

**THE UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA: JEFFERSON
ITS FATHER, AND HIS POLITICAL
PHILOSOPHY. AN ADDRESS
DELIVERED UPON THE OCCASION OF THE
DEDICATION OF THE NEW BUILDINGS OF
THE UNIVERSITY, JUNE 14, 1898**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649139699

The University of Virginia: Jefferson its father, and his political philosophy. An address delivered upon the occasion of the dedication of the new buildings of the University, June 14, 1898 by James C. Carter

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

JAMES C. CARTER

**THE UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA: JEFFERSON
ITS FATHER, AND HIS POLITICAL
PHILOSOPHY. AN ADDRESS
DELIVERED UPON THE OCCASION OF THE
DEDICATION OF THE NEW BUILDINGS OF
THE UNIVERSITY, JUNE 14, 1898**

81582
The University of Virginia:

Jefferson its Father, and
his Political Philosophy.

An Address delivered upon the
Occasion of the Dedication of
the new Buildings of the Uni-
versity, June 14, 1898

BY

JAMES C. CARTER, LL. D

University of Virginia



THE UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

1898

The University of Virginia :

AN ADDRESS.

THE lives of institutions, like those of human beings, have their vicissitudes. This University, in whose honor we are gathered together to-day, has not been an exception. It had a long struggle even for existence. Joy and triumph followed when, eighty years ago, its first corner-stone was laid with pomp and ceremony in the presence of a distinguished company which included three illustrious men who had filled the office of President of the United States. A long succeeding period of growth, prosperity and happiness was rudely interrupted by the desolating storm of war—war raging with fury around its own temples, and driving even its own peaceful children into the grim work of destruction and slaughter. But even war, which spares almost nothing, yet spared the walls with their precious contents. The

heart of the soldier will still melt before the sad pleading of the Muse.

“Lift not thy spear against the Muses' bower:
The great Emathian conqueror bid spare
The house of Pindarus, when temple and tow'r
Went to the ground; and the repeated air
Of sad Electra's poet had the pow'r
To save the Athenian walls from ruin bare.”

The dawn of peace found the University weak and exhausted, but not disheartened. The people of Virginia who had learned to cherish it, its sons who looked back to it with fond affection, the warm-hearted and open-handed friends of learning in distant places came forward with liberal help. The Muses returned and re-peopled their haunts, and a new era of prosperity, stimulated by the new national life, began its course.

But another stroke of adversity awaited it,—this time, not from the hostile passions of man, but from the rage of the elements, less savage indeed, but not less unsparing. Its very walls were laid in ruins and their precious treasures wasted. But if any evidence were needed to show the extent to which the University had increased in power, in grandeur, in usefulness, and in the esteem of the people of Virginia and the friends everywhere of the higher education, it would be found in the undaunted spirit with which this disaster was faced. There was an immediate resolve that it should rise from its ashes in yet fairer proportions, more worthy of

the spirit in which it was originally founded, better equipped for the great work to which it was originally dedicated, and a more glorious monument to the great name forever associated with it.

This great purpose has now been accomplished, and we are gathered together to-day to celebrate its completion. The scene before me and around is the best evidence of the interest of the occasion. The sons of the University from near and far have returned to the bosom of their Fair Mother to rejoice together over her happiness. Representatives of other seats of learning are here to offer their congratulations. The diplomatic representative of the great empire at the antipodes—an empire in which learning has for ages been held in honor—lends to the occasion the dignity of his presence. The venerable Commonwealth is here in the person of the Chief Magistrate and principal officers of state to manifest her own interest in an institution which her bounty has cherished and which has given back in return the support upon which alone a free Commonwealth can rest.

It is the custom on such occasions to make provision for deliberate utterance of the thoughts which they are calculated to excite, and the authorities of the University have thought it suitable to invite to this office, not, I have been made to feel, an entire stranger, but a friend from a distance, whose opportunities have not

been such as to permit a close observation of the history and fortunes of the institution. Profoundly sensible of the honor thus conferred upon me, I cannot help feeling how inadequate I am to its due performance. I cannot speak of the University of Virginia with all the affection which the graduate cherishes for his Alma Mater, nor with the full pride which the Virginian alone can feel; but to those who regard this institution as their own, who have control over its destinies, or have been reared within its walls, a view of it, as it appears to outside observers, may not be unwelcome, or wholly uninteresting. We are sometimes enabled to correct our own conceptions of ourselves, and qualify ourselves in some degree for the better performance of our own duties, by learning what is thought of us and what is expected of us by others.

Let me then occupy your thoughts for a brief hour with a sketch, very rude and imperfect, of the origin of the University and of its principal features as they appear to the world at large, to which I may add some allusion to its illustrious founder, and to the political philosophy the teaching of which he so ardently desired to promote.

Its origin offers a strong contrast with the beginnings of our principal seats of learning which preceded it. Harvard, Yale, Columbia and Princeton began as mere schools for humble

colonies, with no prevision of the great destinies which awaited them. Their majestic proportions have been developed and shaped, during long periods of time, by many different hands and many varying influences. But the University of Virginia sprang into life, in full panoply, from the conception of a single man, like Minerva from the brain of Jove. The aim of its founder was not to supply merely local and immediate wants, but to make provision for the growth, maintenance and glory of the new civilization and the new empire with which his visions were filled. No sketch can even be outlined of the origin and character of this institution which does not take in as a principal element the figure of this illustrious man.

The leading feature in the mind and character of Thomas Jefferson was a firm and undoubting belief in the worth and dignity of human nature, and in the capacity of man for self government. This was at once the conclusion of his reason and the passion of his soul. Whence it came to him it is difficult to discover; it was not from the sense of subjection and oppression felt by an inferior class in society towards those above it, for he belonged to the class of well to do, if not wealthy, Virginia land-holders; not from the venerable college of William and Mary, in which he was bred, for his opinions were not the cherished sentiments of that institution; not from his early and familiar acquaintance, to

which he has acknowledged his great indebtedness, with Dr. Small, the President of that College, George Wythe and Gov. Fanquier, for their tendencies were towards very conservative views; not even from the fiery eloquence of Patrick Henry, to which he had often listened with admiration,—that may have fanned the flame in his bosom, but indignation at the Stamp Act would scarcely have nerved him to his early effort in the House of Burgesses to facilitate the manumission of slaves. It seems to have been inborn; but whether inborn or communicated, it ruled his life; it burst from him like the peal of an anthem when he came to pen the immortal Declaration; his long residence in Europe only confirmed it; the excesses of the French Revolution had no effect to abate it, and it breathes through every line of his public utterances from his seat as President of the United States; it was the foundation of his virtues and the source of his errors; and not only the source of these, but the cause of the false imputation to him of errors he never committed; his friendships and his enmities were alike due to it; he distrusted all who were not in full sympathy with it, and they distrusted him. Taught by bitter experience that the principles of true democracy are often as distasteful to the multitude as they are to the possessors of wealth and privilege, that the masses of men, fascinated by the splendors and force of concentrated power, may easily be