Chapter 5

LOW WATER

1791–1828

HANDICAPS

So the Trustees and Faculties of the state University and of the restored colonial College were merged into one body and began from the year 1791 a new life. No alumnus, however loyal, and no historian, however sunny, can contend that the united University in the later years of the eighteenth century and the early decades of the nineteenth was a great institution. But neither were the other American colleges and universities of the time. All institutions have their times of depression. This was not a great academic age.

As to Pennsylvania, the whole period, from the union in 1791 for a generation, was a low tide in her affairs. Surrounding educational conditions were less favorable than they had been in colonial times. The needs of higher education in the state outside the city were being met by new institutions with the attraction of a religious conformity far more powerful than that exercised by the University with its higher but colder claim of freedom from religious predilections. Absence of sectarianism cost its price. Presbyterians had always gone by preference to Princeton, and now Dickinson at Carlisle, founded in 1783, gave a new opportunity to the Presbyterian Scotch-Irish population of its region. Franklin College at Lancaster, chartered in 1787, made provision for the youth of the German counties and so drew off a large possible contingent from the University.

The Quakers of Philadelphia and Pennsylvania might have
been expected to make use of college opportunities. They had ex-
cellent elementary schools, they were intelligent, great readers
and good observers of nature. But they were not given to aca-
demic studies; and they had no need, as had the Anglicans, the
Presbyterians, and even the Baptists, to train a learned ministry.
In the far west of the state the academy which was to become
the University of Pittsburgh was established in 1787. The Uni-
versity of Pennsylvania might be, as it has always been, the lead-
ing academic institution in the state; it was no longer the only
one.

Geographical combined with religious conditions to make the
University less attractive; Maryland, though its Revolutionary
plan of a state university made up of twin colleges, one on the
Eastern and one on the Western shore, had failed of realization,
retained Washington College, which Dr. Smith had set up in 1782
during his period of exile, and thus educated at home some stu-
dents who might otherwise have come to Philadelphia, as they
had so often come in colonial times. William and Mary had passed
through a reorganization. The state universities of Georgia and
North and South Carolina were struggling into existence. Thus
while New England Congregationalists frequented Yale, and
Unitarians Harvard, and Presbyterians of the middle states came
trooping to Princeton and Dickinson, Baptists to Brown, An-
glicans to Columbia or William and Mary, Pennsylvania in the
proud isolation of her freedom from religious bias found virtue,
as usual, its own somewhat cold reward.

With its secularism Pennsylvania might be content, believing
that all other higher institutions would eventually come around
to her position. There were other characteristics of her organi-
ization that were equally unfavorable and not so admirable. It
was a serious deficiency that she had no president, a personage
that has played so characteristic and influential a part in the
history of other American colleges and universities. The Provost
in no way took the place of a responsible president. He was only
in a most restricted sense the head of the institution. He had
neither power nor real responsibility. These lay in the Board of
Trustees. He was not only their appointee, he was in a certain
sense their employee, often disregarded, limited, instructed, con-
trolled at every turn. He was merely one of the professors, with some precedence over his colleagues, considerable distinction and a higher salary, but with little influence on the administration of the institution. His position is plainly indicated in an early set of regulations, which provide "there shall be five professors, of whom one shall be Provost and one Vice-Provost." He had only the slightest connection with the Medical School, the most active and successful department of the University. A testy Provost in 1799 suggested that the titles "Provost" and "Vice-Provost" be abolished to avoid imposing upon the public by intimating that the holders have any "responsibility or superintendence." The devotion of many of the Trustees to their task, the powers given them by the charter, their sense of responsibility, their personal distinction in the life of the community, were beyond question. Strongly asserted, these reduced the position of the Provost, unless he was a man of unusual strength, almost to insignificance. The personal vigor of Dr. Smith had gone far to nullify this defect in the colonial College, but for almost a century he had no successor of equal assertiveness or any to whom actual power was conceded. During this long period the University sorely needed a real head.

The same superiority of position of the Trustees and their habitual regulation of what were purely educational matters disparaged and enfeebled the Faculty. The minuteness of control of the Trustees over curriculum, textbooks, hours of study and teaching, holidays, promotions, discipline, and all the daily relationships between teachers and students would be incredible except for the testimony of the written records.

The close interrelation between College and Academy was a weakness of organization. Until well into the nineteenth century the time and labor of all the professors except the Provost and Vice-Provost were given largely to administering their respective "schools" and teaching the younger boys. Genuine college professors they could hardly be when they were at the same time schoolmasters. The students belonging to the College and those belonging to the Academy were incompletely discriminated. Housed in the same building, in some subjects taught by the same masters, sitting sometimes in the same study room, boys
and young men ranging all the way from ten years old to twenty
missed much of the exhilaration that comes from the distinct-
ton of academic rank between school and college.

Nor was the effect merely upon the pupils' feelings. The col-
legiate standard was debased by the admixture of schoolboy alloy.
There was a steady pressure to advance the pupils from Academy
to College grade at an abnormally early age. Early in the century
a rule was adopted that no student should be admitted to college
before reaching the age of fourteen. Nevertheless in a class of
thirty-six students admitted soon afterward, eight were less than
fourteen years old and were admitted under a suspension of the
rules. It is recorded that the average age of the class of 1812 at
graduation was under seventeen, and we hear of some students
who entered at thirteen. It is true that the age of entrance to
college throughout the country was extremely low according
to modern standards. The cases of students graduated from
Harvard, Yale, and elsewhere at fifteen or sixteen are familiar,
though of course not typical. It may be said, generally speaking,
that in the first quarter of last century students were gradu-
ated at about the age at which they now enter college.

Finally one thrill of "going to college" was not to be had by
students coming to Pennsylvania. They did not live together
in a college hall or dormitory, free from parental supervision,
for the time largely their own masters, as they would be if they
should go to Princeton or one of the New England institutions,
or indeed to almost any college not in a large city. The old col-
nial dormitory building had not been restored to use after the
Revolution; students lived at home or with relatives or in scat-
tered boarding houses chosen by themselves or their parents.

To overcome these handicaps of the early part of the nine-
teenth century would require imagination, effort, and probably
the passage of time. Some of them were characteristic of the age.
One has only to consult the chronicles of other institutions to
find what seem incidents of the same story. Loyal alumni of the
present generation who would fain read the history of their alma
mater as one of early greatness and continuous distinction must
expect to be disappointed and to console themselves with such
evidences of excellence and of contemporary recognition as they
can find. They existed at Pennsylvania even in this period of low water.

THE NEW HOME

The turn of the century saw the migration of the University from the first to the second of the three successive homes it has occupied; from the little group of buildings at Fourth and Arch streets, in which the drama of its colonial life had been played and the troubled period of division and reunion had been lived through, to the "President's House" on Ninth Street. Twice before, serious proposals for the abandonment of the old site had been made. The first was in 1771 when Dr. John Morgan, who was seeking subscriptions for the College and Medical School in the West Indies, exuberant by nature and warmed by the eloquence of his own carefully written appeal, became convinced that he would obtain more liberal contributions if he could say that an entirely new group of buildings was to be erected for what he was already calling the "University." This was a proposal for which the Trustees were not ready, as has been told before. The second was in 1784, at a time when it was believed that the College would soon resume its old buildings and that it might be necessary for the University to move elsewhere. The Trustees then remembered the lands they owned in Bucks County, "Norriton Farms," and considered moving there if they were displaced. This would have conformed to Franklin's old plan in the Proposals, to place the Academy "not many miles from the town . . . not far from a river": it would have equally anticipated Valley Forge, quite similarly situated. But the union took place before any change was made, and the combined institutions remained in the city.

At the union the University had the use both of the old buildings at Fourth and Arch and the rooms in the Philosophical building which the old University had occupied for the last two years. In 1794 the five years' lease of the Philosophical Society rooms ran out; the Society had a more desirable tenant in view and asked a higher rent, so the reunited institution momentarily crowded into the old buildings. The medical classes soon found more room elsewhere; but by 1800 the old buildings had be-
come antiquated and inadequate. The location itself was no longer convenient. Whereas it had at one time been on the very edge of the built-up city, population had now crept far out toward Broad Street.

The special inducement to move just now was an opportunity to acquire, as had been done in 1750, a building already erected, conveniently situated, roomy and not too unsuited to academic uses. In 1791, when the seat of the Federal government was removed from New York to Philadelphia, the Pennsylvania Legislature purchased a fine piece of ground on the west side of Ninth Street, running from Market to Chestnut, and erected upon it a large handsome building in which it was expected President Washington would live. It would be a Philadelphia "White House." The corner stone was laid on the tenth of May 1792, but the work of construction had proceeded slowly; new appropriations were required, and it was not until the spring of 1797 and after the expenditure of almost $100,000 that the building was completed. It was a large and dignified structure. But by this time Washington's term was over. John Adams had been elected, and what had no doubt originally been intended as a free gift to the first President was now only offered on lease to the second, though he was allowed to name a rate of rent as low as any he could get elsewhere. President Adams, not attracted by this limited offer, and troubled, as he says, by constitutional doubts, returned a polite note to Governor Mifflin in March 1797 declining to occupy it.

The President's House, as it had come to be called, lay vacant, becoming increasingly out of repair, for three years. Proposals were made to use it as a mansion for the Governor of the state, and again to rent it as a hotel. Finally it was ordered, March 1800, to be sold at auction. The Trustees of the University saw their opportunity, negotiated with the state government, and in July of the same year bought the building for $24,000 and the twelve attached lots for $17,650, making a total price of $41,650, payable in four instalments. To meet the cost they sold part of their old buildings on Fourth Street, including the Provost's House and the houses in which three of the professors had lived, retaining the two principal buildings, the hall, ultimately
to be used for the Academy, and the dormitory building, to be used partly for the Charity School, and in part as a dwelling house for Vice-Provost Andrews. They then sold enough of their remaining confiscated estates, their Pennsylvania bank stock and Federal bonds to make the early payments. They rented out parts of their new domain and built houses for the professors on its Chestnut Street front. Although considerable alterations were required to make the building usable for teaching purposes, these were completed in a year and by 1802 all the College and most of the Academy classes had been transferred to Ninth Street.

Hardly had the purchase of the Ninth Street building been announced in July 1800 when the five medical professors petitioned the Board to be “accommodated with a sufficient number of chambers in the New Building.” They complained of the loss of time of their students in passing from the old buildings on Fourth Street, where some of their lectures were given, to Anatomical Hall on Fifth Street where they had their anatomy and chemistry. They pointed out that this building could be rented and the general income of the University thus be increased. Later this was done; the building was rented to the City Board of Health and for many years the University received a rent of $400 a year from it. For the present the request of the medical professors was granted, so far as their principal lecture courses were concerned, and with only a little delay the transfer of their classes was made. Before the end of 1802 the medical students also were stretching their limbs in the President’s House.

The University had now established itself in what we have already described as the second of its homes. There it was to remain for the next seventy years. What was to be the nature of its life in this new home?

FOUR DECADES OF TROUBLE
1791-1828

University and College had been impelled to unite principally by the need for funds and the hope of receiving support from the government of the state. The united institution continued long
to have the same need and to be lured on by the same hope. The income from the combined endowments and fees from students still showed no prospect of lifting the inherited load of debts or of paying such current expenses as the Trustees contemplated. They looked, however, with even greater confidence than their predecessors to the Legislature for support. One of their earliest actions was to draw up an address to the Assembly requesting further provision for their needs. The persistent dream of a university adequately supported by the Commonwealth on which its name reflected honor and whose population it enriched by a constant flow of ingenious and trained young people, has never been more skilfully expressed. Later requirements, later forms of service, later arguments for state subsidies for higher education have been formulated from time to time, but the bases of the claim are already stated in 1792. The appeal was presented to the Assembly early in January by a distinguished committee attending in person.

It was a long, persuasive, and astute letter. In addition to general arguments, it took for granted that the Assembly would proceed to provide whatever funds were necessary “to effectuate the great design of the Legislature in uniting the two former seats of learning lately subsisting in Pennsylvania.” The Legislature was congratulated on “the foundation of one great seminary worthy of the capital of the Commonwealth,” and “calculated to diffuse the rays of knowledge throughout the western world.” It made a bid for the support of “our German brothers,” who made up so great a proportion of the inhabitants of the state, by pointing out that the united institution had provided, as had the former University of the state, for a professor of the classics who would give his instruction in the German language and would also teach the English boys German. The University would thus supply ministers and teachers who could use both languages; and so, it was hoped, English would spread everywhere “and make us in all respects one people.”

This was a reversion to Dr. Smith’s proposals made to his British colleagues of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, to extend their work among the ignorant Germans of Pennsylvania threatened by Roman Catholic and French propaganda,
as indeed also to Franklin's promise to make his Academy, among other things, a preparatory school for common school teachers throughout the state. But education among the Germans was taking quite another course, and neither this nor other arguments of the University got its application for funds beyond the stage of reference to a committee. A year later, in January 1793, a second appeal was made and was referred for consideration to "a grand committee." But neither appeals to their pride, reminders of their duty, nor assurance of the usefulness of the University to the state extracted any support from the Legislature, and the expectation of a close connection between the state government and the University gradually faded away.

All other sources of income were exploited. The confiscated lands still remaining in their hands were sold. In December 1795 a thousand pounds had to be borrowed from the Bank of Pennsylvania on the personal credit of the Trustees. A timely windfall of some thousand pounds resulted from a decision by the Supreme Court of the state concerning some old lands. This was promptly invested in mortgages and in the stock of state and Federal banks. But it was not enough. The day of balanced budgets and of liberal expenditures seemed still far off.

Relations between the College Faculty and the Trustees were strained. The plan of teaching imposed upon the Faculty by the Board at the union became more and more distasteful to them, and they were convinced that it lay at the base of the evident failure of the College to obtain students or popular support. Five years after its adoption the Faculty writes, "We have complied with your new mode of education . . . although we foresaw it would ruin the institution . . . the consequences have proved our prediction," and a year later, "while this continues the seminary will never flourish." Provost Ewing's letters to the Board—there was no other means of communication between Faculty and Trustees than through the ordinary mails—became more and more acrimonious and later, as his health failed, petulant and even offensive. He counsels abandonment of the examinations of the students in public, which have long become, as he says, a "solemn farce." He urges over and over again a return to the curriculum of the University of the state. His letters re-
mained frequently unanswered. Other professors also occasion-
ally wrote tart letters, and appealed against the conditions that
were imposed upon them. They protested against the "slavish
confinement" of attendance through the whole of every day,
while in all other colleges and schools in the state, they say,
two afternoons in the week are free for both students and in-
structors. One professor reports that the curriculum, so far as it
affects his subject, is in form a "curious novelty," but that in
principle it has long been tried and found wanting. They want
themselves to appoint the tutors who are to assist them. The
salaries of all the professors except the Provost and Vice-Provost
were dependent in part on the fees of their students, payable
only when the students attended; in these days when, as in 1793
and 1794, the yellow fever drove the well-to-do inhabitants out
of town for long summer seasons, there were many months in
which the professors received no income from their teaching.

On the other hand, on May 27, 1797, a committee of the Board
visits the University and learns that the College classes are not
meeting that day because the Provost is "indisposed" and the
Vice-Provost has gone out of town on business and his return
has been delayed. Failure begets recrimination. There were at
that time only three students in the senior, nine in the junior,
and none in the third class. It is no wonder that the committee
reports that "the institution appears to be in a declining state."
There is of course a brighter side to the story, as will presently
appear, but so far as the period immediately after the union of
1791 was one of reorganization of the collegiate department it
was less happy than the previous period in the life of either
of the older institutions.

Provost Ewing's health and temper became steadily worse
until in January 5, 1802, the Trustees resolve that his health
will not allow him to maintain his authority or to perform his
duties as Provost and Professor and that his salary shall cease
except as to an undefined pension. A month later he writes to
the Trustees that he will leave it to the public to judge whether
the low state of the University "is to be ascribed to my want of
health and strength or to your own operations by undertaking
to manage the education and discipline of the University with-
out the advice and contrary to the opinion of your Professors who are daily with the students, observe their conduct and deficiencies." He had never been allowed to direct the students' education "without the interference of the Trustees." However, he died ten months later, December 7, 1802. It is indicative of the low state of the University that no Provost was appointed for four years, when Dr. John McDowell of the class of 1771, for some years a tutor, and later Professor of Mathematics at St. John's College, Maryland, became Provost and carried on a colorless administration till 1810. In that year Vice-Provost Andrews, of the class of 1765, amiable and learned, a typical school teacher, already sixty-five years of age, was promoted to the provostship, filled it obscurely, and retired from it three years later, accepting gratefully the kindly pension the Trustees voted him.

The first two decades of the nineteenth century were the lowest period in the history of the College. For the first ten years of the century the college course was only two years, for the second decade only three. In 1804 there were only eight students in the senior class, six in the junior; in 1807 only seventeen altogether; and in 1812 sixteen seniors, fifteen juniors, and thirteen freshmen. Its weakness must be acknowledged but need not be given more attention than is its due. The twenties were somewhat better. Their improvement was foreshadowed by the appointment of Dr. Frederick Beasley as Provost in 1813. Why he was chosen does not appear. He was a southerner, from North Carolina. Although a graduate of Princeton and for some years a tutor there, he was ordained as an Anglican and served as rector of two or three parishes successively. At thirty-six years of age he was elected Professor of Moral Philosophy and Provost of the University. He was intellectually quite competent for the position. In the course of his career he wrote a number of philosophical, controversial, and political essays, and made some impress on the small body of early American metaphysicians by his Search for Truth. He was given the degree of D.D. by both Pennsylvania and Columbia in 1815. Even in the sphere of administration at the time of his election he gave promise. He declared that measures must be taken "to raise the College from its present
state of depression and decay and infuse new life and vigor into it." Immediately after his induction into office he made a tour among the near-by colleges to examine into their organization. He then presented to the Trustees a long report in which he made two rather drastic recommendations: the first that all students now in the upper classes who could not really qualify for their present standing should be placed in lower classes; second, that the age of admission should be raised to sixteen or at least to fifteen years. Freshmen should on entrance show familiarity with a given list of Latin and Greek texts not markedly different from the classical works required by the University within recent years.

Two silver medals now lying in the University Museum, given to students at the Commencement of 1814, are surviving witnesses to another of Dr. Beasley's beliefs, that marks of approval of achievement and good behavior would prove more influential than prevailing forms of discipline. Twenty-eight such medals were procured and two of them were bestowed, but for some reason the practice of giving them was later disapproved and the remaining specimens have disappeared. The new Provost believed in the pomp and circumstance of academic life, and wanted professors and students to wear their gowns on all ceremonial occasions. He asked that one of the rooms in the building, which must still have retained many of the domestic characteristics of the President's House, should be assigned for a chapel or hall, in which the daily religious services might be followed by orations and declamations; and that from time to time there should be occasions of ceremony accompanied with lights and decorations to which the public should be invited.

The influence of the Provost was exerted to obtain approval and a favored position for the Philomathean Society. He seems to have counted much on oratory and open debates to attract the attention and sympathy of the community. What Dr. Beasley wanted was evidently a general awakening and stiffening up of the whole institution. With this desire the Trustees sympathized and for such purposes they accepted several of his suggestions. But with the curriculum, the subjects to be taught, the methods of teaching them, the arrangement of hours and holidays, the
higher discipline of the students, they would brook no interfer­
ence. A body of "Rules and Regulations" of much definiteness
and formality had been recently drawn up. These, they declared,
must be accepted and conformed to by the Provost and Faculty,
even though they extended into the field of the daily routine of
instruction and discipline of the students.

When numbers, discipline, and attendance still remain unsatis­
factory as the years passed, successive committees inquired
into conditions. They concerned themselves largely with Faculty
deviations from the regulations of the Board. When answers to
a questionnaire sent to all members of the Faculty brought un­
satisfactory replies, the Board resolved that "It appears that the
Rules ordained by the Trustees for the government of the Uni­
versity are not complied with in two particulars; the rules in
relation to these particulars must be henceforth enforced and
complied with as well as in all other cases." These rules were
for holidays and for the number and order of recitations. The
Faculty had met the problem of repeated absence of whole classes
from recitations, apparently with the connivance of their par­
ents, by offering an occasional extra day of freedom as a reward
for regular attendance, satisfactory work, and good behavior.
The Board expressed strong resentment against this unauthor­
ized action of the Faculty and insisted on exact conformity with
the rules for holidays. The same difficulty arose in regard to the
order of recitations, the Faculty wishing to vary the sequence,
the Trustees insisting on the arrangement already prescribed.
Discipline was at that time very bad; when the Faculty asked
authorization for a change in practice the Board refused to give
this on the ground that the professors already had sufficient
power to enforce order through the system of marks. Rumors
reached the Trustees that some of the professors did not remain
at college until the end of the afternoon, although the rules
required that both professors and students should remain at their
recitations or study from nine to five, except for the lunch hour
and the Saturday half-holiday. It seemed a hopeless condition
of conflict of ideas and practices.

The very numbers, distinction, and ability of the Trustees of
the time gave them confidence in their own judgment: Chief
Justice Tilghman, Horace Binney and John Sargeant, William Rawle and J. R. Ingersoll, famous Philadelphia lawyers, Nicholas Biddle, President of the Bank of the United States, Bishop White and Peter DuPonceau, all men of eminence, most of them college graduates, many of them also Trustees of other public institutions in which their powers were more direct, hopelessly outclassed the little group of four or five men to whom the imposing name of "Faculty" was given.

The respect for their traditional control of the institution was none the less because five of the Trustees of that time were men whose fathers had been Trustees before them, and two others were of the third generation of membership; other relationships by birth or marriage existed. Election to the Board of Trustees of the University was a coveted distinction, a mark of social standing in Philadelphia. The position of a professor or even of the Provost bore no comparison in social recognition with that of a member of the Board of Trustees. The tradition of a self-governing and self-perpetuating body of men of prominence, having the University in their keeping and controlling it to the minutest detail, was a well-established one. There was no department of its activities which was deliberately placed under the control of the Faculty, or which was not subject to the decision and action of the Trustees at any time.

One Trustee in 1827, deploring the bad condition into which the University had fallen, expresses the fear that "at no distant period, there will be nothing left of the University of Pennsylvania but its Board of Trustees." That is to say, in the last resort the University was the Board of Trustees. Many of the Trustees took these responsibilities very seriously. Of course many were not interested. A study of the minutes and committee reports has left the writer of this work with the impression, perhaps only an impression, that about half of the Board of Trustees were apt at any one time to be interested in the duties and opportunities of their position and reasonably regular attendants at the Board meetings. The interest of many of these regular attendants was deep and devoted. Most of the work of the Board, however, as in other such bodies, was done by committees, and much of the committee work was done by the chairman. There have been few
periods, from the time of Franklin down, when there were not some men on the Board who were devoting a large part of their time with much self-sacrifice to University affairs. Ordinarily it was these men who governed the University, within the bounds of the prejudices and fixed ideas of their colleagues. At other times the University simply drifted.

Although the term "Faculty" was constantly used, the unity of organization intimated by that term scarcely existed. The Board of Trustees communicated with members of the Faculty by letter or conversation individually, not as a body. Although meetings of the professors were provided for by the rules, they were in the first quarter of the century seldom held. The first known minute book of the Faculty of the Department of Arts dates from 1826. It records regular weekly meetings, but these meetings seem to have been little more than occasions for complaints by certain professors of student disorders and "arraignments" of individual offenders. The professors had little contact with one another at other times, and relations among them were often unfriendly on account of the unfortunate financial arrangements by which the fees of students were somewhat irregularly divided among them. Influence could have been exercised by so small a body only if they had possessed power, cultivated unity, and were men of unusual ability working under favorable surroundings. None of these conditions characterized the position of the Faculty in the early part of the nineteenth century.

The matter of discipline was a contested point between the Faculty and Trustees. Behavior of students was very bad. A committee remarks in 1824: "That a deficiency exists either in the system or the administration of college discipline is too obvious to be denied or doubted." Most of the misbehavior was mere childishness. Provost Beasley and Dr. Patterson and Professor Thomson at various times complained of students rolling shot or pebbles about the floor, bringing musical instruments or animals into classes to distract the attention of students and teachers, or ridiculing the professors behind their backs, the bolder ones defying them to their faces; behaving in all those petty ways by which college boys in olden times used, by a strange line of reasoning, to try to prove by childish behavior that they were
college men. There was similar curious subservience to college ringleaders, such as the one referred to by the Provost as "one of the most refractory and ill designing young men that I have ever become acquainted with in any college." However, this particular young man was expelled, after which the remaining students showed a greater spirit of independent judgment.

College discipline was at this time, as it long remained, a nation-wide problem. Without mentioning small colleges, diaries of Harvard students in the twenties chronicle shuffling to drown professors' voices in the classroom and chapel, throwing inky water over the professors as they emerged from their rooms, oaths taken to stay away from classes in college altogether till expelled classmates were reinstated and informers disclosed. In 1823 the Harvard Faculty expelled forty-three students of a class of seventy. In 1828, according to a contemporary newspaper, the opinion was prevalent in New England that at Harvard "all was not as it should be; we heard too often of riots and rebellions, and it was known that there was much of undisguised and unpunished dissipation; in fact the College failed to realize the expectations of the public and the hopes of its friends." After some investigation "it was a general opinion either that the system of education was a bad one or that it was badly administered . . . the instruction was found to be inadequate and by no means what the public had a right to expect from the funds of the College and the number of instructors; and the modes of punishment were ascertained to be deficient in principle and insufficient in their operation." ¹

At Yale there were expulsions in 1828, withdrawals of students to their homes in protest against Faculty action, classroom disturbances and other disorders of which the contemporary newspapers were full. At Princeton ever since the beginning of the century there had been disorders; in 1802 the students were thought to be responsible for a fire in the college; in 1812 and 1814 there were more "uprisings," another fire and an explosion and defacement of the walls. Fourteen students were dismissed in the especially disorderly year 1816. These institutions are

mentioned because their records are easily accessible. There is no reason to doubt the existence of similar conditions in other colleges.

Therefore when in 1828 the Faculty at Pennsylvania appealed to the Trustees for assistance in securing discipline, it was rather an instance of that parallelism in the history of American colleges that strikes one whenever he dips into their chronicles than anything peculiar to this. There is no doubt, however, that the condition of the University remained unsatisfactory. Notwithstanding the evidences of intellectual interest to which we shall call attention later, the number of students attending remained small, seldom reaching more than fifty or sixty, while the largest number of graduates in any year within this period was twenty-six. Attendance as well as discipline was bad. In 1822 from ninety-five recitations in a certain subject, one student had been absent thirty-nine times, another thirty-eight, and still another thirty-four. The professors felt compelled to accept the excuses they brought from home on the ground of sickness. Numbers were so small that they could not risk withdrawals.

Whatever the cause of the failure of the institution to flourish, the conviction grew on the Trustees that it was due to lack of devotion and ability on the part of the Faculty, and more especially to the unsuitability of Provost Beasley for his position. He seems to have been entirely unaware of this growing dissatisfaction, for he continued to write letters to the Board, often with implied criticism, but with unbroken optimism and hope for better times if the professors are given their head. He writes, for instance, concerning the rebuke to the Faculty for granting extra holidays: "I do not think it of any importance that a few days more should be allowed by law to the students, but the matter is that the Faculty should be allowed occasionally to exercise their power . . . which is allowed to the Faculties of other Colleges." In October 1820 the Provost wrote to the Board a letter concerning which the minutes record, "a letter was received from the Provost which being read was returned."

As a matter of fact just such conflicts between the Overseers and the Faculty were then in progress at Harvard and between Trustees and Faculty at Princeton, and at other colleges. Their
respective powers were not yet delimited; but in most other insti-
tutions the Faculty had a President to establish the balance.
At Pennsylvania the differences soon came to a head. April 1,
1828, a committee of the Trustees appointed to consider the
representations of the Faculty with respect to discipline went
further and took up the whole question of abuses in College and
defects in the existing system of teaching. In accordance with
their report, at the meeting of July 2 the Board adopted a drastic
resolution for the reorganization of the Faculty, to the effect that
at the end of the term all existing professorships in the Depart-
ment of Arts should be vacated and a new Faculty elected. This
did not involve so great a change as might have been expected.
Vice-Provost Robert M. Patterson had just accepted a call to
the University of Virginia as Professor of Natural Science. This
left of the Faculty only Professor Robert Adrain, who had just
been called from Rutgers as Professor of Mathematics and would
certainly be reelected, and three members who would probably
not be reelected: the Provost, Professor J. G. Thomson, and the
one tutor, Garrett van Gelder.

It was undoubtedly the desire to get rid of Provost Beasley that
prompted this extreme action. What was the head and front of
his offending does not appear. He himself was quite astounded
and could think of no reason for his dismissal. Nor does any ex-
planation appear beyond the report of the committee that "a
want of confidence in the capacity of the Provost for the govern-
ment of such an institution is the main and leading cause of the
distressing condition into which it has fallen." In answer Dr.
Beasley questions as others had before him and were to after him,
"Am I to be considered as responsible for the ill results of a
scheme acknowledged on all hands to be so radically defective in
itself . . . operating in the midst of a population so uncon-
cerned about its interests?"

On removing from office the Provost and Professor Thomson
the Board voted a grant of $1,800 a year to the former and $853.33
a year to the latter for three years. No provision seems to have
been made for the tutor. The minute book of the Faculty of Arts
recording their special meeting, April 30, 1828, notes the resig-
nation of Professor Patterson and closes with the succinct state-
ment, "Dr. Beasley, Mr. Thomson and Mr. VanGelder also leave the institution, in consequence of a recent resolution of the Trustees. So the present faculty adjourned, never to meet again." ¹

Among all the broils of the period, steps in advance were taken. In 1819 the extension of the course to four years and the addition of another professor to the Faculty were recommended by a committee of the Board, and although there was much delay, in 1825 these were finally approved. At the same time the Academy scholars were at last separated from those in the College by removing them to the old buildings on Fourth Street. On the whole also the number of students in the College began to climb. Although there were some lean years when only a handful of students attended, and in 1801, 1806, 1809, and 1816 none were graduated, the average number of graduates which between 1799 and 1818 was only a little over eight, between 1818 and 1828 was more than fifteen. The unsatisfactory relations between Trustees and Faculty did not altogether prevent progress, nor was all the time of the students devoted to mischief.

The period closed with a disconcerting if not necessarily calamitous financial crisis. This was the discovery in June 1829 of a serious theft of the University's funds by the Secretary-Treasurer. A committee engaged in an investigation found that the accounts of this trusted officer showed a deficiency of $16,224.58. Other defalcations appeared later increasing the amount. He was bonded for $10,000 and this was collected from his sureties, one of them himself a Trustee. The defaulter applied for relief from further payments under the insolvency act, but whether the University was nevertheless able to recoup its general loss does not appear. Indeed the whole occurrence is recorded in such impersonal terms as to suggest the possibility that there were reasons of social relationship that made the Board anxious to call as little public attention to the matter as possible.

One specific loss, however, appears in the records some fifteen years later. Among his peculations the defaulting Treasurer had

¹ See the interesting account of this obscure series of events by C. S. Thompson in the General Magazine and Historical Chronicle, October 1930 and January 1931; Minutes of College Faculty.
appropriated $5,000 obtained by the theft of the whole of a cer­
tain bond and one-half of another. This was part of the Keble fund. The University had received by bequest from John Keble in the year 1809 a number of houses and ground rents, the in­come from which was to be used for the education of poor chil­dren. The Trustees had allowed the income to accumulate until in 1823 they were in a position to establish the Keble School alongside the old Charity School. In July 1825 the old Charity School was educating forty-nine boys and twenty-nine girls, and John Bullock, teacher of the Keble School, had thirty-six boys under his charge. In 1827 they were able to invest the funds in two mortgages, one of $4,000, the other of $2,000. It was from these the defaulter had secured the part of his plunder named above. Even the remaining half of the $2,000 mortgage was of no value, for the property on which it was loaned sold for less than that amount. However, the houses of the original bequest were still in the University's possession as late as 1848, bringing in an income of something more than $600 a year. In 1829 the school is still mentioned, but after that year the fund seems to have been used to increase the income of the old Charity School, and the Keble School disappears from the records.¹

INTELLECTUAL INTERESTS

In this little group of immature students and overworked professors intellectual activity was by no means wanting. The professors were genuine scholars. Provost Ewing, although his later years were embittered by disappointment, conflict, and bad health, had a long career of scientific eminence. His statement that he had written his lectures "on chemistry, pneumatics, optics and astronomy" years before but had corrected and added to them as scientific investigation proceeded, is corroborated by his Plain Elementary and Practical System of Natural Experimental

¹ John Keble was an Englishman living in Philadelphia. He had been for three years a "Bluecoat boy" in London, and on his death in 1807 left his estate of some $90,000 in the hands of trustees to be distributed according to their judgment among Philadelphia charitable institutions. It was divided among fourteen of which the University, because of its interest in free education, was considered one.
Philosophy, published in 1809, after his death, apparently representing his regular course. His reputation was based more largely on his engineering services in defining the boundaries of three states and his observations on the transits of Mercury and Venus. Dr. Andrews published a System of Logick, which went through several editions and was used at Princeton. He wrote also Elements of Rhetorick and Belles Lettres, published in 1813. A graduate of the class of 1803 gives a pleasant glimpse of Dr. Andrews’ class.

He read to us lectures on Moral Philosophy. We studied Logic from a small compend prepared by himself. After the regular business of the morning Dr. Andrews would spend some time in informal remarks on any subject that would occur to him, the last book which he had read, perhaps, gradually passing to something else so that each of these occasions would give us quite a variety of matter to think upon and led us to read many books which otherwise would not have been sought— He generally closed with some pleasing remark which would raise a smile, then rising from his seat and slightly inclining himself towards us he would with a long and kind look at us bid the “Young gentlemen” good morning.¹

Dr. James Davidson wrote a popular Latin grammar published in 1798. Professor Robert Patterson prepared a Compend of Spherical Geometry and Trigonometry and many mathematical studies and was president of the American Philosophical Society.

This rather unpromising period also saw the foundation of those literary and debating societies that have ever since been a characteristic part of college life. Groups of young men interested in law or medicine or politics or music or in general self-improvement have been noted a generation earlier among applicants for the use of the old College rooms; but they were outsiders. The societies we now come upon were made up of students in college, including sometimes a few alumni. Some of them were short-lived, others have had an active existence to our own time.

A bundle of incomplete minutes, dating from the year 1807, are the only memorial of what appears to be the oldest of these

¹ Biography of John McAllister, Jr. of the Class of 1803, MS., by his son, Thomas Hamilton McAllister, of the class of 1843 (written Jan. 1874).
organizations, formed in February of that year, the Philological Society. It consisted at this time of five seniors and eleven juniors. It had a room in the northeastern corner of the third floor of the Ninth Street building. Some of the professors acted as patrons. Its members debated, made orations, elected one another to office, fined one another and excused the fines, much in the way of all college literary societies. Their debates rang the changes on the rights and wrongs of slavery, the relative advantages of agriculture and commerce as the basis of a nation's prosperity, whether the city or the country is the best location for a college, whether the bar or the ministry is the better profession, and other such theoretical and practical subjects. The orations were sometimes original, at other times "Othello's Address to the Venetian Senate," "Hector's Reproach to Paris," and such triumphs of ancient and modern eloquence. After five years this society came to a rather abrupt end. One of its members by his ill behavior won repeated fines and ultimate expulsion from the society, then brought disgrace upon it, according to the view of the other members, by further "scandalous action," culminating in the publication of a "libel" upon it. At any rate, in 1812 it was in such bad odor that the Trustees denied the members, now mostly graduates, the further use of their room.

The next society to be formed, the well-known and still active Philomathean Society, had a special position. It was formed by the senior class in 1813 with the interested support of the newly elected Provost, Dr. Frederick Beasley. He had advised the formation of such a society in his letter of recommendations for reforms sent to the Board of Trustees at the time of his election, and on November 23, 1813, he informs the Board that such a society has been formed, gives it his strong approval and asks for the official sanction and support of the Trustees, their encouragement and the grant to it of a room in the College building instead of the use of his own recitation room, which is the only place they have so far had for their meetings. The Trustees thereupon sanction the institution of the society, ordering that "a suitable room should be appropriated to their use." This promise has been honored ever since, though there have been times when

1 University of Pennsylvania Library Chronicle, V, 80–87.
their accommodations were not so good as the spacious group of rooms in the northeast corner of the third floor of the President's House which they had inherited from the Philological Society. A sheet of paper still lies among the society's archives bearing the names of the thirteen founders, with a declaration of the objects of their organization. Light is thrown on the prevailing age of college students by their rule that none should be admitted to the society under fifteen years of age. It is of interest to remark also that of the sixteen members who were ultimately admitted from this first class, five subsequently became lawyers, three clergymen, five merchants or bankers, one a farmer, and two followed no profession. This was not an unrepresentative classification of Pennsylvania graduates, aside from the medical department, at that time and for long afterward. It was not, like most other contemporary colleges, a nursery of ministers.

More than once "Philo," presuming upon its semi-official position, asked for money grants; the Trustees would then give them $40 for their library or help pay the expenses of their annual exercises. In gratitude the society at one time elected the whole Board of Trustees honorary members and expressed a hope that they would sometimes attend the meetings.

There are ups and downs in the lives of associations as of institutions, and in the late twenties "Philo" seems to have become a focus of disorder. Its own moderator found himself powerless against disturbers and had to dissolve successive meetings. This was said to be due to what were then called "nominal" members. These were men who were neither "junior" nor "senior" members, but students who had been dropped or had withdrawn from college yet still continued to attend the society meetings. They became so troublesome that in 1832 Provost DeLancey threatened to deprive the society of its rooms. On the other hand many of the best students continued to join "Philo"; its Commencements attracted attention, its prizes were seriously competed for, and a lengthening line of students prominent in their college course, and of alumni who attained high positions in the world, made membership constantly more attractive. Early in its history, by a curious chance, Henry D. Gilpin '19, afterwards Attorney-General of the United States, James M. Mason, '18,
LOW WATER

United States Senator from Virginia at the outbreak of the Civil War and Commissioner from the Confederate States to Great Britain and France in 1862, and Robert J. Walker '19, Secretary of the Treasury of the United States under President Polk, Governor of Kansas Territory in 1857 and '58, and Senator from Mississippi at the outbreak of the war, were successive moderators of "Philo." As in colonial times there was even yet a certain connection between the South and Pennsylvania.

In May 1829, influenced perhaps by the new building and the new spirit which, as we shall see, characterized the immediately succeeding years, a new and rival debating society, the Zelosophic, obtained the approval of the authorities and the assignment of meeting rooms. Its founders were seven members of the junior class of that year whose numbers were rapidly added to and who seem to have had particularly close relation with Professor Coppée and some other new members of the Faculty. Within five years they had begun the publication of a dignified literary journal containing thoughtful essays, short stories, and some poetry rather above the undergraduate level. Debates and orations, ultimately in competition with other societies and colleges, kept up its interest and membership. Scores, probably hundreds, of other societies of a literary, scientific, or professional character have since arisen and duly fallen, or, amid the greater diversification of the institution, still exist, but "Philo" and "Zelo" have remained through all subsequent changes witnesses of the intellectual interests of the small institution as it approached the end of its first century.

It is indeed remarkable how many men from the small classes of the University of this time attained eminence in later life. Only once in the first two decades of the century were there more than fifty students in the College department, frequently there were not more than twenty, once only ten. From the class that had graduated two years before "Philo" was formed, however, one graduate, S. B. How, became President of Dickinson College, another, T. K. Carroll, Governor of Maryland, and another, the valedictorian of his class, Thomas P. Bennett of Easton, Maryland, while he was still in College made a transcript of Professor Patterson's *Compend*, which drew the special commendation of
that excellent mathematician. In this work he laid down the admirable doctrine worthy of continual remembrance, that "Nothing should be produced from this seat of learning and science but what is either excellent in thought or elegant in diction." The Latin salutatorian of the class of 1812, Richard S. Mason, became successively President of Hobart College and of Delaware College. John Meredith Read, who graduated in 1812 at fifteen and delivered on that occasion an address on "The Amelioration of the Penal Code," held successively almost all political offices in Pennsylvania, and was nominated to the Supreme Court by President Polk, but withdrew his name under pressure from southern senators objecting to his free-soil views. He became Chief Justice of Pennsylvania. He was a candidate for the Republican nomination for President but turned his local support to Lincoln. William Meredith, who entered at thirteen, the youngest member of his class, became its valedictorian and afterwards held successively a long list of legal and judicial offices. He was Secretary of the Treasury of the United States and was offered the position of Counsellor of the United States at the Geneva Arbitration Conference of 1877. Many other names of distinction might be added.

If this chronicle should seem to the reader to record too much of mere personalities and dwell too much on the contrast between the fecklessness of these callow youths while in college and the achievements of their later lives, it may be remembered that there is the possibility of judging too much from numbers and deploring too deeply that Pennsylvania was at one time only a small college, such as Daniel Webster loved.

Another form of intellectual interest of this period sprang from the unpromising soil of the financial relations of the University to the state. These had not improved, from the University's point of view, since the failures of the applications made directly after the union of 1791.

The requirements of the Act of Union that the University should make an annual report on its finances to the Legislature were punctiliously fulfilled, but the hope that this would be followed by corresponding appropriations was just as regularly disappointed. A new complication was introduced by the purchase
by the University from the state in 1800 of the President's House. After the original payment a second and third instalment were paid, each to an amount of some $10,000, but the fourth instalment, with accompanying charges, amounting to $10,100.79 was in 1807, according to the Controller-General of the state, long overdue. Indeed in October of that year he declared that unless settlement was soon made he must take action that would be extremely disagreeable to him and, presumably, still more so to the University. There followed, as an alternative to this payment, in the next few years a series of plans and efforts that bade fair to add an interesting and wholly new phase to the University's activities. Relations between the finances and the curriculum must justify a short disquisition on the subject of botany.

Few intellectual interests were more widespread in the early years of the nineteenth century than what might be called research in medical botany. A whole continent with an almost unexplored flora lay at their doors; what might it not contain for the cure of disease? Almost all medicines were then drawn from the vegetable kingdom. Botany and materia medica lay very close together. Equally interesting was the possibility the study of plants offered of an improvement in agriculture. Pure scientific curiosity followed close on practical usefulness. Of this scientific interest Philadelphia was the recognized center. Their city was described in 1816 by an enthusiastic group of botanists as "The Hot-bed of Sciences, the nursery of the Arts and the Home of Philosophy." A scientific man speaks of botany as "a favorite study among us." The story of John Bartram's "conversion" is a familiar one. After describing his sudden awakening of interest as he examined a flower while resting from his plowing, "I returned to my plow, but the new desire did not quit my mind. At last I could not resist the impulse, for on the fourth day of the following week I hired a man to plow for me and went, as many a man in search of wisdom has gone, to Philadelphia."

The University did not long remain uninfluenced by this "favorite study." Science has appeared in her annals in three quite different forms: one as an adjunct to the study of medicine, another as an intellectual interest, not unlike the classics or history or pure mathematics, the third as a form of profes-
sional training the immediate object of which was to prepare the student to make a living by applying his scientific knowledge in some field of practical usefulness. These various objects of scientific study doubtless overlap, the first and second being of occasional usefulness to society; the last having its own claims to an intellectual interest and value. In this practical sense it was not to appear till later in the century, and may be left for mention till that time. The first and second were acknowledged from the very beginning. Thanks largely to the interests of Franklin, Smith, and Kinnersley, pure science had never been entirely absent from college teaching, and in the first group of medical instructors Dr. Adam Kuhn was Professor of Materia Medica and Botany.

In 1789 in the restored College, Dr. Benjamin Smith Barton, who had in the traditional manner studied at Edinburgh, but actually took his medical degree at Göttingen, was elected Professor of Botany and Natural History, the first professorship with that specific title in the United States. At the union, in 1791, he was continued as Professor of Natural History in the College and was elected at the same time Professor of Materia Medica in the Medical School; later he became in addition Professor of the Theory and Practice of Medicine. In 1803 he published the Elements of Botany, the first textbook on that subject issued in America and, except for the great French book of Michaux, published the same year, the first systematic work on the plants of the United States. Besides his work in the Medical School, Barton gave a course of general botanical lectures every year to a small class of students from whom, as he says, "the emoluments were small but the satisfaction great."

A reputation for scientific subjects had evidently reached President Jefferson, for in writing to Dr. Wistar for advice as to the education of his grandson, a boy of fifteen years of age, he remarks, "There are particular branches of science which are not so advantageously taught anywhere else in the United States as in Philadelphia," and a few years later speaking of the teaching of mathematics and natural philosophy at William and Mary, he says, "I prefer it to any college I know, except that at
Philadelphia; and, for boys, to that also, because that is a great city while Williamsburg is but an academical village.”

It was in 1806, however, that the University deliberately proposed the extension of its scientific work. In that year the Medical Faculty appointed Dr. Barton to draft an address to the Board of Trustees asking that steps be taken toward establishment of a public botanical garden in Philadelphia like the private gardens already in existence and the public gardens which had recently been opened in New York and in another American city. It was an old project; the Philadelphia College of Physicians, which included in its membership the whole Medical Faculty of the University, had petitioned the Assembly for the establishment of such a garden March 14, 1788. In 1806, likewise, Dr. Rush was appointed by the Medical Faculty to make an appeal to the state Legislature for support for the garden and for the Medical School. From that time for the next twenty years a botanical garden in Philadelphia was an object of general discussion. The suggestion was made by someone that the financial relation of the University to the state might be made conducive to success in carrying out this plan. The Trustees therefore early in 1807 asked the state government for a postponement of the final settlement of their debt and placed before it a request that the whole or part of the remainder of this debt should be remitted on condition that the University should establish a botanical garden. This proposal they considered would commend itself to the Legislature from its evident public utility to medicine and agriculture, and at the same time would further the scientific study of botany. Indeed, the whole plan may well have been the suggestion of Dr. Barton, always more interested in botany than in medicine.

In answer to their appeal the Legislature granted to the Trustees on March 18, 1807, out of the money owed by the University to the state the sum of $3,000, “for the purpose of

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enabling them to establish a garden for the improvement of the Science of Botany and for instituting a series of experiments to ascertain the cheapest and best food for plants."

This grant gave the desired relief from immediate payment but provided no disposable funds, and it was not till eight years later, when the death of Dr. Barton precipitated the question of what should be done with his double, or triple, professorship, that the subject was again seriously taken up. As to Barton's professorship in the Medical School, his work was for the time divided by the other professors among themselves, but the medical students, always a rebellious group, would have none of this arrangement, nor would they accept the choice of Dr. Dorsey, as had been the wish of Dr. Barton, to fill both chairs. A hundred of them signed a letter of protest, and from several applicants for the professorships another choice was made. The number of students had so increased that the medical professorships had become profitable as well as honorable and so were objects of competition.

There were also rival applicants for Dr. Barton's other position, his professorship of botany and natural history in the College; it was evidently desirable if not lucrative. Among the competitors was the naturalist C. R. Rafinesque—vain and eccentric, but gifted and influential, a true cosmopolitan, born in Constantinople from French and German parents, and educated in Italy, a recent immigrant to America and for most of his life a resident of Philadelphia, He wrote now from the luxurious home of Chancellor Livingston in Clermont, New York, and set in motion all possible lines of influence and intrigue to obtain the position. He wished to teach his "New Natural Method of Botany" and thus become "the American Linnaeus." He would prefer to be elected professor of natural history, which would include both zoology and botany, but would be satisfied with a professorship in either subject. However, W. P. C. Barton, nephew and pupil of the elder Barton, who had been long in training for this position, also applied and, with the use of some influence and some slight misrepresentation of his uncle's promises, was elected. In November, 1815, he began a course of lectures on "Elementary Philosophical and Medical
Botany," the opening lecture given in the College Chapel, the remainder of the course in the old Anatomical Hall on Fifth Street.

In the same month a committee of the Board of Trustees was at last appointed to report on the best method of carrying out the intentions of the Legislature in making the grant of 1807. Since that grant had provided no funds, the Trustees proceeded to issue an appeal to the public for the means to purchase and equip a garden. By the active efforts of Professor W. P. C. Barton and with the support of the lately formed Linnaean Society, of which he was President, they secured a considerable sum, although evidently inadequate for the purpose.

Just at this time, February 1816, a group of gentlemen calling themselves the "Cabinet of Science," who had issued a similar appeal and collected a similar inadequate sum, proposed a union of the two plans. Although willing to enter into the plan, the University committee made such extreme demands for control that the members of the Cabinet withdrew their offer.

The Trustees could not now, however, give up their project, and with a view to drawing in a number of interests they resolved early in 1816 to organize a "Faculty of Physical Science and Rural Economy." This title would seem to indicate that it savored rather more of practical than of the purely intellectual ideals. As finally agreed upon, it provided for four professorships, of botany, of natural history, including geology and zoology, of mineralogy and practical chemistry, and of comparative anatomy, including veterinary science. Agriculture and horticulture were suggested but not included. Professor Barton, of course retained the professorship of botany which he held until the year 1827. The other professorships were filled by the election of Dr. Charles Caldwell for natural history, Thomas Cooper for mineralogy and chemistry, and Thomas G. Hewson as Professor of Comparative Anatomy. The new department was considered to be parallel with the Faculties of Arts, Medicine, and Law, and it appears as such in the Catalogue of 1825 and is so described in a public address by Dr. G. B. Wood in 1826.

Arrangements were made for the use of rooms in the University buildings for lectures, and steps were taken to secure the
garden which was so essential a part of the whole scheme. Several places were considered and visited, including one in the confines of the present Fairmount Park, by the indefatigable and interested Trustees and the Professor of Botany. Finally in 1817 a tract of forty-two acres on the old Canal Road in Penn Township, in Montgomery County and twenty miles from the center of the city, was purchased for $8,000. Professor Barton, in a new book he was preparing, announced himself as “Director of the Botanic Garden.” The Trustees and the Director made occasional use as a place of resort of a building on the tract, and there were the usual complications of fencing, intruding cattle, and arrears of rent for pasturage.

Neither the garden nor the new department flourished; both lacked the fertilizer of adequate funds. As to the Faculty, the professors received no salaries, the expectation being, apparently, that they would receive financial support, as did the medical professors, from the fees of their students. But there were very few students. The only member of the Faculty who lectured regularly was Dr. Barton, and he habitually remitted his students’ fees. There was one great difference between this department and the Medical School: its courses led to no profitable employment. Devotees of pure science were not numerous enough to fill classrooms, certainly not to throng them as did the medical students.

Soon the complaint was not that students did not come but that the professors did not lecture; and there were no funds to develop the distant garden. In 1819 the Trustees, discouraged, were considering its sale, but it was long held, reported regularly at a valuation of $8,000, and was rented to a neighboring farmer for pasturing his cattle for $100 a year. Barton and the other professors occasionally lectured, and on their successive resignation others were elected, but the Faculty of Natural Science, as a department, had no substantial existence, and in 1828 it was formally abolished. The Botanic Garden in Montgomery County was sold in 1833 to Edward S. Burd.

The project of a garden shrank to the improvement of the stretch of ground between the College and the Medical Building on Ninth Street, and the erection of a greenhouse upon it. This
was built partly by the contributions of forty-eight persons who gave $10 apiece, and partly at the expense of Mr. Dick, the janitor, who was a person of some eminence in those days. Even these modest provisions of space and opportunity were lost in 1829 when the new buildings were erected covering nearly the same space.

The interest in botany and in other forms of pure science did not, however, cease with the abandonment of this project. Extra series and voluntary lectures on those subjects were given from time to time on the threshold of the new century. C. W. Peale had in 1798 and 1799 given two courses of lectures on natural history, and the Portuguese Consul in Philadelphia, Correa del Terra, lectured on the same subject in 1815 and 1816. In April 1820 Dr. W. P. C. Barton asked to have his course transferred to the Medical School, presumably for better fees, but the Trustees refused. He then accepted a position in the newly established Jefferson Medical School, and when in 1827 the Trustees announced that a professor in the University could not at the same time hold a position in another college, his connection with the University ceased altogether. Dr. Solomon W. Conard was Professor of Botany for many years, and Thomas Say was Professor of Natural History.

In March 1827 an act of legislature was passed freeing the University from its agreement of 1807 to establish a botanical garden, and allowing it to use the trust funds it held for that purpose, which were then $7,239.81, for any other proper object of University expenditure.

**THE MEDICAL SCHOOL**

1791–1829

The Medical School and the Arts courses did not keep step; the period following the union in 1791, which was one of depression and even decline for the older department, was one of striking growth for the Medical School. The successive attacks of yellow fever from 1793 to 1804, which deprived the College teachers of their students and their income during the summer months when all well-to-do families left the city, gave occupa-
tion and experience to the medical professors. In 1793, between August 14 and November 9, there were 4,094 burials in a city of scarcely more than 50,000 inhabitants; there were 3,599 houses lying unoccupied. Ten city physicians died, one, Dr. Hutchinson, of the Medical Faculty. In 1797 of the twenty-four physicians in the city, eight died. In 1798, 3,645 people died; the next year there was a similar epidemic, and the same conditions recurred in the early years of the next century.

Dr. Rush became famous for his heroic treatment of patients, and Dr. Physick and Dr. James, both destined later to become prominent members of the University Faculty, coming home in 1793 from taking their medical degrees in Europe, found themselves immediately absorbed in the struggle with the pestilence. These attacks drew the eyes of the rest of the country on Philadelphia and on the fight its physicians were making. In response to this and to the abilities of the group of six professors, Shippen, Hutchinson, Barton, Kuhn, Rush, and Wistar, and the adjunct-professor, who made up the Faculty after the union, the number of medical students began to rise. In 1784 there were 60 students in attendance, and eight were graduated. In 1802 the lecture rooms are crowded with 125 students; in 1804 the faculty reports 150 and in 1807, 275. By 1810 there are more than 400, and after that there are seldom less than that number in attendance, never less than 350; in 1825 there are 485.

It is noticeable that the numbers attending have little relation to the numbers graduating. In the first year of the century there were but ten graduates, in 1804, out of one hundred and fifty attendants but fifteen took their degrees. Somewhat later the number of graduates began to increase, running up to sixty or eighty a year. The annual average of those graduating in the twenty years from 1809 to 1829 was eighty-eight, but the disparity with those in attendance was still as great, the average of the latter being slightly over four hundred. The number of students in the school, therefore, was almost always from four to five times as many as the graduates.

A student for a year was William Henry Harrison, later President of the United States, who in 1791 studied in the Philadelphia Medical School, under the guardianship of Robert
Morris, but left to join the army in the West before he was graduated. Since it was not until 1810 that students were required to take more than one course of lectures with each of the five professors, and then only two courses, it is evident that there were many matriculates who never came up for degrees. What was the occasion for the attendance of this horde of medical students, paying substantial fees, crowding the lecture rooms and the boarding houses of the adjacent streets, yet never trying to become physicians, needs explanation.

It is to be observed that many medical students came from the South. Out of 1,950 graduating in the first quarter of the century, almost 1,000 came from below Mason and Dixon's Line. Over and over again more students came from Virginia or even Georgia than from any northern state. Of the 132 graduates of the year 1836 more came from Virginia than from Pennsylvania, and seventy in all were Southerners. It has been calculated that of the 123 men from the state of Georgia who took the degree of M.D. in the first quarter of the century, eighty-three, about two-thirds, took them from the University of Pennsylvania. It was evidently the favorite place of medical study for Southerners. But by that time medical students were also coming from the West Indies, South America, Canada, and even Europe.

It has been suggested that a considerable number of southern planters or their sons or employes may have wished to learn enough medicine to dose their colored dependents. Other students probably came to get a smattering of medical knowledge that would enable them to set up as practitioners in backward communities with the claim that they had studied at a great medical school. A realization of this goes far to explain the efforts of the Medical Faculty in 1806, 1808, 1825, and later, to induce the Pennsylvania Legislature to pass a law against unlicensed medical practice.

As early as 1807 the Faculty called attention to the fact that, although the rules required two years' attendance, out of a class of two hundred or more not more than fifty appeared for a second year, of whom thirty were candidates for a degree. They ask whether this three-quarters of each class who come for only
one year give up the medical profession or go home and practise without a degree. They think it not unreasonable to require all those who do come to take two courses with each professor.

There is abundant testimony to the prominence, even the supremacy, of the Medical School of the University of Pennsylvania. Among others Benjamin Silliman of Connecticut, preparing in 1802 to teach in the new medical school at Yale, says in his diary, "Of course I must resort to Philadelphia, which presented more advantages in science than any other place in our country"; he proceeded to attend courses there in 1802–3 and 1803–4. Dr. David Hosack, speaking before a medical society in New York in 1812, refers to the "celebrity" of the school and the honor and emolument it brings to its professors, and literary reputation to the state of Pennsylvania; he believes it has come to surpass in numbers even the University of Edinburgh. A committee of the Senate of the state, speaking of the University in a report on education March 1, 1822, says, "The merits and extensive utility of the Medical department are so well known that it would be superfluous for the committee to offer any remarks thereon. It has long been the pride of our state and country. It has flourished without a rival."¹ Thomas Jefferson wrote to Dr. Wistar in 1807. "Your medical school for anatomy and the able professors give advantages not to be found elsewhere."

All this fame and this assemblage of students meant financial prosperity for the school, or rather for the individual medical professors, who received the fees of their students directly without interposition of the University Trustees. Their position was a highly remunerative one. An English traveler in 1820 learns that the payment of one of the professors for his college duties, which only occupy his time for four months of the year, is $6,000; another writer in 1826 estimates the average income of a medical professor at $10,000² A committee of the Board, anxious not to overestimate, places the average between $5,000 and $6,000, though for a period of eighteen years the average

¹ Hazard's Register, II, 307.
² United States Gazette, 1826.
income of the anatomical chair, always the best paid, was $6,000 gross, or $5,425 net.¹

To consider costs to the students, in addition to the payment for the “ticket” for each course taken, which was $20, sold in early times by the professor himself, later by the janitor, there were fees on graduation—$5 to each of the professors, $4 to the Provost and $2 to the Vice-Provost for their signatures, and $4 to the Secretary for the preparation of the diploma. These graduation charges, calculated in 1810 at $32.50, later at $39 for each student, with the ordinary terrors of a professional examination, may help to explain the large numbers who never subjected themselves to either of them.

Even more substantial were the fees paid by the more ambitious students who enrolled as apprentices with one or other of the better-known professors. In 1791 Dr. Benjamin Rush wrote to John Dickinson that he has six apprentices in his “shop” and that his usual fee is £100 cash. He understands that Dr. Wistar and Dr. Griffitts will take apprentices for less than £100. He assures his correspondent that they are both professors in the University, both physicians of the Dispensary, and can be relied upon for their amiable dispositions and social standing.² It is not to be supposed that all students sought such expensive patrons. Indeed the average cost of living and of medical education for a student in Philadelphia is estimated in 1812 at about $400 a year; the year, for medical students, was a short one.³ Somewhat later a newspaper correspondent estimates a student’s yearly expenses, including tickets, boarding, books, and amusements, at $300.⁴

A realistic letter home in 1816 from a medical student, William Irvine Wilson of Deerstown, Pennsylvania, gives in much detail the circumstances of his entry upon his studies. He has found lodging in South Fourth Street, not too far from the University, where, rooming with two others, he gets excellent board and lodging for $5 a week, which seems to him high.

¹ Report of Committee of Trustees on the Medical Department, April 5, 1859.
² Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography, XXXV, 501.
³ American Medical and Philosophical Register, II, 225.
⁴ American Daily Advertiser, Nov. 25, 1835.
There were seven other medical students in the same boarding house. He pays $120 for his tickets for his six courses of lectures and would like to take a ticket for the hospital and for the course of Thomas Cooper, who was spending four years of his distinguished career as Professor of Chemistry and Mineralogy in the College, and was already advocating a broader training in medicine. His quaint silhouette is familiar among University archives.

Wilson was much impressed with the number of his fellow students. "There are between four and five hundred students who when crowded into one room make a pretty respectable appearance." He hears five lectures every day in the morning, from five professors, Dorsey, Chapman, Physick, Coxe, and Wistar, and one in the afternoon from Dr. James. There was no regular provision for dissection in the course and, now that classes were so large, clinical teaching for only a favored few. Wilson would like to take some other courses but cannot afford them, but hopes to have money enough to get a subject for dissection. Perhaps he could not keep up the expense, for unfortunately his name is not on the list of graduates, although those of his two roommates are.¹

It may easily be imagined that the problem of room for teaching all these students was a pressing one. The old shell at Fourth and Arch could not contain them and must be broken. Among the twenty-five pieces of property confiscated from Tories at the Revolution and handed over to the University in 1785 was a fine lot at the northeast corner of Fifth and Walnut streets, fifty-two feet on Walnut and extending back two hundred and fifty feet on Fifth. It had been confiscated, along with several other properties, from the loyalist Andrew Allen. In 1792 we find Dr. Shippen and Dr. Wistar reconstructing, at the somewhat grudging expense of the Board of Trustees, an old building on this lot, the lower story for a chemical laboratory and lecture room, the upper floor for a larger lecture room. The building was long known as "Anatomy Hall" or "Surgeons' Hall" or simply the "Laboratory." Other lectures were still given at the old building, but chemistry and Dr. Ship

¹ Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography, XXXVII, 507–8.
pen's lectures on anatomy, physiology, and midwifery were given in Anatomical Hall.

The death of Dr. Hutchinson, Professor of Chemistry, in the yellow fever epidemic of 1793 was followed by the election and almost immediate death of Dr. John Carson. It was a widespread wish that the position should be taken by Dr. Joseph Priestley, the famous English scientist, the discoverer of oxygen, the friend of Franklin and of humanity, who took refuge in America from the intolerance of England. Dr. Barton asked that his name should not be considered for fear of its interference with Priestley's election and acceptance. The latter was in fact unanimously elected November 11, 1794. But he had by this time settled at Northumberland, where he hoped another college would sometime be established, and declined, though regretfully. Dr. Woodhouse was thereupon elected. It was here that Silliman in 1802, 1803, and 1804 heard Shippen and Woodhouse lecture; he notes, however, that neither of the rooms "was equal to the dignity and importance of the Medical school . . . the lecture rooms were not capacious enough for more than one hundred or one hundred and twenty." Nevertheless Anatomy Hall was in use for many years for the chemical and anatomical lectures, and in 1811 was improved and enlarged. Silliman also attended the lectures of Rush, Barton, and Wistar, but in other rooms which were by this time occupied by the Medical School in addition to the building on Fifth Street.

The purchase of the President's House by the Trustees was followed promptly in October 1800 by a petition from the Medical Faculty explaining that they are now established in two separate buildings, the old Academy building on Fourth Street and Anatomy Hall on Fifth, and asking as a matter of greater convenience for a sufficient number of chambers in the new Ninth Street building for all their classes. This seems not to have been practicable, but by 1802 the "west bow-room in the second story" of the President's House had been fitted up for the lectures on materia medica and such subjects, while anatomy and chemistry were taught in the Fifth Street building. Still inconvenienced by their divided location and the
small size of the chemical laboratory and the lecture room above, they asked the Trustees in 1804 to set aside four rooms in the old Fourth Street building for their exclusive use. When this was not granted they asked the Trustees to join them in an appeal to the Legislature for a grant to put up an entirely new building for medical lectures. This appeal was sent in but, as usual, laid on the table. The next year the medical professors offer as a group to pay the Trustees $720 a year if they will fix up adequate quarters for them, and propose to collect $2 apiece from the students for reimbursement and themselves pay any deficit. With an abundance of means coming from fees under their own control the Medical Faculty endured with impatience the inconveniences of their location. After considerable altercation the Trustees in 1807 agreed to put up an entirely new building, or rather a separate structure attached to the main building on Ninth Street. This they did at an expense of some $16,000, which was to be repaid on a complicated system, partly by the Medical Faculty itself, partly by direct charges on the medical students. This was the domed octagonal building that appears in the old pictures as a semi-detached south wing of the President's House. It was here that Dr. Shippen gave his last lectures and his reminiscences of his first class in anatomy forty-five years before in the little building in his father's garden. He died the next year.

It was in these negotiations that the old Faculty of the school as it had been reorganized after the Revolution—Drs. Shippen, Rush, Wistar, Woodhouse, and Barton—appears in its last activity. It was an organized body, meeting frequently, each member acting in turn for a year as Dean. Its first minute book "From 1767 to 1814" is preceded by a brief authoritative account of the foundation and earliest history of the school. At the end of 1807 Dr. Physick was added to their number; in 1809, on the death of the quaint Dr. Woodhouse, Dr. Coxe, a member of the Board of Trustees and a dubious choice, as appeared later, was elected. It may be this election that led Jefferson to write: "The College of Philadelphia has lost its character of primacy by indulging motives of favoritism and nepotism, and by con-
ferring appointments as if the professorships were entrusted to them as provisions for their friends." ¹ In 1810 Dr. James was made professor of the newly separated chair of obstetrics, with Dr. Chapman as assistant. In 1811 Robert Hare was elected Professor of Natural Philosophy, but did not begin his long and distinguished career as Professor of Chemistry in the Medical School until 1819. In the meantime death had been busy; the passing, not only of Dr. Shippen in 1808 and Dr. Woodhouse in 1809, but Dr. Rush in 1813, Dr. Barton in 1815, and Dr. Wistar in 1818, dissolved the Faculty as it was in the early days. Their successors were a larger, probably an equally capable but not so picturesque a group.

From 1806 to 1815 the Board of Trustees had collected a matriculation fee of $4 from each medical student to pay for the increased accommodation required. This averaged some $460 a year. The students were dissatisfied with the requirement of a new matriculation fee each year, which they declared was not demanded in any other medical school. They complained also that the "tickets" for the courses cost more than in European institutions. In 1815 by a new arrangement the Medical Faculty paid $1,200 a year as rent for their wing of the building, took over the charges to the students, and required them to pay but one matriculation fee of $5. In 1817 the Medical Faculty induced the Trustees to spend $8,000 on the enlargement of their hall at an increase of ten per cent of the rent. There were many complicated engagements and rearrangements between Faculty and Trustees, including, among other demands, a requirement that every newly engaged professor in the Medical School should pay $600 as a "bonus" into the University treasury.² In 1828 the attempt to improve the old buildings for their uses was given up altogether and a determination reached to tear them down and erect a separate medical building.

So this constructive period in the history of the Medical School came to an end. Many events in that history have gone

¹ Jefferson to Joseph C. Cabell, Feb. 3, 1824.
² For a detailed description of these financial negotiations see a Report of a Committee on the Medical Department, April 5, 1859.
unmentioned: the rise of private teaching to correspond to the demands of the many students, the provision by enterprising physicians of additional courses to continue study beyond the short four or five months of the regular University course, the establishment in 1825 of the rival Jefferson Medical College, internal disputes, and the quaint custom of the "green box" for examinations, changes in requirements for the degree, the appearance of new and interesting personalities on the Faculty—all these demand a separate history of the Medical Department, rather than the few paragraphs available in this volume. This is still more manifestly true of the next period, and indeed of all the intervening time until the extent and diversification of the medical interests of the University during the last half-century have brought that department into the very forefront of attention.