

**INAUGURATION OF
WILLIAM O. THOMPSON,
AS PRESIDENT OF MIAMI
UNIVERSITY**

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Inauguration Of William O. Thompson, as President of Miami University by Various

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VARIOUS

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Separate

MIAMI UNIVERSITY.

INAUGURATION

OF

WILLIAM O. THOMPSON, D. D.

AS

PRESIDENT

OF

From

MIAMI UNIVERSITY.

OXFORD, OHIO:

PUBLISHED BY THE UNIVERSITY.

1891.

INTRODUCTORY.

On the 17th day of June, 1891, Wm. O. Thompson, D.D., of Longmont, Colorado, was unanimously elected by the Board of Trustees President of the Miami University.

Having signified his acceptance of the position it was deemed best that his inauguration should take place prior to the opening of the collegiate year, and accordingly Tuesday, September 15, 1891, was selected for that ceremony and the following order of exercises agreed upon by the committee of arrangements appointed by the Board:

PRAYER, by B. W. CHIDLAW, D. D., of the Class of 1833.

ADDRESS, by HENRY MITCHELL McCracken, LL. D., Chancellor of the University of the City of New York, of the Class of 1857.

ADMINISTRATION OF THE OATH OF OFFICE AND DELIVERY OF THE KEYS, by JOHN W. HERRON, President of the Board of Trustees of the Class of 1845.

INAUGURAL ADDRESS by President THOMPSON.

BENEDICTION, by THE REV. J. G. MONFORT, D.D., LL. D., of the Class of 1834.

The Board of Trustees directed the following addresses delivered on that occasion to be printed:

ADDRESS OF
HENRY MITCHELL MACCRACKEN, LL. D.
CHANCELLOR OF THE UNIVERSITY OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK.

MR. PRESIDENT, FRIENDS OF MIAMI AND CITIZENS OF OXFORD:

This day, here, in Oxford, at "Old Miami," is, for me, feelingly described by the stanza of Wordsworth, when, upon his revisiting Yarrow, he says:

"Past, present, future, all appeared
In harmony united,
Like guests that meet and come from far,
By cordial love invited.

The Oxford "past" in my memory begins when I, a boy of not quite twelve, first attended prayers under President Anderson in yonder chapel. I had been here two months before at Commencement, and had listened with hushed admiration to the speeches of the graduating seniors, Benjamin Harrison, David Swing, Harmar Denny and the rest. When September came I was here again, and stepped up to write my name in the ponderous matriculation book. I recall that as I slowly traced my boyish autograph the President said: "You write remarkably well." I have since looked at that signature. I doubt whether Dr. Anderson was a judge of penmanship. But he was a judge of boyish nature and he won my immediate good will.

For five years I was a student here, and I did not miss five days of recitation in the five years, and graduated when not quite seventeen. I have had very few days in Oxford since, and not an hour in over twenty years. It is therefore

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a far-away past that comes back to me at my loving invitation.

I recall that I had not learned everything when I left Oxford. But I had learned to study. I had learned to judge independently. I had begun to measure men. I had been driven to distinguish with some clearness, ability from pretense, truth from falsehood, virtue from viciousness, magnanimity from meanness. Among six score college boys I had found in embryo the men I have known since. I recall more vividly than anything else a careless, happy time.

To quote another line of Wordsworth:

"Brisk youth appeared, the morn of youth,
With freaks of graceful folly."

I swam in Four Mile Creek. I caught catfish from its dark depths. I pursued botany along the banks, in company with older classmates, who, I fear, were watching to catch glimpses of chance blossoms in the enclosures of the two young ladies' seminaries. I followed foot-ball, cricket and a game called wicket (which I have never seen since), played with a stuffed ball, larger than a foot-ball. I joined my classmates in two or three incipient outbreaks. I took part, as a young boy would, in things of whose real tendency I had about as much conception as a drummer boy at Shiloh or Gettysburg must have had of movements of regiments. All that comes back to-day, bringing only pleasure. How I greet this noblest college campus that I ever saw; these sixty acres of fair lawns and glorious trees. I love the Oxford of the Miami Valley, for the great good I consciously received from her. How much I owe her for what I got unconsciously, I can not measure. I was born here, and grew out of infancy here. Close by, in the town which Howells celebrates as "A Boy's Town," I was prepared for Oxford. Not far away, in this same county, my father was born, and here he graduated. Here my mother, found men and women to aid her in establishing, more than fifty years ago, one of the earliest high-schools for young women plant-

Address of Henry Mitchell MacCracken. 7

ed in Ohio. Here, uncles, brothers, cousins, have received their baccalaureate honors.

Dear old Oxford, I bring tribute to thee as one of the most modest, yet most generous of mothers. Thou hast from the first, given all thou could'st give to thy children, laying up nothing for profit except a good name. Thy ground-rents were, like the laws of the Medes and Persians, to know no change. They were the same seventy years ago, when five hundred silver dollars paid a professor's salary, as they are now. They will remain the same, I suppose, though it should take ten times five hundred silver dollars to support a professor. Fortunately, silver dollars are still worth as much as gold dollars and Miami has as many professors on her roll as she ever had. Her present condition, known to me only in vague outline, seems pleasant. Like her past, it gives us only happiness.

When the Oxford past, and the Oxford present, which I have invited into my mind as my guests, are so delightful, I should be an ungracious host if I invited any guest who was less pleasing. Oxford future is not likely to be unpleasing. I have Oxford as one of the sisterhood of three hundred American colleges before my mind, as I choose a subject for this baccalaureate hour. My theme is—

THE COMING COLLEGE IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

The coming college in the United States of America, it is hoped will be something more definite than the present college. We are in the midst of a remarkable movement. It is nothing less than an effort to place America abreast with the oldest European lands in higher research and instruction. One of the great New York bankers said to me recently that last year had advanced us very far toward the financial front rank of the world. Whether consciously or not, we Americans are seeking also to stand in the educational front rank among the nations. This means forward steps in the way of research and scholarship in each of the three great fields of knowledge, language and literature, mathematics and natural

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science, philosophy and history, which together make up what Europe for five hundred years has called philosophy—and in the applications of these, not only in the three ancient professions of theology, medicine and law, but also in the new technological profession, in the fine arts and in journalism in pedagogy and in civics, and in each new profession, whatever it may be.

The task of giving instruction in the new fields opened and of giving more advanced instruction in the older fields has seemed to fall to our colleges. A score or two of our richer foundations have undertaken it. They have not set about it deliberately, or upon any well-settled system. They have merely added to their courses of study from time to time one and another subject. They have also added to the requirements for admission to college. What then? They are now very much as I fancy the banks of a community might be if from handling the trade of a county or state, they should gradually, without any reorganization, attempt to transact the affairs of an entire continent and foreign countries. There are a score or two of colleges in America that find that they have overburdened the college proper. They have greatly changed and expanded the American college course. The result is, we find, that the college course needs relief. If I may be permitted to personify this subject, I may say of that very worthy personage the American College Course, that he is in some localities, in an ailing condition; not thoroughly sick, but still not in as good working order as he was twenty or thirty years since. There is too much of him. He needs to be reduced. Either his Freshman feet, or his Sophomore legs and thighs, or his Junior breast and arms, or his Senior head, are requiring treatment. The doctors have taken hold of him. Indeed a new profession has risen up for his benefit. Its members are entitled to the degree of D. C. C., Doctor of College Courses; and it is as the proverb says, "tot homines, tot sententiæ." There are as many opinions as doctors.