison High School,

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Sidney Dean Townley, *Diary of a Student of the University of Wisconsin, 1886-1892* (mimeographed, Stanford University, 1939), 28.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ Pyre declares that the first game recorded was played between the University and a team of the Calumet Club of Milwaukee in 1889. James F. A. Pyre, *Wisconsin* (New York, 1920), 312.

¹⁵ Townley, *Diary*, 90, 92.

¹⁶ Davis, *Football*, 328.

Lake Forest, Rush Medical, Grinnell (Iowa), Beloit, Chicago, Northwestern, Minnesota, and a postseason game with the Carlisle Indians at Chicago.¹⁷ Over four thousand dollars was taken in during the season, nearly fifteen hundred from the Minnesota game alone.¹⁸

By now student enthusiasm for the game was nothing short of phenomenal. Within a few years after its inauguration, football news filled the pages of the *Daily Cardinal* during the season to the exclusion of almost everything else. Victories were announced in bright red colors, defeats in funeral-black borders. A decade before, the editors had moralized upon the necessity for each student's developing his mental equipment to the maximum; now the paper dwelt upon the necessity for athletic development. In 1893 a student writer called attention to Wisconsin's rapid progress in athletics. "Perhaps it is not morally wrong for a person who has athletic ability to keep out of competitive events. However there is no question but that it is very decidedly, athletically wrong. The moral sensibilities of our students who have good chances of standing high in athletics, may not be dwarfed if they do not take active interest in sports, yet their physical abilities are suffering, and the university has much cause to complain at their inactivity."¹⁹

President Adams desired that each student be given a "proper and systematic training in the Gymnasium." To the Board he said, "Physical training is even more needed by the weak than by the strong; and it is for this reason, that, if the department is to be useful to the students of the University, we must have it properly manned and equipped."²⁰ He recommended the appointment of a professor of physical training and the adoption of a physical education requirement comparable to the ones then in force at Amherst and Cornell.²¹ Dr. Elsom was duly appointed and requirements in physical education established throughout the University.

It was urged that women students be admitted to the benefits

¹⁷ *Daily Cardinal*, February 5, 1897.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, March 4, 1893.

²⁰ Adams to the regents, January 16, 1894, in Reports to the Regents, Vol. C, p. 561.

²¹ *Ibid.*

of athletics. The Board of Visitors as early as 1893 proposed the employment of a landscape architect to lay out Camp Randall as an athletic field. They suggested that this be done with an eye to the special needs of women "who really require the outdoor exercise as much and even more than the young men."²² The *Cardinal* the same year urged that something special be done for the women.²³ A year later the paper was again worrying about providing something for the women which would be equivalent to the benefits of the playing field.²⁴ Two years later it was reported that the young ladies had formally considered the feasibility of forming a female boating crew. Coach Andrew O'Dea had consented to coach the ladies, and others had offered to be of service.²⁵ By 1898 Adams was able to boast that the gymnasium was among the best administered in the United States and the results obtained were "such as to satisfy any reasonable demand."²⁶ A year later Adams pointed out that the physical education program attempted to accomplish three things for all students, male as well as female: it provided the means of systematic body development; it reached the entire student body, "including the timid, the awkward, and the poorly developed"; and it improved the health of the students.²⁷ The Board of Visitors was uniformly friendly, often pointing out that athletics furnished "a safety valve against the explosion along other and more harmful lines of a surplus animal energy that must find its expression in something."²⁸

Although there was a tendency to regard the physical education program, which was aimed at physical improvement and better health for all students, and the intercollegiate competitive sports program, which was aimed at winning games, as parts of the same thing, they were separately administered during this period. The physical education program, placed under the control of Dr. Elsom, was a part of the University course; intercollegiate athletics was largely left in the hands of the students.

²² Report of the Visitors in the *Regents' Biennial Report*, 1893-94, p. 64.

²³ *Daily Cardinal*, May 17, 1893.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, March 13, 1894.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, April 30, 1896.

²⁶ Adams to the regents, April 19, 1898, in Reports to the Regents, Vol. D, p. 396.

²⁷ Report of the President in the *Regents' Biennial Report*, 1897-98, p. 28.

²⁸ Report of the Visitors in the *Regents' Biennial Report*, 1899-1900, p. 61.

A coach was employed, not by the University but by the Athletic Association. But it was the competitive sports that won attention and enthusiasm.

At Wisconsin the evils of intercollegiate athletics were apparent early. Even newspaper reporting of athletic contests was as partisan as it was inaccurate.²⁹ Sportsmanship and gallantry toward a worthy opponent were seldom in evidence. It was often asserted that the teams of the opposition were dominated by professionals. In 1895 the *Cardinal*, in one article, charged Beloit, Michigan, Northwestern, and Chicago with employing professional athletes on their teams.³⁰ In the fall of the same year the *Cardinal* printed an agonized protest against the charges that Wisconsin employed subsidized athletes and indulged in dirty playing.³¹ In 1896 a postseason game was arranged at Chicago with the Carlisle Indians. The Indians won the game with a score of 18 to 8. The *Daily Cardinal* told its readers, "The unfairness of the western crowd was manifest all during the game. . . . It is putting it fair and mildly when it is stated that this umpire was not stout-hearted enough to give decisions contrary to the wishes of a rabble-crowd." The *Cardinal* explained, "The Indians had the crowd, the best of the officiating, and more endurance than our men, consequently they won." Even so the paper was unwilling to pronounce the winners the better team. Coach Stagg of Chicago had invited the Indians to his gymnasium "where he coached them as far as he is capable of coaching, and acquainted them with Wisconsin's style of play."³² A year later, when Wisconsin won from Chicago by a score of 25 to 8, the Chicago papers announced that Stagg had challenged the Wisconsin team to a return game, feeling that the victory had been an accident. He offered a \$5,000 guarantee.³³ The *Cardinal* denounced Stagg for having resorted to the "tactics of a defeated prize fighter." A day later it reprinted a letter purported to have been written by Phil King, the Wiscon-

²⁹ See Carl D. Voltmer, *A Brief History of the Intercollegiate Conference of Faculty Representatives, with Special Consideration of Athletic Problems* (New York, 1935), 2-3.

³⁰ *Daily Cardinal*, May 14, 1895.

³¹ *Ibid.*, October 11, 1895.

³² *Ibid.*, December 21, 1896.

³³ *Ibid.*, November 13, 15, 1897.

sin coach, stating that "Wisconsin does not have to defeat a team twice in order to demonstrate its superiority."³⁴ The same day the paper's editors proclaimed that the "mercenary spirit dominates every department and is present in every phase of life at the University of Chicago."³⁵ In 1898 Chicago defeated Wisconsin 6 to 0, and although the *Cardinal* announced the loss in funeral dress, and declared that the grounds "could hardly have been more detrimental to the visitors," it offered no other excuses and made no attacks upon either the Chicago coach or the players.³⁶ Bitter as the student editors were against their team's opponents, they naturally made heroes of some of their own players. Greatest of them all was Patrick O'Dea, famous for his prodigious efficiency at punting and drop-kicking and still regarded locally as holder of the all-time record for punting, a record not supported by the chroniclers of football.³⁷

In 1896 the editors of the *Cardinal* began to campaign for a cheer leader. Early in the football season the paper wistfully reported that many eastern colleges had what was known as a yell master: "He is a person elected by the students to lead and guide the yelling and shouting at football games and other contests.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, November 16, 1897.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Ibid.*, November 12, 1898. Perhaps the most notorious alibi ever formulated by Wisconsin for losing a contest came out of the 1899 crew race on the Hudson. Wisconsin led almost to the finish line in the four-mile race, but lost to Pennsylvania by half a length. The coxswain, J. G. Dillon, said that near the end of the race he had swung the shell out of its course to avoid a large floating berry crate and that he had been unable to get it back without losing too much distance. *New York Daily Tribune, Milwaukee Sentinel*, June 28, 1899. The coach, McConville, publicly complained that the officials should have policed the rowing area more thoroughly. *Milwaukee Sentinel*, June 29, 1899. Others testified to having seen the obstacle. *Wisconsin State Journal*, June 30, 1899. However, Andrew M. O'Dea, formerly crew coach at the University, in a special account of the race for the *Sentinel*, did not mention the berry crate and declared Pennsylvania to be the best crew. *Milwaukee Sentinel*, June 28, 1899. Six years later Samuel Crowther branded the alibi as a "ridiculous story," invented by a newspaper man to "give color to the race and to account for the swerve of the shell." Samuel Crowther and Arthur Ruhl, *Rowing and Track Athletics* (New York, 1905), 129-130. Whatever the truth of the story, it survives to the present.

³⁷ Baker lists O'Dea's longest field goal as 62 yards, third longest of all recorded field-goal kicks. Baker, *Football*, 120. In 1937 O'Dea was selected by Pudge Heffelfinger as one of the ten best punters. *Ibid.*, 133; *Daily Cardinal*, December 22, 1897, November 28, 1898, November 28, 1899. In the last issue the *Cardinal* contends that O'Dea held the world's record in punting and drop-kicking.

The position is not an unworthy one either." The yell master appoints assistants and, with their help, "he systematizes the yelling at games. He does not check it by any means, every one can shout or blow their horn [*sic*] as much as they please, but they are required to follow certain regulations and directions, consequently greater efficiency is gained."³⁸ The pre-game pep meeting became an institution soon after, and Wisconsin was not above importing some yells and pep songs from Princeton via Phil King.³⁹

Keen desire to win led to the practice of scouting (spying on) teams of opposing schools. Later this became an accepted practice, but in the 1890's, and indeed until after the modifications of the football rules in 1906-07, it was a furtive enterprise sometimes leading to uncomfortable consequences. For example, in 1902 the *Daily Cardinal* reported that a Minnesota spy was caught attending the secret practice of the Wisconsin team. The spy was questioned and his guilt established. He was ducked in the lake, at that time an almost universal punishment for social and athletic misdemeanors. Afterwards he was escorted to his hotel to pack, taken to a train, and put on it.⁴⁰

The first coach, aside from the student manager, was Parke H. Davis, who was hired by the Student Athletic Association in 1893 and who also played on the team. Davis, who had played for Princeton, subsequently became one of the historians of the game. In 1896 Phil King, also of Princeton, became coach. Indeed, while the University was relying upon Johns Hopkins for members of its teaching staff, it seems to have been turning to Princeton for its coaches. King had been a member of the Princeton team for four years, and for three of them—1891, 1892, and 1893—was named to Walter Camp's All-American team.⁴¹ He is credited by Parke Davis with having devised the tandem line which helped to revolutionize football.⁴² King coached at Wisconsin from 1896 to 1902. During that time Wisconsin won three conference championships, in 1896, 1897, and 1901, although in the last year the honor was shared with Michi-

³⁸ *Daily Cardinal*, November 7, 1896.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, October 13, 1899.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, November 11, 1902.

⁴¹ Baker, *Football*, 145. ⁴² Davis, *Football*, 97.

gan.⁴³ King enjoyed a success at Wisconsin which made him a peer of the more widely publicized coaches, Camp, Stagg, and Glenn S. Warner. In fact, his six-year record at Wisconsin was better than Stagg's period at Chicago, but he never attained the national fame of the others. He left Wisconsin in 1902 to enter business. Although Andrew O'Dea, the rowing coach, won a place on the faculty in 1900 as instructor of physical culture, King remained in the academic limbo. He was never listed in the *Catalogue*, and the alumni directory does not carry his name.

The faculty at first tried to ignore the problems created by intercollegiate athletics. The abuses were numerous, quite apart from the gambling and drinking that often accompanied the games. There were, of course, no eligibility rules at that time, and many schools fielded teams on which few of the players were bona fide students. Moreover, players might compete for as many years as they liked. One Wisconsin football player, who graduated in 1892 and joined the faculty a year later, played his last game as a member of the University team in 1896, four years after he received his bachelor's degree and one year before he received the degree of doctor of philosophy!

Such control as there was over the earliest intercollegiate competition resided in the Northwestern College Baseball Association, formed in 1881. Wisconsin, Northwestern, and Racine College were the first members.⁴⁴ The organization was formed by the students and largely controlled by them. Sometimes, however, they called on the president or faculty for assistance. In 1889 Chamberlin wrote to the president of Beloit saying he had hoped the University might be withdrawn from the Western Baseball League and "for that reason we laid aside certain other proposed efforts looking to the restraint of objectionable tendencies connected therewith." However, the University had not withdrawn, and Chamberlin now hoped regulations and restraints would be adopted by the association but he neglected to specify exactly what he wanted.⁴⁵ Several months

⁴³ Baker, *Football*, 425.

⁴⁴ Pyre, *Wisconsin*, 310.

⁴⁵ Chamberlin to E. D. Eaton, president of Beloit College, February 21, 1889, in the Presidents' Papers.

later Hiestand, writing to Chamberlin, reported that investigation had revealed that there was no drunkenness at the Evanston baseball game and no quarrel had caused the game to break up. "The game was thrown up by our nine in view of the fact that they were beaten and that the day being disagreeable they did not wish to play it out."⁴⁶

Two years later Chamberlin wrote to the president of Northwestern saying that the students had asked him to protest the use by Northwestern of a professional pitcher. "If it does not accord with your policy," Chamberlin concluded, "or if, for any reason, you do not care to consider the matter, I hope you will not feel in the least embarrassed by this communication. There are so many different ways of dealing with such matters of only semi-collegiate character . . . that I could not, for a moment, suppose you indifferent if you were to think it best to do nothing at all, leaving the matter wholly to the students.

"We have been endeavoring during the last two years to do what we could to mitigate the undesirable features that inevitably associate themselves with college sports by a combination of friendly aid, free consultation, and advisory control; and the suggestion of the students that I mediate is an expression of this policy and is my justification for bringing the subject to your notice."⁴⁷

In initiating steps to bring college athletics under faculty control, Wisconsin seems to have been about as prompt as the large eastern schools. In 1889 Wesleyan and Yale, troubled by the large number of graduate and "special" students on the teams of their opponents, called a meeting of the Intercollegiate Football Association to "determine 'certain questions of amateur standing.'"⁴⁸ The session was stormy, and while steps were taken to attempt to exclude professional students, postgraduates, and tramp athletes, these proposals to enforce the rules wrecked the association. Harvard promptly withdrew, and the association, which had included Yale, Harvard, Princeton, Wesleyan, and Pennsylvania, began to disintegrate.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Hiestand to Chamberlin, May 15, 1889, in the Presidents' Papers.

⁴⁷ Chamberlin to President Henry Wade Rogers of Northwestern University, June 4, 1891, in the Presidents' Papers.

⁴⁸ Davis, *Football*, 88.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 88-90, 478-482.

The faculty at Wisconsin, several months earlier, had created a special faculty committee on athletics. The committee had recommended that all arrangements for use of the playing field be made through the committee and that the committee "have the initiative in the granting beforehand of permissions for absence from University exercises on account of athletic matters."⁵⁰ Several months later Chamberlin reported, prematurely but optimistically, that the faculty committee was working not only to develop athletics, "but to put them under systematic control. Admirable sets of regulations have been adopted by the baseball and football associations and the work of training entered upon with higher spirit and aims."⁵¹

But it was not enough for each college to work by itself in these matters. Two years later an abortive attempt was made to form a western college league to include the leading institutions of the Middle West. The *Cardinal*, in announcing that Professor Birge and a student representative were to attend a meeting at Chicago to form the league, looked forward to the time when the western and eastern champions would meet to decide the championship of the United States.⁵² Nothing came of this attempt, but the Wisconsin faculty took another step. In 1894, when the faculty adopted a regulation requiring two years of physical training of all students in the University, it provided that the physical education and military classes be excused for any match games at Madison. It also provided that members of the varsity teams be excused from physical training during the fall and spring and receive credit for playing on the team.⁵³ In adopting this report the faculty also adopted eligibility rules. Freshmen and special students could train with the athletic teams, but no student was to be allowed to be a member of the team during his first term of attendance, and "adult special" students were not permitted to play until they had completed two full terms of residence at the University.⁵⁴

⁵⁰ Minutes of the Meetings of the Faculty (MS.), vol. 3, p. 121-122, September 17, 1889.

⁵¹ Chamberlin to the regents, January 21, 1890, in Reports to the Regents, Vol. C, p. 70. See also the Report of the President in the *Regents' Biennial Report*, 1889-90, p. 45.

⁵² *Daily Cardinal*, April 8, 1892.

⁵³ Reports to the faculty, File Book, vol. 1, pp. 78-79.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*; Minutes of the Faculty, vol. 4, p. 29, May 29, 1894.

Nothing was said about the maintenance of a satisfactory academic record.

A little over a year later, at the invitation of President Smart of Purdue, presidents of seven Midwestern institutions met at Chicago to discuss intercollegiate athletics. A brief set of rules was adopted to govern athletic organizations.⁵⁵ Only bona fide students could participate in varsity games; players must be in residence for six months before being eligible for the team; all professionals were banned; students in graduate and professional schools were permitted to participate only for the minimum number of years required to complete the course; coaches were forbidden to play in the games; all players must be doing satisfactory academic work; and all games were to be played under control of the colleges, and college teams were to play only with other college teams. Lists of eligible players, duly certified, were to be exchanged before games.⁵⁶

The Wisconsin faculty adopted the full set of rules and added several local regulations, providing that the administration of the rules be placed in the hands of the faculty athletic council, that students entering in the middle of the year be ineligible to play during the rest of the year, and that "adult special students" be held ineligible until completion of one full semester of "continuous residence at the University."⁵⁷ The presidents' conference also agreed to the establishment of a regular conference of faculty representatives. Out of this meeting grew an organization through which the faculty representatives have presumably exercised control over intercollegiate athletics.

Although the new rules were first reported in February, 1895, it proved easier to make than to enforce them. A conference of the faculty representatives in Chicago in 1896 led to elaboration of the rules, and the Wisconsin faculty voted that some of them be made operative at once.⁵⁸ As in the case of the eastern college conference, not all of the member colleges were willing to submit to the rules agreed upon.⁵⁹

⁵⁵ Voltmer, *History of the Intercollegiate Conference*, 4-5.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 6-7.

⁵⁷ Reports to the faculty, File Book, vol. 1, p. 100.

⁵⁸ Minutes of the Faculty, vol. 4, pp. 9, 94, March 23, 1896; Stagg, *Touchdown!*, 185-186.

⁵⁹ See Stagg, *Touchdown!*, 185-186.

The rules adopted by the Wisconsin faculty on March 23 were forwarded through the president to the regents for approval. There were delays and in the absence of any action the faculty assumed that the rules were to go into effect at the beginning of the next academic year. They did not. On October 5, 1896, the faculty agreed to withdraw the rule governing residence on the grounds that Chicago, Northwestern, and Michigan had declined to accept it.⁶⁰ On October 10, 1896, the *Cardinal* reported that the Board of Regents (actually the executive committee) had declared that the new faculty rules must remain inoperative until the Board had passed on them.⁶¹ In the meantime, it appeared, no rules were in force.⁶²

There followed a stormy meeting of the faculty called by Adams⁶³ at which Professor Barnes charged him with having deliberately thwarted the will of the faculty by neglecting to transmit the faculty requests to the regents. Professors Turner, Parkinson, and others joined in the condemnation of Adams.⁶⁴ The next day at a special meeting of the faculty with Adams in the chair a resolution was adopted stating that the action of March 23, 1896, had not waived any rules, that the Board action of October 10 left an absence of regulation which "is detrimental to good order and is likely to bring discredit upon athletics in this University." The faculty also asked for a conference with the regents.⁶⁵ Shortly thereafter they authorized the athletic council to represent them before the regents and directed it to try to arrange another intercollegiate conference on athletic rules; they designated the dean of the College of Letters and Science as the University's sole representative at such a meeting.⁶⁶

A conference was arranged at Chicago, November 27, 1896, and substantially the same rules were readopted, with the added provision that "adult special" students must now not only have one year of residence but must pass an examination on the full

⁶⁰ Reports to the faculty, File Book, vol. 1, p. 131.

⁶¹ *Daily Cardinal*, October 10, 1896.

⁶² Minutes of the Faculty, vol. 4, p. 114, October 12, 1896.

⁶³ Charles F. Smith, *Charles Kendall Adams: A Life Sketch* (Madison, 1924), 68-71.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 69; Minutes of the Faculty, vol. 4, p. 114, October 12, 1896.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 116, October 13, 1896.

⁶⁶ Minutes of the Faculty, vol. 4, pp. 121, 122, November 2, 9, 1896.

year's work before being eligible for intercollegiate athletics.⁶⁷ This time the rules were conveyed promptly to the Board of Regents and adopted by them⁶⁸ although they reserved the right to review actions of the faculty taken under the rules.⁶⁹

Meanwhile both faculty and president were slowly moving to correct the evils of student control of athletics. Adams complained to the regents in January, 1896, that while professionalism had been avoided, a more unified control should be established. Instead of having two agencies—an athletic council made up entirely of the faculty and an athletic association made up entirely of students—an athletic board with student and faculty representatives should be established.⁷⁰ The regents took no action. A year later Professor Charles S. Slichter reported that the Athletic Association had accumulated a debt of \$2,500 and that attempts were being made to raise the money by student and alumni subscriptions and by the sale of a University handbook. What was badly needed, Slichter reported, was an instructor in athletics to give a part of his time to the intercollegiate program.⁷¹

Two months later the faculty authorized the formation of a student-faculty committee on athletics composed of six faculty members and four students, elected by the Athletic Association.⁷² The finances still remained in the hands of the student manager. Although this joint committee worked better than two separate organizations, it was not satisfactory. In 1900 Adams again brought up the matter, asking for a complete reorganization. His chief reason for this request was that during the past year the student manager had handled something over \$27,000. This, Adams felt, was too large a responsibility for one student.⁷³ He returned to the subject several months later, pointing out that the athletic board had recently reappointed

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 125, November 30, 1896.

⁶⁸ Records of the Board of Regents (MS.), Vol. D, pp. 540-543, January 19, 1897.

⁶⁹ Reports to the faculty, File Book, vol. 1, p. 143.

⁷⁰ Adams to the regents, January 21, 1896, in Reports to the Regents, Vol. D, pp. 177-178.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 361-363, April 21, 1897.

⁷² Minutes of the Faculty, vol. 4, p. 159, June 14, 1897. The committee itself opposed the overrepresentation of the faculty. See File Book, vol. 1, p. 146.

⁷³ Adams to the regents, February 1, 1900, in Reports to the Regents, Vol. D, pp. 569-572.

the manager "whose accounts were found by Professor Slichter in so chaotic a condition that he declared they could not be audited. They also baffled the skill of Mr. Burd in the Treasurer's office; and Professor Van Hise, after working over them for some weeks, was obliged to leave them unsettled."⁷⁴ While the regents declined to take control, it was proposed that rules satisfactory to the Athletic Association be drawn up and "enforced with the aid of the Regents." A professor was to be appointed superintendent of athletics and the graduate manager of the association and all subordinates were to be responsible to him. The faculty athletic council was to have final control.⁷⁵ But the finances of intercollegiate athletics were not brought directly under University control until after Van Hise became president.

Meanwhile, the Intercollegiate Conference, which became the Big Ten, was not progressing smoothly.⁷⁶ Although Adams and others boasted of having banned professionals at Wisconsin, it was exactly this issue that brought a temporary split in the conference in 1898. At the track and field meet in Chicago early in June, 1898, the amateur status of two of Wisconsin's entries was questioned. Charges of professionalism against the Wisconsin men were brought by representatives of Michigan and Chicago, and it was reported that representatives of Michigan, Chicago, and Illinois threatened to withdraw from the meet if these men were not barred. Before this threat the committee of the conference did probably the only thing it could have done. It gave a unanimous verdict for the Wisconsin men. Wisconsin won the meet although the three objecting universities withdrew and called their own meet the next day. The conference promptly expelled the three universities and suspended all the athletes who had participated in the unauthorized contest.⁷⁷ The rift was healed the next fall. The offending uni-

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 590.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 608-609, April 17, 1900.

⁷⁶ The first members were Minnesota, Wisconsin, Illinois, Northwestern, Purdue, Michigan, and Chicago. Iowa and Indiana were admitted in 1899, Ohio State in 1912. Michigan withdrew in 1908, re-entered in 1917, making it the Big Ten until Chicago withdrew. Voltmer, *History of the Intercollegiate Conference*, 5-6, 21, 27.

⁷⁷ *Daily Cardinal*, June 4, 6, 8, 10, 11, 1898.

versities were reinstated, the conference acknowledged the inadequacy of the rules on professionalism, and the two Wisconsin boys were declared ineligible.⁷⁸ Shortly thereafter Wisconsin, Illinois, and Michigan launched a movement to exclude Chicago from competition. Representatives of these universities had met in Chicago and after discussing their problems "decided that all relations with Chicago must cease until Professor Stagg would consent to more advantageous financial arrangements in the games with his teams." The *Daily Cardinal* explained that Wisconsin was reluctant to enter the combine against Chicago until it had been found that Stagg "refused satisfactory financial inducements."⁷⁹ This combine was, however, short-lived. That year Stagg even engineered a postseason game with Wisconsin and laid claim to the conference championship. Apparently in athletics as well as in business competitors could not always be depended upon to carry out agreements reached between themselves against another.⁸⁰

By the end of the century intercollegiate athletics had become firmly established. The faculty had reluctantly and sometimes ineptly moved to establish eligibility rules, and had helped to create an association with other universities which at least attempted to control the conditions of intercollegiate competition among its members. The tramp athlete, the cheer leader, and the college yells had all appeared and been accepted after a fashion. In short, the basic pattern of intercollegiate athletics had been set and the basic evils revealed. The next years were to unfold a story of institutional ambivalence: the strong movement to keep athletics on a strictly amateur basis and the even stronger movement toward bigger and bigger profits.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, October 5, 1898. ⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, March 14, 1899.

⁸⁰ Stagg tells the story in his autobiography—*Football*, pp. 224–226. He relates the Chicago-Michigan-Illinois "boycott" of Wisconsin to the attempted boycott of Chicago. Stagg says that Chicago, having a greater drawing power, simply insisted on larger guarantees than the other teams could afford to pay. The boycott against Chicago was in effect only one year. Stagg himself tells how the postseason game with Wisconsin was carefully engineered by goading Wisconsin alumni in Chicago, who in turn brought pressure to bear on Wisconsin and brought about permission to arrange the postseason game.

25.

The University Extension

IN ALL that was said and written about what the state university should be and do, the hope was often expressed that the University, a creature of the people's government, would break out of the "narrow aristocratic" bounds of the historic university and serve not the few but the many. Chancellor Lathrop spoke and wrote often about this and so did his successors. But it was one thing to say that the University ought to serve the many in whatever way it could; it was quite another to translate these vague aspirations into a program leading toward this goal. Neither Lathrop nor his immediate successors found the means of launching such a program. Barnard, it is true, with his fitful energy, organized teachers institutes, and members of the faculty delivered public lectures from time to time on various subjects. After the agricultural college had been made a part of the University, the Board of Regents even allowed the professor of agriculture a fund of a hundred dollars a year to visit farmers' clubs. But occasional lectures by the president of the University or members of the faculty to teachers' conventions and institutes, meetings of farmers, or other public groups, no more constituted a program of popular education than the practice, reluctantly established, of admitting special adult students to University classes.

The first major steps in this direction were taken in 1885 when the regents established the Short Course and the legislature provided for farmers institutes. In neither case did the

president or faculty give any support. The Short Course, it will be recalled, was shaped by Regents Hitt and Vilas in part to thwart a plan of the disgruntled farmer groups for establishing a separate agricultural college. Even the director of the Experiment Station, W. A. Henry, opposed the Short Course in the beginning.¹ But if the regents surprised and distressed the faculty by ordering the establishment of the Short Course, they themselves were surprised when the legislature provided five thousand dollars annually for farmers institutes. The institutes were placed under the control of the regents of the University largely because Hiram Smith, long prominent and respected in farm circles, was a member of the Board. The idea was not new in 1885. Even the Board of Regents had some experience with institutes. In 1880 a small sum had been voted to conduct farm conventions at several points in the state, but the experiment had not been followed up.²

It was the regents' farm committee, rather than the faculty and the president, which formulated the institute program approved in June, 1885. The institutes, the committee proposed, were to deal with both the "theory and practice" of farming. Any community could have an institute if it would provide a free hall, take care of local expenses, and get local farmers to participate in the two-day meeting. The management of the institutes was placed under a superintendent, who was to have three assistants for each meeting—the assistants were to be paid no more than five dollars a day—and the aid of members of the staff of the agricultural department. W. H. Morrison, president of the Wisconsin Dairymen's Association, was elected superintendent.³ For political reasons and because the University had little extra room, Morrison maintained his office in the Capitol until 1891, when he moved to South Hall.

The general pattern of the institute was fixed very early by Superintendent Morrison. Attempts were made to draw farmers from a radius of fifteen miles from the town in which the institute was held. Within that area the event was well publicized.

¹ See above, pp. 470 ff.

² In the preparation of this chapter frequent use has been made of W. H. Glover, *The History of the College of Agriculture* (MS), University of Wisconsin.

³ Records of the Board of Regents (MS.), Vol. C, pp. 443-444, June 23, 1885.

Practical farmers and members of the agricultural department of the University presented papers on agricultural subjects. Full and free discussion was encouraged, but the emphasis was kept on practical solutions of farmers' problems. Theoretical and highly technical discussion was discouraged, somewhat against the wishes of Director Henry. Remembering perhaps the unhappy experience of the early Patrons of Husbandry, the institute worker scrupulously avoided discussion of religious or political questions. Often the evening sessions were devoted to lectures of general interest.⁴

The first institute was held at Hudson, Wisconsin, on November 24 and 25, 1885. Well publicized in advance, it boasted the attendance of many prominent farm leaders. Senator John Spooner gave the address of welcome.⁵ Thereafter the institutes progressed rapidly. During the second winter, fifty-seven were held. The legislature in 1887 increased the appropriation to twelve thousand dollars a year, and in the winter of 1887-88 a total of eighty-one institutes drew an estimated fifty thousand farmers.⁶

When Charles Dudley Warner visited Wisconsin in 1888 he was struck by the work of the farmers institutes. "The distinguishing thing . . . about the State University," he wrote, "is its vital connection with the farmers and agricultural interests. . . . I know of no other State where a like system of popular instruction on a vital and universal interest of the State, directed by the highest educational authority, is so perfectly organized and carried on with such unity of purpose and detail of administra-

⁴ Frederick J. Turner, "Extension Teaching in Wisconsin," in *Handbook of University Extension*, edited by George Francis James (Philadelphia, 1893), 313.

⁵ Taken from Glover, *History of the College of Agriculture*.

⁶ *Regents' Biennial Report, 1887-88*, p. 55. President Chamberlin, who came to the University in 1887, accepted many invitations to speak at the institutes, and several members of the Board of Regents also contributed. Frederick Jackson Turner, writing in March, 1892, declared that the attendance varied from fifty to fifteen hundred; the usual attendance ranged from two to four hundred. Two daily newspapers, the *Milwaukee Sentinel* and the *Milwaukee Journal*, sent special correspondents to report the sessions. Turner, "Extension Teaching in Wisconsin," 314. Moreover, the practice was soon established of publishing the best of the institute papers in the *Bulletin of the Wisconsin Farmers' Institutes*, an annual publication created expressly for the institutes and financed by advertising. Within a short time 40,000 copies of the *Bulletin* were being printed and distributed free.

tion; no other in which the farmer is brought systematically into such direct relations to the University." He testified, perhaps as something less than an expert, that the institutes were a powerful influence in changing Wisconsin agriculture from a one-crop system to a diversified one. An agricultural revolution was taking place in Wisconsin, "greatly assisted, if not inaugurated, by this systematic, popular instruction from the University as the centre."⁷ Four years later Frederick Jackson Turner wrote, "The improvement of the agricultural condition of the state effected by the University in thus extending its activity is remarkable. Many cases can be noted in which the industries of communities have been changed from unprofitable grain raising to horticulture, dairy farming, etc., with accompanying prosperity and a rise in land values. It is not too much to say that the rapid progress made by the State in the direction of dairying, horticulture and improved stock raising, is in no small degree owing to the work of the Institutes. Farmers are becoming more intelligent and more prosperous. They participate freely in the discussion, they learn self help and co-operation at the same time, and become interested in public concerns."⁸ These statements involved a dubious *post hoc, ergo propter hoc* sequence. Such prodigious claims overemphasized the influence of the institutes on farm practice. They neglected other potent factors in the change of Wisconsin agriculture from wheat farming to dairying and diversified farming. The newer wheat-producing areas of the United States, for example, could and did produce more cheaply. But such statements have significance in that they represented beliefs honestly held and widely promulgated.

Bascom had had little to do with the institutes but his successor, Thomas C. Chamberlin, was quick to see larger and yet larger opportunities in the widespread popularity of the institutes. What was being done for and with the farmers could be done for mechanics as well, and what could be done for "practical" education might also be done for "cultural." In an ad-

⁷ Charles Dudley Warner, "Studies of the Great West," in *Harpers*, 76:771-774 (April, 1888).

⁸ Turner, "Extension Teaching in Wisconsin," 314.

dress before the State Agricultural Society in 1888 Chamberlin declared: "A new ideal is rising into recognition that it is also the function of a university to seek an all-pervasive educational influence upon its patron community. . . . It finds perhaps its best expression in the English universities in the movement known as 'University Extension' . . . and in our Farmers' Institutes are a more striking and effective instance than even the English movement."⁹ The same year the Board of Visitors, perhaps at the suggestion of Chamberlin, urged the regents to consider establishing a program under which the workingmen of the state would enjoy benefits similar to those conferred upon the farmers through the farmers institutes.¹⁰ In his own report to the Board, Chamberlin proposed the establishment of mechanics institutes and "the lecture system known in England as 'University Extension.'"¹¹ A year later Chamberlin outlined a policy for the future which contained a specific expression of much that was a few years later to be included in the Wisconsin Idea. "I have given further consideration, also," said Chamberlin, "to the subject of mechanics' institutes and to the broader subject of rendering University aid to the various local associations who are endeavoring to extend educational influences among the people, and I would recommend the adoption of a broad general policy on the subject, and would advise that the University offer all the aid which the Faculty can give consistent with their duties in the University to local associations or organizations engaged in endeavoring to educate the people in any industry or calling or in general culture or in any useful line, and that only the necessary expenses attending such aid be charged. I believe that the giving of such aid freely and in various lines will conduce to the great end sought by the University and will prove acceptable to the people."¹²

It was Chamberlin's practice to use the catalogue for a formal exposition of the aims of the University. In the page devoted

⁹ Quoted by Glover from the Wisconsin State Agricultural Society, *Transactions*, 1888, pp. 84-85.

¹⁰ Report of the Visitors, in the *Regents' Biennial Report*, 1887-88, p. 61.

¹¹ Report of the President, in the *Regents' Biennial Report*, 1887-88, p. 55.

¹² Chamberlin to the regents, in Reports to the Regents, Vol. C, pp. 29-30, June 18, 1889.

to University Extension, in 1889, he pointed out that the function of an ideal university was to teach all higher knowledge. "The idea of universality, implied by the term university, has connected itself with the scope of the learning taught, rather than with the extent of its educational influence upon its patron community. To teach all higher knowledge to such as sought its halls, rather than to teach higher knowledge to all the people, has been the dominant conception of the functions of a university. But the view is rising into recognition that it is also a function of a university to seek a universal educational influence in the community tributary to it." Acknowledging that it was not possible to teach all higher knowledge to all the people, Chamberlin postulated that it "is no more impracticable to extend the popular range of university education than to extend the sweep of the university courses."

Of University Extension as represented by the farmers institutes, Chamberlin declared: "This embraces two cooperative phases; first, original investigation and experimentation for the purpose of discovering and proving new truths, and second, a series of publications and a system of local professional institutes, by means of which certain available aspects of the latest knowledge are communicated directly to the people. In other words, advanced knowledge is developed and prepared expressly for the people and conveyed directly to them."¹³ To the state teachers convention two years later Chamberlin urged general University Extension work. "A true and complete educational system," he told the teachers and school administrators, "is a system of convection currents flowing forth from the higher institutions and returning through the lower, warming, enriching and nourishing the whole body of humanity."¹⁴

Frederick Jackson Turner, a year later, speaking of the possibilities inherent in the farmers institutes, used a somewhat similar figure of speech. "There is in this machinery a means for exercising a most quickening and elevating influence upon the village life of the State, and for carrying irrigating streams of education into the arid regions of the State."¹⁵

¹³ *University Catalogue*, 1888-89, pp. 50-51.

¹⁴ *Wisconsin Journal of Education*, 21:16 (January, 1891).

¹⁵ Turner, "Extension Teaching in Wisconsin," 315.

Thus the success of the farmers institutes, while helping to shape the subsequent relations of the College of Agriculture to the farmers, stimulated and encouraged Chamberlin and members of the faculty in a host of diverse but related projects. The mechanics institutes, organized University Extension lecture courses, correspondence courses, the summer school for teachers which opened the way for establishment of the summer session, and the synoptical courses, which represented an attempt to use the idea of University Extension within the University itself, were all related and in varying ways drew strength from the farmers institutes.¹⁶ To men like Chamberlin and Turner, all these activities were embraced within University Extension because all represented attempts to extend the influence of the University. Each could be used "for carrying irrigating streams of education into the arid regions of the State"; together they would permit the "university to seek a universal educational influence in the community tributary to it."

It must not be assumed however that the sole strength of the extension movement was drawn from the farmers institutes. The influence of the English extension movement was also prominent. Begun in 1867, this movement had been quickly imitated by several eastern universities and library associations and had furnished inspiration for the growth of Chautauqua. The Chautauqua Institution had begun in the early 1870's as a summer school for Sunday school teachers. Under the bold and imaginative direction of Dr. (later Bishop) John H. Vincent and Lewis Miller, a manufacturer of farm machinery, Chautauqua quickly outgrew its original purpose and emerged as a people's university embracing, besides the summer conference, a literary and scientific reading circle, a book-of-the-month club, a college of liberal arts, a school of theology, and a press. On its summer staff it boasted the names of many of America's outstanding professors. William R. Harper, who later directed the reorganization of the University of Chicago, organized Chautauqua's correspondence study courses.¹⁷

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 323-324.

¹⁷ John H. Vincent, *The Chautauqua Movement* (Boston, 1886); Herbert B. Adams, "Summer Schools and University Extension," in *Education in the U.S.*, edited by Nicholas M. Butler (Washington, n.d.), vol. 2, pp. 823-834.

The success of the Chautauqua movement was reflected not only in the large patronage of the parent institution, but also in the numerous imitators that sprang up in the United States and abroad and in the quick prosperity of such strictly commercial organizations as the International Correspondence Schools, founded in 1891 and boasting an enrollment of one-quarter of a million students by 1900, more than a million by 1910, and more than two million by 1920.¹⁸ The success of these institutions measured the failure of the established educational agencies, both public and private, to meet the needs, or at least the demands, of the people.

The assumptions and the values on which Chautauqua and its imitators rested differed but little from those which supported the public schools, save that the former would serve people of all ages, the latter only the young. John H. Vincent, in his book on Chautauqua, asserted: "Education, once the peculiar privilege of the few, must in our best earthly estate become the valued possession of the many. It is a natural and inalienable right of human souls. . . . The utter neglect of intellectual capacity is criminal, whether it be by menial or millionaire. It involves a wrong to self, to the family, to the state: to self since it leaves him blind whom God created to enjoy the light; to the family since it turns him into a physical and commercial machine whom God appointed to be companion and comforter; to the state, since it makes him a mere figure head—whether of clay or gold—whom God intended to be a counsellor and helper, and to 'have dominion' according to the measure of his power. No man has a right to neglect his personal education, whether he be prince or ploughboy, broker or hod-carrier." Here was the blend of idealism and materialism already observed in connection with other aspects of our educational history, an appeal to ethical duty joined to the promise of a better life. Education would furnish the means of attaining an improved social and spiritual, even economic, condition.¹⁹ The widely proclaimed aims of the Chautauqua and kindred move-

¹⁸ John S. Noffsinger, *Correspondence Schools, Lyceums, Chautauquas* (New York, 1926), 13.

¹⁹ Vincent, *The Chautauqua Movement*, 2-3, and 3-15 *passim*.



The Women's Basketball Team, 1897



The Football Team, 1889

ments were in harmony with the aspirations and expectations of a large segment of society. The example of these movements combined with the success in Wisconsin of the farmers institutes to provide both the stimulus and the justification for attempting to extend the work of the University into other lines. The mechanics institutes, the first experiment to be attempted after the farmers institutes, fared the worst.



BOTH Chamberlin and the Board of Visitors had proposed in 1888 that a system of mechanics institutes be established. In 1889 an unsuccessful attempt was made to get supporting funds from the legislature. Despite the refusal of the legislature, the regents approved the experiment. Chamberlin at once began preparatory work and he enlisted the aid of members of the Board of Regents. Thus he wrote to Regent J. B. Quarles of Racine, saying that the faculty had arranged a tentative scheme of mechanics institutes. He wrote to Frank Challoner of Oshkosh in a similar vein. To the president of the regents, George H. Paul of Milwaukee, he reported what he had done and declared: "If there are existing organizations devoted to special occupations, as I believe is the case in Milwaukee, it would probably be wise for us to adapt ourselves to them rather than to expect them to reorganize on the University plan. For instance, if your plumbers' association should desire it, Professor Conover could give one or more lectures on the sanitary aspects of plumbing or upon other special phases." Chamberlin himself proposed to visit Milwaukee and talk to interested organizations if necessary.²⁰

In March, 1890, the first series of mechanics institutes was begun at Racine under the auspices of the Mechanics Committee of the Y.M.C.A. In arranging for the meetings Chamberlin had pointed out that "it is not a part of the plan to give an occasional talk as a mere matter of entertainment but to give systematic instruction to those who wish to learn rather than

²⁰ Chamberlin to Quarles, Chamberlin to Challoner, and Chamberlin to Paul, all September 18, 1889, and all in the Presidents' Papers.

to those who merely wish to be entertained. In other words, it is the plan to make this a part of University *instruction*, and it is expected that those who get the benefits will make the usual endeavor of students to profit thereby." Other series were planned for Milwaukee and Beloit and perhaps for Janesville. At the same time Chamberlin reported that the matter of employing a superintendent to take charge of these institutes had been under consideration, but nothing had been done for fear of not getting an able man.²¹

But the mechanics institutes won no quick popularity. Later in the year Chamberlin dwelt upon the difficulties encountered. The problem, he discovered, was much more complex than the problem of the farmers institutes because of the great variety of occupations pursued by industrial workers as opposed to the uniformity of farm problems. Moreover, the University was seriously retarded in this work by lack of resources to carry out the program. He anticipated greater success in the future.²²

During the academic year 1890-91, C. D. Marx was employed as professor of civil engineering and on him largely fell the work of attempting to develop the mechanics institutes. His success can be measured in part by the fact that at the end of the year the mechanics institutes were dropped and Marx went elsewhere. Turner described Marx's work to Herbert Baxter Adams of the Johns Hopkins University late in 1890: "He goes to various cities and studies the local conditions relative to industrial matters. Then a course of graded lectures is arranged by him. He calls in the aid of expert mechanics in the city and a local club is organized. Professor Marx [sic] may lecture, for example, upon *materials* in mechanics relative to some special industry of the city one week and the next a practical mechanic will give a practical demonstration of the principles developed by Professor Marx. He will also give instruction to the local bodies in draughting leaving the immediate charge of the work to local experts. Special lectures will be added by local talent

²¹ Chamberlin to J. W. Adriasse, Y.M.C.A., Racine, January 21, 1890, in the Presidents' Papers; Chamberlin to the regents, April 15, 1890, in Reports to the Regents, Vol. C, pp. 91-92.

²² *Regents' Biennial Report*, 1889-90, p. 42.

and by others. The local manufacturers are brought into the work. They may grow into a system of manual training schools in connection with the public schools. Professor Marx [sic] hopes to see it develop into a system of Gewerbe Schulen, but President Chamberlin does not lay any stress on this—indeed he wished that it should not be mentioned in print. A particular aim of the work is to prevent the students of public schools from rushing to the shops at the age of fourteen, or younger, as they do in our manufacturing towns.”²³

After 1891 little more was heard of mechanics institutes. The failure could be found in several factors: poor financial support, inadequate leadership, the variety of industrial problems which made a common core of interest hard to find, and lastly the fact that, as Turner’s letter to Adams revealed, nobody knew exactly what the institutes should be or in what direction they should travel. When the idea was revived, in 1901, it was in the form of the summer school for artisans conducted by the engineering department at the University.



AT THE same time that Chamberlin was urging the Board to provide mechanics institutes, he also pointed out the advisability of the University’s entering the field of English extension to develop what Turner had called the “culture side.”²⁴ It was not until 1891 that this program was formally announced. During the intervening years Chamberlin and several members of the faculty had been persistently pushing for its establishment. In December, 1890, Turner reported to Herbert B. Adams that the faculty had under consideration a “plan for bringing all departments into relation to the work” but the plan was still too undeveloped for public notice. Turner himself made a survey of historical extension at the request of the president.

²³ Turner to Herbert B. Adams, December 8, 1890, quoted in W. Stull Holt, ed., *Historical Scholarship in the United States, 1876-1901: As Revealed in the Correspondence of Herbert B. Adams* (Johns Hopkins University Studies in Historical and Political Science, Series LVI, No. 4, Baltimore, 1938), 144.

²⁴ Report of the President, September 30, 1888, in the *Regents’ Biennial Report*, 1887-88, p. 55.

Turner already anticipated that extension lectures would take so much time and energy that members of the faculty could not do extension work and at the same time perform their regular duties.²⁵ Later in the same month President Chamberlin addressed the Wisconsin Teachers Convention on the subject. He directed attention to the development and cultural aims of the English extension movement. In contrast, Wisconsin extension work to date had been largely industrial, but he hoped soon to push beyond that. Cultural education, he held, was a vital and necessary part of the extension work of the University.²⁶

Herbert B. Adams was also called upon for support. In September, 1890, Turner wrote urging him to accept an invitation to deliver the biennial address before the Wisconsin Historical Society early in 1891. The address was to be well attended by legislators and others, and it would afford an excellent opportunity to voice support for University Extension, "a movement of great significance." Adams complied handsomely. Speaking before the Historical Society on January 28, 1891, just one month after Chamberlin had addressed the State Teachers Convention, Adams reviewed the history of higher education, called attention to the English extension movement and its adaptation by Chautauqua and some of the eastern institutions. He commended Wisconsin for its farmers institutes but urged that something be done about the liberal studies. To carry on extension work, he said, the University needed a separate staff. He urged too that the Historical Society consider library extension. Adams concluded his address with the plea to everyone to "co-operate with every respectable agency for higher education, whether summer schools, teachers' institutes, mechanics' institutes, farmers' institutes, or by distribution of good literature in popular form and the institution of home reading circles and university extension lectures."²⁷

²⁵ Turner to Adams, December 8, 1890, quoted in Holt, ed., *Historical Scholarship in the United States*, 145.

²⁶ *Wisconsin Journal of Education*, 21:16 (January, 1891).

²⁷ Turner to Adams, September 27, 1890, quoted in Holt, ed., *Historical Scholarship in the United States*, 136; Adams' address was reported in the *Madison Democrat*, January 29, 1891. Turner's plans to win for University Extension the well-publicized sponsorship of one of America's leading historians almost went astray, because on the day that Adams lectured the Madison papers

Meanwhile ground had already been broken for extension lectures in Madison. In 1888 the Contemporary Club of Madison, at the suggestion of William F. Allen, had arranged a course of free lectures on the history of the Northwest. Both Allen and Turner had participated. The next year a course of lectures on the Far West was presented. Among the lecturers were President Chamberlin, Vice-President Parkinson, and Professor Birge of the University faculty. This lecture course was so successful that it was repeated later at Milwaukee. Again in 1890 a course of historical lectures was presented in Madison. Moreover, Turner, who had served as an extension lecturer while a graduate student at Johns Hopkins, delivered two courses of lectures during the academic year 1890-91.²⁸ Thus the groundwork had been laid when, early in 1891, Chamberlin reported to the regents that the faculty had asked for authority to arrange for University Extension lectures on the English plan. The cost was to be borne by those who attended, the professors delivering the lectures were to receive "moderate" compensation, and the work was not to interfere with the professors' regular duties. It was proposed that certificates be issued to those who attended the extension lectures, performed the class work, and passed examinations. At the same time the faculty asked for permission to arrange correspondence courses, the entire fee to go to the professors. Chamberlin anticipated that the growth of this work would be slow "yet it will be of advantage to it and to the reputation of the University, already recognized as a leader in this line, to establish a definite system of a comprehensive nature."²⁹

The regents gave their assent to the proposal in June, and shortly before the opening of the academic year 1891-92 Chamberlin reported that plans had been made to offer eight courses of lectures, the fee to be ten dollars per lecture plus additional necessary expenditures of the lecturer. Moreover, the faculty proposed to grant certificates for work taken and the work was to

were filled with news of W. F. Vilas' election to the Senate. Nevertheless, the *Democrat* gave Adams four full columns on page two the day after the lecture.

²⁸ Turner, "Extension Teaching in Wisconsin," 315-316.

²⁹ Chamberlin to the regents, in Reports to the Regents, Vol. C, pp. 153, 159-160, January 20, 1891. The faculty had adopted the report January 14, 1891.

be accredited by the University on some "equitable" basis.³⁰ The cost of syllabuses was to be borne by those in the course.

When plans for the year were finally complete, ten, not eight, lecture courses were offered. Each course consisted of six lectures. Upon completion of the lecture course and the required reading and upon passing an examination, a student was given a certificate of credit equivalent to one hour a week for one term. Announcement of the extension lectures was printed in the catalogue in the summer of 1891 and a special circular was distributed later.³¹

Chamberlin expected that the work would develop slowly. Turner, who was one of the lecturers, felt the same way at first. From Herbert B. Adams he borrowed syllabuses for guidance. In returning the syllabuses, which he had found useful, he explained: "Of course we shall adapt our work to our environment, as we have always tried to." He hinted that competition was expected from the University of Chicago when it got into full operation but Wisconsin would not resign any "ground which she is asked to *till*." Several months later Turner confided to Adams that he was "fairly well satisfied" with the success of his own efforts. By the end of the season he would have given seven courses of six lectures each in as many places. "In one little community of six hundred inhabitants—farmers, etc.—I have an audience of over two hundred people."³² Professors Freeman, Birge, and Salisbury also received many calls the first year. In his report to the Board of Regents in January, 1892, Chamberlin reported that the University Extension had met with "unexpected success. . . . From all I can learn, the interest has been excellent, and good satisfaction has been given by the lecturers." To date, only four months after launching the extension, forty-three lecture courses had been given or were in progress. Three months later Chamberlin reported that the University had not been able to give all the courses called for. As it was, more had been given than the time and number of the faculty warranted.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 225, 226, September 15, 1891.

³¹ Turner, "Extension Teaching in Wisconsin," 316; *University Catalogue*, 1890-91, pp. 62-63.

³² Turner to Adams, October 19, 1891, and January 18, 1892, quoted in Holt, ed., *Historical Scholarship in the United States*, 169, 174-175.

Chamberlin was concerned about the time it took and about not being able to meet the demand. He proposed using graduate students as extension lecturers.³³

The quick popularity of the extension lecture was attested by the large number of calls, and appreciation for the lectures was frequently reported. At the conclusion of the series at Platteville, H. S. Fiske wrote Chamberlin that the series had been a financial success and that general satisfaction had been expressed. "Nothing that the University has done—in recent years at least—has so thoroughly and happily brought it close to the people in every nook and corner of the state as the University extension movement. And I have no doubt that the growth of the University will be visibly affected by it."³⁴ Upon the conclusion of the lecture series at Oshkosh, the People's Lyceum, which had stood sponsor, tendered thanks to Professors Birge and Turner for the lectures, endorsed the University Extension work, and expressed the hope that the regents would "not only continue the successful experiment, but will, so far as they are able, extend the good work now so auspiciously begun, to the end that the whole people of the state may, so far as possible, secure for their various localities the benefits thus derived from the excellent educational facilities afforded by our state." A copy of the resolution was sent to the Board of Regents.³⁵

In his biennial report to the Board, Chamberlin summarized the record of the first year. It was indeed remarkable. Courses of six lectures each had been offered on the following ten subjects: American history, English literature, Scandinavian literature, Greek literature, economics, antiquities of India and Iran, bacteriology, physiology of plants, electricity, and landscape geology. Requests had been received for 107 courses but it had been possible to offer only 50. The estimated average attendance at the lectures was 170; 127 took examinations and 93 passed the examinations and were given credit.³⁶ Chamberlin

³³ Chamberlin to the regents, in *Reports to the Regents*, Vol. C, pp. 255-256, 274, January 19, April 19, 1892.

³⁴ Fiske to Chamberlin, April 16, 1892, in the *Presidents' Papers*.

³⁵ *Papers of the Board of Regents*, April 19, 1892.

³⁶ Report of the President, in the *Regents' Biennial Report*, 1891-92, p. 44. The fifty lecture courses were given at the following cities: nine in Milwaukee; three in Chicago; two each at Fond du Lac, La Crosse, Madison, Oconomowoc,

estimated that a total of 8,500 people attended the extension lectures, that 4,500 performed the class exercises. Turner reported that the audiences ranged from 33 to 600. All told, it was a successful year, leading immediately to larger plans for the future and to the University's formally affiliating itself with the Chicago Society for University Extension, the Chautauqua movement, and the American Society for the Extension of University Teaching.³⁷

Chamberlin left Wisconsin in the summer of 1892, but his successor, Charles Kendall Adams, wholeheartedly espoused the extension work. During 1892-93 a total of 32 lecture courses were offered, instead of the 10 courses offered the year before. Calls were received for 48. Four of the courses offered were in Chicago and one at Minneapolis, Minnesota. The record was not quite as good as the year before, but in part this may have been because the charge for a series of six lectures was raised from sixty to ninety dollars plus necessary expenses.³⁸ Ely, who had joined the staff at the beginning of the academic year of 1892, wrote to President Adams in January, 1893, reporting that the second year of extension was almost as good as the first. He told Adams that at Philadelphia the demand was only one-third what it had been the year before. However, at Wisconsin, "if the work is well managed, the demand for courses is likely to increase steadily after this year."³⁹

The number of courses was increased the third year to provide 37 courses in all. But the response was not as lively as it had been. The fourth year the number of different courses offered was reduced to 31, but 40 lecture series were given.⁴⁰ In 1895, after much urging, provision was made for a full-time

Oshkosh, and Platteville; and one each at Appleton, Ashland, Baraboo, Beaver Dam, Brodhead, Burlington, Clinton, Delavan, Eau Claire, Fox Lake, Green Bay, Janesville, Monroe, Pewaukee, Portage, Poynette, Reedsburg, Sheboygan, Spring Green, Stoughton, Tomah, Washburn, Watertown, Waukesha, Wauwatosa, White-water. *Ibid.*, 44. Freeman alone offered seventeen lecture courses; Turner, eight; Salisbury, seven; and Birge, six. Turner, "Extension Teaching in Wisconsin," 317.

³⁷ *University Catalogue*, 1891-92, p. 48; Turner, "Extension Teaching in Wisconsin," 318, 323; Minutes of the Meetings of the Faculty (MS.), vol. 3, pp. 197-198; Edmund J. James to Chamberlin, December 4, 1891, in the Presidents' Papers.

³⁸ *University Catalogue*, 1892-93, pp. 35-36.

³⁹ Ely to Adams, January 12, 1893, in the Presidents' Papers.

⁴⁰ *University Catalogue*, 1893-94, p. 37; 1894-95, pp. 31-33.

secretary of the extension department. Jerome H. Raymond was employed for this task and to serve as extension lecturer on sociology.⁴¹ The year 1895-96 was in many respects the most successful for University Extension up to that date. At the end of the year the secretary reported that 57 courses had been offered during the year in 43 communities in Wisconsin and northern Illinois.⁴²

Raymond had also helped to establish a system of correspondence courses, formally announced in 1896. Although these courses attracted attention at the time, they were dropped soon after Raymond left Madison.⁴³ Moreover, the same year a University news service was formally launched in the form of a fortnightly *Bulletin for Editors*, prepared and circulated by the extension division. By the end of the academic year 195-96, President Adams reported that some twelve hundred editors regularly received the *Bulletin*. "The result has been that editors have had the opportunity of knowing what is being done at the University of Wisconsin much better than ever before, and the public is becoming more intelligent in regard to what

⁴¹ Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. D, p. 351, June 19, 1895.

⁴² *University Catalogue*, 1895-96, p. 42.

⁴³ The faculty had asked in 1891 that provision be made for correspondence courses, but nothing came of it. In 1895 Professor Raymond brought the matter formally before the faculty with the information that he had received many inquiries from prospective correspondence students. Minutes of the Faculty, vol. 4, p. 78, October 7, 1895. After investigation the faculty recommended the establishment of correspondence courses and the Board of Regents approved. Reports to the Regents, Vol. D, p. 183, January 21, 1896.

No immediate success was registered in correspondence courses. Two years after the announcement was made that correspondence courses were available, Adams reported that only twenty-two people had signed up for such courses. Adams to the regents, in Reports to the Regents, Vol. D, pp. 408-409, April 19, 1898. The Board of Visitors the same year questioned the effectiveness and educational value of the work. Report of the Visitors, in the *Regents' Biennial Report*, 1897-98, p. 63.

With the departure of Raymond the faculty interest in the correspondence work waned. In October, 1899, Professor Stearns reported that applications had been received for correspondence courses and no provision had yet been made that year for the work. Minutes of the Faculty, vol. 4, p. 238, October 2, 1899. The extension department, now controlled by the School of Education, was instructed to continue the work. Meanwhile a faculty committee was appointed to report a definite policy for this phase of extension work. *Ibid.*, 241, October 24, 1899. This was the death knell of the department. The committee early in January recommended that the correspondence study department be discontinued. The faculty adopted the report without argument on January 22, 1900. *Ibid.*, 250.

the University really is. It is believed that the *Bulletin* has done not a little to counteract the altogether false impression sometimes prevailing that athletic and social events form a chief, or even a prominent part of University life."⁴⁴

At the end of the school year in 1896, Adams, surveying the extension movement with some help from J. H. Raymond, found that intellectual stimulus had been given to thousands of people, many had been inspired to attend the University, better citizenship had developed, many had been given opportunities for self-improvement, much more reading had been done, local reform movements had been launched, more sympathy had been created for the University, and a host of other things had been accomplished.⁴⁵

Despite such boasts, the momentum of the movement could not be maintained. About the same number of courses were offered in 1896-97 but the number of calls declined. In the summer of 1897 Raymond resigned and was not replaced, responsibility for extension being turned over to the newly established School of Education.⁴⁶ There the extension division languished, with the lecturing staff reduced to six or eight, until it was revived early in Van Hise's administration.

The collapse of the extension movement as represented in the extension lectures was not as surprising as it might seem if viewed only from the statistical data and from reading the more exuberant utterances of the most enthusiastic supporters. Both Chamberlin and Turner, at the outset, had anticipated one of the principal dangers: that extension lectures, on a sustained basis, would require too much work from the regular teaching staff of the University. Before the first season was over, Chamberlin had been warned that objections would be made regarding the interference of extension lecturing with the regular work of some of the professors.⁴⁷ In 1893 the Board of Visitors

⁴⁴ Report of the President, in the *Regents' Biennial Report*, 1895-96, p. 31.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 29.

⁴⁶ Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. E, pp. 23-24, June 23, 1897. The regents at the same meeting directed President Adams to confer with Raymond and advise him to accept some position elsewhere "as early as may be practicable." *Ibid.*, 27.

⁴⁷ L. D. Harvey, Oshkosh, to Chamberlin, October 5, 1891, in the Presidents' Papers.

had urged that a full-time secretary of extension be employed and that the extension department concentrate on developing enthusiasm for subjects and courses instead of popular lectures. Two years later another Board of Visitors felt that the extension work had failed notably to build up "a serious body of students" in any community. The complaint that the extension work took too much of the professors' time and energy was voiced again and again. In 1895 students made this charge in the *Daily Cardinal*.⁴⁸ Adams himself echoed it the next year. Despite the good that flowed from extension work, he reported, there was one great disadvantage: it placed a heavy draft on the time and energies of the leading professors and frustrated their efforts at research. Since every professor worthy of his position wanted to and must do research, extension work was a great burden. The result of all this was that several of the most prominent professors had asked to be relieved of extension duties.⁴⁹

The employment of a secretary in 1895 and the prompt expansion of the work led several of the most popular professors to withdraw. Birge was first; he was followed in 1896 by Turner and W. A. Scott and soon thereafter by the most popular of all the University lecturers, Freeman.⁵⁰ Meanwhile the Visitors in 1897 complained that the communities ought not to be required to bear the whole cost of the lectures. A year later the Board of Visitors reviewed the history of the extension lectures. The Visitors explained the early popularity of the extension work in terms of the great amount of publicity it received, the general revival of adult education, and the novelty of the experiment. But since 1896 the novelty had worn off, many of the ablest professors had refused to do the work any more, and their places had been taken by younger and inexperienced men whose services were not appreciated by the communities. The Visitors felt that the extension work was good advertising for the University only when the lecturers pleased the audience.⁵¹ Birge

⁴⁸ Report of the Visitors, 1893, in the *Regents' Biennial Report*, 1893-94, p. 59; 1895-96, p. 49; *Daily Cardinal*, April 20, 1895.

⁴⁹ *Regents' Biennial Report*, 1895-96, pp. 29-31.

⁵⁰ Adams himself reported with regret in 1897 that Turner, Birge, and Scott had withdrawn and that the outlook for extension was gloomy. Reports to the Regents, Vol. D, p. 329, June 22, 1897.

⁵¹ *Regents' Biennial Report*, 1897-98, pp. 40, 62-63.

himself, as acting president in 1901, explained the decline of interest. To him it seemed that three factors were responsible: the withdrawal of the most popular lecturers, the fact that after Raymond's resignation no one had been made responsible for the work, and a general decline of the interest in extension. This decline in interest, he felt, was as much the result of the University's failing to push extension as anything else. Birge urged the regents to consider appointing someone to take charge of extension work.⁵² It remained for his successor to see that this was done.

The experience at Wisconsin, with some exceptions, paralleled the experience of other universities that had launched extension movements during the late 1880's or early 1890's.⁵³ Indeed the movement survived with strength longer at Wisconsin than at many other institutions. There have been various explanations for the "fifteen lean years" from the time extension first began to decline until it was again revived in 1906 under the leadership of Wisconsin. H. B. Adams, one of the original sponsors and expounders of University Extension, found five reasons for the general decline of interest. "First, lack of suitable extension lecturers; second, lack of financial support; third, inability of university men to carry the extra burden of travel and teaching; fourth, the greater claims of academic service on college campuses, where enrollments were just then rapidly increasing; fifth, the development of less expensive ways of popular education."⁵⁴ Although all the reasons given by Adams applied to Wisconsin, others might be added. It should be noted that the first extension movement was launched at a time of political unrest, and that the revival of extension at Wisconsin in 1906 occurred during another period of mounting political unrest. But merely because the extension lecture series lost popularity, and this part of the extension movement col-

⁵² Birge to the regents, in Reports to the Regents, Vol. D, p. 666, June 14, 1901.

⁵³ One such exception was at the University of Iowa. Beginning in 1892, extension lectures were offered on a modest scale. The work gained momentum during the following decade. W. C. Lang, *A History of the State University of Iowa: The Collegiate Department from 1879 to 1900*, pp. 224-227, manuscript doctoral dissertation, 1941, in the Library of the University of Iowa.

⁵⁴ James Creese, *The Extension of University Teaching* (New York, 1941), 49.

lapsed, it does not follow, as is often claimed, that the whole movement failed.⁵⁵ It must be recalled that the University Extension at Wisconsin consisted of many things: the mechanics institutes, teachers institutes, the summer school, the farmers institutes and Short Course, the extension lectures, and correspondence study. Of these the summer school enjoyed a healthy growth and was transformed into the summer session before Van Hise became president; the farmers institutes and the Short Course likewise grew and expanded; the extension lectures, after enjoying rather phenomenal success, dwindled into relative insignificance; and the correspondence study was abandoned. Thus it could hardly be said that the movement collapsed. Those activities which found a substantial area of service and a satisfactory organization expanded; the others were abandoned or permitted to die. Moreover, the principle that the University should conduct this work was fully accepted. In his first message to the legislature, Governor Robert M. La Follette repeated without dissent the declaration of the Board of Regents: "The State will not have discharged its duty to the University, nor the University fulfilled its mission to the people until adequate means have been furnished to every young man and woman in the state to acquire an education at home in every department of learning."⁵⁶



THE summer school for teachers, forerunner of the summer session organized in 1899, was—like the farmers institutes—more forced upon the University than created by it. The latter, however, was quickly adopted by the College of Agriculture and officially sponsored as an effective means of disseminating useful information about agriculture. But the summer school for teachers, although it won the support of individual members of the faculty and elicited many a fine word of praise from the president, was slow in finding complete acceptance as an integral part of the University. When it did, it was only on condition

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 48 ff.

⁵⁶ *Assembly Journal*, 1901, p. 43.

that the summer school for teachers be made a summer session of the University. It is one of the enigmas in the history of many state universities that from the outset various responsible members of legislatures, governing boards, and even faculties spoke or wrote about the transcendent importance of so shaping the university as to provide adequate training for teachers. This had been true at Wisconsin as well as at neighboring institutions. Yet little was done directly toward this end. It was as if there were something slightly improper in a university's open espousal of the training of either high school or elementary teachers, and the professors were vaguely embarrassed about it. This is suggested by the reluctance with which the University entered into this work, despite avowals of interest, and by the low salaries paid to members of the summer school staffs. This latter practice, perhaps necessary originally because of a shortage of funds, also rested on the assumption that teaching teachers was not really as important as other teaching. Teaching farmers or even artisans might be institutionally respectable; the same was not wholly true of teaching teachers.

The first summer school held at the University was a private venture, Professor Stäger's Summer College of Languages, which operated from July 6 to August 14, 1885. It was not successful enough to be tried again the next summer. During the summers of 1887 and 1888 four-week sessions were held at the University under the auspices of the Wisconsin State Teachers' Association. The impulse for this action probably came from Professors Stearns and Birge.⁵⁷ Of the five professors who made up the staff for the session of 1887 all but one were members of the University staff. Birge taught physiology and zoology; Daniells, chemistry; King, then of River Falls, physics and botany; Hermitage, Latin; Stearns, psychology and teaching methods. No credit was given for the courses. Nevertheless 45 teachers paid the ten-dollar fee to attend. At the end of the session Professor Stearns, editor of the *Wisconsin Journal of Education*, pronounced the summer school a success. The Teachers' Association asked the regents of the University and

⁵⁷ S. H. Goodnight, *The Story of the Origins and Growth of the Summer School and the Summer Session 1885-1940* (mimeographed, Madison, 1940), 2-6, 7-8.

of the Normal Schools for financial assistance for the second session and received assistance from both. The Board of Regents of the University provided the salary for two professors for the one month.⁵⁸ Fifty-five students were enrolled the second summer. The moderate success of these two sessions, coupled perhaps with the desire of the University regents to be freed of financial responsibility, led to a request for state funds to support the summer school. The legislature of 1889 provided that the sum of one thousand dollars was to be appropriated annually "to aid in maintaining a summer school of science, literature, language and pedagogy, in connection with the University of Wisconsin." The money was not appropriated to the regents. The teaching staff was to be designated jointly by the state superintendent and the president of the University, and these individuals must jointly certify all expenditures.⁵⁹

Professor Stearns was made director of the summer school, and arrangements were made to bring outside lecturers to Wisconsin. In 1889 besides the men recruited from the Wisconsin faculty, Chamberlin brought Professor W. M. Davis, of Harvard, to teach scientific geography and Professor A. L. Kimball, of Johns Hopkins, to teach physics.⁶⁰ To the latter Chamberlin explained that the summer school of science for teachers, as he called it, lay somewhere between "Chautauqua and pure investigation." Both elementary and advanced courses were to be offered, but the elementary course should be quite elementary. "What we seek is not so much the depths of the subjects taught as the soul and spirit; and a vital appreciation of the essentials, accompanied by an inculcation of the proper mental attitude and a taste of masterful methods of presentation."⁶¹

The progress of the summer school was reflected in the steady increase in enrollment. Forty-five students had attended the first session, 55 the next. In 1889 the number increased to 104,

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 14.

⁵⁹ *Laws of Wisconsin*, 1889, p. 648. Except for the year 1893, when no summer school for teachers was held because of the superior attractions for teachers at the World's Fair at Chicago, the fund was collected each year until 1897, when two thousand dollars was appropriated in the regular University budget for support of the summer school. Goodnight, *Summer School Origins*, 17, 32-34.

⁶⁰ Goodnight, *Summer School Origins*, 16.

⁶¹ Chamberlin to A. L. Kimball, May 3, 1889, in the Presidents' Papers.

three years later to 190. In 1898, 221 students were registered and in 1899, 341. Thereafter the number increased briskly. In 1908 over 1,000 students were in attendance.⁶²

During the first two sessions there were no entrance requirements, and no academic credit was given for the work taken. In 1889, limited provision was made to give University credit to anyone who had adequate prerequisites to enter a course and who passed a satisfactory examination at the end.⁶³ In 1894 more general provision was made to give credit for work done in summer school classes.⁶⁴ On the whole, the Teachers' Association opposed this action, fearing that teachers who could not furnish acceptable credentials would not attend. In 1895 a course in library training was added to the summer school program, largely because of the interest and contributions of State Senator J. H. Stout. The same year arrangements were made to lengthen the summer school term to six weeks.⁶⁵

Meanwhile the relation of the summer school to the University was far from clear. After 1889 summer school announcements appeared regularly in the University catalogue. University credit was given for courses taken. But the "regents of the summer school" were the state superintendent of public instruction and the president of the University. As early as 1892 Chamberlin pointed out that the summer school had already demonstrated that it filled a permanent and important need. It should, accordingly, be made a definite part of the University, the course lengthened to six weeks and the work counted as a regular half term. No action was taken on this recommendation—partly because Chamberlin had already resigned. President Adams repeated it two years later.⁶⁶ The term was lengthened to six weeks, but the regents were reluctant to acknowledge full responsibility for the school.⁶⁷

In 1896, at the suggestion of the director, President Adams

⁶² Goodnight, *Summer School Origins*, 92-93.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 18.

⁶⁴ *University Catalogue*, 1893-94, pp. 200-201.

⁶⁵ Goodnight, *Summer School Origins*, 18, 22, 23.

⁶⁶ Chamberlin to the regents, in the *Regents' Biennial Report*, 1891-92, p. 44; Adams to the regents, in the *Regents' Biennial Report*, 1893-94, p. 48.

⁶⁷ Goodnight, *Summer School Origins*, 22, 24.

submitted a recommendation that the funds appropriated by the legislature should be devoted exclusively to the pedagogical work and that the regents appropriate an additional thousand dollars for the support of the other educational work in the school, "which lies parallel to the University courses, so that the State appropriation may be largely expended for pedagogical instruction."⁶⁸ Adams' recommendation was referred to a special committee of the regents, William P. Bartlett, O. E. Clark, and George H. Noyes. On March 6 the committee reported that "as the said Summer School is not under the control of the University that this Board have no authority to appropriate any money to said School or guarantee any thereto." The Board approved the report.⁶⁹

But it was not long before the regents were tacitly placed in full charge. In 1897 an attempt was made to have the annual appropriation increased to \$2,000. The legislature, instead of making a special appropriation, allocated \$2,000 of the University appropriation to the summer school.⁷⁰ Yet for two more years the old system endured. In 1898 Adams again recommended that the summer school be more closely integrated with the University. The Board of Visitors the same year belatedly discovered that the regents exercised little control over the summer school, that the University really only lent its name, its plant, and some of its faculty. The Visitors urged that the school be brought under the control of the regents as a part of the University.⁷¹ Again nothing was done immediately. The executive committee merely turned over the \$2,000 to Professor Stearns for the school.⁷²

But action could not be postponed much longer. The popularity of the summer school and the fact that the supporting funds were a part of the regular University budget removed the regents' fastidious objection that they had no legal control

⁶⁸ Quoted in Goodnight, *Summer School Origins*, 25-27.

⁶⁹ Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. D, p. 437, March 6, 1896.

⁷⁰ *Laws of Wisconsin*, 1897, pp. 559-560; Goodnight, *Summer School Origins*, 32-34.

⁷¹ Report of the Visitors, 1898, in the *Regents' Biennial Report*, 1897-98, pp. 61-62.

⁷² Goodnight, *Summer School Origins*, 34.

over it. In January, 1899, President Adams again brought the matter up. He pointed out that the summer school had been devoted to giving instruction to teachers, but its policy was not yet clear. One question was whether it should seek to attract grade school or high school teachers. The grade school teachers had not shown much interest. High school teachers, mostly normal school graduates, had not responded either. Adams felt that they would not until arrangements were made to give credit toward advanced degrees. Because so many were normal school graduates, the faculty did not see how this could be done. Meanwhile Chicago, organized on a basis of four sessions a year, had attracted high school teachers to its summer session by offering advanced degrees for this work. Within the past few years Minnesota had begun holding summer sessions in its normal schools for grade school teachers and had enrolled a great many Wisconsin teachers. Since Wisconsin had not yet arranged to serve either of these groups effectively, and since Chicago and Minnesota were attracting Wisconsin teachers, Adams recommended that a committee of the College of Letters and Science investigate the matter and report.⁷³

This subject, as Adams well knew, was already under consideration by the faculty. The day before, at a meeting of the University faculty, Dean Birge submitted the report of a committee appointed to study the desirability of instituting a regular summer session. The faculty promptly voted that "it is desirable that provision be made in some form for the continuation of University work during a considerable part of the summer months." A week later the committee report, slightly amended, was adopted and in March the regents accepted the recommendations of the faculty.⁷⁴

The faculty committee, after several full discussions, had reached the conclusion that the University should hold a summer session of at least six weeks and that at least one-half the regular University faculty should teach in it. The committee rejected a proposal to adopt the Chicago quarter system. It was undesirable, the committee held, for the faculty to teach in

⁷³ Adams to the regents, in *Reports to the Regents*, Vol. D, pp. 467-468, January 17, 1899.

⁷⁴ *Minutes of the Faculty*, vol. 4, pp. 211, 213, 223.

both the summer and regular sessions year after year. Accordingly, the committee had recommended that those who taught in the summer session be given the option of receiving salary or paid leave for one semester in return for teaching two sessions of the summer session without pay. "The summer session somewhat endangers the best interests of the university in the fact that it diminishes the vacation. The vacation furnishes to the teacher the opportunity for receiving fresh ideas, for the writing of books that may give reputation to the University, and for the rest and recuperation so essential to the best work during the year." The committee proposed that ten thousand dollars be allotted for the summer session.⁷⁵

The Board of Regents adopted the recommendation of the faculty and in April named Dean E. A. Birge director of the summer session.⁷⁶ Birge held this position through the summer of 1903 and was then succeeded by Dana C. Munro, who in turn was succeeded by George C. Sellery.

For several years after the creation of the summer session of the University, the summer school for teachers continued at least nominally with Professor Stearns as director. When Birge retired from the position as director of the summer session, the two schools were formally brought together as the summer session of the University. Actually the summer school for teachers had almost disappeared four years earlier. In the first announcement of the establishment of the summer session, it was pointed out that: "While the summer session of the University of Wisconsin will include the Summer School for Teachers, which has been in operation for some years, it is not an enlargement of that school, but has a different purpose, providing elementary, advanced, and graduate instruction throughout the range of subjects ordinarily covered by the Faculty of Letters and Science."⁷⁷ Since the summer session represented an extension of the University school year, its requirements for admission were made the same as those for the regular term. However, anyone who desired might enter without examination and

⁷⁵ Reports to the faculty, in File Book, 1889-1907, vol. 1, p. 164. The committee consisted of Professors Birge, Turner, Ely, Haskins, Slichter, Hubbard, Stearns, Bull, Van Hise, and Whitney.

⁷⁶ Goodnight, *Summer School Origins*, 35.

⁷⁷ *University Catalogue*, 1898-99, p. 151.

take the work without credit. That was virtually all that remained of the summer school for teachers after 1899.⁷⁸

The regents provided only one-half the amount of money specified by the faculty committee as necessary for a respectable summer session. Nevertheless, the first regular summer session attracted 341 students, as against 221 of the year before.⁷⁹ In his report of 1901, Birge pointed out that between 1899 and 1901 the enrollment had actually dropped slightly. The summer session had failed to meet full expectations. Those attracted were chiefly undergraduates seeking additional credits, teachers, and graduate students. Birge complained in his report, "This result is somewhat surprising in view of the fact that the program of the Summer Session has been varied each year with the hope and expectation of attracting a different class of students. For the program of the present session especial attention was given to the course in commerce . . . most of the course of lectures were in this general department. It was thought that quite a number of persons would attend the Summer Session who for business reasons were unable to attend the regular session of the University, and a large number of the announcements of the Summer Session were sent out with reference to securing such persons." However, the attempt failed to attract such students.⁸⁰ As yet the University authorities could not quite be reconciled to the thought that the summer session must be principally a session for teachers.

After Van Hise became president, Dean Birge gave up the directorship of the summer session. D. C. Munro of the history department was named to the place. Turner then prepared a long memorandum for Munro discussing the functions of the summer session and making recommendations for future development. Turner saw in the rise of the University of Chicago a serious threat to the continued prestige of the University of Wisconsin. This was largely because of the excellent work done by that institution during its summer session. The University of Wisconsin had done much to compel high schools of the

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 152.

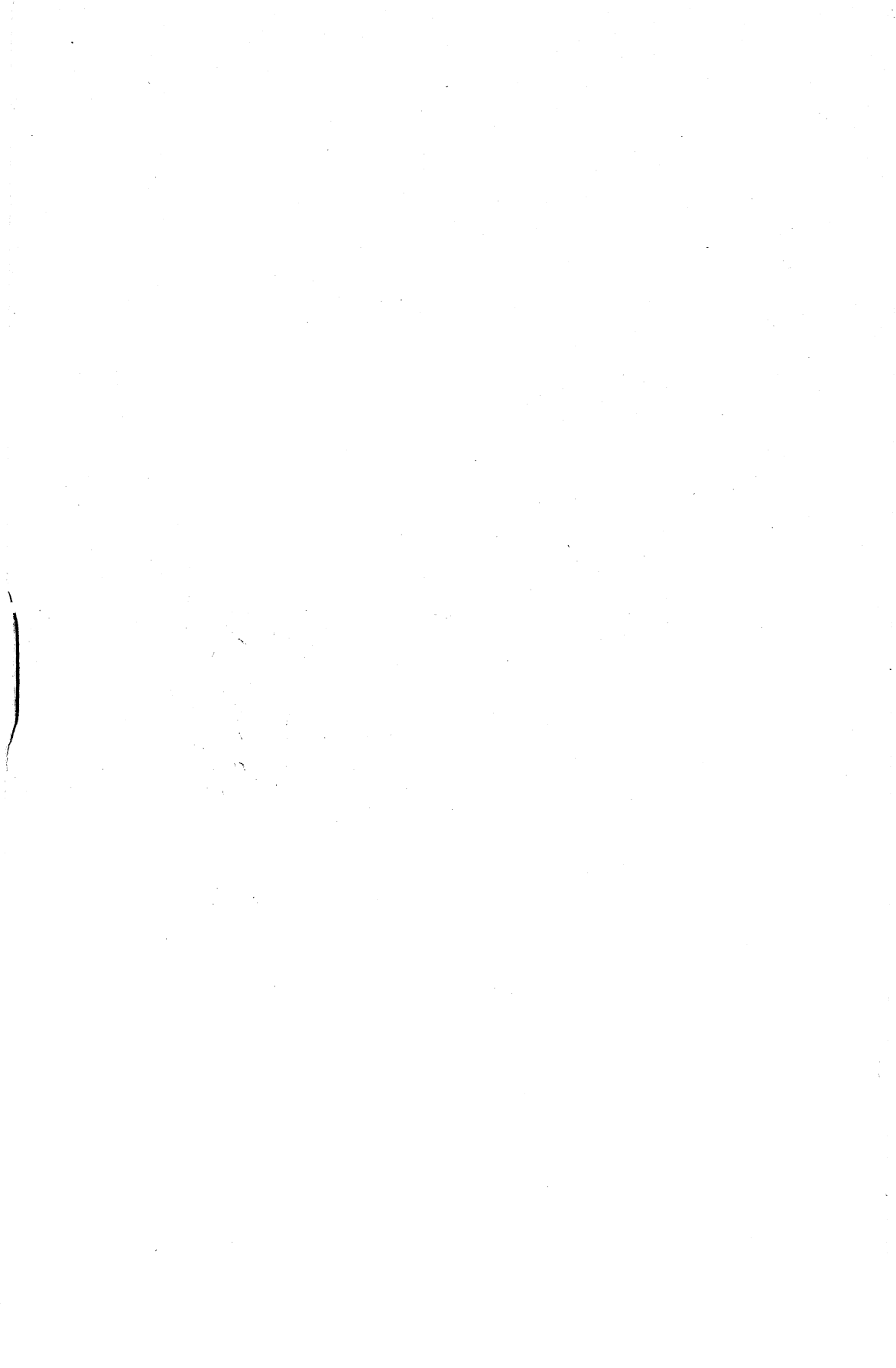
⁷⁹ Goodnight, *Summer School Origins*, 35, 92.

⁸⁰ Records of the Board of Regents, Vol. E, p. 469, August 14, 1901.

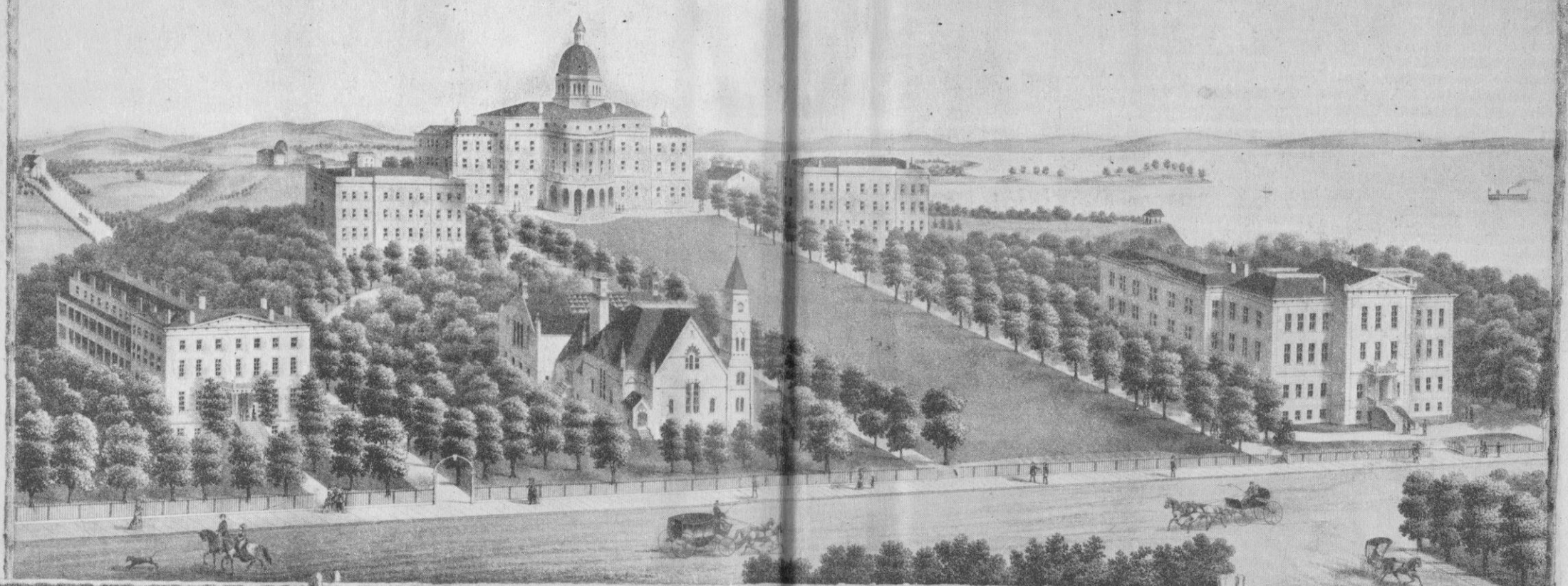
state to employ teachers with college training, and teachers holding a bachelor's degree needed graduate work in the summer in order to hold their jobs or get better ones. "There is therefore a demand," Turner wrote, "for advanced work in the summer, of a high grade under conditions that give prestige to the teacher. Whatever instruction, therefore, satisfies this demand will secure the teachers." Teachers would of course go to the institutions which promised most to further their chances of getting better jobs. Turner felt that the University should train teachers not only for Wisconsin but for the whole Midwest region. "Unless we adopt a broad policy, and gain a reputation by becoming a summer Mecca for educational movements from neighboring states, we shall cut our students off from the opportunity to share in this growing area opening to the teacher." Besides this, should Chicago or some other institution gain a monopoly on the training of high school teachers, it would not only benefit originally from the large attendance of teachers each summer, but also would profit eventually from a large number of high school graduates, for "the teachers will send their students to their *alma mater*. Nor is it reasonable to suppose that it [the University] can retain the best of its Wisconsin constituency; for the University that has the reputation of being the place from which to secure teachers will furnish a considerable fraction of Wisconsin teachers, and these will be so many garrisons of the enemy in Wisconsin's territory, affecting directly the supply of students."⁸¹

Although the hope expressed by Turner for "advanced work" of "high grade" was not realized immediately, the summer session during the next years improved rapidly. The session became increasingly a continuation of the regular academic program designed primarily for teachers. But during the next years the Colleges of Engineering, Law, Agriculture, and still later, Medicine, also offered summer work, and the summer session, for most educational purposes, blended into and became a regular and recognized part of the established offerings of the various branches of the University.

⁸¹ Goodnight, *Summer School Origins*, 41-45.



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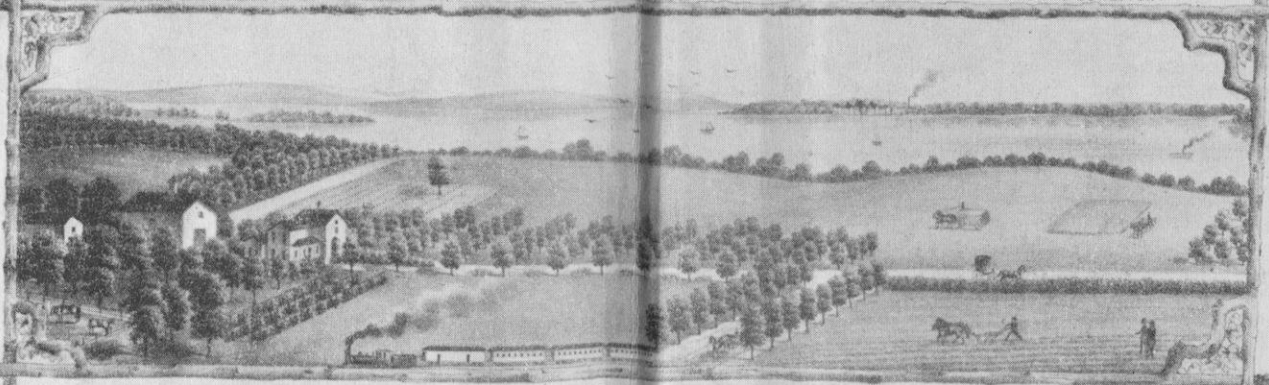
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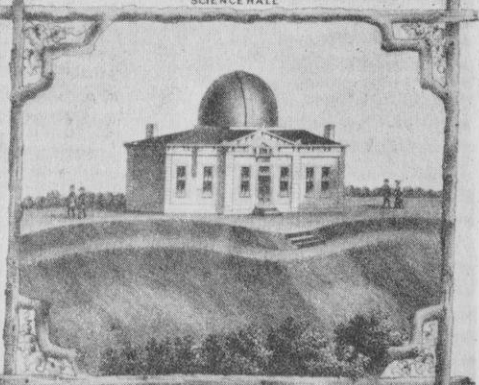
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