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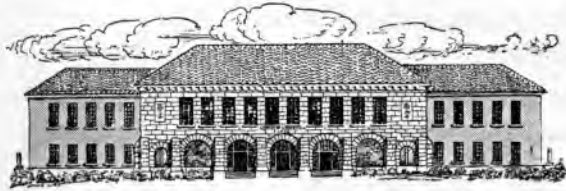
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1827

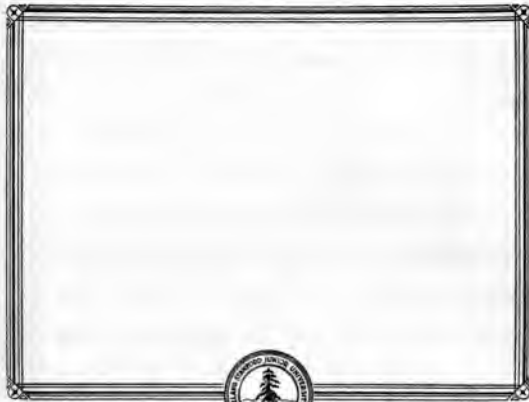


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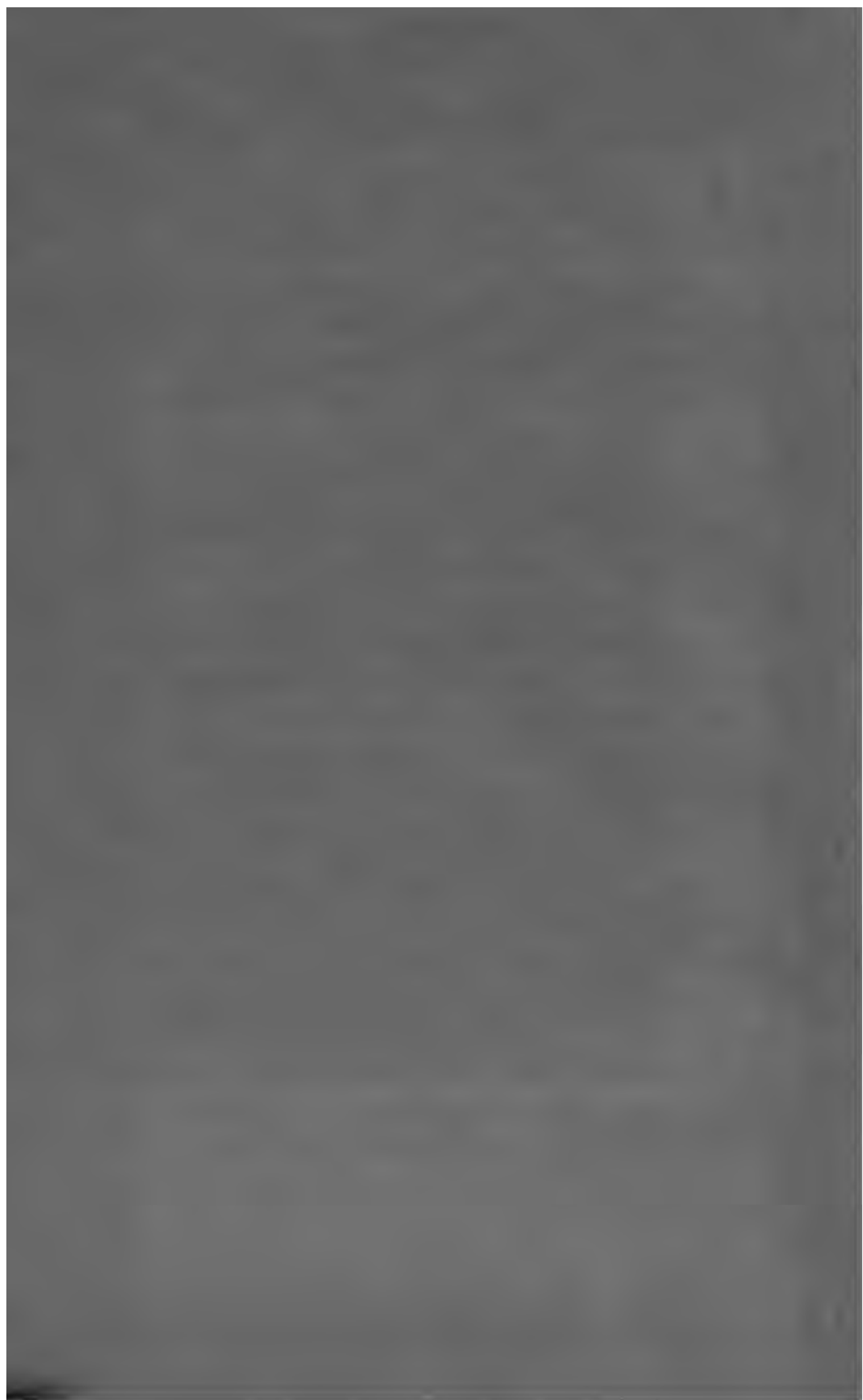
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THE SUBSTANCE OF

TWO REPORTS

OF THE

FAULTY OF AMHERST COLLEGE,

TO THE

Board of Trustees,

WITH THE DOINGS OF THE BOARD THEREON.

AMHERST,

CARTER AND ADAMS.....PRINTERS.

1897.

Reprinted 1948 by Amherst College

REPORTS.

AT the annual meeting of the **BOARD OF TRUSTEES** of Amherst College, August 21, 1826, the Faculty presented a detailed Report of the state of the Seminary, and the course of instruction, together with some general remarks upon the inadequacy of the prevailing systems of classical education in this country, to meet the wants and demands of an enlightened public. The Trustees were so much interested by this Report, particularly that part of it which touches upon the subject of modifications and improvements, that they appointed a Committee, consisting of the **PRESIDENT**, the **HON. LEWIS STRONG**, and the **HON. SAMUEL HOWE**, to publish extracts from it, at such time and in such a way, as they might think best calculated to elicit inquiry ; to subserve the great interests of the College ; and to promote the general cause of education.

At the same meeting, the Trustees passed a resolve, requesting the Faculty to draw up a specific plan of improvement, upon the basis of their Report, and present it for consideration at a future meeting of the Board.

The following extracts are herewith presented from this Report.

“Entrusted as we are, under the oversight and authority of this Board, with the immediate government and instruction of the College, we have endeavoured in all respects, to pursue an elevated and liberal course, in accordance with the just and comprehensive views of its founders and guardians, as expressed in the Charter and Laws of the Institution. And though it would ill become us at so early a period, to claim for our favorite Seminary a place in the highest rank of kindred Institutions, we shall ever esteem it our honour and happiness, to cooperate with the Trustees, in making it more and more worthy of public patronage and confidence.

“The government which we have sought to establish and maintain is parental and moral, rather than penal. The confidence of our pupils, the sway of principle, and the obedience of the heart, are in our estimation, incomparably preferable to a mere cold conformity to the laws, however exact, or universal.

“As it respects the great interests of the College, we feel that we have something more to do, than merely to sustain them, upon their present elevation. This is emphatically an age of improvement, especially in the science of education. Situated as we are, therefore, accustomed and even constrained by our daily employment, to investigate principles, to examine text-books, to compare the reigning systems of education not only with each other,

but with those of past ages, and to consult the peculiar genius, wants and demands of a great and prosperous Republic, we conceive it to be our duty to lay before the Trustees, any suggestions which may occur to us, as having a direct bearing upon the permanent interests and more extended usefulness of the College. Under this impression, we shall proceed to offer a few thoughts upon the great and popular question of College reform, which may possibly serve as hints or waymarks, should the Board think it of sufficient importance to call for any further discussion.

“ One fact, we take it, is becoming more and more obvious every day. The American public is not satisfied with the present course of education in our higher seminaries. And the great objection is, that it is not sufficiently modern and comprehensive, to meet the exigencies of the age and country in which we live. Not that the general voice seems to be hostile to the Ancient Classics. Any College may, without serious opposition, retain both the Latin and Greek languages for the majority of its sons—may insist more strenuously than heretofore upon the study of the abstruse sciences, and may multiply its requisitions in every existing department, provided it will at the same time open its doors to that large class of young men, who are not destined to either of the learned professions, and carry them through a course, which they think better adapted to their future plans and prospects. The complaint is, and if our ears do not deceive us, it daily waxes louder and louder, that while every thing else is on the ad-

vance, our Colleges are stationary ; or if not quite stationary, that they are in danger of being left far behind, in the rapid march of improvement.

“ Why, it is demanded, such reluctance to admit modern improvements and modern literature ? Why so little attention to the natural, civil, and political history of our own country and to the genius of our government ? Why so little regard to the French and Spanish languages, especially considering the commercial relations which are now so rapidly forming, and which bid fair to be indefinitely extended between the United States and all the great southern Republics ? Why should my son, who is to be a merchant at home, or an agent in some foreign port ; or why, if he is to inherit my fortune, and wishes to qualify himself for the duties and standing of a private gentleman, or a scientific farmer—why, in either case, should he be compelled to spend nearly four years out of six, in the study of the dead Languages, for which he has no taste, from which he expects to derive no material advantage, and for which he will in fact have but very little use after his senior examination ?

“ Such questions as these, are every day asked, by men, whose strong good sense, education and standing in society, entitle them to be heard ; and it does not satisfy them to be told, even from the halls of science, that a knowledge of the Ancient Classics is in all cases of pre-eminent importance ; that no man can speak, or write English correctly, who has not read them ; that the present system

has the advantage of great age, and the sanction of long experience; that innovations are dangerous; and that, if the young men of this generation profit as much by a liberal education as their fathers did, the public will have no reason to complain.

“To such admonitions as these, coming as they do from some of the highest literary authorities in the land, the advocates of reform may lend a civil and patient attention: and the profound veneration of many for old establishments, may half prevail over their better judgement; but the majority will be apt still to contend, that in an age of universal improvement, and in a young, free, and prosperous country like ours, it is absurd to cling so tenaciously to the prescriptive forms of other centuries; and to meet every call for instruction in Modern Languages, Literature and Improvements, with the cry of innovation. What, they will ask, are our liberties, and indeed all our civil and religious rights and blessings, but the fruits of innovation?”

“But however that large class of enlightened men, of whom we have just been speaking, may differ in regard to the practicability, or expediency of modernizing our Colleges, in one thing they are entirely agreed. These Institutions do not at present, afford all the facilities which they want, for the liberal education of their sons; and we are convinced, that if the Colleges cannot so modify their systems, as to meet the public demand, or if they do not choose to do it, other seminaries, equal in rank and of surpassing popularity, will spring up by their side. How detrimental this would be, to the pros-

perity of existing establishments, especially such of them as derive their support chiefly from tuition, we need not stop to inquire. Let our Colleges promptly lead on in the mighty march of improvement, and all will be well; but let them hesitate and linger a little longer, and many of their most efficient friends will go on without them.

“That there are serious difficulties in the way of such changes and modifications as are called for, is certain; but we hope and believe, that they will not be found insuperable. Would it not, for example, be practicable to connect a new and liberal course, with that which is now pursued, under the direction of a common Faculty, and for the most part, under the same teachers, so as not very materially to increase the expense, while both courses would derive some important advantages from the union? We have nothing matured on this subject, to submit to your consideration; but it does appear to us, that something like this is practicable, and would be of great public advantage. The amount of study required in each course might be the same; it might be left optional with candidates for admission which to take; and they might all graduate together. More instruction, indeed, would be required in two courses than in one; but would not the number of students be sufficiently increased to defray the greater part of the additional expense?”

“But whatever may be thought of these suggestions, there is one new department of great practical importance, which it appears to us, should be annexed to the College, as soon as the funds will

any how permit—we mean the *Science of Education*.

When it is considered how this lies at the very foundation of all improvement; and when so many Professorships have been established in all the other sciences, as well as in literature and the arts, it is truly wonderful to us, that so little attention has been bestowed upon the science of mental culture, and that there is not, (as we believe there is not) and never has been, a single Professor of Education, on this side of the Atlantic. Will it not be an honour to that College, which shall be the first to supply this deficiency, and open a department for the thorough education of teachers? But we have no room for detail, or enlargement in the present Report, and can only add in conclusion, that should the Board judge it expedient, to refer the several topics which it embraces to a select committee, we fondly indulge the persuasion, that much good might result from the reference."

It has already been stated, that the whole subject was recommitted to the Faculty, and at a special meeting of the Board, Dec. 6, 1826, called for the express purpose of receiving and acting upon some specific plan of improvement, the following Report was presented, and, after much discussion and some amendment, was ordered to be printed.

Gentlemen of the Trustees,

In compliance with a vote of your Reverend and Honorable Board, duly communicated by the Secretary, we have the honor to submit the result of our

deliberations, upon the expediency of new modeling and extending the present system of academic instruction and study in this College. Every one knows, how much easier it is to find fault than to amend; to point out existing deficiencies than to supply them; and we shall not attempt to conceal, that the imperfectly digested plan now presented, has cost us more thought and discussion than we had anticipated. At the same time, if it can be carried into successful operation, as we believe it can, in all its essential provisions, the advantages which it proffers, might well be purchased at a far dearer rate. What we propose, in discharging the duty which the partiality of the Board has devolved upon us, is to offer a general outline of our plan, accompanied with such reasons and remarks, as we have thought needful for its illucidation and defence. The plan is somewhat extensive, and embraces,

I. Preparatory studies.

II. The present classical and scientific four years course.

III. A new course, equally thorough and elevated with this, but distinguished from it by a more modern and national aspect; and by a better adaptation to the taste and future pursuits of a large class of young men, who aspire to the advantages of a liberal education.

IV. A department devoted to the science and art of teaching; but more especially at first, to the education of School-Masters.

V. A department of theoretical and practical mechanics.

The final result of much discussion with regard to *preparatory studies* is, that the terms of admission should remain as they are; that the present amount of Latin and Greek should be required for both courses; and that no divergency should be recognized or encouraged, till after the initiatory examination. Once received to full and honourable membership, and with the two courses before him, let the student consult the wishes of his friends and his own inclination, and take his choice.

If he prefers the course now established in the seminary, he will find a rich reward in the study of the Latin, Greek, and Hebrew* Languages; Ancient and Modern History and Geography; Grammar, Rhetoric and Oratory; Mathematics and Astronomy; Experimental Physics and Natural History; Anatomy; Intellectual and Moral Philosophy; Political Economy and Theology. We think that in the new contemplated arrangement, it is best to retain this course without alteration;

1. Because it still holds its place in our most

* Hebrew or Greek, at his option, during a part of senior year.

distinguished public seminaries, after long and thorough experience ;

2. Because, though powerfully assailed from many quarters, particularly in the department of languages, it continues, if we mistake not, to maintain its popularity with a majority of those who are best qualified to judge, in the case; And

3. Because we regard it, upon the whole, as well entitled to the estimation in which it is held.

But we cannot discover in this long established course, liberal and thorough as it is, any legitimate claim to exclusive patronage and regard. To say nothing here, of some of the more practical branches of education which it scarcely glances at, but for which there is an increasing public demand, we observe, that while for want of time, it passes hastily over several of the later and more popular sciences, it does not profess to lead the student a single step within the bright enclosures, of some of the richest and widest fields of modern literature. Elevated and comprehensive as it is, therefore, nobody can doubt, that it leaves ample room for genius and industry to range and gather affluence, without its ample limits. Under the impression, however, that there is not space enough left for a new and liberal parallel course of four years; or that something short of this is demanded by the public, much has been said in favour of annexing a *partial* course to each of our Colleges. Now we do not believe that any such plan will satisfy an enlightened community. Well informed men, who have the means of carrying their sons through College, will hardly con-

sent to send them, to study English Literature and the Sciences for two or three years, and take a certificate merely, when for a little more expense, a diploma may be had at the end of a full and liberal course.

For these and other reasons, our decided and unanimous judgment is, that if a new course is introduced, it ought to proceed on a most liberal scale. By whatever name it may be called, it should be fully equivalent to the course which we now pursue. It should fill up as many years—should be carried on by as able instructors—should take as wide and elevated a range—should require as great an amount of hard study, or mental discipline, and should be rewarded by the same academic honors.

In presenting to the Trustees an outline of this parallel, or rather equivalent course, we find considerable difficulty in giving it a sufficiently distinct character of its own; arising chiefly from the many coincidences which our plan contemplates, and we ought perhaps, thus early to premise, that should it be adopted, experience will doubtless ere long suggest important modifications and improvements.

In the department of Languages, an entire separation is proposed, by substituting the modern for the ancient, provided however, that in the new course, Latin may be taken instead of the Spanish, at the option of the student when he enters College. Thus, with the knowledge of Greek and Latin, which all who enter will be required to bring along with them, it is thought they may in four years, so

far master the French and Spanish, as to read and write, and even speak them with considerable readiness and fluency. Should room hereafter be found for German, or Italian, or both, so much the better; but we deem it inexpedient to begin upon so broad a scale. The adoption of our general plan, will make the two courses more distinct in the department now under consideration, than in any other. But the new course will differ from the old in several important respects, which are yet to be mentioned: as

First. In the prominence which will be given to English Literature, than which no subject has higher claims upon the American scholar, or can more richly reward his diligence. We do not mean to attach any blame to the Colleges, for having done comparatively so little hitherto, in this department, for who can teach every thing in four years? But we believe the time has come, for the more critical study of some of the admired classics in our own language, by a portion at least, of the liberally educated in every College.

Second. The new course will differ essentially from the old, in the attention which will be given to French and Spanish Literature, by connecting this branch of study, with the recitations and other exercises in these two rich and popular languages.

Third. In Mechanical Philosophy, by introducing some such text book as, "*Nicholson's Operative Mechanic and Machanist*;" and by multiplying and varying the experiments, so as to render the science more familiar and attractive.

Fourth. In Chemistry and other kindred branches

of Physical Science, by showing their application to the more useful arts and trades, to the cultivation of the soil and to domestic economy.

Fifth. In a course of familiar Lectures upon curious and labour saving machines ;—upon bridges, locks and aqueducts ; and upon the different orders of architecture, with models for illustration.

Sixth. In Natural History, by devoting more time to those branches which are now taught, and by introducing others into the course.

Seventh. In modern History, especially the history of the Puritans, in connection with the Civil and Ecclesiastical history of our own country.

Eighth. In the elements of Civil and Political law, embracing the careful study of American Constitutions. To which may be added Drawing and Civil Engineering, together with some other branches perhaps, which are not specified in the foregoing enumeration. Ancient History, Geography, Grammar, Rhetoric and Oratory, Mathematics, Natural, Intellectual and Moral Philosophy, Anatomy, Political Economy and Theology, will, upon the plan here recommended, be common to both courses. This plan may be presented at a glance in the following illustration.

Two friends set out the same day from Boston, or New York, for the City of Washington. But as they have not precisely the same objects in view, and are led by curiosity, or business to visit different places lying a little off from the general route, they make their arrangements before they commence the journey, where to separate and where to

meet again—when to travel in company and when to take different roads and conveyances ; but so as to advance with equal speed, and reach the seat of Government on the same day. Thus would we have, not two distinct classes of the same standing ; but two divisions of the same class, advancing through four years in their respective courses, now in company, and now by separate paths ; but under such an arrangement, as shall bring them both out together.

To encourage and reward uncommon proficiency in either course, provision might be made for extra recitations in both. Thus, for example, the regular student in Greek and Latin, might employ his spare time in the study of French and Spanish ; while another might pass over from the new to the old course, and take lessons in Latin, Greek, or Hebrew.

We are fully aware, that the outline which we have thus hastily sketched, requires much filling up ; and that it will be found no easy task, to select text-books and spread out the new course in all the details of four years' study. But it can be done ; and should this part of our plan be sanctioned by the Trustees, any aid which we can lend will be most cheerfully afforded.

The Board will recollect, that in our first Report, we ventured to express a decided judgement, in favour of *a new department* for systematic instruction in the science of education ; and all our subsequent thoughts on the subject, have conspired to strengthen the opinion which we then entertain-

ed. Indeed, we look at this chasm, in the most complete and popular systems of an enlightened age, with increasing wonder. Why has it been suffered so long to remain, or rather why to exist at all in our public seminaries? No respectable College would think itself organized, without a department of Natural Philosophy, and another of Chemistry—nor without Professors in Rhetoric and the Languages; and yet, how few who enjoy these advantages in College, expect ever to be practical Chemists, or Philosophers, or Critics. How then can the most distinguished and useful literary institutions in the land, go on from year to year without a single instructor devoted to the science of education, when three fourths of their sons expect to be teachers, in one form or another themselves, and when the primary schools, academies and higher institutions of learning, require twice, or thrice as many thousands to supply them, as are wanted for all the learned professions together? Every third or fourth man we meet, is, or has been a school-master; but who among a thousand of the best qualified, was ever regularly instructed himself in the science and art of teaching, for a single quarter? And to rise still higher, who that daily gives lectures, or hears recitations in College, does not find reason to regret, that when he was a student, the analysis of mind was so little known or thought of, with reference to the science of education? Who, in short, is so old, or so wise, that he would not gladly take his place as a learner, under a competent Professor of this noble, but strangely neglected science?

We feel confident that the time has come to supply this great desideratum. The public is not only prepared for it, but loudly demands it, and will, we are perfectly assured, rejoice to see the Trustees of this College, acting definitively on the subject. Nor, if we judge correctly, will an enlightened community be satisfied with any but the most comprehensive and liberal views, in the establishment of this new department. To occupy the whole ground, will require,

1. Much time and talent in the selection, revision and compilation of elementary school-books.

2. An experimental school, consisting of young children, under the entire control of the department, where students may have opportunity to learn the art of teaching from example, and in which new methods of instruction may be tried, and the results carefully recorded.

3. Adequate provision for the systematic instruction of school-masters, in all the branches of education, which they may have occasion to teach in our primary or district schools, together with the theory of teaching and government.

4. An able and connected review, or rather series of reviews, of all the popular systems of education now in use, particularly in our own country, with free and critical remarks upon College text-books.

5. A course of lectures annually by the professor, on the science of education, for the particular benefit of the regular members of College, but which other young men, wishing to qualify themselves for teaching, might be permitted to attend.

Less than this, ought not to satisfy public expectation from the department, when time shall have been allowed, and means provided for its complete organization. But we do not think it necessary to occupy the whole ground at once. Let the system be introduced gradually, and with ultimate reference to the most ample enlargement. As the first and most urgent call is for good teachers in the common schools, let arrangements be made, as soon as practicable, to receive a limited number of young men, and put them upon such a course of study, as when successfully completed, will entitle them to a certificate from the department.

The details of instruction, study, examinations, tuition fees and the like, we purposely omit in this Report; our object being simply to present an outline of the improvements contemplated in the general plan. It is obvious to remark, however, that a department for the education of school-masters, offers some advantages by being connected with a respectable College, which cannot be enjoyed at so cheap a rate, in a separate institution. Competent professors in Natural Philosophy, Chemistry, Natural History and Rhetoric, commodious lecture-rooms and costly apparatus, are already provided for other and higher purposes; and the aid of most of these, is very important, if not essential, to every man who is to assist, in educating the children and youth of this great republic. A literary atmosphere too, exists in the precincts of a College, which though free as common air, is never formed at once, but is gradually and expensively created.

The last addition or improvement, contemplated in our general plan, and which we ask leave to suggest, for the consideration of the Board, is a department of theoretical and practical Mechanics. This would afford exercise and amusement to many of the students, and to a few of the more ingenious and active, some pecuniary advantage. We should expect much greater advantage however, from a judicious arrangement of appropriate studies, connected with a course of practical lectures upon mechanics, during a part of one of the collegiate years.

For a considerable time, at least, the skill and industry of this department might be profitably employed, in furnishing the College rooms upon a uniform plan; in keeping all the buildings and furniture in constant repair; in making some of the more common articles of philosophical and chemical apparatus; as also many curious models in machinery, for the use of the professors in other departments. Here would be ample scope for the exercise of all the mechanical ingenuity in the Seminary; and surely, it would be no disadvantage to any professional man in after life, to have learned how to drive a nail, or put on a lock, or use a plane, or a saw, when he was a student in College.

But it will be seen at a glance, that our plan of multiplying the branches of Education in this College, cannot be adopted without adding to the present number of buildings and instructors; and of course, to the *expenses* of the Institution. Gladly would we point out the ways and means

of defraying these expenses, were it in our power; but we fear that in this emergency, our financial skill will be of very little use to the Board. Can it be, however, that if the improvements which we have recommended, shall meet the approbation of an enlightened public, the necessary funds will long be wanting? Our confidence in this regard may be misplaced. But of one thing we are certain. Though our present labors are not unusually light, we are prepared to take upon ourselves additional burdens, for the sake of advancing the interests of sound and useful learning in the College, by enlarging the sphere of study and instruction. We can only add, that the new system, should it be adopted, would doubtless increase the number of students, and of course the amount of income from tuition; and for the rest, we cannot permit ourselves to believe, that an institution which has already shared so richly in the prayers and largesses of an enlightened christian community, will be denied the means of support and extension, whenever its wants and its plans for increasing usefulness, shall fairly be made known to the public.

All of which is respectfully submitted, in behalf of the Faculty.

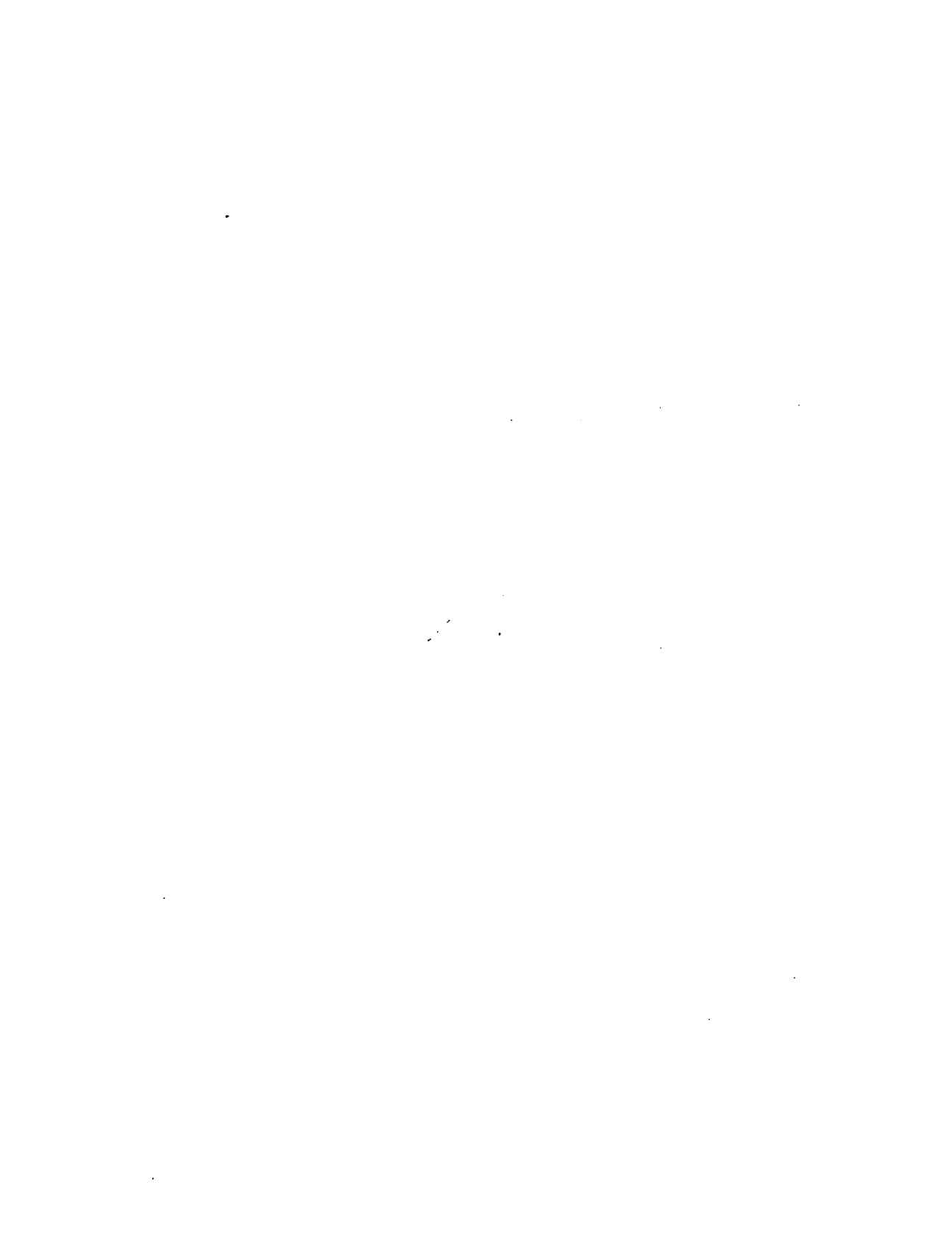
H. HUMPHREY, *President.*

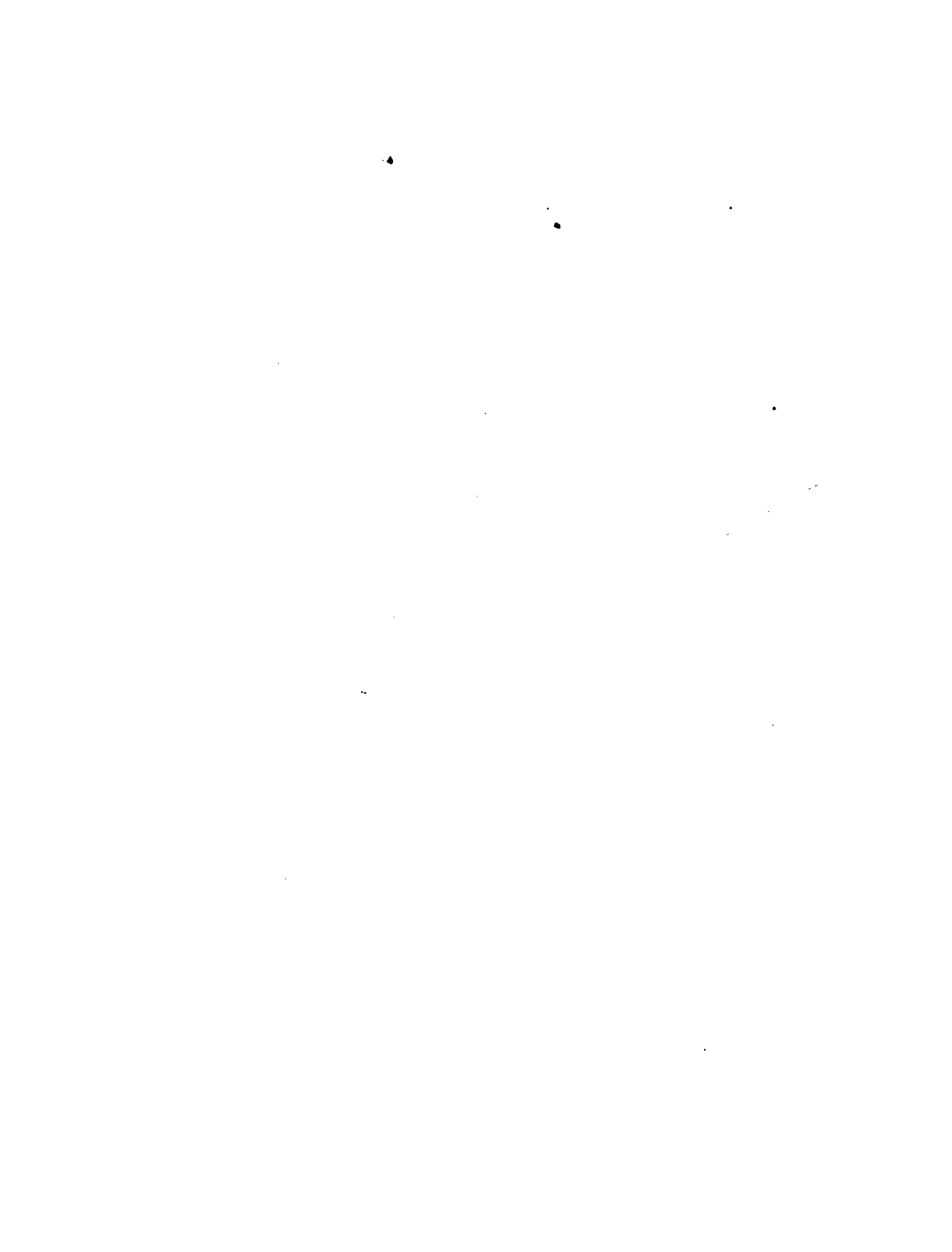
Amherst College, Dec. 5, 1826.

It has already been stated, that this Report was ordered to be printed, and it should have been added, at the same time, that it was adopted by the unanimous vote of the Trustees. They did not in-

tend, however, to pledge themselves by their vote, to any immediate or specific course of measures; but to express their cordial approbation of the general plan, and their design of incorporating the *new course*, substantially as drawn out in the Report, with the present four years system, and to add the *department of Education*, as soon as they can obtain the necessary means. The *Mechanic department* they deem of less immediate consequence; but as worthy of a fair trial, whenever the funds of the College will permit.

Neither the Faculty nor the Trustees suppose, that the contemplated changes and improvements, are all that would be desirable, if the Institution could afford to make them. The new system is graduated upon the moderate scale of present ability, and the confident expectation of further encouragement to go forward. And the Trustees fondly cherish the hope, of one day seeing the Seminary which the Legislature has committed to their care, become worthy of the title prospectively given to it in the Charter, an UNIVERSITY. In the mean time, they will do what they can, to cherish its growth and increase its usefulness.







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