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THE FAITH OF THE UNIVERSITY

IN thus endeavoring to write about the meaning of the new institution I have at some length written about its sources in the Founder's philanthropy and its history in the public spirit of his friends; of its site, glorious in problems bristling with difficulties and joyous in possibilities of creative effort; of its scope in entering upon a university programme for the advancement of letters, science, and art, by investigation and by instruction, in the individual and in the race of all human kind; of its saints of the past and its seers of the present, pointing by exhortation and example to the highroad along which progress in these high purposes lies; of the shades and towers in which are to be undertaken the daring adventures of its life in deeds of thought and action; of its staff of professors, lecturers, and instructors, in whose personality and work of research and teaching are to be found combined the careers of citizen, scientist, scholar, and schoolmaster; of its students, through whose studies and standards in scholarship and sport constant contributions are to be made to the character, culture, and citizenship of the Republic; of its strength in its freedom from political and ecclesiastical affiliations, in its faith in the progress of the human spirit, in its faculties of science, humanity, and technology, in its self-governed student democracy, in a definite educational policy, and the driving power of ideas and ideals backed by material resources for their realization; of its support in the schools of the city, the county, and the commonwealth, in the college men and women of the community, in the captains of industry and commerce, in all organized conferences for education, welfare, and uplift, in the resolute determination of the

people who have been winning the West, now to win the best for the sons and daughters of the West. My further and final object is an attempted portrayal of the spirit which presides over the university: a presentation, more or less rough, of that breath and finer form of the spirit of learning which lends what is perhaps its chief glory to the life of reflection and gives what may be perhaps its final purpose to the life of action.¹

Twenty years ago it was specialization. Ten years ago it was specialization. To-day it is specialization still, whether in academic education or in professional training, but specialization on the broadest kind of general foundation. Preparatory to attacking the practical problems of the material world, men are coming to provide themselves with the most complete theoretical training yet devised in the world of mind. On the other hand, pure scientists are continually on the outlook for applications of their discoveries either to the ideal world in which they live or to the real world in which they find their livelihood. As a result the professor's desk is nearer the market-place, closer to the counting-house, within easier call of State and Church than ever before. The university is saying to its men of letters, "You must be leaders of men"; to its men of science, "You must be also men of affairs." The world in its turn is demanding that its engineers be cultivated men, and that its skilled artisans be skilled in the liberal arts as well.

Where theory and practice thus meet there must be reason, and this reason is restoring to learning its unity, in whose spirit we read the strength and the vision of the uni-

¹To bring within the time limits of the programme the reading of an address obviously too long to be read in its complete form in public on any occasion, only four sections of this address were actually delivered as a part of the formal exercises of the inauguration and dedication of the Rice Institute, and under the caption, "The Meaning of the New University: Its Source, Its Site, Its Scope, Its Spirit."

versity. This spirit appears to us under three aspects in those disciplines by which men seek for truth and strive after beauty in letters, in science, in art. Art was originally the handmaid of religion; science, at one time the servant of philosophy, has more lately become its master; letters, in the beginning the playfellow of poets and story-tellers, has grown to be humanity's recording angel. Science has its source in a sense of wonder, art in a sensitiveness to measure and proportion, while literature partakes of the substance of science and the form of art. Science consecrated to the conquest of truth would solve the universe; art would recreate it in the conservation of taste. Science progresses by inquiry, art under inspiration. Intuition dominates the artistic reason, while inference controls the scientific.

In other words, by the spirit of liberal and technical learning I understand that immortal spirit of inquiry or inspiration which has been clearing the pathway of mankind to intellectual and spiritual liberty, to the recognition of law and charm in nature, to the fearless pursuit of truth and the ceaseless worship of beauty. Its history is the history of the progress of the human spirit. Led by an instinct for knowledge, an instinct for harmony, an instinct for law, that spirit has brought the twentieth century its most precious possessions: the love of reason, the love of art, the love of freedom.

There abide these three: the spirit of science, the spirit of letters, the spirit of art, but the man has not arisen to say to us which is the greatest of the three. These are the faces of the spirit of learning, above which there hovers a halo called by the modern philosopher the spirit of service, and by the ancient seer the spirit of wisdom. Knowledge becomes power only when it is vitalized by reason; it becomes learning only when it lives in the personality of a man; it becomes

wisdom on translation into human conduct. I know as well as you that the spirits of which I speak are ghosts who will themselves not speak until they have drunk blood. We propose to give them the blood of our hearts in the service of the new institution.¹

Ladies and Gentlemen of Houston: At your gates there have arisen for all time the walls and towers and men of the Rice Institute, whose life is to be an integral part of your life, whose service is to be local in the best sense, whose significance, let us hope, may be State-wide, and even national, in its reach, on a foundation builded for Houston, for Texas, the South, and the Nation. A long avenue doubly lined with trees, at one end the captains of industry and commerce in factory and counting-house, at the other a college community in academic shades dedicated to liberal and technical learning, the happy homes of Houston lying in between! A university devoted to the advancement of literature, science, and art; to the promotion of letters as the record of the achievements of the human spirit; to the promotion of science as the revealer of the laws and the conqueror of the forces of nature; to the promotion of art as the sunshine and gilding of life. A society of scholars in whose company your children, and your children's children and their children, may spend formative years of their aspiring youth under the cultivating influences of humane letters and pure science, pursuing culture with forward-looking minds and far-seeing spirit before undertaking in the Institute's professional schools special or technical training for the more sober business of life. A temple of wisdom and sanctuary of learning within whose courts and cloisters you yourselves may find an occasional retreat in which to think more quietly

¹ It is to Professor von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, I believe, that I owe this figure of speech.

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and more deeply; perhaps to worship more devoutly and more intelligently; certainly to contemplate the deeper things of patriotism and politics, of reverence and religion, of peace and progress; and mayhap to discover, if never before, that you may belong to the great community through which the Eternal has worked for ages, that you may have a share in the high privileges and solemn duties which belong to every member of that great community, that in the continuity of human history you may march forward, if you will, in a great pageant that moves from the living past through the living present into the living future.

Not long ago I stood on a great rock—a great living rock—within eyeshot of the birthplace of modern civilization. Upon it rose those incomparable ruins, mighty as the mind that conceived them, majestic as the mountains and sea that call to them. In their midst the gods of the Greeks still live. And of all those gods it was to her who typifies science that the Parthenon was dedicated; to that great goddess who sprang full-armed from the head of Zeus at the touch of fire and toil, to conquer the deep himself.¹ It is no long flight of fancy from the Parthenon above the fields of Hellas to these towers that rise on the plains of Texas. Under her ancient promise, may Pallas Athena preside over these academic groves and guide men by the spirit of science and the spirit of art and the spirit of service in their search for the great, and the lovely, and the new, for solutions of the universe in terms of the good, the beautiful, and the true!

And I recalled the words of the wise man of another chosen people:

“Except the Lord doth build the house, they labor in vain that build it.”

¹ The idea and experience of the first part of this paragraph I am obliged to share with Professor Sir Ronald Ross, but I am unable to supply the appropriate citation.

"I prayed, and understanding was given me; I called upon God, and the spirit of wisdom came unto me; I preferred her above sceptres and thrones, for she is unto men a treasure that never faileth."

"For wisdom is a breath of the power of God, and a pure effluence flowing from the glory of the Almighty. She is the reflection of the everlasting light, the unspotted mirror of the power of God and the image of his goodness. And in all ages, entering into holy souls, she maketh them friends of God, and prophets."

*Wisdom hath builded her house,
She hath hewn out her seven pillars;
She hath mingled her wine;
She hath also furnished her table,
She hath sent forth her maidens; she crieth
Upon the highest places of the city,*

*"Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither";
As for him that is void of understanding, she saith to him,
"Come, eat ye of my bread,
And drink of the wine which I have mingled,
And walk in the way of understanding.*

*"Blessed is the man that heareth me,
Watching daily at my gates,
Waiting at the posts of my doors;
For whoso findeth me findeth life,
And shall obtain favor of the Lord."¹*

EDGAR ODELL LOVETT.

¹ These several passages, from the Book of Proverbs and the Book of Wisdom, in slightly abbreviated form have been distributed in the carving on the caps of the columns which support the arches in the cloisters of the North Wing of the first Residential Hall.

