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Minutes/ Board of Trustees Aug 8th, 1887

Board of Trustees

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3 July 27)

Dr Dalbey

FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE, HELD ON AUGUST 8TH, 1887.

"To the Honorable, The Board of Trustees of The University of Tennessee:
Gentlemen:

I have the honor to notify you of my acceptance of the presidency of the University of Tennessee, and the Directorship of the Tennessee Agricultural Experiment Station, upon the terms set forth in your resolution of the 25th ultimo.

In doing this, I desire, first of all, to express my appreciation of the honor bestowed and my earnest purpose to prove worthy of this great trust. Your generous confidence has filled me with heartfelt solicitude, and I shall devote, sacredly, every power I may possess to the accomplishment of the great work before us. And let me say that it would have been impossible for me to undertake this grave responsibility, this arduous task, if you had been one whit less harmonious in your action, less generous and less noble in your purposes. The complicated and difficult undertaking will certainly fail of accomplishment if your honorable Board does not sustain me in the exercise of the liberal powers which you voluntarily offered, and have now pledged to me. I know that you fully appreciate this.

We do not disguise the fact this is a critical period in the history of the University. It has done a great work in the past for the young men of Tennessee.

But the times have changed. The progress of the day is along new highways. There is a demand for a new education, the education of the hand and heart, as well as head, which, however, is but the oldest education, that of the ancient landmarks.

Already the demand is heard in Tennessee. It is in the air, we all feel it. An epoch of vast material development is upon us. The watchman upon the walls round about us proclaim the dawn. They call every man to go to work in a ripened harvest.

The higher education of the past tended to remove all intelligent men from industrial pursuits. The purpose underlying the old education was, in the minds of parents, to lift their children above the necessity of manual labor. This was the inducement held out to parents by the old-fashioned college. Literary education was too frequently offered, not as a preparation for any manual work, but as an excuse for idleness. The desire of the youth was to escape from the drudgery of labor and to live by his wits.

The old system is cursing our agriculture worst of all. The smart boy must leave the farm and become a lawyer, a doctor, a merchant, or, at least, a merchant's clerk. "Any fool is fit to farm", they say, that is, to pursue the most difficult and complicated of all professions, the one involving more different sciences and requiring more varied knowledge, experience and training than any other vocation.

We do not lose sight of the fact that training is the great end of education. But we hold that as good manual training may be gotten in studying, for instance, mathematics and its application in mechanics, chemistry and its application in agriculture, and geology and its application in mining, as in studying Greek roots and Latin participles.

We propose to educate the whole man, to educate the eye to judge, and the hand to hew to the line, as well as the brain to reason and remember facts. At the same time, we must not be understood to depreciate classical education. But your institution was established to educate the "Industrial Classes." It is a "College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts." It has thus its own peculiar field, distinct from that of any other in the state. It shall be our aim to build it to occupy this field.

The General Assembly has called upon you by special resolu-

tion to give the youth of Tennessee opportunity for industrial education. This is the idea. Let our agricultural and mechanical college be faithful to the purposes for which its funds were given, faithful to the present needs of our country and it will be sustained.

I am, your obedient servant.

Charles W. Dabney, Jr.