

Rotunda, or Library, of the University of Virginia, Designed by Thomas Jefferson. (Photo Copyright by R. W. Holinger, Charlottesville.)

Shall Jefferson's University Admit Women?

Awakened Daughters of the Old Dominion, in Quest of College Education, Seek to Break Ancient Tradition at Virginia's Famous Seat of Learning

SHALL women be admitted to the historic University of Virginia, spirit child of the great Democrat, Thomas Jefferson? The Legislature of Virginia which assembled in Richmond on Jan. 12 is laboring to reconcile the conservative sentiment of the Old South with the just claims of modern womanhood to a university education. The struggle centres around a bill providing that the Board of Visitors of the men's university shall, when funds are available, establish a co-ordinate college for women near the present institution. To the North and West this seems little enough to ask. To the Old Dominion, the idea is revolutionary.

Three times—in 1910, in 1912, and 1914—have the earnest women, aided by the university and its more progressive alumni, toiled to make this dream of democratic education for women come true in spite of the conservatism of the old régime, and the indifference of lawmakers. The last attempt carried the bill triumphantly through the Senate, but met defeat in the House by a scant six votes. The present session, it is believed, will see the measure passed. The opponents, on theory or sentiment, have given up argument and made the issue a practical question of money. Can the State afford to establish this new undertaking now? Should not all possible income be devoted to the common schools? It is a queer conflict between one part of democracy and another. The result will be deeply significant of the new spirit of the South, the force and idealism of which many outsiders do not understand. The problem is worth study.

To the chivalric ideal of the conservative South co-education is an impossible thing. Women must be kept apart, unspoiled by worldliness and intimacy. That is why the advocates of higher education have asked for a co-ordinate college like Barnard, Radcliffe, and the Sophia Newcomb in this country, and Girton and Newnham in England. The same Faculty, libraries, laboratories, and administrators will serve both men and women, lending economy and efficiency. The standards will be the same. The degrees of Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science—strange paradoxical terms—will be given the women graduates on the same strict terms as those that have guaranteed the training of Virginia men.

But men and women shall not meet in classrooms; they shall be separated in their social life; they shall have different residence halls and grounds. The beautiful cloistered lawns of the men's college shall not be invaded by women. Indeed, one provision of the 1914 bill was that the new college must "be situated at least one mile from the present campus." This year the mooted question of site is to be left to a committee of educators and legislators. It is urged that the location be a mile or so across the town of Charlottesville—but as this would

mean three-quarters of an hour for each student and professor every day, and so nullify many of the advantages of co-ordination, it is hoped a more sensible compromise may be effected. The local car company would profit most by the long-distance co-ordination.

The State is not asked for a specific appropriation. The beginning will be modest, as the first women students will be both few and heroic. It is certain that endowment gifts will be secured from persons in both the South and North interested in woman's progress. In 1914 some \$50,000 was promised. This year the City of Charlottesville and the County of Albemarle will offer a fund of about \$40,000, probably for the purchase of a site.

The beautiful and historic University of Virginia, on the prestige and traditions of which it is hoped a great new institution may be founded, is the State University of Virginia and was founded in 1819 by Thomas Jefferson as the child and glory of his last years. It is located in the central, or Piedmont, region of the Commonwealth. The great leader of the common people designed its lovely grounds and classic buildings, and from his retreat at Monticello watched this final care of his life take visible form. There is no more beautiful home of learning in the country. In that at least it will be a fine setting for Virginia women.

Jefferson's estimate of the value of popular education is clear from the epitaph he directed to be carved on the plain obelisk that now rests above his grave on the quiet mountain-side. In these words he sets forth his claim to men's honor:

Author of the Declaration of Independence, Of the Statute for Religious Freedom in Virginia, Founder of the University of Virginia.

Those are great words. It is not strange that the forward-looking women of his State desire to share in the spiritual distinction that must reside in a school built out of the very ideals of a statesman and seer. The University of Virginia is rightly known as "Jefferson's University." But he held no such selfish view. To him it was the capstone of a system of popular education that should mold and inspire democracy. It was the last step of an ascent that led from the simplest child in the grammar school to the scholar, training other teachers in the high elements of learning. It included high schools, and the proponents of the present measure claim, and wisely, that his vision would have been the first to see that women must receive the best education possible if democracy shall survive. They declare he would have welcomed new things, like the Montessori method of child training, and that to him women in this school would have seemed but a part of progress.

The essential democracy of the founder, his enduring faith in the people, and his humility in the face of liberty and

progress are disclosed in the following words, quoted by women to show how he trusted his foundation to the future:

A system of general instruction which shall reach every description of our citizens, from the richest to the poorest, as it was the earliest, so will it be the latest of all the public concerns in which I shall permit myself to take an interest. Nor am I tenacious of the form in which it shall be introduced. Be that what it may, our descendants will be as wise as we are, and will know how to amend and amend it until it shall suit their circumstances. Give it to us, then, in any shape.

Another President of the United States, a century later, has added his approval of the plan to "amend" his alma mater to suit the new circumstances. Woodrow Wilson, graduate of the Law School of the University of Virginia in 1881, wrote this letter:

I have been in a position for a good many years to know the history and experience of co-ordinate colleges elsewhere. I can, therefore, say with a great deal of confidence that it seems to me that your plan promises more than any other plan could for the advancement of the education of women in Virginia. Undoubtedly every consideration of economy and most considerations of efficiency are in



Dr. Edwin A. Alderman, President of the University of Virginia. (Photo Copyright by R. W. Holinger, Charlottesville.)

favor of building upon the institutions we already have. We are in danger, nowadays, of wasting our resources by scattering them and of missing our opportunities by not making our work tell where an impulse is already established and a tradition already set up which is of immense value and stimulation. Cordially and sincerely yours, WOODROW WILSON.

Two other Presidents were immediately connected with the beginning of the university. James Madison and James Monroe both served on the Board of Visitors in the early years.

The evil of scattering resources has already been felt in Virginia. In addition to the university, the State supports historic William and Mary College, the famous Southern West Point, Virginia Military Institute, and the newer Virginia Polytechnic Institute. The latter is a school for industrial, agricultural, mechanical training situated far in the

southwest of the Old Dominion, entirely separate from the central institution. The university missed the opportunity of annexing this now powerful school to its life. The lesson has been so well learned that now Visitors, Faculty, and President are working to bring the co-ordinate college to their institution.

The logic of the situation is indisputable. Dr. Edwin A. Alderman, President of the university, chosen in 1905, has succeeded in practically doubling the wealth and size of the university. There are 1,035 students in attendance this session. The income has been increased from about \$165,000 to \$330,000. Andrew Carnegie gave \$500,000 for endowment. This was increased to more than one million by alumni and friends. The teaching staff has been doubled. The service of the university has been extended to the public schools, to State forests, and in a hundred ways it is performing the true duty of a State-supported institution. It would seem folly to waste years and money erecting a new college when such a magnificent foundation is already to hand.

At present Virginia spends nothing on higher education for women, save in connection with State normal schools. Three private colleges offer more adequate work. Richmond College is a small city college, and Sweet Briar is for many a finishing school. Randolph-Macon, in Lynchburg, is among the best of colleges for women in the entire South, and probably approaches Bryn Mawr in standards. The cost of education in these schools is, however, prohibitive for the average plain Virginia girl. However, last year Randolph-Macon furnished seventy women teachers for State high schools. The University of Virginia furnished but thirty men.

Of course, Virginia girls are getting college educations. In 1915 some 121 went to Northern colleges. But sixty-six of them averaged about \$600 as the cost per year. Virginia men can get equally excellent training in the State for half this expense. Moreover, 1,215 women attended the University Summer School. It is plain they want higher education.

The most pressing demand, however, is for a place where the State can train its high school teachers. The public high school is comparatively a recent thing in Virginia. Though Jefferson planned his university as the capstone of a great system, the people did not provide the link of the secondary school. The aristocratic private academy sent boys to the university. Now the high schools are built. Since 1905 the number has been trebled. Last year 446 high schools enrolled 9,190 boys, and 12,724 girls. In 120 graduating classes there were 1,087 girls against 633 boys.

"Where shall these girls get more education?" the educator and the modern woman ask. What right has the State to train more girls than boys to the point of entering college and then supply the minority of boys with splendid equipment while denying to the girl any op-

portunity at all? It is an economic waste. Common sense and justice dictate that the daughters of the people receive a square deal. That is one argument.

The State, moreover, needs more than a thousand teachers in these high schools. Over 70 per cent. of them are women. Only 281 of these had even two years of college training. In short, the untrained woman teacher is the one who is expected to equip a boy for higher education. The basic fact on which educational experts demand a woman's college supported by the State is to furnish the right kind of high school teachers. The co-ordinate college is to be a link in the great public school system. It will not handicap, they say, but help the entire structure.

These are the strong words the Virginia legislator is hearing from the folks back home. The people want their girls better educated. They see the new school not as a rich man's luxury, but a poor man's necessity. The taxpayer wants full value on his investment in the university plant. The plain democracy of Virginia is voicing a longing that Jefferson would have rejoiced to hear.

But there is plenty of opposition. The University of Virginia has been intensely, vividly masculine. The students love manliness and strength. From the beginning it has worked on the elective system of studies. The students have been individualists with the right to choose what they would study. They fought duels. They devised the honor system in 1842, and under the protection of the student code ever since examinations have been held without overseers or policemen from the Faculty. This spirit of responsibility has penetrated the whole institution.

In athletics it was the first Southern school to adopt the alumni coaching system for athletic teams. It wanted pure athletics and hated to be dominated by a paid outsider. In spite of the comparatively small number of students, this system has produced such good results that last Fall the North received a hard shock when the Orange and Blue eleven beat Yale in its own bowl 10 to 0, and later held Harvard to a 9 to 0 count, all the points coming from drop kicks by Mahan.

These things have developed a spirit hardly found in any other American university. The Virginian regards his State university as so peculiarly different and superior to all others that he speaks of it as "THE university," believing no other title is needed. The alumni, among whom are the chief opponents of the change, cherish an almost fanatic devotion to the "old university." They regard its traditions and spirit as priceless and immutable gifts. Some oppose all education for women. Others are willing to let women be educated anywhere—but at THE university. There is a sincere fear that some heritage of great value will pass from the school the day women pass along its cloisters as students.

One member of the Faculty said: "The alumni of any institution are always sentimentally opposed to change. They have no reason, but they want their university to remain forever as they left it, brilliant with the glamour of their youth, eternally preserving radiant memories. They love the past; they cannot understand the spirit of change."

Sentiment and a virile Anglo-Saxon conservatism have kept the university masculine for nearly a century. The closest a mere woman ever came to invading the sacred precincts in session was almost twenty-five years ago, when on June 24, 1892, an ambitious Virginia girl, Miss Caroline Preston Davis, presented a petition to the Faculty begging that she be permitted to stand the examination in the School of Mathematics, and receive such recognition as her work deserved. The privilege asked was the same as that first granted women by Columbia.

The Faculty resolved thus: "In its present condition the university is not prepared to undertake for young ladies the duties of instruction." The Visitors concurred in this, but also granted permission to women to take the examinations. The idea of co-education was strongly urged, however, and prolonged discussion ended in defeat of a proposed admission of women.

Miss Davis meanwhile quietly studied under the private tuition of the instructor in mathematics, and in 1893 availed herself of the right to stand the exam-

ination for graduation in the specified department (in a room separate from men.) She passed with distinction. But to show that higher education does not produce feminism in Southern women, it may be noted that Miss Davis is today an active leader in anti-suffrage work in Virginia. No other woman has ever used the right granted her. But about ten years ago a Summer normal session was opened at the university, and from June to August each year hundreds of teachers have availed themselves of excellent training for teaching and breathed at least the material atmosphere of the ancient school.

New York need not smile at these old-fashioned ideas. Barnard College has only come to its twenty-fifth anniversary

for guarantees of \$100 a year for a term of years. About \$11,000 was raised, a house rented, and Barnard College, named for the President of Columbia, who had worked so faithfully for the new school, was opened Oct. 27, 1889, with twenty students. The endowment now, it may be added for the encouragement of Virginia, is around \$4,000,000.

It is probable that many persons worked for co-ordinate Barnard who dreaded co-educational Columbia. This is the situation with many men in Virginia. There is a wide sentiment in favor of the proposed college among those who fear that unless just provision is made for the education of Virginia women in this way, a steady demand by the people may force co-education on the

possibly a new danger. To animate and direct this new power and to avoid the possible menace calls for the strongest and best force in the State's life. The task is worthy of the university and the university is worthy of the task.

Many of the university alumni are heartily in favor of the college. They have petitioned the Board of Visitors from all parts of the State. One of the most prominent, the Governor of Virginia, Henry C. Stuart, declared in his inaugural in 1914: "It should be the duty and pride of the State to assist in maintaining and advancing our higher institutions of learning and to add to their number an institution for the education of women, in such manner and at such time as may be practicable."

The Virginia Federation of Labor, the Farmers' Co-operative, and Educational Union, and the Department of Public Instruction, all representing the people, have indorsed the co-ordinate college. The newspapers are united behind it; and one of the first editorials pleading for its establishment was from the pen of Henry Sydnor Harrison, author of the brilliant "Queed" and "Angela's Business"—a novel dealing with both feminism and education.

One of the strongest pleas comes from the director of the Girls' Canning Clubs of the State, Miss Ella Agnew. She teaches Virginia rural communities how to raise wonderful crops of tomatoes on a tenth of an acre, and how to preserve fruit and vegetables for home and market. There is a touch of real pathos in her view:

Among my own girls I have some who are working and saving and making all they can from their gardens, who want to go to college, but who realize that they must go outside their State in order to get what they need to prepare them for life. I have two in other States who have saved money for their own education, and who could not find a college to which they could go in their own State.

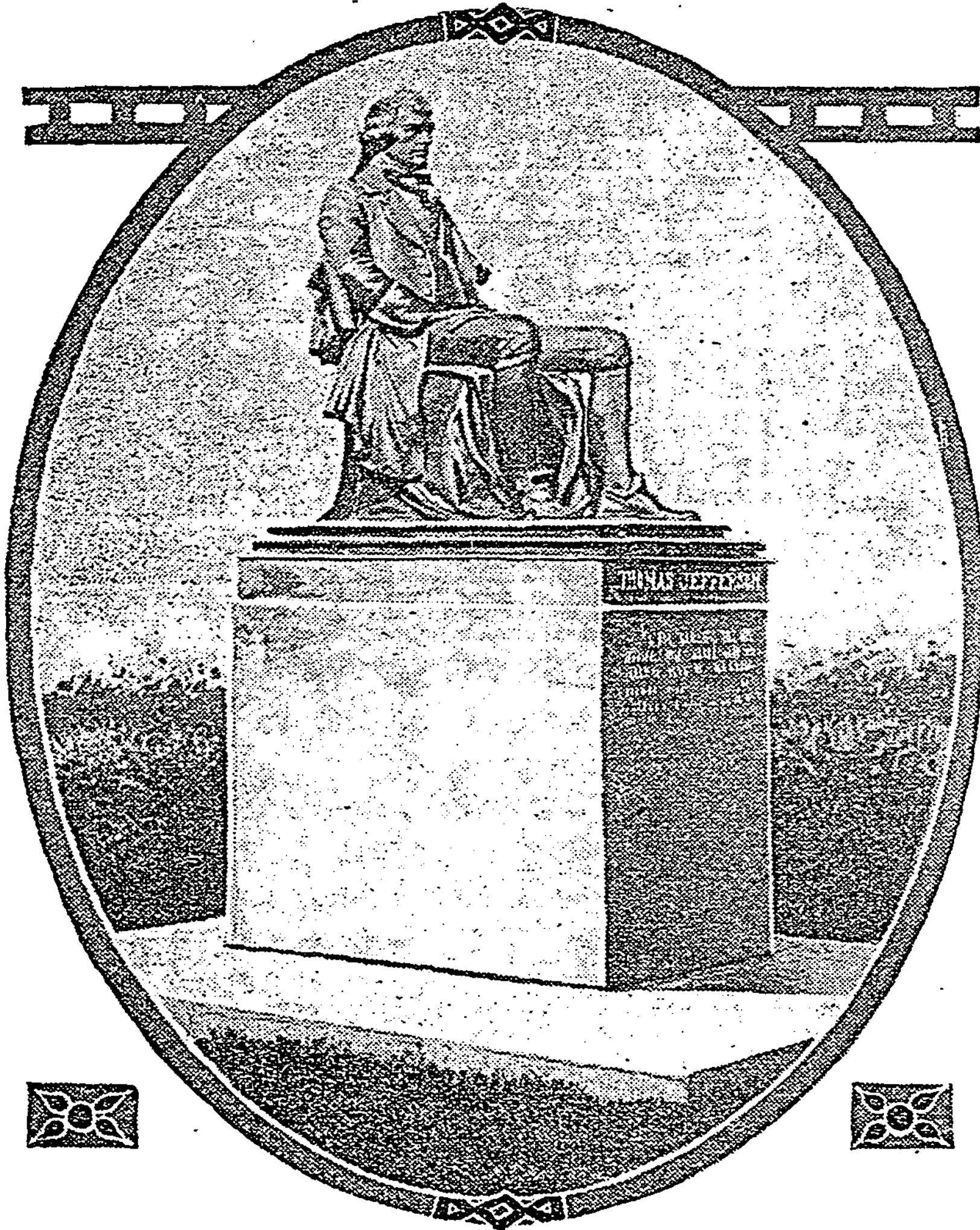
What is sentiment and conservatism compared to this plain and solemn statement of a need? The essence of all democracy, of all striving, of all woman's inspirations lies in this simple condition. Virginia cannot refuse to provide the best for girls who have the courage and the brains to make their college expenses out of garden truck. To lose such women from the State's life is the costliest of sacrifices.

While democracy is the heart of this movement, there is a due desire for intellectual aristocracy. The women want the reputation and standards of the greatest of Southern universities. It might be possible to develop college grade work in one or all four of the redundant normal schools in the State. But woman's aspirations are for the best. They want no makeshift.

They are right in wanting to share in the glory of this ancient foundation. It has done good work. Perhaps the single largest spiritual influence in the South for years, it is now of profound importance to the nation. A truly remarkable list of its graduates are directing the affairs of the United States at this moment. President Wilson is an alumnus. Justice McReynolds, raised to the Supreme Court from the Attorney Generalship, is of the class of 1884. So is his successor in the Cabinet office, Thomas Watts Gregory. Edward Kernan Campbell, '83, is Chief Justice of the Court of Claims. John Skelton Williams, '85, is Controller of the Currency. Milton C. Elliott, 1902, is counsel for the Federal Reserve Board. Dr. Rupert Blue, '90, is Surgeon General. Thomas Nelson Page, '74, is Ambassador to Italy, and Colonel Joseph Willard, '79, Ambassador to Spain.

In the legislative branch the record is equally noteworthy. Oscar Underwood, former House leader, now Senator from Alabama, was graduated in 1884. John Sharp Williams left in 1872. Thomas S. Martin, '66, is a power in the upper house. James Hamilton Lewis caught his urbane gifts with the class of '82. Culberson of Texas was graduated in 1877. In the last Congress Virginia's University furnished eight Senators and eighteen representatives. Harvard itself scarcely excels this.

The kind of university training that makes possible a success in life such as is shown here is what the women of Virginia seek. They are leaving no step untaken to bring their long task to completion this month. If they win, it will mean a victory for the Jeffersonian ideals in democracy over the caste and prejudice of an old social tradition.



Statue of Thomas Jefferson, by the Late Karl Bitter. Presented to the University. (Photo Copyright by R. W. Holsinger, Charlottesville.)

sary, and the struggle to open Columbia's advantages to women is still modern in history. It lasted fifteen years from the time Sorosis presented a memorial asking that women be admitted. The plea was rejected. In 1883 a petition of 1,400 names was presented to the Trustees asking that women be admitted to lectures and examinations. Among the signers were President Arthur and General Grant. Presidents of the nation seem always to have looked favorably on extensions of higher education. But as in Virginia, the alumni of Columbia, led by Hamilton Fish, Bishop Horatio Potter, Dr. Morgan Dix, and others successfully combated the proposal. Dr. Dix declared: "Never, with my consent, shall co-education be introduced into Columbia College."

Yet in 1885 he helped adopt a plan whereby women were given examinations and granted degrees, but could not prepare for either in Columbia. Private instruction prescribed by the college was given young ladies over 17 years old. About thirty women took advantage of this queerly restricted opportunity.

In March, 1885, Mrs. Anna Nathan Meyer, the guiding spirit of this movement, as Mrs. Beverly B. Munford of Richmond is now in Virginia, secured about fifty prominent names to a petition praying for a co-ordinate college in which qualified women could secure instruction of high university standard from the Columbia Faculty, supervised by its Board of Trustees. The signers included such names as Frederic R. Coudert, President of the alumni association, Joseph H. Choate, Richard Watson Gilder, Robert Collier, Lyman Abbott, and prominent women.

No funds were asked of the Columbia Trustees, but on their provisional acceptance of the offer an appeal was in-

university. This is in some measure the attitude of the Visitors, Faculty, and President. At a meeting in December, the Board of Visitors passed a resolution in favor of the college, voting six to two. The rector, Armistead Gordon, states his position, in a letter written in 1912, as follows:

Frankly, I am for the co-ordinate college, because I think that the women of Virginia are entitled to the same opportunity of education at the hands of the State as the men of Virginia; and, because I think further that co-education is per se, pernicious and dangerous, and is ultimately avoidable at the university only by co-ordinate education. . . . The University of Virginia belongs to the people of Virginia and not to the President, the rector, and the members of the board, and what the people of Virginia want and are entitled to, it is the business of the Visitors and the Rector and the President and the Legislature of Virginia to furnish them, if possible, in abundance and overflowing.

The Faculty in their only official action favored the plan by a vote of 42 to 5. President E. A. Alderman, the man largely responsible for the growth and prosperity of the university, is convinced of the wisdom of the proposal. He believes the new college will not only serve Virginia but help the older institution. He has written thus:

I hold the firm conviction that the State should intrust to the University of Virginia the direction and control of the higher education of women in a co-ordinate college developed along the lines indicated in this bill. In no other way can the women hope to get what they deserve, the highest and best training, and in no other way can the university, in the State's service, touch so helpfully and vitally the progressive and democratic life of the whole people, not only in Virginia, but throughout the South, which has for a generation expected educational leadership of this Commonwealth.

It would be flying in the face of the very genius of the age to establish a separate institution for women's training. The attitude of women toward society in the future represents a new problem, a new force, and