

**REGISTER OF THE  
OFFICERS AND CADETS  
OF THE VIRGINIA  
MILITARY INSTITUTE**

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OF THE

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## REMARKS.

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THE VIRGINIA MILITARY INSTITUTE was established, and is supported, by the State of Virginia. It was organized in 1839, as a State *Military* and *Scientific* school, upon the basis of the United States Military Academy at West Point, and has been in successful operation for thirty years. The cadets admitted consist of two classes, *State* and *Pay* cadets. The Institute supplies to the State cadet his board and tuition; and in consideration thereof, he is required to teach two years after graduation. The Pay cadet is at his own expense, which averaged before the war \$375 per year, for every charge, *including clothing*. The State cadets are selected from those who are unable to bear their own expenses. The Institution has always had as many pupils as its buildings would accommodate, and numbers now 36 *State* and 300 *Pay* cadets. Applications are made, by letter, to the Superintendent prior to the first of July, each year, and appointments are made for both classes of cadets by the Board of Visitors.

The State makes an annual appropriation for the support of Virginia Military Institute of \$15,000. This sum supplies *tuition* and *board*, to the *State* cadets, *without charge*, and supports—by the aid of the tuition fees, and the income from vested funds—the faculty. In 1860, a donation of \$20,000 was made by Gen. PHILIP ST. GEORGE COCKE, for the endowment of the chair of *Agriculture*, and in the same year, a donation was made of \$11,800 by Dr. WILLIAM NEWTON MERCER, of Louisiana, to endow the chair of Animal and Vegetable Physiology, applied to *Agriculture*. A donation was made at the same time by Mrs. E. L. CLAYTOR, of Virginia, of \$5,000, to erect a *Hall of Natural History*.

The *Virginia Military Institute* had just placed itself before the public, as a *General School of Applied Science*, for the development of the *agricultural, mineral, commercial, manufacturing, and internal improvement* interests of the State and Country, when the army of Gen. Hunter destroyed its stately buildings, and consigned to the flames its library of

10,000 volumes, the Philosophical apparatus used for 10 years by "STONEWALL" JACKSON, and all its chemicals. The cadets were then transferred to Richmond, and the Institution was continued in vigorous operation until the evacuation of Richmond, on the 3d April, 1865.

On the 21st of September, 1865, the Board of Visitors met in Richmond to re-organize the Institution. The war had made sad traces on the school, besides the destruction of its building, library and apparatus. Three of its Professors, Lt. Gen. "STONEWALL" JACKSON, Maj. Gen. R. E. RODES, and Col. S. CRUTCHFIELD, two of its assistant Professors, Capt. W. H. MORGAN, and Lieut. L. CRITTENDEN, and 125 of its alumni had been slain in battle, and 350 others maimed. Considering, however, the great demand flowing from the general suspension of education in the South, and the special field of usefulness *distinctively* marked out for this *School of applied Science*, the Board of Visitors, proceeded with energy and resolution in their work, and having elected Gen. G. W. CUSTIS LEE, and Col. WM. B. BLAIR, distinguished graduates of the U. S. Military Academy, to fill two of the chairs made vacant by the death of Gen. JACKSON and Gen. RODES, and at subsequent meetings, appointed Commodore M. F. MAURY, LL. D., late of the Observatory, Professor of Physics, and Superintendent of the Physical Survey of Virginia, and Capt. JOHN M. BROOKE, late of the Navy, to the new chair of Practical Astronomy, Geodesy, Physical Geography and Meteorology, the Virginia Military Institute resumed its accustomed work, amid its ruins at Lexington, on the 17th October, 1865, with some 50 cadets, organized in four classes, and prosecuted its work with earnestness and effect, and *on the 4th of July following, ten* cadets, constituting the first class, who had borne the hardships and perils of the Institution, during the whole of the war, were graduated, having completed a course of scientific and general study, which will commend them to the confidence of the scientific scholar.

The Legislature of Virginia promptly responded to these evidences of vitality on the part of the school, by providing for the payment of its annuity and the interest on its vested funds. This provision enabled the Board of Visitors to appoint the State cadets required by law to be admitted, and arrangements were at the same time in progress, to restore the buildings, and by the 1st of September next, the Barracks and Mess Hall will be restored complete. The Virginia Military Institute now numbers 600 graduates, 200 of whom were *State* cadets. There have been altogether 2500 matriculates, and of these 560 were *State* cadets.

The government of the Virginia Military Institute, although military

in its organization, is carefully arranged for the protection and development of the moral character of the cadets. Attendance on the public services of the sanctuary and regular Bible instruction on the Sabbath are positively enjoined by the regulations.

The following extract from the Report of the Superintendent to the Board of Visitors, of June, 1859, will exhibit, in some degree, the influence of the moral government:

“There is no part of the duty of the Superintendent which weighs so heavily upon his mind and heart as that connected with the control and government of the moral conduct of those committed to his charge. No general idea of the wayward and depraved character of the human heart is at all equal to that which experience of the follies and vices of young men makes known to the conscientious teacher.”

The great Head Master of Rugby School gives utterance to his experience in the following striking language:

“Undoubtedly, this place (Rugby School,) and other similar places, which receive us when we have quitted the state of childhood, and before our characters are formed in manhood, do partake somewhat of the character of the wilderness; and it is not unnatural that many should shrink back from them in fear. We see but too often the early beauty of the character sadly marred, its simplicity gone, its confidence chilled, its tenderness hardened. Where there was obedience, we find murmuring and self-will and pride. Where there was a true and blameless conversation, we find now something of falsehood, something of profaneness, something of impurity. I can well conceive what it must be to a parent to see his child return from school, for the first time, with the marks of this grievous change upon him. I can well conceive how bitterly he must regret having ever sent him to a place of so much danger; how fondly he must look back to the days of his early innocence. And if a parent feels thus, what must be our feelings, seeing that this evil has been wrought here? Are we not as those who, when pretending to give a wholesome draught, have mixed the cup with poison? How can we go on upholding a system, the effects of which appear to be so merely mischievous?”

My own experience but too painfully confirms these honest and truthful acknowledgments of Dr. Arnold; and I have no doubt the testimony from every school in our land would, if honestly brought out, speak the same verdict. But this is only one side of the picture. Let Dr. Arnold present the other also, and show the results, as well as the encouragements, of faithful effort in leading the young through the wilderness which meets them on the threshold of academic life.



“Believe me,” he says, “that such questions must and ought to present themselves to the mind of every thinking man who is concerned in the management of a school; and I do think that we could not answer them satisfactorily, that our work would, absolutely, be unendurable, if we did not bear in mind that our eyes should look forward, and not backward—if *we did not remember that the victory of fallen man is to be sought for, not in innocence, but in tried virtue.* Comparing only the state of a boy, after his first half-year or year at school, with his earlier state as a child, and our reflections on the evil of our system would be bitter indeed. But when we compare a boy’s state, after his first half-year or year at school, with what it is afterwards; when we see the clouds again clearing off; when we find coarseness succeeded again by delicacy; harshness and selfishness broken up, and giving place to affection and benevolence; murmuring and self-will exchanged for humility and self-denial; and the profane, or impure, or false tongue uttering again only words of truth and purity; and when we see that all these good things are now, by God’s grace, rooted in the character; that they have been tried, and grown up amidst the trial; that the knowledge of evil has made them hate it the more, and be more aware of it—then we can look upon our calling with patience, and even with thankfulness. We see the wilderness has been gone through triumphantly, and its dangers have hardened and strengthened the traveler for all his remaining pilgrimage. For the truth is, that to the knowledge of good and evil are we born, and it must come upon us sooner or later. In the common course of things, it comes about that age with which we are here most concerned. I do not mean that there are not faults in early childhood—we know that there are; but we know also, that with the strength and rapid growth of boyhood, there is a far greater development of these faults, and, particularly, far less of that submissiveness which belonged naturally to the helplessness of mere childhood. I suppose that, by an extreme care, the period of childhood might be prolonged considerably; but still it must end, and the knowledge of good and evil, in its full force, must come. I believe that this must be. I believe that no care can prevent it, and that an extreme attempt at carefulness, while it could not keep off the disorder, would weaken the strength of the constitution to bear it.” \* \* \* \* \*

“Ignorance, absence of temptation, the presence of all good impressions, constitute much of the innocence of mere childhood—so beautiful while it lasts—so sure to be soon blighted. It is blighted in the first experience of life, most commonly when a boy first goes to school. Then his mere innocence, which, indeed, he may be said to have worn rather

instinctively than from choice, becomes grievously polluted. It is indeed a discouraging season—the exact image of the ungenial springs of our natural year. But after this, there comes, as it were, a second beginning of life, when principle takes the place of innocence; when thought and inquiry awaken; when, out of the mere chaos of boyhood, the elements of the future character of the man begin to appear. Blessed are they for whom the confusion and disarray of their boyish life is quickened into a true life by the moving of the Spirit of God! Blessed are they for whom the beginnings of thought and inquiry are the beginnings also of faith and love, when the new character receives, as it is forming, the Christian seed, and the man is also a Christian. And then, this second beginning of life, resting on faith and conscious principle, and not on mere passive innocence, stands sure for the middle and the end.”

I feel assured that the experience of Dr. Arnold, as to the results of academic life, under faithful discipline and instruction, has also been happily exemplified in the history of this Institution; and that the change which he so strikingly depicts, as witnessed in his own pupils, may be traced in the progress of every class that has been subjected to our discipline. I, too, have seen the modesty and the purity of innocence gradually give way in the course of the first year, and changed into the roughness and waywardness and impurity which have marked the character of many a member of the third class. It has been at this critical culminating of the “knowledge of evil,” that the discipline of the Institution has been most frequently exercised, and the patient labor of the teacher most earnestly called into requisition. But I, too, have seen a change take place, as the second class year advanced. There has been a gradual return to the primitive delicacy and purity and truthfulness; and these good qualities have not only matured in the *first-class-man* during his last year, but they have become “rooted in the charter;” the early *habit* of virtue has been replaced by the settled *principle* of virtue; and the dangers of the “wilderness,” which he has triumphantly passed through, have hardened and strengthened him for the pilgrimage of life now lying before him. Look at the class now presenting themselves for the honors of graduates of the Institution, and contrast them as they now appear with what they were two or three years ago; or contemplate the large second class, and see the characters it now presents, and remember what they were eighteen months ago, and all familiar with them will testify to the accuracy of the statement which I have made. But we have had more substantial grounds of encouragement still, founded upon considerations which have constituted

the essential basis of the virtuous character to which I have referred. This Institution has graduated 522 members, exclusive of the present first class, and *not one graduate* (exclusive of the first graduating class, of which I cannot speak positively) *has ever left the Institution, who was not, at the time of graduation, thoroughly convinced of the Divine Character of our Holy Religion.* May we not hope that "the second beginning of life," to which Dr. Arnold refers, rested, to many of these, on faith, as well as on conscious principle, and that the Christian seed received here, has been since developed in the formation of many a Christian character?

These facts are significant. They not only give encouragement and hope to those who have had, amidst such darkness and many clouds to struggle on in laborious duty of teaching and disciplining the young here, but they furnish the most satisfactory evidence of the soundness of the system of discipline which characterizes this Institution; and this would be made still more apparent if an analysis were made of the material of which it is usually composed. I am thoroughly persuaded that the system of government of a Military Institution, when combined with careful, systematic Bible instruction, furnishes the best possible instrumentality for the awakening and development of religious character. The community of life and sentiment which peculiarly characterizes a Military School, furnishes a powerful bond of sympathy for good as well as evil, and no one, acquainted with the growth of piety in military life, could fail to have noticed this. But the minute regulations of a Military School, which are so often objected to by some, serve to promote this end in a variety of ways.

An eloquent divine (*Caird*) has said, that "one reason why the sinful man does not 'understand his errors' is, that *sin can be truly measured only when it is resisted.* It is impossible to estimate the strength of the principle of evil in the soul till we begin to struggle with it; and the careless or sinful man—the man who, by supposition, is not striving with, but succumbing to sin—cannot know its force. *So long as evil reigns unopposed within the soul, it will reign, in a great degree unobserved.* So long as a man passively and thoughtlessly yields his will to the sway of worldly principles or unholy desires and habits, he is in no condition to measure their intensity—scarcely to discover their existence. For in this, as many other cases, *resistance is the best measure of force.*" And a greater than *Caird* has said, that "by the law is the knowledge of sin." "I had not known lust, except the law had said, thou shalt not covet." The vices, the irregularities, the follies and the errors of the young, are brought to light, made manifest to them in the forming period of their