

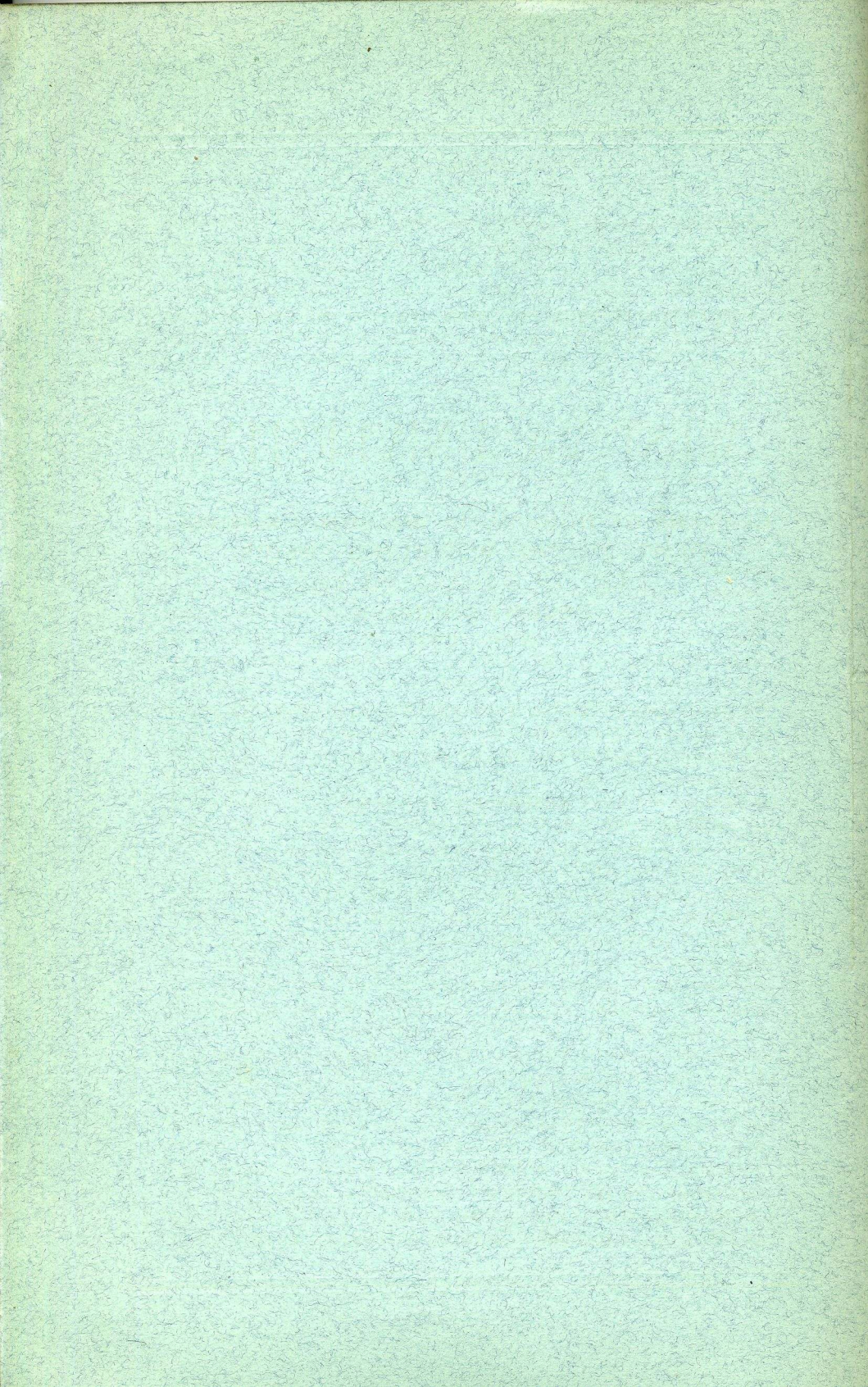
# WEST VA. UNIVERSITY.

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LETTERS OF HON. W. L. WILSON, EX-PRESI-  
DENT, TO THE WHEELING "REGIS-  
TER" IN REGARD TO THE  
RECENT CHANGES,  
ETC., ETC.

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# WEST VA. UNIVERSITY.

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## LETTERS OF HON. W. L. WILSON, EX-PRESIDENT, TO THE WHEELING "REGISTER" IN REGARD TO THE RECENT CHANGES, ETC., ETC.

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CHARLESTOWN, August 10.—I avail myself of the proffered courtesy of your columns, for some statement as to the present organization and facilities of the University, in the hope of correcting erroneous impressions now current as to that institution. I have delayed this statement in order that I might address the sober second thought of the State, after the force of the recent assault was partly spent. Many of the unfriendly articles that have appeared in the papers I have not seen, but I have carefully followed those in several journals that have been foremost in the attack upon the University, and I think all who have read them will agree with me, that while much censure has been expressed in a general and sweeping and sometimes passionate way, there has been a lack of definite grounds of assault, and that it is not possible to gather from them a bill of particulars to be considered or answered in detail. I think it has been further disclosed that the number of those who, from partisan or sectional intolerance, would wreck the chief seat of learning in the State, is not large, and that they cannot long infect any influential part of our people with their malignant spirit.

Prior to my election to its Presidency I had but slight acquaintance with the University, and only the respect due the unsolicited action of the regents induced me to make that careful examination which ended in my decision to take, what

was to me personally, the momentous step of a change of residence and of vocation, and to accept the position of which at the first I had but little serious idea.

I found the institution beautifully located, with good buildings, a reasonably liberal support from the State, and a faculty large enough for an extensive and liberal college course. With the exception of Bethany, it was the only school for higher culture in the State, and consequently the sole hope and opportunity for most of our young men to acquire a liberal education. Yet it was clear that in many sections it was viewed with hostility, and that in many populous and intelligent counties, young men rejected even its offer of free tuition, and went beyond our borders to expensive schools or remained uneducated. It seemed to me that this was as unnecessary as it was unfortunate, and that it was possible to place the University on a basis acceptable to all sections, to gather to its halls young men from every county, and to increase indefinitely its usefulness, by making it so good that none, not even the wealthiest, need go elsewhere for college education, and keeping it so cheap that none, not even the poorest, need despair of enjoying its advantages. To do all this was far more difficult than to build up a new institution, and as a brief experience soon showed me, much harder than I had at first supposed, for the past history of the school had bequeathed its baleful legacy of strifes, controversies and traditions, with which it was possible to have no sympathy, but whose burden it was not possible to escape. But it seemed to me practicable to overcome inveterate prejudices by patiently showing that there was no reason for them, and to build up the institution from within, so that its patronage might rest not on the favor of any party, sect or section, but on the solid and unshifting basis of its own merits, as understood and appreciated by all our people. I was the more influenced in my action because in early life I had been professor in a college, where conflict of opinion in matters political or sectional, had introduced no drop of bitterness, and because I believed it practicable, with the utmost good faith, to adopt the sentiment of the great Francis Lieber, "I belong to no party when teaching. All I acknowledge is *Patria cara, carior libertas, veritas carissima.*" The last session of the University opened prosperously. The number enrolled in the fall term was near one hundred and forty, an attendance not exceeded in the history of the school. But the first days of the session disclosed that the friction of some recent changes in the organization of studies was working discontent, and that there were influences seeking to in-

crease that discontent in order to disparage the University and thwart its success under the new system and management. As those changes have been made the occasion of much criticism and complaint, and seem to be totally misunderstood by those who most strongly condemn them, I will endeavor to give an explanation of them, such as may easily be understood by those not familiar with college matters.

### **Abolition of the Curriculum for the Elective System.**

The American college, as originally organized, had a fixed and inflexible course of studies, called a curriculum. It was distributed over four years, leading by successive classes to graduation, (B. A.) and none could graduate but those who completed this curriculum. When this routine was established the subjects of college study included little more than the ancient languages, mathematics, philosophy and logic, and it was not only possible but easy to prescribe the same course for all students, as the foundation or rather the entire scheme of liberal education. But in modern times, in the last two or three decades, there has been such an immense multiplication of the subjects of knowledge, worthy a place in a scheme of liberal education, and such an indefinite increase in the range of occupations for which college education is intended to qualify, that the subjects of instruction are limited only by the ability of institutions to employ instructors. Among these subjects I may specify the modern languages and literatures, the scientific study of our own tongue; the new science of languages; the study of history with reference to its philosophy; the several social and political sciences, and the constantly increasing and splendid sisterhood of the physical sciences. All these now demand a recognition on a footing of equality with the formerly exclusive subjects of the curriculum, and the great endowments of our richer colleges are unable to keep pace with the progress and methodizing of knowledge, especially in the domain of scientific and technical education. Clearly then, it is not possible to combine all of these subjects into a curriculum, or indeed to study many of them in the time allotted for a college course, nor is it easy or perhaps practicable, to make a judicious selection among them, adapted to the needs of a majority of students. Education, in which the first object must always be to train the mind, and to stock it only the second, is one, but the road for one student to reach it may be widely different from that which is most advantageous to another. Hence our best colleges have been forced, very reluctantly in many cases, to allow students

a constantly widening freedom in the selection of their studies, by substituting an elective system for the curriculum, or attempting to combine the two in some practicable scheme.

There are, generally speaking, three methods in use among them. Some colleges attempt to engraft the elective system upon their curriculum, allowing greater freedom of choice as the classes advance; others instead of a single curriculum, or combination of studies, offer several or many; and still others, declining to prescribe any curriculum, which must always be changing, break up the system of study by general classes into a system of study by subjects or branches.

Our best Eastern colleges have generally adopted the first plan. President Eliot long since announced for Harvard that "the college proposed to persevere in its efforts to establish, improve and extend the elective system," and that institution has now advanced, so far, that I have, in the last week, seen its so-called curriculum, described as a *go-as-you-please system*.

Michigan and Cornell Universities are striking examples of the second method, as also the College of the Johns Hopkins University, which has been established with more freedom from mere traditional fetters, and more regard to the actual needs of the present, than any of our institutions. This now advertises seven distinct courses or combinations of study, leading to the same degree, (B. A.) among which, students select the course they judge most useful to themselves, or the best foundation for the special or professional study that comes after a college education. The third system, which organizes the various subjects of study into separate departments, prevails in the University of Virginia, in the best secondary colleges, male (and female) of that State and in many of the most useful colleges and theological seminaries of other States.

I have explained these systems with some detail that I may clearly show the changes made at Morgantown, and further show how a question, beset with practical difficulty it is true, but as completely within the domain of educational philosophy as the proper method of studying a dead language, has been involved, through misrepresentation, ignorance and prejudice, in an atmosphere of lurid partisan politics. Weighty reasons may be given in support of each of these methods of dealing with the problem of college organization. Under each one of them great colleges are working smoothly and efficiently; under each one thousands of young men are studying zealously and successfully.

In 1882 our University was in a position to take a very

decided step forward. Under the liberal appropriations of the last Legislature the Regents were expected to fill the vacant Presidency, establish a new professorship, and extend the professional schools. There would be ten full professors in the University and two associates in the Preparatory school; a corps of teachers ample for a very considerable college. The Faculty could not, then, in justice to themselves or the State, escape a two-fold duty, viz: to extend the elective system, and to raise the standard. In dealing with the first duty they recommended to the Regents to adopt the third or independent school system above described. In this selection they were undoubtedly influenced by those professors who were familiar with the system chosen, and who conscientiously believed it to be, of all systems the most promotive of thorough scholarship. But the action of the Faculty was *unanimous*, and is so declared in the report of Prof. D. B. Purinton, acting President, dated June 5, 1882, (See Rep. Regents to last Legislature, p. 16). I cite this one to show that this change, so unaccountably denounced as a partisan act, was the act of the entire Faculty, as then constituted (prior to the election of Dr. Allen and myself). For it they are, each and all, jointly and severally responsible. A lack of unanimity would have called for the judgment of the Regents; as the action of the entire faculty, I presume it was sanctioned as a matter of course.

Under this system the University is organized into ten separate schools, of which eight are Academic, and two professional. The former are: 1. Metaphysics; 2. Mathematics; 3. Ancient Languages; 4. Modern Languages; 5. English; 6. History; 7. Agriculture, Chemistry and Physics; 8. Geology and Natural History. While students can select the schools they wish to attend, they do so under the advice of the Faculty and are required, except professional students, to attend not less than three, unless excused for cause. Upon completing the course and examinations in any school, students receive a diploma therein; a certain number of diplomas entitle to the University degrees. The advantages claimed for this organization may be briefly stated. For the University itself it cuts the Gordian Knot which so many colleges are essaying to untie, and puts it into position to take in, as rapidly as its resources may permit, other subjects of study, without any jostling of the subjects already in its system, and without the necessity of attempting to fit them into any artificial curriculum. For the student, (who can have the same guidance in the choice of his studies, as under the curriculum, without its empirical restraints), it teaches him betimes to study by

subjects rather than in classes, a method he has to adopt in after life, and it develops his individuality, by throwing him at once upon his own diligence for success, as he is neither borne forward by the momentum of a class nor retarded by its inertia. If he can take but a partial course he can still have a thorough course, and become a graduate of the University with the immense intellectual and moral benefit of knowing one thing or several things well, instead of having a superficial and dangerous knowledge of many things. For the professor it tends to produce greater range and thoroughness of instruction. He is free to organize his school as the progress of knowledge and his own attainments suggest, without the hampering and oftentimes unintelligent control of associates, and he is expected to make it as thorough and successful as if it were the only school in the University. Under the stimulus of this personal responsibility and in the honorable competition with his associates, he will inevitably make his instruction more thorough than if the same subjects were simply a constituent part of a general curriculum, and must seek to infuse such enthusiasm among his students that they will perform great additional labor without a sense of its added burden and irksomeness.

Besides these general advantages it is claimed for the new system that it is specially adapted to the lack of preparation, or to the irregular preparation of our West Virginia students, none being prevented from making progress in some studies by their deficiencies in other directions.

Having now explained this change and the reasons for it in the organization of the University, I reserve for another paper what I have to say about the standard of scholarship.

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## ARTICLE II.

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### THE RAISED STANDARD OF SCHOLARSHIP.

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CHARLESTOWN, W. VA., August 11.—Yesterday I spoke of the adoption of an advanced elective system by the University; to-day I will speak of the raised standard of scholarship. By standard, here, I mean the minimum mark required for passing from a lower to a higher class, or for graduation. Under the curriculum this had not been high. An average of six, on a scale of ten, was required, and this average was reached by counting class room marks as three (3) and examination as



one (1); examinations were restricted to fifteen questions. It is difficult to explain how mild a standard this was. A student who made seven on daily recitations (an unsatisfactory mark) would need but three on examination to pass him. This standard was doubtless adopted on the idea that an easy course leading to University degrees, would attract students, and popularize the institution; the success of the school having been mistakingly based at least by the public on the number of names that could be gathered for its catalogue, rather than on the thoroughness and extent of its educational work. Another custom permitted the assignment to a professor of subjects entirely outside of his field of teaching or study. A professor of Modern Languages would be required to teach Mathematics; a professor of Belles Letters to teach the Natural Sciences. This was utterly inconsistent with the character of instruction a college ought to give. Whatever the general attainments of a teacher, the work of his own special department cannot be well done without exclusive devotion to it. Other teaching will generally be mere hearing of lessons out of a text book. Prof. Huxley, advocating the study of science, has said that he would not raise a finger to introduce mere book work in science into every art curriculum in England. Mere book work in many other fields is equally fruitless. In saying all this, I wish to guard against any implication that good teaching was not done, and good studying also, or that graduates did not go forth with excellent attainments. All I mean is, that it was possible, under the standard, to graduate without high attainments, and nowhere, as experience and observation teach me, is it more important to exact thoroughness and good scholarship than in our University. The lack of higher culture in our State (as a West Virginian I may say this) makes it possible to pass off the name for the reality. Despite our gratifying educational progress, we are still in an era when we are apt to call small things by great names, or to accept the shadow for the substance. Our primary school teachers are largely "professors." Indifferent schools are self-styled colleges. But a few years since there was current in our educational journals and newspapers, an advertisement of a "college," which, in the extravagance of its professions, surpassed the boasting of the quack-medicine vendor, and whose Faculty (of one) promised to do what neither Harvard nor Yale would offer to accomplish. The "loud" style is not yet banished from our school advertisements. All this tends to debase the estimate of real culture, and to give currency to its counterfeit. Moreover the idea is

prevalent, especially among our young men, that the chief object of attending college is to graduate; that education is getting a diploma, rather than becoming something; that the sheepskin of itself, not the attainments of which it should be the certificate, is the object of pursuit. All this makes it the more important that our University should not range itself with that throng of so-called colleges, where graduation depends on attendance alone, and which, yearly, send forth their schools of titled ignoramuses with scant culture and much conceit, but that no effort should be spared to make it a seat and center of genuine education, a fountain of higher culture. It is its mission, no less than its duty to dispel ideas blighting to our educational progress, to encourage and require high standards, to stimulate our youths, no matter how defective their earlier training, to faithful work and scholarly attainment, and to send out graduates with the power, the modesty, and the high ideas of true culture, not with the pretense and conceit of unconscious ignorance. The action of the Faculty in raising the standard was not extreme or abrupt. They continued the grade at six, but doubled the value of examinations, counting them as one-half instead of one-fourth, in ascertaining the average, and they made the examinations more thorough. Certainly it cannot be said that this is unreasonably high.

The introduction of the elective system and the raising of the standard required other innovations. Hitherto lectures or recitations were forty-five minutes in length, and as a rule confined to the forenoons of five days of the week, the University students having a holiday on Saturday as regularly as the pupils of the common schools. With the beginning of the last session, one hour was allotted to each University recitation, and some exercises were assigned to afternoons and Saturdays.

I have now stated the changes which were made in the University in 1882. They were: 1. The substitution of the elective system for the curriculum; but students already in the curriculum classes are allowed to continue in them through their course. 2. The raising of the standard by increasing the requirements as to examinations. 3. Lengthening the time of recitations from forty-five minutes to one hour. 4. Assigning some college exercises to afternoons and Saturdays. These changes could not but produce friction and occasion some confusion. The students viewed with dissatisfaction the increase of hours of study and the advanced standard, and with bewilderment and uncertainty the introduction of a system under

which graduation was a matter of individual effort, not of mere class membership. All this, I think, would have been temporary and as soon as order was evolved out of the dissolution of the former system, there would have been slight discontent, but that other influences were watchful and eager to foment any dissatisfaction, and turn it to the detriment of the University, and to the discrediting of the new administration. In truth the school, from the beginning of the session, was enveloped in a cloud of depreciation and evil foreboding, and accordingly when at the first examinations several students failed in the class of mathematics, there was an effort to create a stampede. The students who failed, with several others who were able to maintain a good standard, withdrew to easier colleges, and a few others, glad of any excuse to escape from study, availed themselves of this occasion. That this attempted exodus was organized, concerted, aided and abetted from without, was shown, among other things, by the fact that the University was flooded at this time with the catalogues of two sectarian colleges in Ohio. In the winter term quite a number of students go out to teach in our free schools. This usual diminution, increased as above stated, reduced the attendance last winter to about one hundred, and was seized upon for an attack upon the University, intended, as it seemed, to injure it with the Legislature, in which it was falsely asserted that only seventy students remained, and that political reasons had something to do with the departures. The University became a target for newspaper assaults, the coarsest of which were known to be instigated by relatives of a student who was excluded from its privileges for conduct involving grave moral and legal turpitude. The attack did not affect the action of the Legislature, which was more liberal than ever in its appropriations, but it did effect the attendance in the spring term. My correspondence showed me that the influx of new students would have been as great as ever, but the dissemination of these reports at the critical time, deterred many who were preparing to come. And now, while upon this subject, I will say all that I have to say upon this matter of numbers. At the close of the session it was again published, and reiterated that only seventy students remained. There seems to have been some attraction about that particular number. This is not true. I have, to-day gone over the catalogue, and find that there were over seventy in the University alone, while the preparatory students swelled the attendance to more than one hundred. But if it had been true, the blame and responsibility would have been with those who

kindled the assault upon the school, not with the school itself. But more as to numbers. One object of the above changes was to make the University more acceptable to the State. After fifteen years existence and the expenditure of hundreds of thousands of dollars from the State treasury, it remained too largely a local institution. In 1882, when its attendance was largest, its catalogue showed 177 names. Of these 159 were from West Virginia, of which 59 were from the University county, 14 from the adjoining county of Preston, and 86 from 28 other counties in the State. In 1883 the catalogue shows 159 names. Of these 146 are from West Virginia, of which 51 are from the University county, 7 from Preston, and 88 from 31 other counties. Again, of the 177 in 1882, there were 103 in the preparatory school and 74 in the University. Of the 159 in 1883, there were 76 exclusively in the University and, 45 exclusively in the school, and 38 having studies in both the University and school. This shows that while there was a decrease in the aggregate attendance, it was local and in the school, while in the University itself there was an increase in the students and in the counties represented. It has been objected to the maintenance of a preparatory department, that it is supported largely for local benefit. I do not agree with this objection, but there is some force in it. It is thus seen that under the most adverse circumstances in its history, the past session showed progress in widening the patronage of the University. Now as to the elective system: of the 74 students in the University proper in 1882, there were 9 exclusively professional, and 65 collegians. Of the latter 22 were "optional" and 43 in the curriculum. Of the 43 there were 38 from West Virginia, and 15 were "conditioned;" so that of the 177 students enrolled, there were only 28 in the regular classes of both the scientific and classical courses. This would show that the school itself was forcing its way toward an elective system, and that the Faculty were justified in supposing it was better adapted to the needs of the students of the State. Had they consulted their own ease, they might have avoided all this censure, continued an easy curriculum, and swelled their classes, with great applause for building up the University, when in truth they would not have been advancing our real educational interests, or faithfully discharging the high trust committed to them. The standard is not yet what it ought to be. The income of the University is sufficient, the State which supports it and the young men for whom it is supported, alike desire that it shall be made as good as it can be made, both in the breadth and

depth of the education which it dispenses. I shall have something more to say in another paper, which will conclude my article.

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### ARTICLE III.

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#### THE CHARGE OF PARTISANSHIP.

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CHARLESTOWN, W. VA., August 16.—In speaking of the raised standard at the University, I omitted to state that a student must reach the grade of seven and a half, in the senior classes of a school, to graduate therein. Six is sufficient, as stated, to pass from a lower to a higher class.

I come now to speak of the charge of partisanship in the University, which has been made with much vehemence and pertinacity. So far as this charge grew out of or was based upon the changes recently made in the institution, the explanation given of them, is its best refutation. Fair minded persons, I think, will rather say that it is partisanship, and that of a very reckless type, to seize upon the confusion and temporary discontent involved in a proper and much needed effort to improve the educational work of the University, and to raise it to a higher and wider plane of usefulness, for an attack upon it in the hope that any resulting damage may be made into political capital.

So far as the instruction and internal management of the University are concerned, I do not believe that any fact has been cited, or can be cited, to give color or support to the allegation. Such a grave charge should be accompanied by some specification. It is not possible and no man is called on to prove a negative. The accuser should furnish specifications and evidence. Until this is done it will be sufficient to meet a general allegation by a general denial. Speaking for the session just closed, I make this denial as broadly, and as unqualifiedly as it can be made. Indeed, I do not think that any one who understands the inspiration which an instructor feels from contact with young men, and his consequent desire to possess and to merit their confidence and respect for all future time, will readily suppose that he will gratuitously introduce into his relations with them, any influence that will forfeit or endanger that respect. I speak from

experience and with a sense of obligation I cannot exaggerate, when I testify that, for all the exceptional cares and anxieties of my brief connection with the University, I found a compensating enjoyment in the free, cordial and pleasant association with the young men gathered there. That association was marred by not one unpleasant incident, and was brightened by many marks of confidence and regard.

But it is said the Board of Regents, as now constituted, is a partisan board. I do not know how far those who cite this fact can cite their own example in this State in rebuke of it. In some States university regents are elected by popular vote. In such, I presume, the same result appears. It is not a matter of consequence, except as it affects the internal administration of the school. The Regents meet but once a year, and then for a few days only. Their time is largely given to auditing accounts and to like business matters. They elect the Faculty, and it ought to be sufficient defense of the present Board to say, that for one year only in the past dozen years, has the head of the institution been in political accord with the Regents. All those professors who belong to a different school of politics from the Board, have been appointed, reappointed and continued in office by them. The only subject involved in current politics, on which instruction is given in the University, is committed to one of these, and is, I doubt not, taught without the slightest reference to its party bearings. During all the rest of the year except when the Board is in session, the administration of the business matters with the filling of vacancies in the Faculty, is vested in an executive committee of citizens, of which the secretary and book-keeper is Senator W. C. McGrew, one of the most prominent Republicans in the State.

The fact has been commented on that the Regents appointed a Chairman of the Faculty for next session, and the appointee has been the object of much and unmerited abuse. I am not in the counsels of the Board, but it is well known that they balloted several times for a President, and being unable to agree upon one, designated the senior professor (by service) to act as chairman of the Faculty until otherwise ordered. Professor Berkeley, the gentleman so designated, is worthy the full confidence and support of our people, an accurate scholar, an experienced teacher, an unassuming, christian gentleman, modest methodical and conscientious. He may not be so "progressive" as some whose speed is not encumbered by any "load of lean and wasteful learning," but in the better sense of that much abused word, and in having high ideals of scholarship, he is subject to no reproach.

I do not wish to dwell upon the question of partisanship, but candor compels me say before dismissing it, that the same rule is not in all quarters applied to all the professors. Manifestations of political sympathy and activity if in one direction excite no comment or disfavor, but are regarded as matters of course and altogether proper, while the mere holding of opposite views, no matter how quietly and unobtrusively, will be denounced as rank partisanship. In other words, the standard of one side is set up as the absolute rule of right so far as the University is concerned, and all deviation from that standard, whether in act or opinion, is politically inexcusable and wrong.

This may give some explanation of the fact that it has been impossible, hitherto, to get more than one-half of the State represented in the attendance, or to inspire it with any interest in or friendship for the University. On any basis narrower than the whole State its growth must be a forced one, and too often in its past history has the President been expected to abandon his appropriate work, and sally forth as a commercial traveler, "drumming" up pupils for the school. There is surely something to be remedied if the State after spreading the feast has to send out into the highways and compel guests to attend it.

The recent assaults upon the University are unfortunate in that they will inevitably affect the attendance next session. Some youths will go to other and perhaps less advantageous institutions, and some will remain uneducated, who would otherwise avail themselves of the opportunity at their very doors. In my judgment, there was no justification for these assaults. Nothing is better for any State institution, than fair, honest, watchful scrutiny of the press and the public. I believe such institutions should be conducted in the spirit of the old Roman, who, when his architect offered to build him a house into which no man could gaze, replied, 'rather arrange it that all my life shall be open to all eyes.'

The sunlight of public scrutiny should surround and pervade the University, but the institution should never be made the football of mere partisan rancor. If it rightly exists, it exists for all our youth. The very considerable fund expended in its support is a trust fund for the benefit of the young men of the entire State, for those of Hampshire and Hardy and Jefferson and Greenbrier and Logan as well as of the counties nearer the school. The sharp political and sectional differences that divide West Virginia must be recognized in the concession of

equal rights, equal standing, equal hospitality and of equal freedom of speech within the bounds of courteous language. To arrogate unlimited freedom for the one side, and to deny it altogether to the other, sinks into such sheer intolerance as that which criticised Maj. Hotchkiss' address at the late Commencement.

Equally inexcusable has been the aspersion thrown upon the personal characters of the Faculty, and the attempt to beget, by indirection and insinuation, the belief that they are morally unfit to educate young men. The spirit of Pharisaism itself could not go further. To the unintelligent an opprobrious epithet is better than an argument, but to the intelligent and thoughtful, it indicates the lack of argument and the ebullition of mere malice. A State school must steer clear of the breakers of sectarianism. Whether religious exercises should be compulsory or voluntary is a question on which the most discreet and truly pious men differ. The absence of all compulsion, the rule adopted in many State institutions, may relax restraints that are wholesome and necessary. Too much compulsion is equally dangerous, in that it may produce a rooted aversion to religion, or what is far more corrupting and hopeless, may blight the character with the worst of all corrosives, insincerity and cant. It is unreasonable and unjust to make difference of opinion, on this question, a proof of immorality or of lack of reverence for general religion.

I do not say that many improvements should not be made in the University, or that it is as good as it ought to be. Whether the particular elective system adopted will be most advantageous, is a matter to be determined by fair trial only. Some of its critics, learning that it was similar to the system at the Virginia University, have allowed their prejudice to outstrip their information and candor, and have described it as behind the times. No well informed educator would make this suggestion. The only question is whether it be not too far in advance for the young men who gather at Morgantown. But nothing is more certain than it will present no obstacle to any student earnestly bent on getting an education, and to many such it will prove beneficial. Degrees and diplomas, hereafter, will not be so easy to get, but as certificates of faithful work and good attainments they will mean more. Instead of attacking those who are trying to accomplish this, we should encourage and support their efforts. The present resources of the University are ample to make and sustain it as an excellent college, or if it be possible to draw the line



of distinction, as no insignificant university. It is time it were passing out of the "era of prespectry," into that of vigorous, useful existence. The State should exact nothing less. A hearty recognition of this fact that it belongs to the entire State is still the first and most necessary condition of its success. This reached, and many narrowing influences will of themselves fall away. It is no disparagement of its past to say that it offers greater advantages to young men than ever before. Its Faculty is larger; its equipments are better; its courses are more extensive; its standards are higher. The expenses of attendance are kept much lower than in other institutions of like grade. Its halls should be filled with students, reaching to hundreds rather than to scores. Its professional schools continue through the session. The course in law, under the charge of Mr. St. George T. Brooke, is full and thorough, and the degree is conferred upon those who complete it and pass the requisite examinations.

There is no medical department, but a Chair of Anatomy, Physiology and Hygiene is filled by Dr. B. W. Allen, an experienced teacher and distinguished surgeon. The chemical laboratory has recently been equipped by an appropriation of \$2,500 from the State Treasury, and young men have an opportunity, under an able and competent professor, Mr. Woodville Latham, to study, not only general, but analytical chemistry. In geology and natural history they come into contact with one of the rising scientists of our country, Prof. I. C. White, whose contagious enthusiasm compensates for deficient equipments in his department. In the schools of pure and applied mathematics they meet two other graduates of the University, (Messrs. Purinton and Stewart), one of whom, Prof. D. B. Purinton, has filled the office of President *ad interim*, with great success, and stands deservedly high with the friends of the University. Modern languages are taught by Mr. John I. Harvey, a gentleman educated in the best German universities; ancient languages by Mr. R. C. Berkeley, the Chairman of the Faculty, of whom I have spoken. The school of English is in charge of Prof. F. S. Lyon, a teacher of life-long experience, and history will be taught by the professor elect, Mr. W. P. Willey. Prof. Lorentz re-appears at the head of the preparatory department, with Major Lee, the efficient commander of the cadet corps, as assistant. With such advantages proffered to them, it is evident that for very many of our young men no better counsel can be given than to attend our State University, and

upon the friends of education in the State rests the duty of uniting to make the institution a blessing and ornament to our entire commonwealth, constantly urging and helping it to higher rank and wider usefulness.

WM. L. WILSON.

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N. B.—Mr. Wilson has had no opportunity to revise these letters since their first publication.





