

Tuttle, J. S. 1873.

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WHAT IS THE MISSION
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Wabash College?

By Joseph Farrand Tuttle.

WABASH COLLEGE, CRAWFORDSVILLE, IND., }
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TO THE FACULTY OF WABASH COLLEGE:

The Mission of Wabash College as defined by passing events, is a theme worthy of our careful consideration.

Forty years ago there was not in the Northern States a single well endowed College or University. Wabash College was not then subjected to a damaging competition with either State institutions at the West, or the celebrated Colleges at the East, since it was generally thought that a few instructors could impart as thorough drill in Latin, Greek and Mathematics to smaller classes here, as could be done to larger classes at the older colleges. Besides this, the expense and time required to accomplish the journey from Indiana to New Jersey or New England, were so great as to act as a "protection tariff" to our own College.

If we look over the field now, we find that Wabash College is subjected more and more to a competition with other institutions.

In the first place a very great change has taken place in the State institutions at the West. In our own State, the University has quadrupled its income and doubled its number of students within ten years. As the so-called head of the Public School system, and as furnishing tuition free, it is a formidable rival, and the more so, as its resources are likely to be enlarged still more.

The Purdue University, twenty-eight miles north of us, is possessed of about half a million of dollars, and whilst its policy is not yet settled we have reason to expect its competition for at least a part of our present patronage.

The Michigan State University has already a large income and patronage. The power of this greatest of the State Universities is further seen in the recent tax laid on all the property of the State to support it.

Without further enlarging this statement, it is sufficient to show us that Wabash College has to endure a heavy competition with the richly endowed State institutions at the West. And it is not unlikely that the next Congress will make such a disposition of the public lands as shall place all voluntary Colleges at the West in a still more unequal competition with the State favorites.

In the *second* place, a still greater change has taken place in the Eastern Colleges and Universities, and this in two respects:

1st. In their endowments. Within six years, Princeton has received over a million of dollars, and to-day scarcely recognizes the Princeton of ten years ago.

The same is true of Yale. The wealth of Harvard is proverbial. That it has, as one has said by authority, cabinets and libraries, worth two millions, an endowment in cash of three millions, an annual income in cash of three hundred and ninety thousand dollars, and a vast amount of valuable real estate, which is exempt from taxation, is well known. It is also well known that men of wealth are adding largely to its pecuniary power. Its friends have built a single Hall for the public uses of the University, that has cost almost as much as the entire property of Wabash College is worth.

It is needless to remind you that Brown University, Amherst, Williams, Dartmouth, and other Colleges at the East have also munificent friends who are doing what they can to make them attractive to young men. Indeed, when one compares these Colleges as they now appear in their enlarged wealth and facilities, with what they were when the founders of Wabash College offered their first prayer to God in James Thomson's parlor, he cannot fail to be astonished at the changes effected.

2d. In the practical policies and aims of some of these Colleges, great changes have taken place. Forty years ago there was not a *University* in this country, except in name. The single aim of the Colleges and so-called Universities at that time was to impart to young men a liberal education, in kind, like that prescribed in the usual college courses of study, and this fact rendered a comparison of acquirements and acquisition between Colleges comparatively easy. A student could, by consulting the catalogue, determine whether he might hope to win the honors of a particular College or not. And in fact as shown in occasional incidents, the students who could endure the ordeal of examination in the text books at Wabash and Marietta, could do the same at Yale and Princeton. The notion of several roads to the common goal of College honor was not then breached, and at the same time there was a kind of comity among colleges which entitled the students of one to the privileges of all.

A great change has taken place in these several respects. The notion of college comity is abandoned, so that a certificate of dismission is regarded by other Colleges only a certificate of good character, enabling its holder to apply for admission elsewhere by examination.

We must add to this a great change in the preparation required in those who apply for admission to college, especially the colleges at the

East. The prescribed course is enlarged, and it is more rigidly enforced. Those admitted are subjected to a more careful scrutiny, and not a few are either degraded by "conditions" or reduction to a lower class, or are sent away as unworthy of any standing.

We are not to close our eyes to the facts here stated. The Faculties of the two leading New England Colleges claim that for students of average capacity, who have a thorough common school education, a three years' course is necessary to prepare them for Freshman standing. According to the published declarations of the best New England academies, three years are now required for preparation for Freshman, either at Yale or Harvard. And it must be added, that a recent conference with the Principals of the academies at Andover and Exeter, elicited the declaration that this already extended course is to be enlarged by a year, in order to meet the requirements now made at Harvard for Freshman standing.

But great as these changes are, they are not so great and radical as what is called the elective, or optional system, which is in full bloom at Harvard, and which is also displaying a few blossoms at Yale and Princeton. "By actual count there are at Harvard, forty-five classes containing Seniors at present, and forty-four classes which contain Juniors. The *required* studies of the Juniors are six and a quarters a week for recitation, and they must also have nine hours of *elective* recitations per week. The Seniors practically have no required studies; but their electives must fill twelve hours a week. All the studies of the Freshman year are required; but less than half of the Sophomore year are required."

The expensiveness of this radical change is enormous. The revenues even of Harvard, are scarcely equal to the burden, and we are likely soon to hear the cry for larger endowments, and also larger term bills. The tendency is to an aristocracy in learning, which shall only be possible to men of talent and fine scholarship, who have money to meet the heavy expenses. But more marked than this, is the utter setting aside the time honored curriculum of "the American College," for the elective system with its roads to the University honors almost as numerous as the chambers and routes in the Mammoth Cave.

If it be said that the statement applies only to Harvard, I reply that it is becoming fashionable in many circles to speak of Harvard as now not merely the leading University in wealth and numbers, but as having reached the true theory of liberal culture. This change at Harvard has produced a wide spread uneasiness among teachers, students, and also the patrons of liberal learning. And the leading Colleges at the East will attempt to imitate the model at Cambridge. To such an extent has

the Harvard system fascinated the young men of New England that it is asserted that even Phillips Academy at Andover is gradually diverting its graduates from New Haven to Cambridge.

We cannot afford to remain ignorant or indifferent to these facts, since sooner or later they are certain to affect us. At the West as at the East the vast endowments, educational machinery, venerable names, and enlarging curricula of the older and richer Eastern institutions, shall display their attractions before the young men whom we desire to educate and win them from us, unless we convince them that we can educate them as thoroughly as the venerable rivals that seek to overshadow us, or by a counter display of attractions hold our young men loyal to us.

The Eastern Colleges are not our only competitors for patronage. As already suggested, Western State institutions are aiming to monopolize the business of our entire general education. The States of the Great Valley have large common school funds, which are supplemented by general taxation. They also by tax, support a system of High Schools in the larger towns and cities. These High Schools have so arranged their courses of study that those who have passed certain examinations in the lower schools, may be admitted to their classes. The courses of studies in these schools include some of the more advanced English studies, and in some cases, Latin to a limited extent. For the purposes of liberal culture the most that can be said for the High School, is that it is an excellent preparation to enter a classical academy. The influence of these High Schools as at present conducted, on the whole seems unfavorable to classical culture; in the first place by producing an impression both in the community and among young men, that a High School graduate is fully prepared to enter on the study of any profession, and in the second place, by the extinction of classical academies by a hopeless competition with free schools endowed by State patronage.

To such an extent is this true, that aside from the Colleges themselves there are very few Classical Academies in Indiana, Ohio, or Illinois.

It is my deliberate opinion that classical learning is receiving no impulse from the entire public school system, especially the High Schools, and that this opinion is confirmed by the drift of influences even in our State *Colleges*, toward what is sometimes called a practical or scientific education, as contrasted with a classical. So that our great public school funds, and much of our taxation for educational purposes, are, on the whole, adverse to the main purpose which we are seeking to realize in Wabash College.

In this respect, we must strike hands with not a few institutions whose aim is the same as our own and who have to meet the same obstacles.

And to all this may be added a wide-spread hostility in our Western communities to the expenditure of time and money in acquiring an education so largely made up of studies, which, it is alleged, are laid aside when the student leaves College.

The question at once suggests itself to the thoughtful friend of Wabash, whether the College has any further mission, or shall it be swallowed up either by its rivals at the West, sustained by public taxation, or its venerable and powerful rivals at the East, already rich and daily growing richer? From this time forth—giving all honor to its past—what is the mission of our College as defined by such passing events as have been named? Shall we give up the conflict and hand over the work of the higher culture to the State? Shall we strike off the name *College* from our charter and substitute for it the less pretentious word *Academy*, and confine our mission to such work as is done at Exeter and East Hampton? Or shall we, still retaining our well-earned and modest title of *College*, attempt to rival Harvard in her elective system, or even Yale and Princeton in their's? Or shall we cling tenaciously to the old definition of an American College, as practically set forth in the catalogues of our best institutions for the last hundred years, and not merely promise, but actually furnish the most thorough mental drill on that plan to as many young men as may come to us?

In one word what shall be the future policy of Wabash College? If we retain the ancient ideal, shall we in any wise modify it that it may comport more closely with the wants and notions of our times?

In answer let me remark in the *first* place, that our present policy to turn no worthy young man away who seeks even a limited education, is to be pursued. For this there are several reasons. (1.) In doing so we keep ourselves in harmony with the liberal intentions of our founders and patrons. They did not design to build up an exclusive system, but one that gives every worthy seeker of knowledge a welcome. (2.) Such a course is magnanimous and just. The foundations of this Institution were laid in a magnanimous spirit and in letting no man turn away, we display a like spirit. (3.) From the number of these students who came designing only to make a short stay, we receive some most worthy candidates for the full course.

We must attract as many here as we can, and impart as much culture to them as they will receive.

In the *second* place we must spare no pains or expense to make our *Preparatory Department* as attractive and thorough as possible.

The success of the Institution turns so largely on this point that I have sought to give it my most earnest attention, by studying the workings of our own Preparatory School, by conferring with educators

who have experience, and by observing the workings of classical academies which have a high reputation, especially in New England. During our Spring vacation I made a journey as far as Andover, Mass., and Exeter, N. H., to visit the celebrated Academies, both of which bear the honored name of *Phillips*. They are regarded as the best of their kind, and have both done a vast work for liberal education in this country.

My visit to Andover was unfortunate in consequence of its being a holiday, so that I did not see the school in session. A protracted interview with its accomplished Principal, and an examination of schedules, examination papers, and catalogue, gave me a knowledge of the school sufficient for my present purpose. The same evening and most of the next day I spent in conference with the Principal of Phillips Academy at Exeter, and his assistants. I was in this school and witnessed its workings. As far as results and plans are concerned, what I saw at Exeter, may be regarded as fairly illustrating the results and plans of the academy at Andover.

Both were founded for the purpose of aiding young men to prepare for college. Both have been in operation nearly a century. Both have some permanent funds to supplement the income from tuition. Both to some extent afford free tuition to poor young men of merit; the Exeter academy having the means to aid a considerable number to meet the expenses of boarding. Both have an enviable reputation for scholarship at the highest Colleges and Universities. Both were founded by orthodox men, and both maintain a high moral standard, for the regulation of their students. It is said that Andover is more orthodox than Exeter, and if so I can only say that all I heard and saw at Exeter seemed to me in the nature of a very wholesome morality.

Both require a good elementary English education as the condition of entering on the study of the classics. Both have a three years' course preparatory to entering College, and profess to insist on a rigid compliance with it in order to honorable graduation.

Exeter, in the first year, requires two recitations each day in Latin; the History of Rome, two terms, and of Greece the third term, constitutes the third study. Andover requires two recitations in Latin, through the first year, arithmetic the first and second terms, and Greek the third.

At Andover, algebra is taught the first and second terms, and geometry the third term of the second year. Roman and Greek History is taught through the year, and Latin and Greek each have a recitation each day. At Exeter, arithmetic is thoroughly reviewed the first term of second year; elementary algebra taught the second term and the higher algebra the third term. Latin has a lesson each day this year,

and Greek is begun and carried on through the year, with Greek History the first term.

Andover and Exeter devote the third year to geometry; such authors as Virgil, Cicero, Xenophon and Homer, and exercises in both Latin and Greek composition, and a general review of the whole course.

Both Academies profess to accomplish thoroughly all that is promised in their catalogues. Both *make constant use of the black-board* in teaching the classics as well as the mathematics. Both are very exacting as to all lessons, and determine class standing by careful and fair *written* examinations. Each recitation is carefully marked, and attendance at Chapel and Church is kept by monitors.

Both academies profess to adopt the Harvard requirement for admission as the *standard*, and both cultivate, not merely an ambition for high scholarship, in reference to that standard, but the terror of degradation through any sort of failure, either at ordinary recitations or at examinations. During the time of the late Dr. Taylor's office as Principal at Andover, it is said the majority of his graduates went to Yale, but there is now an increasing tendency toward Harvard. Exeter alone sends some forty a year to that University.

As intimated previously, both these academies propose to add a **FOURTH** year to the required course for Freshman, because they say the Faculty at Harvard require more for admission than can be accomplished in three years.

I was charmed with the order, promptness, and apparent thoroughness of the Exeter Academy. The discipline, energy and entire tone of the school is admirable. No doubt the Andover Academy is the equal of Exeter in these respects, but I did not see the classes at work.

Andover has an English Department, but Exeter receives no student, who are not at least fourteen years of age, and who are not preparing for College.

Andover has one hundred and sixty-nine classical students, each of whom recite three lessons a day, except Wednesday and Saturday. On which days two lessons are required. It has seventy-two in its English Department, and six teachers, aside from the instructor in elocution, instruct all the classes of the academy.

Exeter has one hundred and sixty-six in its classes, taught by four teachers; the venerable Principal teaching but one hour a day. So that three men do most of the teaching in this perfectly organized academy.

At Andover the Principal receives a salary of \$2,500, and his house rent free, and his assistants from \$1,200 to \$1,800, without a house.

At Exeter the Principal receives \$2,300, and his house, and his assistants, \$2,000, without a house.

At Andover the Principal teaches two hours a day, and gives the remainder of his time to the supervisory duties of his office. His assistants teach four hours each day, except Wednesday and Friday.

At Exeter the three principal instructors are in the class-room about four hours each day, except Wednesday and Friday.

The visits to these model Eastern Academies were made to ascertain how far our own Preparatory School should be modified. After a careful consideration of the facts, my own opinion is: (1.) that we must insist on a more thorough preparation in the English elements as a *prerequisite* to the classical preparation, and, (2) that we must devote at least two entire years to the preparatory course in the Latin, Greek, Mathematics, with at least some attention to Latin and Greek History.

Such a course will prove itself adapted to the average student, and will answer all present demands. In other words, *a more careful enforcement of our present curriculum is all we ought to attempt in that department.* If we reach this we shall add to our present well-deserved reputation.

In the *third* place, let me say a few words as to the mission of our *Collegiate department.* We open the doors for scientific students, and whilst we admit a considerable number into the Freshman and Sophomore classes, very few reach our requirements for graduation. Our policy here should be to make the most liberal provisions for all who desire acquaintance with the higher English studies of our course. Our policy and our history, as well as our interest point in that direction, to let any worthy young man have any advantages we have to offer, and which he is prepared to receive. In this way we have conferred large benefits on individuals and the community, besides acquiring valuable friends for the College.

As for the classical course, my deliberate opinion is that we *should cling closely to the old notion of the American College.* We have not the means to enter on the expensive experiment of elective studies, but generous men are so far endowing us that we can impart very thorough drill in the general studies which belong to the American College. We can modify by subtracting at one point, or adding at another in accordance with what experience may dictate, but *our mission is mainly to conserve our present admirable curriculum,* making no radical changes, except in the more determined fidelity with which we follow it. In this way Wabash College will make steady progress and fulfill its mission.

It may seem a large expense of time and means, yet the conviction gained by these two visits to "Four Eastern Colleges," and the Model Academies at Andover and Exeter, is worth the expense, for I am thereby made sure that in our position and with our means, *we are doing what we ought in this institution,* and finally that the *cheapness in our expense here,* as compared with the *large and growingly oppressive expense at the Eastern institutions,* must aid us in retaining a large and increasing patronage from our own field. Our watch-word as an "American College," is "to fight it out on this line."

I am, your fellow-worker,

JOSEPH F. TUTTLE.